

## Annemarie Eleonore Curth Goldberg (then Murray-Aynsley)

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A German Jew fleeing Nazism, Curth was married in Italy and was a pediatrician. She was forced to flee again with her husband, but the two did not manage to enter Australia and remained in Singapore. Then came the war, and one day, the notice to evacuate: it was the last time that she saw him. Survivor of a shipwreck and prisoner of the Japanese in Indochina, Curth was stateless for years without knowing where to go. In 1956 she reappeared in Florence with her second husband, British citizenship and the desire to restart her medical practice.

No one knew or imagined what she had endured. In the Australian archives, a voluminous dossier exists about the darkest period of her life in a Japanese camp in Sumatra.

### Education in Heidelberg

Annemarie Eleonore was born on 24 February 1904 in Trebnitz in Silesia (Germany), her father Emil Cohn (1864-1940) was Protestant and her mother Gertrud Brodnitz (1881-1942) of «Mosaic» religion<sup>1</sup>; in 1910 they had Ernst Albrecht<sup>2</sup>. Annemarie studied at the Kaiser Wilhelm Schule in Trebnitz and later at the Reform Real Gymnasium in Hirschberg, where she received her high school diploma in 1923<sup>3</sup>. With the last name Curth, which she assumed in place of Cohn<sup>4</sup>, she graduated from the University of Heidelberg in July of 1929, and in August of 1930 she

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<sup>1</sup> AOMFi, *Fondo medici chirurghi cessati* (MCC), *Fascicoli personali* (FP), f. n. 769, «Annamaria Eleonora Curth Murray-Aynsley», «Certificato di nascita» [Birth certificate], Trebnitz, 25 February 1904.

<sup>2</sup> See biographical information on the page dedicated to him in <<https://www.ancestry.it>> (accessed upon registration 9 September 2019).

<sup>3</sup> National Archives of Australia (NAA), A434, *Commonwealth of Australia, Department of Immigration*, f. 1948/3/11818, «Goldberg-Curth Admission», Annemarie Eleonore Curth Goldberg, «Curriculum vitae», Perth, 12 September 1946. The file is available online at <<https://recordsearch.naa.gov.au>> (accessed 20 December 2020).

<sup>4</sup> AOMFi, MCC, FP, f. n. 769, «A.E. Curth Murray-Aynsley», «Certificato di nascita», Trebnitz, 25 February 1904, the change of surname noted here had occurred on 26 March 1924.

obtained the license to practice medicine<sup>5</sup>. She specialized in medicine and children's diseases at the University clinic at Leipzig (Prof Morawitz), the City hospital at Stettin (Prof Neisser), and the Children's hospital of the Medical Academy in Dusseldorf (Prof Schlossmann)<sup>6</sup>.

After the rise of nazism, she decided to go to Italy «for threatened racial persecution»<sup>7</sup>.

### First escape to Italy

Curth's first stop was probably Livorno, in February of 1934<sup>8</sup>; she settled in Pisa to obtain the university degree that was valid in Italy, and was admitted into the sixth year of study at the School of Medicine and Surgery, as many exams that she had already taken counted towards her requirements<sup>9</sup>. That summer she married Erich Goldberg who, like her, lived in Pisa at via Cristoforo Colombo 27; even though Erich was 12 years older, the two had much in common: both were German, of Jewish origin, and both were physicians. Mrs. Curth Goldberg graduated on 9 November 1934<sup>10</sup>, and in the same year she took the state medical licensing exam at the University of Perugia<sup>11</sup>. Beginning in November of 1934, the couple lived in Florence at Lungarno degli Archibusieri 4, in an ancient palace close to the Ponte Vecchio, where they treated their respective patients. As required, both registered with the Union of fascist physicians of the province of Florence on 30 March 1935<sup>12</sup>.

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<sup>5</sup> ASUPi, *Carriere studenti*, f. «Annemarie Curth», certificate in German, Karlsruhe, 17 September 1930, and translation of the Royal Consulate general of Italy, Frankfurt, 2 March 1934.

<sup>6</sup> NAA, A434, *Commonwealth of Australia, Department of Immigration*, f. 1948/3/11818, «Goldberg-Curth Admission», «Curriculum vitae», 12 September 1946.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., «Application for classification as "refugee alien"», Perth, 2 July 1946.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., in the form she declared that the passport that was issued to her in Livorno on 16 August 1934 was lost during the bombing and sinking of the Vyner Brooke on 14 February 1942.

<sup>9</sup> ASUPi, *Carriere studenti*, f. «Annemarie Curth», registration form, Pisa, 9 March 1934.

<sup>10</sup> NAA, A434, *Commonwealth of Australia, Department of Immigration*, f. 1948/3/11818, «Goldberg-Curth Admission», «Curriculum vitae», 12 September 1946 and ASUPi, *Carriere studenti*, f. «Annemarie Curth», since her wedding in 1934 she also signs with her married surname.

<sup>11</sup> AOMFI, MCC, FP, f. n. 769, «A.E. Curth Murray-Aynsley», R[oyal] University of Pisa, «Certificato di Laurea» [Diploma], 15 February 1935, and R. University of Perugia, «Abilitazione alla professione» [Professional license], 1 February 1935.

<sup>12</sup> AOMFI, *Registro dell'Ordine dei Medici (1911-1950)*, «Goldberg Erich», n. 770, and «Curth Goldberg Murray-Aynsley Anna Maria», n. 769.

Not even in Italy, however, did they find peace. Two weeks after the promulgation of the Royal Decree-Law 7 September 1938 n. 138, *Provisions against Foreign Jews*, the prefectural note n. 34306 imposed the consequent revision of the professional registries<sup>13</sup>. For the racial census, the Union used cards similar to those used for the staff of schools and universities. On 20 September 1938, Annemarie Goldeberg declared on her record card that she was Protestant like her father and, at the same time, a member of the Jewish community, but also that «having been baptised in 1924, before I was without religion»; she responded negatively regarding her mother's Jewish faith, and like her husband Erich she lied about her ancestors<sup>14</sup>. On 30 January 1939 they were both disbarred from the professional registry: they could no longer practice as physicians<sup>15</sup>. They tried to appeal with a complaint, of which we do not exactly know the content, to the prefecture, but the secretary of the Union denied them even a temporary license for «no facilitating circumstances exist with regard to them that can be invoked»<sup>16</sup>.

### **Second escape from Italy to Singapore**

Unable to work in Italy, Annemarie and Erich managed to enroll in March of 1939 at the General Medical Council (GMC)<sup>17</sup>, which registered all doctors certified to practice in British territories. They wanted to go to Australia and acquired the necessary documents to include in the immigration request: the certificates of good conduct<sup>18</sup> and good health. The head of the hospital in Fiesole attested that the Goldbergs «are not suffering from any physical or mental disease and that there

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid., Uncatalogued miscellanea, Prefectural note n. 34306 from the R[oyal] Prefecture of Florence to the Union of fascist physicians, 21 September 1938.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., «Scheda Personale Annamaria Goldberg-Curth», 20 September 1938.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., minutes of the ordinary assembly of the Union of fascist physicians in Florence, n. 3, «Elenco nominativi ebrei stranieri» [List of foreign Jews], 30 January 1939.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., MCC, FP, f. n. 770, «Erich Goldberg», the Union of fascist physicians to the R. Prefecture of Florence, 16 February 1939.

<sup>17</sup> *Uk Medical Registers, 1859-1959*, accessible *ad nomen* at <<http://www.ancestry.com>> (accessed upon registration 27 October 2020); she and her husband appear as registered on 6 March 1939.

<sup>18</sup> NAA, A434, 1948/3/11818, *Commonwealth of Australia, Department of Immigration*, «Goldberg-Curth Admission», Certificate from the City of Florence, 6 February 1939, and R[oyal] Prosecution Office of Rome, Judicial Records, «Certificato Generale a nome di Annamaria Curth-Goldberg», 11 December 1934.

is no evidence whatever [sic] of signs of contagious illness»; the director of the psychiatric hospital in Florence declared that the physician was never hospitalized there<sup>19</sup>. The petition to receive an Australian visa was signed by Erich, and Annemarie appeared as a relative that accompanied him<sup>20</sup>.

The archbishop of the Anglican Church of Perth interceded so that the Laborist John Curtin, leader of the opposition in the Parliament of the Commonwealth, intervened with the Secretary of the Department of the Interior Joseph A. Carrodus. Despite these recommendations, the Australian visa for the Goldbergs arrived after they had to leave Italy in April of 1939. They stopped in Singapore, where her husband was soon offered a position as assistant medical superintendent at the Central Mental Hospital in Tanjung Rambutan, in Perak; and she started a private practice, predominantly in Ipoh<sup>21</sup>.

However, after two years, things took a turn for the worse: in July of 1941 Erich was accused of anti-British propaganda by a colleague and resigned from his post at the mental institution. Since they were no longer considered desirable, and their application for a visa to enter Australia had been rejected (their previous visa had expired), they were also declared enemy aliens. In November they were detained in Singapore. Apparently, Erich was accused by the government of being an infiltrated activist<sup>22</sup>.

### Surviving in the camps

On 8 December 1941 the Japanese invaded the country. Because the order to evacuate was issued, apparently on 12 February 1942<sup>23</sup>, Annemarie boarded the SS

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid., certificates of Rodolfo Benelli, chief physician at the Camerata Hospital (Fiesole), Florence, 9 February 1939, and, with revenue stamp, of the director of the psychiatric hospital of Florence, 13 February 1939.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., «Application for permit to enter Australia», Florence, 15 February 1939.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., letter from Erich Goldberg to the Secretary of Department of the Interior, Government of the Australian Commonwealth, Singapore, 23 October 1941, and AOMFi, MCC, FP, f. n. 769, «A.E. Curth Murray-Aynsley», letter from A.E. Murray-Aynsley to the National Welfare and Assistance Office for Physicians (ENPAM) and to the Medical Board of the province of Florence, 18 March 1963.

<sup>22</sup> On his vicissitudes, see here Patrizia Guarnieri, *Erich Goldberg* (2020).

<sup>23</sup> NAA, A434, 1948/3/11818, *Commonwealth of Australia, Department of Immigration*, «Goldberg-Curth Admission», «Curriculum vitae», 12 September 1946.

Vyner Brooke without Erich. The ship transported only women and children; it was a steamship that had been requisitioned and armed by the Royal Navy along with two other armed ships, the SS *Giang Bee* and the *Mata Hari*, to evacuate the foreign civilians from Singapore. On 14 February 1942, the SS *Vyner Brooke* (named after the Rajah of Sarawak) was bombed and sank; the shipwreck survivors were either taken prisoner or killed by the Japanese military. After a few weeks in the prison in Muntok, Annemarie managed to get recruited as a physician in the Japanese prisoner camps in Sumatra: in April of 1942, in Palembang in the Catholic Charitas Hospital with other doctors, nurses and approximately 40 nuns, and in September of 1943, in the Irene Laan area with the other women and children prisoners<sup>24</sup>. After the unconditional surrender of the Japanese in August of 1945, on 21 September she was brought to Singapore along with other detainees on a Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) plane.

There was no news about her husband. After various searches he was declared missing. Annemarie's father had already died in 1940; her mother had died on 30 October 1942 at 58 years old in Theresienstadt, a concentration camp where her aunt, Frieda Friedmann (1885-1943) was also deported to and died on 15 February 1943<sup>25</sup>. We do not know when Annemarie learned about them and her other relatives who did not survive extermination, like her uncle and her cousin Klaus Fröhlich (1918-1945). Her brother Ernst instead managed to flee to France, and then emigrated to the United States where he remained permanently<sup>26</sup>.

### **Towards Australia and the hope of naturalization**

She remained in Singapore for just over a month. Through the Colonial Office

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<sup>24</sup> The Muntok Peace Museum in Muntok, Banka Island, Indonesia, *A List of all the Internees, Annemaria Eleanor Goldberg* <<http://muntokpeacemuseum.org>> (accessed 3 January 2021).

<sup>25</sup> See Gertrud Curth née Brodnitz (1881-1942) and Frieda Friedmann née Brodnitz (1885-1943), in *Jewish Holocaust Memorials and Jewish Residents of Germany 1939-1945*, available online, *ad nomen*, at <<https://www.myheritage.it>> (accessed upon registration 4 November 2020). On the Theresienstadt ghetto and concentration camp see <<https://www.yadvashem.org>> (accessed 10 October 2020).

<sup>26</sup> See Ellis Island Foundation, *Passenger Search, ad nomen* <<https://www.libertyellisfoundation.org>> (accessed upon registration 4 November 2020); on his trip in 1948 he provided an address in New York City, 136 Liberty Street.

Representative, she requested to go to Australia for health reasons and to retrieve her medical tools and personal belongings that she had shipped to Fremantle before the war<sup>27</sup>. With a 12-month visa approved in October of 1945<sup>28</sup>, she flew out on a RAAF plane in mid-November<sup>29</sup>. She settled in Perth, hosted by Eva Gunsberg and her husband who lived on Koorda Street. With a permit issued by the police and valid from 25 January to 20 March 1946 for the Eastern states of the island, she was able to attend «refresher courses» at the University of Melbourne and then at the University of Sydney<sup>30</sup>, where she moved at the end of February 1946 to the address of K.A. Freeman, Flat 9, Beverley Flats, 43 Newcastle Street, Rose Bay<sup>31</sup>. On 28 March 1946 she applied for a permanent permit to remain on the island and indicated Ilse Simon, one of her cousins who lived in Sydney, as a reference<sup>32</sup>.

For the subsequent naturalization, the Department of Immigration specified that at least one year of residence in the country was required, and thus, she would be able to submit her application starting 13 November 1946<sup>33</sup>. Meanwhile, she requested to be registered in the Medical Board of Western Australia; the first time her application was rejected, because she was «a German and an evacuee only». She resubmitted it on 20 May 1946, when she also exhibited the permanent permit n. 46/3/3770 that she had obtained<sup>34</sup>. Evidently, she wanted to remain and live

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<sup>27</sup> NAA, A434, *Commonwealth of Australia, Department of Immigration*, f. 1948/3/11818, «Goldberg-Curth Admission», «Mrs A.M. Goldberg» from F.R. Sinclair, Secretary of Department of the Army, Melbourne, to the Secretary of Department of Immigration, Canberra, October 1945.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, Department of Immigration, «Memorandum No. 46/3/3770: Dr. A.E. Goldberg-Curth. Permanent admission to the Commonwealth», 18 July 1946.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, «Dr. Anna Maria Goldberg-Curth» from D.A. Alexander, Deputy Director, to the Director of Commonwealth Investigation Service, Canberra, 22 January 1948. This source includes the date of arrival on 13 November 1945 and the arrival at Point Cook, Victoria, Melbourne. However, in *ibid.*, «Memorandum» by J. Adams, Deputy Director of Investigation Branch, Perth, to the Director General of Patents Office, Canberra, 1 May 1946, the listed date of arrival is 14 November 1945, at Brisbane's Archerfield Airport. In *ibid.*, in the «Application for classification as "refugee alien"», Perth, 2 July 1946, the doctor declared as the date of arrival 15 November 1945 in Brisbane.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, «Memorandum» from J. Adams, Deputy Director of Investigation Branch, Perth, to the Director General of Patents Office, Canberra, 1 May 1946.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, «Memorandum» from F.J.R. Penhalluriack, Migration Officer, Melbourne, to the Secretary of Department of Immigration, Canberra, 15 May 1946.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, «Application for permit to enter Australia», 28 March 1946. In other documents, the surname of her friends in Perth appears written as «Gunzberg».

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, letter from A.E. Peters, Acting Secretary of Department of Immigration, Canberra, to A.E. Goldberg, 2 May 1946.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, letter from Neilson Hancock, Registrar of Medical Board of Western Australia, Perth, to the

there, and to return to her profession.

### «Obstacles» to staying in Australia

The Medical Board, however, was holding off its decision. Why? «Adverse reports» were circulating on Dr. Goldberg. The Investigation Branch of Western Australia had been investigating; the director in Perth reported that, between March and April of 1946, they had collected the testimonies of some former women prisoners of the Army Medical Service in Sumatra, who had worked there with her<sup>35</sup>. These testimonies had been given by five Australian nurses: Ellen Mavis Hannah; Jessie Elizabeth Simons; Iole Harper; Wilma Oram; Vivian Bullwinkel, who accused her, first of all, of collaborationism. Her first words to the Japanese had been: «I am a German, I am a German, I am your friend"», reported Wilma Oram<sup>36</sup>. According to her, Goldberg had concealed her Jewish origins and had avoided being interned, while receiving permission to wander freely around the island. Only later on she would be locked up in the camp, but she would still have, in any case, a privileged treatment: she had extra rations of food for the sick, but instead of giving them to the ill she used them at her own discretion; for example, she passed them to a certain Mrs. Holderness, who took care of Goldberg's personal needs and did nothing else<sup>37</sup>. The nurses also accused the physician of discriminating against patients: in exchange for jewelry, she would keep them hospitalized for longer than necessary, while she would not take care of others and refuse night calls. They also suspected her to be a delator since she was very friendly with the Japanese; some of her information would have even contributed to the murder of a colleague, a certain Dr. Ziesel, and to the imprisonment of others, including Dr. Peter Tekelenburg, who was sentenced to death as a result<sup>38</sup>. Goldberg would have

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Secretary of Department of the Interior, Canberra, 28 June 1946.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., «Memorandum» from J. Adams, Deputy Director of Investigation Branch, Perth, to the Director General of Patents Office, Canberra, 1 May 1946.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., copy of declaration of Wilma Oram, 15 April 1946.

<sup>37</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>38</sup> The surname of Dr. Ziesel appears transcribed also as «Siesel» o «Xiesel». The surname of Dr. Tekelenburg also appears transcribed as «Tehlenburg» or «Tekelemburg».

mistreated and slapped Sr. Raymont just before she passed away. As for Sr. Dora Shirley Gardam – nurse Simons testified – Dr. Goldberg «refused to admit her to the Hospital, but she subsequently admitted her to the hospital a few days before she died on the 4th of April, 1945. At the time accommodation could have been made available for her but she, like many other Australians, who had no money were not as a rule admitted to the hospital»<sup>39</sup>.

A witness appeared particularly reliable, «a very gallant Australian lady, any statement by whom merits complete respect. Sister [Vivian] Bullwinkel has given evidence before the War Crimes Tribunal in Tokyo and was regarded as a witness of great clarity, stability, sincerity and truth»<sup>40</sup>. She released a long and detailed testimony about Dr. Goldberg<sup>41</sup>, and declared to the International Military Tribunal for the Far East that she «seemed to do anything that would bring her anything from the Japs»<sup>42</sup>.

### **The role of the Medical Board of Western Australia**

On 28 June 1946 Neilson Hancock, chancellor of the Medical Board of Western Australia, wrote to the secretary of the Department of the Interior in Canberra: «my Board would be glad to know at your earliest convenience, if, in view of these statements, it is proposed to cancel the permit No. 46/3/3770»<sup>43</sup>.

More than a month passed. In the meantime, Dr. Goldberg was asked to be considered a «refugee alien»<sup>44</sup>. In August, Tasman Heyes, the new Secretary of the Department of Immigration responded that «he preferred British and Northern European immigrants, and people of "Aryan" stock; and he defended the White

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<sup>39</sup> Ibid., copy of the declaration of J.E. Simons, 23 March 1946.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., «Memorandum» from the Director of Commonwealth Investigation Service, Canberra, to the Secretary of Department of Immigration, Canberra, 21 January 1948.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., copy of the declaration of Vivian Bullwinkel, 15 April 1946.

<sup>42</sup> Declaration of Vivian Bullwinkel to the War Crimes Tribunal on the massacre of Banka Island and on her imprisonment in Muntok, Palembang and Balalau, The Muntok Peace Museum in Muntok, Banka Island, Indonesia <<http://muntokpeacemuseum.org>> pp. 10-11 (accessed 20 December 2020).

<sup>43</sup> NAA, A434, *Commonwealth of Australia, Department of Immigration*, f. 1948/3/11818, «Goldberg-Curth Admission», letter from Neilson Hancock, Registrar of Medical Board Western Australia, to the Secretary of Department of the Interior, Perth, 28 June 1946.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., «Application for classification as "refugee alien"», Perth, 2 July 1946.



Australia policy»<sup>45</sup>. Heyes wrote two letters: the first one communicated to Dr. Goldberg that the permanent permit was annulled and informed her that she had «to leave the Commonwealth by the first available vessel, failing which steps will be taken for your deportation»<sup>46</sup>. The second letter was addressed to the chancellor, Neilson Hancock, to inform him of the decision taken and signed by the minister, Arthur August Calwell<sup>47</sup>.

### The physician's version

Annemarie Curth Goldberg wrote immediately to Secretary T.H.E. Heyes:

I have no knowledge of any act of mine which would make me an undesirable resident. As you already know I am a refugee, and for the greater part of the war was either working in Malaya as a medical practitioner, or acting as Camp doctor for internees after my capture by the Japanese. I have reason to believe that my services on behalf of the internees have been very well spoken of. I can assure you that at no time during the war have I had or shown any sympathy for the enemies of this country, or done anything against the interests of this country<sup>48</sup>.

To defend herself, the physician contacted who she knew would be of help. Seven years prior, in 1939, to obtain a visa, she and her husband Erich were recommended to John Curtin by the secretary of the Church of England Immigration Committee of Perth<sup>49</sup>. The secretary was by now R.B. Peagam, and Curtin's successor in the Labour Party of Freemantle was Kim Edward Beazley<sup>50</sup>. The latter showed himself to be immediately available: with a telegram to Immigration Minister Calwell, he

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<sup>45</sup> Cited in Markus Andrew, *Heyes, Sir Tasman Hudson Eastwood (1896-1980)*, in *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, vol. 14, Melbourne, Melbourne University Press, 1996, *ad nomen*, then the National Centre of Biography, Australian National University <<http://adb.anu.edu.au>> (accessed 20 November 2020).

<sup>46</sup> NAA, A434, *Commonwealth of Australia, Department of Immigration*, f. 1948/3/11818, «Goldberg-Curth Admission», letter from T.H.E. Heyes, Secretary of Department of Immigration, to A.E. Goldberg, 5 August 1946.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, letter from T.H.E. Heyes, Secretary of Department of Immigration, to Neilson Hancock, Registrar of Medical Board Western Australia, 6 August 1946.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, letter from A.E. Goldberg to the Secretary of Department of Immigration, Perth, 14 August 1946.

<sup>49</sup> See here Patrizia Guarnieri, *Erich Goldberg* (2020).

<sup>50</sup> See John Curtin Prime Ministerial Library, Curtin University, Perth, *Kim Edward Beazley, Member for Fremantle 1945-1977* <<http://john.curtin.edu.au>> (accessed 20 December 2020).

asked to delay the expulsion order against Goldberg<sup>51</sup>.

The following day, in a long letter to the Minister, Beazley retraced, in detail, her troubled story: her emigration caused by racial persecution from Germany to Italy which had forced her to flee to Singapore, then the war, the separation from her husband Erich, the sinking of the ship that should have brought her to safety, and then the Japanese captivity, the liberation and the arrival in Australia. On Australian soil, she had been granted a permanent permit in May that had then been annulled in August; she was told to leave the country, without even being provided with a reason. Dr. Goldberg «believe[d] that this action [was] a result of her application to the Medical Board», which did not grant her permission to practice her profession on Australian soil, even though it was her right, a «right [...] established by the General Medical Council of Britain's registration certificate», which attested that she was formally registered with the Council. In an added note, upon specifying that the case dated to the time of his predecessor John Curtin, Beazley asked the Minister to personally read the letter: «it seems to me that a serious injustice is being done»<sup>52</sup>.

Calwell telegraphed Beazley on 20 August from Canberra: he was willing to discuss the case with him and to postpone the deportation of Dr. Goldberg<sup>53</sup>. He also agreed to receive her when Bailey suggested it<sup>54</sup>. But the meeting never took place. Calwell in fact had gathered information in the meantime, also about the statements of the five nurses: «It appears to me that the prima facie evidence against her is so strong that no reasonable action other than deportation could be carried out»<sup>55</sup>.

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<sup>51</sup> NAA, A434, *Commonwealth of Australia, Department of Immigration*, f. 1948/3/11818, «Goldberg-Curth Admission», original telegram from K.E. Beazley to A.A. Calwell, 15 August 1946. On the minister, see Freudenberg Graham, *Calwell, Arthur Augustus (1896-1973)*, in *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, vol. 13, Melbourne, Melbourne University Press, 1993, *ad nomen*, then the National Center of Biography, Australian National University, <<http://adb.anu.edu.au>> (accessed 2 December 2020).

<sup>52</sup> NAA, A434, *Commonwealth of Australia, Department of Immigration*, f. 1948/3/11818, «Goldberg-Curth Admission», letter from K.E. Beazley to A.A. Calwell, with attached note, 16 August 1946.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, copy of the telegram sent from A.A. Calwell to K.E. Beazley, 20 August 1946.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, response of K.E. Beazley to the telegram of A.A. Calwell, 26 August 1946, and from A.A. Calwell to K.E. Beazley, 28 August 1946.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, letter from K.E. Beazley to A.A. Calwell, 10 September 1946.

She could still appeal. Beazley suggested that she write directly to the Minister. And so she did: a seven-page letter in which she restated her requests and, at the same time, defended herself. First and foremost, she asked that her permit be renewed for three months, that is, for the time necessary to collect the testimony of other survivors abroad, in addition to those already enclosed. She also asked that a statement be released that would exonerate her from the accusations; and that her move be facilitated to another country. She then defended herself point by point. With regard to her declaration to be a German, she claimed that for «not being dishonest of course I admitted my country of origin»<sup>56</sup>. As for the «preferential treatment», she reminded her addressee of her role: «I was chief medical officer in the camp, with an enormous responsibility, and worked day and night without even one day off for 3 1/2 years except for one week's collapse through exhaustion and sickness». Moreover, according to her, each of the four doctors of the camp received extra rations, «because of our responsibility and our arduous work». She had not had «a personal "servant"»: Hilda Holderness had helped her «for friendship and gratitude for the medical care to her, and in appreciation of other help I had been able to give her and her husband before his death».

Additionally, «each group of nursing sisters connected with the hospital (Australian, British and Dutch Nursing Sisters) had one or two individual helpers – called "home sisters" – to look after them»<sup>57</sup>.

She, like many internees in the camps, had also gotten infected with malaria and beriberi. She had also suffered from deprivation, and this was «to be seen by my physical condition upon my arrival in Australia»<sup>58</sup>, as her friends in Perth, the Gunzbergs (or Gunsbergs), who hosted her for nine weeks after her arrival, could testify.

As regards accusations of having demanded money, she explained that the wealthiest people interned in the camp had managed to create a fund that Mrs.

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<sup>56</sup> Ibid., letter from A.E. Goldberg to A.A. Calwell, Perth, 4 September 1946, p. 2.

<sup>57</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid., p. 3.

Millicent Daisy, known as Mollie, administered for a few years. When Mollie got sick,

Elsa Cross [...] took charge as ration officer; distributions were only done after consultation with the camp-commandants and the doctors. I can only swear by God the Almighty that I never used a penny of that fund for myself, nor accepted any money from any patient or camp-inmate for myself<sup>59</sup>.

It was true that

[...] I had money in the camp, but by referring to the Swiss Consul in Singapore (Mr. Wild), you can verify that upon several occasions he sent me, officially and with the permission of the Japanese, money from my personal property which had been deposited with him before I left Singapore; the money received from that source was shared freely with my fellow prisoners<sup>60</sup>.

She denied any mistreatment but admitted to having slapped Sr. Raymont because «she was terribly noisy and restless; morphine had been of no effect and I had nothing else with which to quieten her, but quieten her I had to in the interest of the many other very sick patients in the ward»<sup>61</sup>. If she had denied hospitalization to some sick people, she had done so to limit the spread of infection, and she had other justifications for the management and the administration of medicines. Regarding the affairs of her colleagues Ziesel and Tekelenburg, she stated that she had been interrogated by the Japanese; in essence, she had nothing to do with them and she referenced M.M. Alacoque's declaration<sup>62</sup>.

### **The testimonies in her favor**

Mother superior M.M. Alacoque, of the Charitas, was the key witness. And she exonerated her:

Dr. Goldberg Curth has, as far as I know, no guilt on account of the death

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<sup>59</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>60</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid., p. 4.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid., pp. 5-7.

of Dr. Siesel and imprisonment Dr. Tehlenburg [sic] and myself. [...] We were accused of taking part in a complot against the Japanese [...], organised by the Ambonese living on Sumatra<sup>63</sup>.

According to the nun, Dr. Ziesel was sentenced to death for what he had confessed under torture; and it was because of his statements that she and Dr. Tekelenburg got also in trouble. «The Japanese have never mentioned Dr. Goldberg [sic] Curth at the several trials, which is to me a certain fact that she had no hand in this affair»<sup>64</sup>. Another nun from the Charitas, who signed as «Zr. Ma. Rhynilda (M.M. Pwelandt) Matron nurse during internment», stated in favor of the physician, who had contacted her:

As far as I know Dr. Goldberg Curth has never done or said anything which could be a reason of trouble with the enemy (Japanese) for any prisoner of war or internee. On the contrary, when the Japs offered her freedom and work outside, she refused, preferring [sic] to stay with us and keeping on working as doktor [sic] on behalf of the interneees<sup>65</sup>.

Elsa Cross had been interned with her and charged with the management of the rations in the camp. When Goldberg contacted her, she was in Scotland, and responded: «You are in a very unpleasant position at present, but I have no doubt, that everything will turn out all right. After all, your conscience is clear». But she did not feel like sending her a certified statement:

The Government strongly disapprove [sic] of Government Servants (or their families) giving statements of such a nature, and I could do so only if so requested by [the] Government – in this case the Australian Government. If they approach me officially, letting me know on what points they want information, I'll be very glad to give them the necessary information but otherwise I can do nothing<sup>66</sup>.

Instead, the secretary of the Assembly's Foreign Missions Committee and Women's

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<sup>63</sup> Ibid., copy of the declaration of M.M. Alacoque, Palembang, 20 September 1946.

<sup>64</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid., copy of the letter from Sr. Rhynilda to A.E. Goldberg, Palembang, 20 September 1946, and copy of the declaration of Sr. Rhynilda, Palembang, 20 September 1946.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., copy of the letter from Elsa Cross to A.E. Goldberg, The Manse, Muthill, Scotland, 26 September 1946.

Missionary Association of the Presbyterian Church of England sent her a precise testimony from London:

She [Dr. Goldberg] attended [to] four Missionaries of this Church, giving much care and thought throughout their illnesses, and was instrumental in saving the life of one of them, Miss S.G. Cullen, who had a long and serious attack of typhoid fever and who testifies to the effective and kindly service of Dr. Goldberg. With very limited supplies and under very restricted circumstances Dr. Goldberg worked hard to relieve distress and suffering in the hospital. Dr. Goldberg is now desirous of naturalization under British Rule and Miss Cullen assures us that we can have every confidence in recommending her as a desirable person to enter Australia or to apply for British Naturalization papers<sup>67</sup>.

Among the enclosed testimonies was also a letter addressed to her from another internee, Georgette Gabriel Gilmour, a French woman married to an Australian:

Speaking from personal experience you were both attentive and kind to me on the three occasions I was a patient in hospital, and I am not only extremely grateful for that; but also for the care given [to] my two friends before they died. I think you, among other camp workers, did all that was possible under the existing conditions. I hope you are feeling better after your recent attack of malaria<sup>68</sup>.

Mary Glasgow also responded to the physician: every time that she was hospitalized, she «received every attention and consideration possible, free of any charge whatsoever». Furthermore, she added that:

From my personal observation I can say that Dr. Goldberg worked hard under very trying and difficult circumstances. She put up a hard fight to get medical supplies from the Japanese and in spite of rebuffs and refusals she kept on fearlessly demanding [the] same and was often successful in the end when every others [sic] means seemed to fail. I have known Dr. Goldberg to use her own money liberally to buy "extras" for people who had no means. I never heard of her misappropriating funds, or refusing to see patients without pay, or asking for gifts from patients or ill treating

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<sup>67</sup> Ibid., copy of the declaration of J.W. Galt, from the London office of the association, Church House I 34, George Street, Edgware Road, with typescript «dated about April 1946». Sarah Gladys Cullen, therein mentioned, had been interned in the female camp of Palembang and was head cook; see The Muntok Peace Museum in Muntok, Banka Island, Indonesia, *List of all Internees, ad nomen*, <<http://muntokpeacemuseum.org>> (accessed 14 December 2020).

<sup>68</sup> NAA, A434, *Commonwealth of Australia, Department of Immigration*, f. 1948/3/11818, letter from Georgette Gilmour to A.E. Goldberg, Perth, 12 September 1946.

prisoners of war<sup>69</sup>.

Someone personally wrote to Minister Calwell. Mr. Watts-Carter felt a duty to intervene; his wife, Millicent Daisy (Mollie) Watts-Carter, an Australian nurse of British Queen Alexandra's Nursing Service, died in a Japanese prisoner camp in Indonesia in August of 1945. The widow was in possession of the diary his wife had kept during her years of internment:

In this diary my wife mentions a number of times the very excellent work done by Dr Goldberg as Camp Medical Officer for the British, Australian and Dutch women interned. Regarding her own treatment, she cannot speak highly enough of [Dr. Goldberg], and in a part of her diary, she makes a definite [*sic*] request that some thing [*sic*] be done on liberation to express her deep gratitude to the Doctor.

When he went to look for his wife in Sumatra, arriving too late – 14 days after her death – he had the opportunity to talk with many people. He writes in his letter:

[I] can assure you honestly and most sincerely [that] I have never heard one word spoken against Dr Goldberg [...]. I can give names and addresses of many women ex-internees who would, I feel sure, would [*sic*] be pleased to express their appreciation of Dr Goldbergs [*sic*] services to the Camp for her difficult and splendid job during these trying years of internment. I, for one, will always be grateful of [*sic*] all she did for my wife. In conclusion, Sir, I ask that Dr Goldberg, who is a war-widow, be given a permit to remain in this fine country of ours<sup>70</sup>.

For her part, she underlined another aspect. There was a crucial difference among the witnesses: she had always worked with nuns of the Charitas since April 1942, whereas the Australian nurses had joined her at the end of October 1944, and it may have been for this reason that they misunderstood some circumstances, such as, for example, the possession of jewelry:

In a number of cases very sick patients or if they were unconscious the Matron, Sister Rhynilda, asked me to take their jewels or money into safe custody. These objects were, of course, always checked either together with the Matron or one of the other doctors. If the patient did not recover,

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<sup>69</sup> Ibid., copy of the declaration of M. Glasgow, Kuala Lumpur, 25 September 1946.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid., original of the letter from J.W. Watts-Carter to A.A. Calwell, Melbourne, 27 September 1946.

these objects were, according to nationality, immediately after her death handed over either to the British or to the Dutch camp-commander who was to send them after the war to their next-of-kin. If the patient recovered the objects were, of course, given back. The nurses may have seen these things being handed over to me and made their usual unwarranted conclusions<sup>71</sup>.

Either directly or through Beazley, all of the papers concerning her defense were delivered to Minister Calwell and to the Australian intelligence service; both the minister and the agency examined them.

### **The Minister's decision**

«I enclose a curriculum vitae. I am stateless and as I have to leave Australia now, I don't know where to go»<sup>72</sup>. Since she no longer had a residence permit for Australia, she looked for a place, «anywhere in Java or Sumatra»<sup>73</sup>. She tried a contact in the Dutch East Indies including a signed letter from a dozen Dutch ex-internees, who thanked her for her «great assistance» and said that she had been a blessing for them during their imprisonment<sup>74</sup>.

At the same time, she also wrote to Italy. On her request, the restored Medical Board of Florence sent her a certificate attesting that she had been regularly registered since 25 September 1944. All those who, like her, had been disbarred for racial reasons in 1939 and were re-registered ex-officio at the end of the war, received similar certificates<sup>75</sup>. Regardless, it was fundamental for her to hear from the Australian Department of Immigration about the outcome of her defense.

In the beginning of October Beazley pressured Minister Calwell, who, in the

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<sup>71</sup> Ibid., letter from A.E. Goldberg to K.E. Beazley, 7 October 1946.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid., copy of the letter from A.E. Goldberg to Dr. Van Tricht, Perth, 12 September 1946; written from the George Hotel, Murrat Street, Perth, where she was staying.

<sup>73</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid., copy of the letter sent to Dr. A.E. Goldberg and signed «by about 12 people», aboard the SS Klipfontein, 7 April 1946. An annotation in the footer reads: «This translation was made from a copy, it cannot be guaranteed that the original was an authentic document, or that the Dutch evacuees ever wrote the letter here translated».

<sup>75</sup> AOMFi, MCC, FP, f. n. 769, «A.E. Curth Murray-Aynsley», «Certificato d'iscrizione all'albo», Florence, 24 September 1946.



meantime, had extended her residence permit for three months<sup>76</sup>. The crux of the question was that only former prisoners could testify on facts that had happened in Japanese camps; and in this instance, the testimonies were contradictory. Minister Calwell admitted it:

This case is the most difficult I have yet had to deal with. Quite frankly, I am perplexed at the contradictory nature of much of the evidence, but you may rest assured that I will do my utmost to see that justice is done, even though it may take some time to complete all our enquiries<sup>77</sup>.

In the meantime, in the beginning of November the Acting Diocesan Secretary of The Cathedral Office in Perth informed Beazley that «the High court of Malaya has admitted evidence of the presumed death of Dr. Goldberg-Curth's husband, and has granted her the administration of his not-inconsiderable estate»<sup>78</sup>. 14 November marked a year since the beginning of her stay in Australia; one week later, Calwell wrote again to Beazley, this time with a response:

I have carefully considered the evidence submitted by both sides. On the one hand, there is evidence that generally Dr. Goldberg-Curth was considerate and attentive in the treatment of her patients and it would seem that the Australian nurses may have been, and probably were, mistaken in their views as to many of the doctor's actions and motives. On the other hand the nurses have cited specific instances of treatment which, prima facie, would appear to have been unduly severe. There is no reason to believe that these nurses have conspired to manufacture evidence for which there is no foundation in fact. A feature which, I think, has an important bearing on the case is that both sides were at the time suffering a severe mental and physical strain, having been bombed and shipwrecked, and were not living normal lives. This, combined with differences in nationality and temperaments may have led to undue suspicion and resentment of some of Dr. Goldberg-Curth's actions. In view of the length of time that has elapsed since the alleged incidents occurred and as the circumstances connected with the case are so unusual and so difficult I feel that I could not, with justice, pass judgment on it. I also feel that in the circumstances I would not be justified in insisting that Dr. Goldberg-Curth shall leave Australia and I therefore propose to take no

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<sup>76</sup> NAA, A434, *Commonwealth of Australia, Department of Immigration*, f. 1948/3/11818, «Goldberg-Curth Admission», telegram from K.E. Beazley to A.A. Calwell, October 1946, and copy of the response telegram from A.A. Calwell to K.E. Beazley, 8 October 1946.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, letter from A.A. Calwell to K.E. Beazley, 15 October 1946.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, letter from the Acting Diocesan Secretary R.B. Peagam to K.E. Beazley, 7 November 1946.

further action in that regard<sup>79</sup>.

If everything was to remain the same, the residence permit would have expired in three months. The minister wanted her to go and made his intent clear: his department would facilitate the physician's transfer, as she had requested, to the country that she preferred; she had to let them know which one. «In the event of Dr. Goldberg-Curth securing permission to enter any particular country she will be granted the necessary passport facilities to enable her to proceed there»<sup>80</sup>. She continued to ask to be rehabilitated. She was in Melbourne, but about to go to Java, where «I have been offered a job in the service of the Dutch E. I. Government». And she was already thinking about the next step, «to come back to this country after having done a good job for the Dutch Government. I know how much a decent children's specialist is needed in Perth and how many people would be very pleased if I could settle down there after all this struggle»<sup>81</sup>.

On 11 December 1946, the Investigation Branch alerted the Department of Immigration that they had intercepted a message: Dr. Goldberg's assignment in the Netherlands East Indies (NEI) Government Service had been cancelled at the last moment, after unspecified information about her had reached the Dutch authorities in Melbourne from Sumatra, confirming suspicions of collaboration with the Japanese while she was in Palembang. The Department of the Army also intended to investigate her presumed misappropriation of jewelry and «her possible commission of war crimes». The agent who signed the report recommended that she leave the country; he did so while expressing his personal negative impression of the physician who was looking for «employment overseas with the Dutch»<sup>82</sup>. Giving full credit to outside testimony, he suggested that an

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<sup>79</sup> Ibid., letter from A.A. Calwell to K.E. Beazley, 21 November 1946; Calwell's response is very similar to the form and content of the «Memorandum No. 46/3/3770» drawn up by the Investigation Branch, 19 November 1946.

<sup>80</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid., letter from A.E. Goldberg to K.E. Beazley, Melbourne, 28 November 1946.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid., «Alleged Japanese Collaborator: Dr. Anna Maria Eleanor Goldberg-Curth» from Agent R.S. Browne, Commonwealth Investigation Branch, to the Secretary of Department of Immigration, 11 December 1946.

«examination of the contents of the crates may confirm the allegation of ex P.O.W. Sister James that they contain the property of Dutch and British women, or that they be subject to the payment of duty»<sup>83</sup>. He did not take into account the fact that in reality, those crates had been shipped by the Goldbergs to Australia before the war, when her husband was still alive<sup>84</sup>.

The Australian Department of Immigration found it necessary to verify the information «given to the Dutch authorities in Australia by the authorities in Sumatra»<sup>85</sup>. Could this further investigation lead to reopen the case?

In the meantime, Beazley updated the minister on what Dr. Goldberg had written to him: that she asked for assistance with Dutch authorities<sup>86</sup>. Officially they had cancelled her assignment by claiming that she did not have the «Dutch medical qualification»<sup>87</sup> that was required in order to practice medicine in their territory.

On 4 December 1947 the Australian Commissioner in Singapore informed the Department of External Affairs that he had approved of Goldberg's entrance visa as «stateless of German origin (Jewish)»<sup>88</sup>. Apparently, she had decided to return to Singapore and was thus looking to obtain an identification card<sup>89</sup>.

### **As long as she leaves**

In fact, the situation had reached a stalemate: Australian intelligence wanted further

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<sup>83</sup> Ibidem; in The Muntok Peace Museum in Muntok, Banka Island, Indonesia, *List of all Internees, ad nomen* <<http://muntokpeacemuseum.org>> (accessed 14 December 2020), a certain Nesta Gwyneth James, of Britain, is found. In particular, in another file in NAA, MP729/8, 29/431/15, «Alleged Japanese collaborationist – Dr Anna Maria Goldberg ex Singapore and Sumatra» a report is found on the version given by Sr. James, which ends, however, as follows: «[The report] contains no evidence that Dr. Goldberg was a political or military collaborator, so action against her for that reason must be excluded». The file is available online at <<https://recordsearch.naa.gov.au>> (accessed 11 January 2021).

<sup>84</sup> Ibid., «Mrs A. M. Goldberg», from F.R. Sinclair, Secretary of Department of the Army, Melbourne, to the Secretary of Department of Immigration, Canberra, October 1945.

<sup>85</sup> NAA, A434, *Commonwealth of Australia, Department of Immigration*, f. 1948/3/11818, «Goldberg-Curth Admission», letter from T.H.E. Heyes to the Investigation Branch, Canberra, 14 January 1947.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid., letter from K.E. Beazley to A.A. Calwell, 17 December 1946.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid., letter from Roland S. Browne, Acting Director of Commonwealth Investigation Branch, to the Secretary of Department of Immigration, 5 February 1947.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid., «Memorandum», from the Australian Commissioner in Singapore to the Secretary of Department of External Affairs, 4 December 1947.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid., «Dr. Anna Maria Goldberg-Curth», application for an identification card to the Director of Investigation Service, Canberra, 14 January 1948.

investigation but left it to Dutch authorities, without even informing the Australian consul in the NEI<sup>90</sup>. In January 1948 the expected Dutch information finally arrived. Australian intelligence reported that government policies in the Netherlands East Indies required that in general, Germans be denied residence<sup>91</sup>. «Dr. Goldberg [...] has neither family ties nor long residence in that area nor any personal interests in the country»<sup>92</sup>; and above all, she was stateless:

This would mean that if Dr. Goldberg were admitted to the N.E.I., she would never be able to be deported from the islands, as no country in the world, according to International Law, can be forced to admit persons to whom it can not be established by means of official documents issued by that country, that the person concerned is indeed a subject of such country<sup>93</sup>.

International law was thus invoked. The outcome of the Dutch investigations on Dr. Goldberg's presumed crimes took second place: «There are no facts known to her detriment in the Indies, whilst the assertions, made by Sister James, which have been fully investigated, have proved to be entirely without foundation. This would have inevitably led to the complete rehabilitation of Dr. Goldberg»<sup>94</sup>. The Australian Investigation Branch, whose accusing attitude was refuted, objected that «Sister James appears to be strongly supported by several members of the Australian Army Nursing Service and the N.E.I. report does not indicate how their officials arrived at such a definite conclusion to the contrary and by what manner of witnesses»<sup>95</sup>.

However, they did not see – nor did they want to see – obstacles in Dr. Goldberg's transfer to Singapore. To Colonel Flanningan of the Department of the Army, who

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<sup>90</sup> Ibid., letter from T.H.E. Heyes to the Investigation Branch, 21 July 1947; *ibid.*, from the Director of Commonwealth Investigation Service to the Secretary of Department of Immigration, 5 August 1947; *ibid.*, «Memorandum», from the Director of Commonwealth Investigation Service to the Secretary of Department of Immigration, 21 January 1948.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid., «Document V/39649», from D.A. Alexander, Deputy Director, to the Director of Commonwealth Investigation Service, 22 January 1948.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>93</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>94</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>95</sup> Ibid., «Dr. Anna Maria Goldberg-Curth», from the Commonwealth Investigation Service to the Secretary of the Department of Immigration, 5 February 1948.

enjoined them to warn the authorities of «her story», the Department of Immigration responded that they «did not intend to take any such action». He himself would have to do it, if he deemed it necessary, through military channels. Instead, they issued her the identity card n. 1535, dated 10 February 1948<sup>96</sup>. On 23 February 1948, Annemarie Goldberg boarded the *Gordon* from Geraldton<sup>97</sup>.

### **In Singapore, again**

Little is known about her second stay in Singapore.

She did not mention any difficulties years later, in Italy, when she would declare that:

as the only European physician in private practice, I managed again to make myself a vast and affectionate clientele among all races and nationalities of Malaysia [and as] the honorary medical colonel of the St. John Nursing Brigade, teaching accident and emergency medicine [and] hygienics to women and young girls of all nations and races<sup>98</sup>.

Yet, difficulty and bitterness were certainly not missing. Having always been registered in the GMC she was able to practice her profession, but she was always distressed. In February of 1949, Mrs. Margaret Holmes, Secretary of the Australian Student Christian Movement SS Mooltan, Adelaide, wrote to T.H.E. Heyes, Secretary of the Department of Immigration, to examine the situation:

Dr. Goldberg-Curth is still painfully aware that she left Australia without having been able to clear her reputation from the charges that had been made against her by some of her fellow-internees; and she is still beset by the thought that rumours of her experiences in Australia may follow her to Malaya or elsewhere, to the detriment of her personal and professional reputation<sup>99</sup>.

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<sup>96</sup> Ibid., «Memorandum», from the Department of Immigration of Melbourne to the Secretary of Department of Immigration, Canberra, 17 February 1948.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid., «Memorandum», from R.W. Gratwick, Commonwealth Immigration Officer for W.A., Perth to the Secretary of Department of Immigration, 4 August 1948.

<sup>98</sup> AOMFI, MCC, FP, f. n. 769, «A.E. Curth Murray-Aynsley», letter from A.E. Murray-Aynsley to ENPAM and to the Medical Board of Florence, 18 March 1963.

<sup>99</sup> NAA, A434, *Commonwealth of Australia, Department of Immigration*, f. 1948/3/11818, «Goldberg-Curth Admission», letter from M. Holmes to T.H.E. Heyes, Secretary of the Department of Immigration, 21 February 1949.

Holmes wished that the Department of Immigration would allow her to return to Australia and to obtain naturalization: «If something of this kind were to be practicable, it would not only relieve her of the anxiety and sense of humiliation that oppress her, but would also be a great satisfaction to her Australian friends in both Perth and Melbourne»<sup>100</sup>.

The response of the Secretary was blunt: «As [...] the question of her re-admission has not been raised, it does not fall within the scope of this Department to decide whether the allegations against her have any foundation»<sup>101</sup>. Here ends the file on Dr. Annemarie Goldberg's case.

She remained in Singapore. In 1952 she managed to obtain English citizenship, when at 48 years old, she entered into her second marriage with Sir Charles Murray-Aynsley, 59 years old, widowed for one, without children, President of the Appeals Court in Singapore. He was a British diplomat of a certain importance. A portrait of him dating to 1951 is at the National Portrait Gallery in London. One photo shows them together in Singapore on an official occasion<sup>102</sup>.

### Further controversial testimony

The Muntok Peace Museum was founded in 1995 for the initiative of the prisoners' families and of the Malayan Volunteers' Group, in Muntok, Banka Island, Indonesia, in the place of the massacre that occurred on 16 February 1942, to remember what happened to the civilians, who had been captured by the Japanese, from February 1942 to November 1945<sup>103</sup>. From the list of internees it is possible to track down further testimonies about Dr. Goldberg, which Australian authorities did not have,

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<sup>100</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid., letter from T.H.E. Heyes to M. Holmes, 25 March 1949.

<sup>102</sup> *National Portrait Gallery* <<https://www.npg.org.uk>> (accessed 20 December 2020). See also *Murray-Aynsley, Sir Charles Murray* (28 Nov. 1893–31 Aug. 1967), *Who's Who & Who Was Who*, 2001 <<https://www.ukwhoswho.com>> (accessed 11 December 2020). For the photo of the Murray-Aynsley couple, in the National Archive of Singapore, that Judie Balcombe has brought to our attention, see <<https://www.nas.gov.sg>> (accessed 20 December 2020).

<sup>103</sup> We wish to thank Judie Balcombe, contacted by Patrizia Guarnieri, for pointing us to the Muntok Peace Museum and its list of internees <<http://muntokpeacemuseum.org>> (accessed 19 November 2020) and for the information on the controversial case of Annemarie Curth Goldberg, on which she has now published the page <<http://muntokpeacemuseum.org>> (accessed 3 January 2021).

like those published by the BBC in the online archive *WW2 People's War*. A former prisoner remembered:

[She] never wore trompers like the rest of us, she was always well dressed and seemed to have plenty of money. Just before I left Muntok Iris Frith had given me a good pair of shoes which were too small for her. These I still had so I offered them to Dr. Goldberg, hoping she would give me a good price – but being who she was she only gave me F. 10<sup>104</sup>.

According to an Australian nurse: «Goldberg, a German Jewess, was very thorough but occasionally she was anti-Australian and would refuse to admit Australian nurses, although on another occasion she raised forty guilders to provide tinned milk for their two typhoid victims»<sup>105</sup>.

The memoirs published in 1983 by American journalist and later priest, William McDougall, who was a civilian detainee in the camp in Palembang, confirms Alacoque's cited version of the deaths of Dr. Ziesel and Dr. Tekelenburg, and makes no mention of any Goldberg involvement<sup>106</sup>.

### Her return to Italy

When her husband Charles retired from his position in Singapore, in March of 1956, they decided to move to Italy. In July they were living in Florence, at Piazza di Bellosguardo 6, a beautiful location of note to educated and wealthy foreigners<sup>107</sup>. Annemarie was 52 years old and intended to continue to privately practice her profession.

She learned, however, that the Florentine Medical Board (Ordine dei Medici) that had re-registered her ex-officio had cancelled her again from the registry in 1944 because she was nowhere to be found. Since being in the registry was essential, on

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<sup>104</sup> Phyllis Briggs, *Phyllis Briggs's War*, edited by Bournemouth Libraries, in *WW2 People's War*, part 10, 2005 <<https://www.bbc.co.uk>> (accessed 20 December 2020).

<sup>105</sup> Catherine Kenny, *Captives. Australian Army Nurses in Japanese Prison Camps*, St. Lucia, University of Queensland Press, 1986, pp. 71-72, even though the origin of the source is not clear.

<sup>106</sup> William H. McDougall Jr., *By Eastern Windows. The Story of a Battle of Souls and Minds in the Prison Camps of Sumatra*, Salt Lake City, Western Epics, 1983.

<sup>107</sup> AOMFi, MCC, FP, f. n. 769, «A.E. Curth Murray-Aynsley», letter from Dr. A.E. Murray-Aynsley to ENPAM and to the Medical Board of the province of Florence, 18 March 1963.

7 July 1956 she immediately made a request to be registered again. The Board in Florence asked the opinion of the national federation in Rome. President Raffaele Chiarolanza responded that in order to re-register, it was necessary to present all documentation again, including the certificate of Italian citizenship that she, however, did not have<sup>108</sup>. Therefore, she was denied registration. For her, this was a painful and unexplainable refusal: she never had Italian citizenship, yet sincerely believed that she «could be useful in this City that I love so much, with my incredible experience with Tropical diseases and Children, after having practiced my profession for 17 years in the Far East»<sup>109</sup>.

She appealed and reapplied in 1958, but «all of our lawyer's attempts were useless». With her husband she applied for a residence permit; they waited 5 years and finally, in 1962, the Murray-Aynsleys became residents at via Solferino n. 28, close to the Teatro Comunale<sup>110</sup>. In December of 1962 she tried again with the Medical Board of Florence, and on 13 December 1962 her application was accepted because the reciprocal agreement with the UK had been restored<sup>111</sup>. However, the Board presented her with the bill of the arrears of the annual registration fee that awaited payment: a very large sum. It was too much, in every sense. Dr. Murray-Aynsley protested:

It was not my fault that I was not re-registered within the ten-year frame established by the law. Indeed, I have been treated with great severity and credulity [*sic*]. We live off of my husband's retirement and it will be difficult enough to make myself another clientele, again, and it will certainly be impossible for me to pay a contribution of more than a half million [lire; TN: pre-Euro Italian currency]: instead of being compensated for all of the financial and health damages that I have suffered without being at fault<sup>112</sup>.

She declared that she could not pay the amount requested by the Board and

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<sup>108</sup> Ibid., letter from the National Federation of Medical Boards to the Medical Board of Florence and to Dr. A.E. Curth Murray-Aynsley, 30 July 1956.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid., letter from Dr. A.E. Curth Murray-Aynsley to the Medical Board of Florence, 7 July 1956.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid., City of Florence, «Certificato di residenza», 26 November 1962.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid., note of the Medical Board of Florence, 27 March 1963 and AOMFi, *Registro dell'Ordine dei medici (1911-1950)*, «Curth Goldberg Murray-Aynsley Anna Maria», n. 769.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid., letter from Dr. A.E. Curth Murray-Aynsley to ENPAM and to the Medical Board of the province of Florence, 18 March 1963.



presented her resignation on 26 September 1963.

During the same year, the couple stayed in Switzerland, in Geneva and Basel, with his relatives because she wanted to complete some refresher courses. In March of 1964, back in Florence, she made a complaint to the Board because they were asking her for money «towards an old age pension that I did not want»<sup>113</sup> (ignoring that it is mandated by Italian law). She changed her mind after being widowed by Sir Charles Murray-Aynsley, on 31 August 1967, having «only a small pension as a war widow». She moved from via Alfieri to Lungarno Amerigo Vespucci n. 50 (the address corresponds to a beautiful hotel) and she re-applied to the Medical Board on 29 April 1968, at 64 years old. The Ente nazionale di previdenza ed assistenza medici (ENPAM) [National Welfare and Assistance Office for Physicians] asked her the arrears equal to 21 years of contributions: 1,600,000 lire to be paid by 1969. She seems to have asked for a loan in order to pay them, so that she could collect a pension from 1 January 1972, even if she resigned from the Board on 8 February 1994, at 90 years old<sup>114</sup>.

Sara and Giovanna Volterra, daughters of Dr. Mario Volterra who, in his time, had been disbarred, expelled, and forced to emigrate to New York, remembered that Annemarie Eleonore Murray-Aynsley, their neighbor at piazza Augusto Conti n. 5, moved to England<sup>115</sup>. On Christmas 1994, in a greeting card to a certain *signora* Antonella she wrote: «I will stay here for some time, then I may return to Italy», but she was 90 years old and did not hide that she was sick<sup>116</sup>. On the back of the card, her address was that of a retirement home, the Cox Hill Manor Residential and Nursing Home Chobham Surrey GU 24, 8AU England, where she died in April of 1997<sup>117</sup>.

In spite of everything, she was always very attached to Florence where, in fact, she

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<sup>113</sup> Ibid., letter from Dr. A.E. Curth Murray-Aynsley to ENPAM, 12 March 1964.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid., letter from ENPAM to Dr. A.E. Curth Murray-Aynsley, 23 November 1967, and AOMFi, *Registro dell'Ordine dei Medici (1911-1950)*, «Curth Goldberg Murray-Aynsley Anna Maria», n. 769.

<sup>115</sup> Testimony of Sara and Giovanna Volterra given to the Author in Florence, 20 February 2019.

<sup>116</sup> AOMFi, MCC, FP, f. n. 769, «A.E. Curth Murray-Aynsley», greeting card from A.E. Murray-Aynsley to Antonella Amniotti, at the Medical Board of Florence, Christmas 1994.

<sup>117</sup> *England & Wales Deaths, General Register Office Indexes, 1969-2007*, accessible at <<https://www.myheritage.com>> (accessed upon registration 16 October 2020).

is buried, at Cimitero Evangelico degli Allori, just outside the city<sup>118</sup>.

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- NAA, MP729/8, f. 29/431/15, «Alleged Japanese collaborationist – Dr Anna Maria Goldberg ex Singapore and Sumatra».

Lucrezia Nuti

Translated by Melissa A. Leone

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<sup>118</sup> She is buried with the name, Annemaria Eleanor Murray Aynsley, British citizen of Anglican religion, see *The Alphabetical Register of the Cimitero degli Allori, ad nomen* <<http://www.florin.ms>> (accessed 4 January 2021).

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