

## Gertrud Berthe Leonie Lange

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She opted for Italy when she lost her job in Berlin in 1933, and in 1939 she left Florence to join her mother and sister in Manchester. In 1940 she moved with them to the United States and settled in Providence, where she resumed her professional career and devoted herself to child psychiatry.

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Lives on the move:

### Education in Berlin

Gertrud Lange was born in Berlin on 30 May 1895, to Max, a merchant, and Mathilde Hedwig Cahn (1873)<sup>1</sup>. She lost her father in 1913,<sup>2</sup> and in 1919 she graduated in Medicine from the Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität, one of the most prestigious universities of the time. In May 1920 she passed the state examination for admission to the medical profession, and in 1922 she married her colleague, Hans Adolf Ferdinand Müller. After a period of training, from January 1923 she worked as a pediatrician in the medical support service of the kindergarten in Lüdenscheid (North Rhine-Westphalia). On 30 June 1933, as a Jew, she was dismissed from her post, in accordance with the «Law for the Restoration of the Professional Civil Service», issued by the Nazi government on 7 April 1933<sup>3</sup>.

### A pediatrician emigrating to Italy

In the meantime Gertrud had lost her husband, whose surname she would have kept all her life; alone, and now without a job, she decided to move to Italy and forwarded her application to the local embassy. She opted for

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<sup>1</sup> Landesarchiv Berlin, *Geburtenregister der Berliner Standesämter 1874-1909*, under name, available online at <<http://www.ancestry.com>> (accessed by login 20 February 2022).

<sup>2</sup> Landesarchiv Berlin, *Sterberegister der Berliner Standesämter 1874-1955*, under name, available online at <<http://www.ancestry.com>>.

<sup>3</sup> I owe this information and that relating to the second degree, taken from the Historical Archive of the University of Palermo (ASUPa), f. «Lange Gertrud», to Alessandro Hoffmann, whom I thank.

Palermo, perhaps because she knew someone in the small community of German Jewish students and doctors who had emigrated to the Sicilian capital<sup>4</sup>.

After evaluating her study career, the Academic Senate on 17 May 1934 approved her enrollment in the sixth year, with the obligation to take only the examination in forensic medicine: she graduated on 18 July 1934, with a thesis on renal infantilism, her supervisor being the director of the pediatric clinic, Sebastiano Cannata<sup>5</sup>.

After passing the state exam in Catania, on 22 January 1935 she registered in the local branch of the Doctors' Association<sup>6</sup>. She had, however, made a decision to change residence once again: on 15 March 1935 she applied for her affiliation to be transferred to the Association's branch in Florence<sup>7</sup>. It can be imagined that Gertrud chose to move so as to be closer to her family or to seek more opportunities, perhaps on the advice of friends who practiced in the Tuscan capital.

The Fascist Provincial Doctors' Union ordered her exclusion from the Register in its session of 30 January 1939, but by that date the doctor had already «gone abroad», as the postman noted in her file a few days later<sup>8</sup>. She had left Italy shortly before, since at the beginning of the month she had in fact asked the Union for a confirmation of her entry in the Register<sup>9</sup>.

Gertrud emigrated to Manchester, where in all likelihood her mother Mathilde, a housewife, and her sister Hildegard Helene (1898), a bank

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<sup>4</sup> Cf. for some sketches Alessandro Hoffmann, *Storia di una famiglia di origine ebrea a Palermo*, Palermo, Qanat, 2017.

<sup>5</sup> On Cannata cf. the obituary in «Rivista di clinica pediatrica», 1940, p. 127.

<sup>6</sup> Archivio Ordine dei medici di Firenze (AOMFi), *Fondo medici chirurghi cessati* (MCC), *Fascicoli personali* (FP), f. 767, «Lange Muller Geltrude [sic]», prefectorial administrator of the Doctors' Association of the province of Palermo to the prefectorial administrator of the Doctors' Association of the province of Florence, 26 March 1935.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., G. Lange, request to the Doctors' Association of the province of Florence, 15 March 1935.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., U.L. Torrini to G. Lange, 31 January 1939; file for the registered letter returned to the sender on 4 February 1939.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., Torrini's statement, 12 January 1939.

employee, had already moved<sup>10</sup>. Here the three women were helped by Muriel Edwards, a doctor who belonged to the Quaker relief network for refugees fleeing dictatorships; thanks to her good offices they overcame the bureaucratic difficulties that were delaying their departure for the USA, even though they had managed to obtain an affidavit<sup>11</sup>. On 25 September 1940 they obtained an in quota visa, and on 24 October they embarked from Liverpool on the *Western Prince*, bound for New York: in registering for the voyage, they gave as their contact in the USA a friend, Miss Miriam Shaw, Harvard, Massachusetts<sup>12</sup>. Possessed of a considerable inheritance, unmarried and childless, Shaw was a significant figure in the Harvard community, given her commitment to charitable activities. After her death in 1970, various bequests in her name went to local educational institutions<sup>13</sup>. Although we do not know how they made this contact, it is likely that Shaw was active in the relief networks for European refugees.

In January 1941 Gertrud applied for naturalization, which she obtained in 1946; after her arrival she settled at 116 Pleasant Street, Brookline, Massachusetts, but she later moved to 5 Congdon Street in Providence, Rhode Island, together with her mother and sister<sup>14</sup>. She did not return to Italy after the end of the war and therefore must have been unaware of the fact that on 25 September 1944 the medical commission of the Tuscan

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<sup>10</sup> The National Archives, Kew, UK, *WW2 Internees (Aliens) Index Cards 1939-1947*, under name; *1939 Register*, under name, available online at <<http://www.ancestry.com>>.

<sup>11</sup> On Edwards and the help given to the Lange family cf. Bill Williams, *Jews and Other Foreigners. Manchester and the Rescue of the Victims of European Fascism, 1933-40*, Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2011, pp. 184-186.

<sup>12</sup> The Statue of Liberty - Ellis Island Foundation, *Passenger Search*, under name <<https://heritage.statueofliberty.org>> (accessed by login 20 February 2022).

<sup>13</sup> On Shaw cf. Mary E. Arata, Associated Press, *Benevolence Noted of the Late Miriam Shaw*, «Nashoba Valley Voice», 2 September 2011, updated 11 July 2019 <<https://www.nashobavalleyvoice.com>>. On her «Bostonian marriage» with Maria de Acosta, cf. Honor Moore, *The White Blackbird. A Life of the Painter Margaret Sargent by Her Granddaughter*, New York, W.W. Norton & Company, 2009, p. 172.

<sup>14</sup> For the requests for naturalization see National Archives at Boston, *Petitions and Records of Naturalization*, «Gertrud Berthe Leonie Lange», «Hildegard Helene Sophie Lange»; for their obtaining *Indexes to Naturalization Records for the District Court, 1906-1991, and the U.S. Circuit Court, 1906-1991, Rhode Island*, under name, available online at <<http://www.ancestry.com>>.

Committee for National Liberation had reinscribed her *ex officio* in the Register and that on 30 November 1947 she was declared untraceable and permanently removed from the Doctors' Association<sup>15</sup>.

She served for about two years at Butler Hospital, a psychiatric facility where she took care of the men's ward; she resigned on 31 August 1945 for a fellowship in child guidance at the Judge Baker Foundation in Boston<sup>16</sup>. She later returned to practice in Providence. She chose to specialize in child psychiatry, and was enrolled in the American Psychiatric Association up to the end of the 1960s<sup>17</sup>. She died on 23 October 1975 in Providence<sup>18</sup>.

### Archival sources

- Archivio Ordine dei medici di Firenze (AOMFi), *Fondo medici chirurgi cessati* (MCC), *Fascicoli Personali* (FP), f. 767, «Lange Muller Geltrude [sic]».
- Archivio storico of the Università di Palermo (ASUPa), f. «Lange Gertrud».
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<sup>15</sup> AOMFi, MCC, FP, f. 767, «Lange Muller Geltrude [sic]», statement by the president, Luigi Siciliano, 30 November 1947.

<sup>16</sup> Butler Hospital, «Annual Report», 1945, p. 25.

<sup>17</sup> American Psychiatric Association, «Biographical Directory of Fellows and Members», 1968, p. 509.

<sup>18</sup> Rhode Island, US, *Historical Cemetery Commission Index, 1647-2008*, under name; Washington DC, *Social Security Death Index*, under name, available online at <<http://www.ancestry.com>>.

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