ISAAC S. AND SUZANNE A. EMMANUEL

HISTORY OF THE JEWS OF THE NETHERLANDS ANTILLES

This revealing book of 1165 pages is divided into two volumes. In the first (pp. 533), the authors unfold the history of the oldest Jewish community of the Americas, since 1634 till now. The historic material, result of painstaking research into inexhaustible primary sources for over thirty years in various European and American archives and libraries, is well organized and invaluable. The authors gave interesting data about the Jewish life of the largest Jewish Community of the Americas in the 18th century, about the rabbis and their writings, the fourteen emissaries of the Holy Land who visited Curaçao, the forty physicians, the forty-six newspapers edited or published by Jews, the cantors Curaçao sent to the Americas, the amazing economic power of the Jews of this island and their contribution to the development of Curaçao, the arrival of Ashkenazic Jews and their wonderful economic achievement.

The second volume (pp. 632), consists principally of 31 highly interesting appendices. The reader will know, for the first time in Jewish history, that the Jews of Curaçao owned over 750 plantations and gardens since 1659, also owned 1,200 boats, some of them commanded by 200 Jewish captains. In this volume are recorded the dowries re-

Isaac S. and Suzanne A. Emmanuel

HISTORY OF THE JEWS OF THE NETHERLANDS ANTILLES

FIRST VOLUME - HISTORY

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AMERICAN JEWISH ARCHIVES, NO. V

HISTORY OF THE JEWS OF THE NETHERLANDS ANTILLES

By Isaac Samuel Emmanuel

HISTOIRE DE L'INDUSTRIE DES TISSUS
DES ISRAÉLITES DE SALONIQUE, 1935

HISTOIRE DES ISRAÉLITES DE SALONIQUE, 1936

GUEDOLÉ SALONIKI LEDOROTÁM, 1936

PRECIOUS STONES OF THE JEWS OF CURAÇAO:
CURAÇAON JEWRY, 1656-1957, 1957

MAZAVOTH SALONIKI, 2 VOLUMES, 1963-1968

TOLEDOTH YEHUDÉ SALONIKI, IN PRINT

With Suzanne A. Emmanuel:

HISTORY OF THE JEWS OF THE NETHERLANDS ANTILLES, 1970

COAT OF ARMS OF ORANGE
AND THE NETHERLANDS

COAT OF ARMS OF THE
NETHERLANDS ANTILLES

COAT OF ARMS OF CURAÇAO

IN APPRECIATION OF THE RELIGIOUS AND CIVIL LIBERTIES ORANGE,
THE NETHERLANDS AND CURAÇAO
EXTENDED TO THE CURAÇOAN JEWS SINCE 1634

2. SYNAGOGUE MIKVE ISRAEL, NOW MIKVE ISRAEL-EMANUEL,
CONSECRATED IN 1732

3. SUZANNE A. EMMANUEL
1912-1969

TO THE SACRED MEMORY
OF MY BELOVED WIFE
SUZANNE A. EMMANUEL
TO WHOM I OWE THIS BOOK

Exclusive Selling Agent
for the Netherlands Antilles
BOEKHANDEL SALAS
Curaçao, N.A.

PREFACE

In 1957 my *Precious Stones of the Jews of Curaçao* (now out of print) made its appearance. The present work should have accompanied it. For one reason or another the Mikvé Israel parnassim who shared in the publication of *Precious Stones* could not make up their minds until 1963 to sponsor this history. Since then numerous difficulties arose to hold up publication. The delay nevertheless worked to the good, for it afforded me more opportunity to continue with my research.

The Jews of Curaçao have the longest continuous history in the Americas. Their beautiful synagogue is the oldest in the Western Hemisphere. And it is my privilege to be the first to write a full-length history of the Jewish communities of Curaçao and St. Eustatius.

The contribution of the Jews to the development and welfare of Curaçao ever since 1634 is so stupendous that their history is inseparable from that of Curaçao. Until 1825 the Jewish community of Curaçao held sway as the largest Jewish center in the Americas. It was to her that other American Jewish communities invariably turned for assistance of one form or another. Consequently the history of the Jews of Curaçao forms an integral part of American Jewish history. Small wonder that Dr. Jacob R. Marcus devotes considerable space to Curaçao in his forthcoming book, *The Colonial American Jew*.

ARCHIVAL MATERIAL

Like my *Precious Stones*, this work, too, is based chiefly on archival material – virgin matter from prime sources. Besides the vast number of documents and manuscripts studied (see bibliography), I also consulted numerous old newspapers of Curaçao and a treasure trove of rare pamphlets forming part of the Joseph Mendes Monsanto Library. A glimpse at the copious footnotes and the thirty-one appendices – especially appendix 2 (plantations), appendix 3 (navigation), appendix 16 (settlement of Curaçoan Jews in various parts of the Americas) and appendix 17 (marriages and dowries) – will attest to the painstaking research conducted over a span of thirty years at great sacrifice of health and money.

CENSORSHIP

The difficulties encountered in the preparation of the book were increased by the censorship imposed by the parnassim. Like most people of Spanish-Portuguese background, they clung tenaciously to the principle of "Victorian Filiopietism," which is to omit anything that might cast a shadow on the established good reputation of the people portrayed. Dr. Marcus cogently brings out this practice among Sephardi writers, especially between 1892 and 1930, in his "Major Trends in American Jewish Historical Research" (*AJA*, XVI, 1964, pp. 9-11). According to Dr. Marcus, this "filiopietism" finally gave way in 1930 when non-Jewish scholars also took an interest in American synagogal archives. Only then "facts took precedence over sentiments."

As in *Precious Stones of the Jews of Curaçao*, the parnassim made it a condition *sine qua non* to control the manuscript before delivery to the printer. Nine gentlemen – seven from the former Mikvé Israel Congregation and two from the Reform Congregation – participated in this reading.

In order to avoid unpleasantness or cause for heated discussion with the gentlemen, I took extreme care to eliminate one or another unpleasant fact about an individual so long as it did not affect the thread of history of the collectivity (e.g., the Andrade case, pages 271-75). Aside from some minor changes touching especially on the hardships I had endured as their former rabbi, the committee respected the manuscript fully. This is to their credit. The censors for the Reform Congregation, while respecting the texts, took exception to one or another detail over the communal schism of 1864 and the foundation of the Reform Community that year (pages 370-392).

Meanwhile the merger of the Mikvé Israel and Temple Emanu-El congregations took place. The United Congregation Mikvé Israel-Emanuel became affiliated with the Reconstructionist Foundation and the World Union for Progressive Judaism, and changed over from the Sephardic rite to the Reconstructionist Ashkenazic rite. I was obliged to return to Curaçao for the approval of Chapter XXV covering this merger. The parnassim of the United Congregation wanted to reduce this chapter to three or four pages. I could not agree to that. As a Sephardic rabbi I had to rise to the defense of the founders and supporters of this once glorious community who were inviolably committed to maintain the Sephardic rite and customs. I had to show these good people that their affiliation with Reconstructionism and Liberal Reform Judaism would not save Portuguese Jewry from disappearing.

The parnassim were annoyed and threatened to abandon all thought of publication if I persisted in this vein. I accepted their challenge. I could not allow a case of precedent among modest Sephardic communities in the

Americas. They finally decided to have several of their number reread the controversial chapter. For six weeks we literally fought over each word and comma. After some seventy modifications or deletions, they accepted the chapter (pages 502-17).

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I am deeply indebted to the heads of various departments of the Curaçao Government – including those who have since passed away – for giving me access to their records.

The Portuguese Jewish Community of Amsterdam and their secretaries have my sincerest appreciation for their cooperation and understanding in permitting Mrs. Emmanuel and me to consult their archives, manuscripts and numerous bundles of documents opened by us for the first time in many years.

For their friendliness and eagerness to help, my thanks to the archivists of the Municipal Archives of Amsterdam – particularly Dr. Simon Hart, to the archivists of the State Archives at The Hague (Rijksarchief), to the librarians of the Royal Library (Koninklijke Bibliotheek), The Hague, and to the Public Library of Cincinnati.

I am most grateful to Herbert C. Zafren, Chief Librarian of the Hebrew Union College Library of Cincinnati – one of the best organized Jewish libraries in the United States of America – and all the librarians under him for their excellent cooperation.

My thanks to Dr. Stanley F. Chyet, associate director of the American Jewish Archives on the Hebrew Union College campus, and the staff for their friendliness and assistance. (Indeed, it is almost impossible for one to undertake a serious study of any American Jewish community without consulting the Archives' rich collection of material and its catalog of a half million cards).

I am indebted to Dr. Jacob R. Marcus, director of the American Jewish Archives, not only for his numerous communications to me, but also for his profound interest in my work. Despite the countless demands on his time, he kept up a correspondence with the parnassim of Curaçao over several years, and finally succeeded in straightening out the differences between us. May G-d prolong his life, and may Jewry be blessed with many more scholars and teachers like him.

My thanks also to Dr. Josef David Weintraub, Cincinnati, a very busy physician, who graciously read galley proofs after the sudden death of Mrs. Emmanuel. I cite gratefully Mrs. Daphne van Schendel, Curaçao, for procuring some photos for the illustrations, and Max Silvian, Cincinnati, for checking the Index with me.

For the realization of this history at long last, I thank each and every subscriber and supporter for the faith kept in the administration of the United Congregation Mikvé Israel-Emanuel and the author. The publication of this book originally was sponsored by the Mikvé Israel Congregation with the participation of the Reform Congregation, Temple Emanu-El. S. E. L. Maduro & Sons and Maduro & Curiel's Bank outshone themselves with a subscription of 10,000 Netherlands Antillian guilders. The Ashkenazic communities of Curaçao and Aruba – Shaarei Tzedek and Beth Israel, respectively – as well as many Gentiles, showed their usual cooperation by purchasing copies.

The parnassim of the former Mikvé Israel and the parnassim of the United Congregation deserve to be cited for their interest in the history of their forefathers.

I wish to express my heartfelt gratitude to Abram E. Salas for his part in conciliating the parnassim, and to Norman M. Chumaceiro for his time-consuming task as chairman of the Book Committee, and to both for their constant efforts to see this publication through.

My thanks also to the Curaçoans Cecil L. Delvalle, Frank M. Chumaceiro and Samuel I. Yohay, and to the late Cincinnati pharmacist Ralph Crespin, for their splendid cooperation in photographing or reproducing most of the photos appearing in this book, cost-free or at cost.

I cannot refrain from recalling three friends of blessed memory who had longed to see this book. They are Dr. Wybo Jan Goslinga, a G-d fearing Protestant *Mehassidé umoth ha 'olam* and former inspector of government schools of the Netherlands Antilles; S. (Mongui) A.L. Maduro, and Jossy M. L. Maduro. May they rest in peace.

The forgoing preface was typewritten and amended by my beloved wife, Suzanne Amzalak Emmanuel, when she was suddenly taken from us in the prime of her life, on April 26, 1969. The shock was, and still is, unbearable. She was to me, as the Rabbis say: a stone wall, a fortress of love and devotion. During the twenty-three years of our happy marriage she worked with me to gather material for this book as she did with my *Precious Stones of the Jews of Curaçao*, as well as with my studies and contributions published in scholarly magazines and books. Working together we studied and abstracted countless documents and manuscripts in archives and libraries in Holland, Curaçao, Cincinnati and elsewhere. She translated into English from the Portuguese many documents that appear particularly in the second volume. She indexed all this precious material systematically. She checked the citations of the manuscripts and documents carefully, polishing, typing and retyping our voluminous manuscript. She was in the midst of correcting the galley proofs

of appendix 17, when, on a holy Sabbath, she left me forever, in the greatest pain and sorrow. I owe this book, as it appears now, to her. She was a perfectionist. Therefore I consider it a privilege to associate her with myself in the authorship of this book, although she was extremely modest and refused to accept any credit for her tireless work.

I wish to point out that wherever the word "author" is used, it is to be interpreted as meaning my wife Suzanne A. Emmanuel and myself as "co-authors."

For her self-sacrificing, tireless and valuable help, for her patience and kindness, and for her unlimited devotion to me and to our daughter, Regina, I say proudly with King Salomon: "Many daughters have done virtuously, but you excel them all" (Proverbs 31 : 29). As my tribute of affection I am dedicating this book to her sacred memory. May her virtuous soul enjoy eternal bliss, amen.

The board of the Congregation Mikvé Israel-Emanuel, Curaçao, decided to pay tribute to the authors, my late wife and myself, by installing in the chapel of their cemetery at Berg Altena a plaque of appreciation, whose text follows on the next page. My sincere thanks go to them for associating us, my wife and myself, with the saintly people, resting in the cemeteries of their Congregation, as portrayed in my *Precious Stones of the Jews of Curaçao* and in the present work.

It is my hope that the new generation of the old Jewish Curaçoan families will read this book carefully and that they will work for the reestablishment of the original rite of their synagogue, the traditional Sephardic rite. If my hope is fulfilled, then my thirty years and the twenty-three years of my beloved wife, devoted to writing this history will not have been in vain.

Isaac Samuel Emmanuel

Cincinnati, April 26, 1970

The Congregation MIKVE ISRAEL-EMANUEL
pays tribute to our Rabbi Emeritus Dr.
ISAAC S. EMMANUEL,
1899-197 , and his wife
SUZANNE AMZALAK EMMANUEL,
1912-April 26, 1969 – Iyyar 8, 5729,
for their indefatigable devotion and
sacrifice in the research, preparation,
and publication of two scholarly works
on the history of our Congregation
and Cemeteries

ת'נ'צ'ב'ה

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אשת ה"חכם" יצחק ש"
ע מ נ ו א ל
8 אייר 5729
אשת חיל עטרת בעלה

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NEW YORK JANUARY 12, 1912
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ת'נ'צ'ב'ה

ABBREVIATIONS

ADJRC or DJRCA	Archives of the Dutch Jewish Reform Community, Curaçao
AJA or *AJA*	American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati
AJHS	American Jewish Historical Society
C	Catalog of the Old Jewish Cemetery of Curaçao (*Precious Stones of the Jews of Curaçao*, pages 493-548)
CC	*Curaçaosche Courant*
CEOE	Curaçao en Onderhoorige Eilanden (Curaçao and its island dependencies [Records at the State Archives, The Hague])
CGA	Curaçao Government Archives
OGAHV	Curaçao Government Archives, "Haven en Veiligheidsregt" (Harborage and Security Charges)
CGAK	Curaçao Government Archives, "Kadaster" (Land Registry)
CGAMR	Curaçao Government Archives, "Monsterrollen" (Ship Crew Lists)
CGANA	Curaçao Government Archives, Notarial Acts
CGAR	Curaçao Government Archives, "Rooibrieven"
CGAT	Curaçao Government Archives, "Transport" (Contracts of Purchase and Sale of Real Estate and Ships)
DOTAR	Santa Companhia de Dotar (Archives of the Orphans Administration of the Amsterdam Portuguese Jewish Community)
DTB	Doop, Trouw & Begraafregisters (Baptism, Marriage and Death Registers [Municipal Records of Amsterdam])
GAA	Gemeente Archief Amsterdam (Municipal Archives, Amsterdam)
KET.	Ketuboth (Marriage) Register
K. K.	Kahal Kados
K. K. T. T.	Kahal Kados de Talmud Torah (The Portuguese Jewish Community, Amsterdam)

KV or *KV*	Koloniaal Verslag (Colonial Reports)
MC	Memorias Curiel
MGWJ	*Monatsschrift für Geschichte und Wissenschaft des Judenthums*
MIA	Mikvé Israel Congregation Archives
MM	Mahamad
MS	Memorias Senior
NOT.	Notary, notarial
OA	Old Archives
OAC	Old Archives of Curaçao
OWICA	Old West India Company Archives at the Hague
PAJHS	*Publication of the American Jewish Historical Society*
PJCAA	Archives of the Portuguese Jewish Community of Amsterdam
RA	Rijksarchief (State Archives at The Hague)
SCBJ	"Seventeenth Century Brazilian Jewry"
T. T.	Talmud Torah
W. I.	West India
WIC	West India Company
WICA	West India Company Archives at The Hague
WIG	*West Indische Gids*

CHAPTER I

EARLIEST ATTEMPTS TO COLONIZE CURAÇAO

WHILE THE REPUBLIC of the United Provinces of Holland was preparing to conquer Northern Brazil, the Dutch West India Company[1] studied the idea of seizing Curaçao[2] from the Spanish. Only thirty-eight miles off the Venezuelan coast, the island was rich in timber, salt and other natural resources and would provide an ideal base for operations against the Spaniards.[3] Generals Johannes van Walbeeck and Pierre le Grand, veterans of the conquest of Brazil, were appointed to head the expedition. They left Holland in May, 1634, landed in Curaçao on July 29, and took it without any resistance.

A JEW ACCOMPANIES THE EXPEDITION

Along with them the generals took an interpreter — a prime requisite for such an expedition — since he was the vital link between conqueror and conquered. For countless ages Jews had been entrusted with this delicate task, and it was quite natural for the Company[4] to follow this tradition. Walbeeck's choice was Samuel Cohen who had accompanied General Hendrick Cornelisz Lonck in the conquest of Pernambuco.[5] Born in Portugal, this 41-year-old linguist left wife and children in Amsterdam to join the expedition. When the Dutch took Curaçao, only seventy Indians were encountered. Before long Walbeeck promoted Cohen to Chief Steward[6] to replace a traitorous official caught plotting against the Dutch. Like his many core-

1 Founded in 1621 and hereinafter designated as Company or WIC.

2 For particulars on the name Curaçao, see Father A. Euwens, *De Naam Curaçao* (Curaçao, 1936).

3 Johannes Hermanus Jacobus Hamelberg, *De Nederlanders op de West-Indische Eilanden* (Amsterdam, 1901), pp. 19-30; *Documenten*, pp. 1-42.

4 In 1636 the WIC engaged one Manuel Morais to compile for its use a "Dictionario Brazilero," for which they paid him 400 florins (OWICA 14, Nov. 10, 1636, p. 208v).

5 Isaac S. Emmanuel, "New Light on Early American Jewry" [= NLEAJ], *American Jewish Archives* [= *AJA*], vol. VII, no. 1 (Cincinnati, 1955), pp. 20, 64.

6 Irene A. Wright, *Nederlandsche Zeevaarders op de eilanden in de Caraïbische zee en aan de kust van Colombia en Venezuela, 1621-1648*, documents of the "Archivo General de Indias" of Seville (Utrecht, 1934), pp. 235, 237, 342, 343, 393 and 395; Father A. Euwens, "De eerste Jood op Curaçao," *West Indische Gids* [= *WIG*], 1930-31, pp. 360-66.

ligionists in Brazil, Cohen distinguished himself for his loyalty to the Company. In fact, he earned their citation as "a trustworthy, conscientious man."[7] He had the distinction of being the first Jew to tread on Curaçao soil and the first Jew to serve there as an official of the Company. Versatile and enterprising of spirit, Cohen dug for gold in various parts of the island, but without success. His disappointment mounted with the growing economic difficulties on the island during those early years of the Dutch occupation. There also was widespread talk that Holland planned to abandon Curaçao. Dispirited, homesick and fearful of this outcome, Cohen returned to Amsterdam[8] before 1642 when Peter Stuyvesant was named governor. It is entirely possible that Cohen left behind him on the island some Jews and some Marranos (particularly since there were Marranos in Caracas and Maracaibo during this period[9]). We know of one Marrano, Juan de Araujo, known also as Julio de Araujo, who was on Curaçao in the 1640's. Araujo subsequently left the island and went to Mexico, where he had troubles with the Inquisition.[10]

ARRIVAL OF THE FIRST SETTLERS IN 1651

Moved more by greed than religious zeal, the Church instituted the Inquisition in Portugal in 1536. A New Christian had but to wear a clean, white shirt on Friday evening to be arrested, cruelly tortured and stripped of his fortune. At the time 120,000 Marranos lived in Portugal and the only thing left for them was to flee the country. Many of them flocked to the cities of the Turkish Empire[11] and Italy where they founded prosperous communities.[12] Some chanced going to the colonies of the Western Hemisphere where the

[7] Hamelberg, *De Nederlanders*, p. 35, note 1.

[8] He died in Amsterdam before 1662. Most likely he is the same person who lies in the old sector of the Jewish cemetery in Amsterdam, between Sara Cohen, d. April 18, 1623, and Esther Hana Cahanet, d. 5423 [1662-63] (David Henriquez de Castro Mzn, "Alphabetisch Register der Personen die op de Oude Afdeeling der Portug. Israel. Begraafplaats . . . begraven zijn" in J[aap]. Meijer's *Encyclopaedia Sefardica Neerlandica* [Amsterdam, 1949], part I, p. 187).

[9] See appendix 16, "Caracas," "Maracaibo."

[10] According to a letter from Seymour B. Liebman to Dr. Jacob R. Marcus and to the author (January, 1965). Liebman refers to P. Mathias de Bocanegra, S. J., *Relación del Auto General de la Fé celebrado* [etc.] *11 de Abril de 1649* (Mexico, 1649).

[11] I. S. Emmanuel, *Histoire des Israélites de Salonique* (Thonon-Paris, 1936), pp. 59-61.

[12] Almost every Jewish community in Turkey founded by Portuguese Jews had a synagogue called Portugal or Lisbon. At the end of the 16th century the "Portugal" synagogue in Smyrna was also known as "Kahal Kadosh Anusé Portugal" — synagogue of the Marranos of Portugal (Daniel Estrusa, *Magen Giborim* [Salonika, 1754], Responsa no. 41, p. 64a).

Inquisition was less rigid. Others settled in Flanders, which served later as a stepping stone to Holland.

Like Turkey, the Dutch Republic welcomed the Portuguese Marranos. They were accorded not only religious freedom, but also the right to rule themselves in keeping with their own religious laws. Because of this benign attitude hundreds of the refugees settled in Amsterdam since 1581.[13] They founded three synagogues[14] and contributed greatly to the commerce and navigation of that bustling, hospitable city. In gratitude they also served in the ranks of the Dutch army which took possession of Brazil and other lands, including Curaçao.

Among the Marranos in Amsterdam returned to Judaism was one João de Yllan, known also as Jeojada, Jeudah and Johanan de Yllan.[15] (His father had assumed the Jewish name of Abraham Barase or Barasco.[16]) De Yllan was born in Porto Alegre, Portugal, in 1609, and there he was denounced for Judaizing. Once established in Amsterdam, he engaged in commerce and traded with his uncle in Dutch Brazil, Joseph Frances, outstanding merchant and food supplier to the soldiers of the Company.[17] De Yllan's business thrived and he became quite prosperous between 1640-44. He became a member of the Santa Companhia de Dotar Orfas in 1641,[18] Parnas of the Bicur Holim brotherhood in 5402 (1641-42) and undertook one year later the costly honor of Bridegroom of the Law at the Portuguese synagogue in Amsterdam. During the same period he erected a beautiful, luxurious mansion in that city.[19]

While he was doing business with his uncle in Pernambuco, another member of his family, Jacob Delian, joined the Dutch army in Brazil as

[13] The parnassim of Curaçao twice mention the year 1581 in their defense of April 29, 1727, to the Island Council (WICA 216, Petersen vs. Parnassim).

[14] About the third synagogue, see Emmanuel, "Yedi'oth ḥadashoth 'al ha-Kehila ha-Portuguesith me-Amsterdam," *Oẓar Yehudé Sepharad*, vol. VI (Jerusalem, 1963), pp. 160-61, 173-74.

[15] The archives of the Portuguese Jewish Community of Amsterdam (= PJCAA) refer to him as Jeoada and Jeoyadan just as often as Jeudah (Dotar, Termos C, 1639-61, no. 143; *ibid.*, Termos E, 1735-87, p. 11; Acordos da Naçao, p. 696; Fintas, ano 1677, Tezoreiro Mosse de Matatia Aboab (ms. at the Ets Haim); GAA 2204, Notary (= Not.) Lock, Feb. 6, 1658; De Castro Mzn, *De Synagoge der Portugeesch-Israelitische Gemeente te Amsterdam* ['s Gravenhage, 1875], p. LIV. De Yllan signs as "Joao de Yllan" (GAA 2905, Not. Padthuysen, Feb. 24, 1672). He also appears in the WIC records as "Delian" (Hamelberg, *ibid.*, p. 45).

[16] His name, as father of Joao and Esther de Yllan, appears in GAA, DTB 676, f. 31v; 675, f. 5.

[17] RA, Staten Generaal, 83, p. 94v; *ibid.*, no. 3229, meeting of Feb. 22, 1658; GAA 2213, Not. Lock, p. 55; Emmanuel, "NLEAJ," *AJA*, *ibid.*, pp. 17, 48; PJCAA, Acordos, p. 626.

[18] PJCAA, Dotar, Termos C, 1639-61, p. 18v. He was "brother" (member) no. 143 under the names Jeoada and Jeuda.

[19] GAA 1780, Not. Venturin, June 22, 1643.

captain, later becoming a colonel. He fell in battle[20] while defending the country which had given him liberty of conscience.

For many years the Dutch West India Company sought to make Curaçao the center of its West Indies slave trade. When their Vice Director Jacob Pietersz Tolck (1638-41?) failed to achieve that goal, they seriously considered giving private individuals the right to colonize and trade freely in Curaçao. Beginning with 1643 while Peter Stuyvesant was governor of Curaçao, the slave trade picked up, and after 1648 Curaçao became a flourishing slave trade center. Despite the improvement, the Company realized that not even a profitable slave trade could bring to the island the stable, orderly economy that only colonists and tradesmen could give it. Therefore the Company went ahead and issued its proclamation inviting settlers to go to Curaçao.

No stranger to the idea of taking risks, Joao de Yllan accepted the offer. He immediately entered into negotiations with the Company to found a Jewish colony in Curaçao. In case of difficulty, he could count on the support of his father-in-law, the then very influential Dr. Jacob Bueno.[21] In March, 1651, he obtained a contract, a copy of which was sent to Stuyvesant as director of New Netherland and overseer of Curaçao.[22]

Letters exchanged between the Company and Stuyvesant reveal that De Yllan had promised to bring fifty colonists to Curaçao. A report from Vice Governor Rodenburch to Stuyvesant makes it appear that De Yllan was unable to recruit more than twelve, including Abraham Drago who had spent some time in Brazil.[23]

In June, 1651, before leaving for Curaçao, De Yllan petitioned the States General of Holland for letters of introduction to Vice Director Lucas Rodenburch and to Stuyvesant so that they might "aid him to support himself, protect him and assist him . . . for the cultivation of his colony."[24]

[20] Jacob Delian took a loyalty oath on Sept. 18, 1647 (RA, Commissieboek, Raad van Staten, no. 1527, p. 220). His widow, applying as widow of Colonel Delian, petitioned the States General of Holland for his back pay and got it (RA, Staten Generaal, no. 3228, meetings of Nov. 11 and 26, 1649, pp. 503, 510).

[21] De Yllan married in Amsterdam in June, 1641. His wife, Rachel Bueno, who was also born in Porto Alegre, Portugal (GAA, DTB 676, f. 31v), died in Amsterdam in 1655.

[22] G. Herbert Cone, "The Jews in Curaçao," *Publications of the American Jewish Historical Society* (= *PAJHS*) 10:147.

[23] To Isak Azevedo he assigned his right to claim 1,582:5:0 florins from the Portuguese Crown for assets left in Brazil (GAA 2908, Not. Padthuysen, July 27, 1674; I. S. Emmanuel, "Seventeenth Century Brazilian Jewry, A Critical Review" [= SCBJ], *AJA*, vol. XIV, no. 1 [Cincinnati, 1962], p. 51).

[24] "There having come to the assembly the petition of Jean de Yllan, owner and proprietor of a certain 'colony' on the island of Curaçao by virtue of a contract made with the directors of the West

Since the Company did not permit the purchase of slaves, Drago took the precaution of bringing along for a fourteen-year period one Juan Pinto, a 33-year-old native of Angola.[25]

At the same time that De Yllan headed for Curaçao with his group of colonists, there were several Jews who joined him as independent businessmen. We know of the following: David Machoro and Jean Cardoso who entered into a four-year contract with Francisco Lopes Henriques and Antonio Luis in Amsterdam on June 2, 1651, to settle in Curaçao. Each partner invested 150 florins and was to share equally in the profits and losses. Another document of the same date states that Luis lent Cardoso the required amount. Cardoso was ready to embark for Curaçao on the *St. Joris*.[26] Luis apparently did not set out, or returned shortly afterwards to Amsterdam where he is encountered in 1660 busying himself with the Jewish colonization of Cayenne.[27]

In spite of their good will, without slaves De Yllan and Drago could not dedicate themselves completely to tilling the soil. They had to engage also in trading which consisted mainly of the export of horses and logwood. Rodenburch complained about this in his letter of April 2, 1654, to Stuyvesant and expressed the hope that De Yllan's contract would soon be cancelled for want of the fifty colonists promised. He also reported that the ten or twelve Jewish colonists working under "'Jan Dilan' . . . all wished to get rid of him and become planters under the protection of the Company." That means that the colonists were pleased to stay on the island. Whatever the situation, the Company felt that the planters could do as they wished after the end of the contract.[28] It is quite possible that one or another of the newcomers left Curaçao. The *Tudesco* (German Jew) captured by English pirates on his homeward journey and ransomed off by the Portuguese Jewish community of Hamburg in 1654[29] may have been one of them.

India Company, requesting letters of introduction from the States General to the Messrs. Lucas Rodenburgh, vice governor of the aforesaid island, and Peter Stuyvesant, governor of New Netherland, ordering them to assist in maintaining and protecting him or his mandatee or submandatee against all inconvenience, and also to assist and be helpful to him, the petitioner, in cultivating and planting his 'colony,' and it having been deliberated upon, was approved." (Staten Generaal, no. 76, p. 368; Hamelberg, *ibid.*, p. 45, and *Documenten*, no. 63, p. 89, give an extract of this resolution but without the archival number and folio. Hamelberg did not know that De Yllan was Jewish.)

25 GAA 1593, Not. Hassen, May 3, 1651.

26 GAA 1097, pp. 130, 137-38, Not. J. van der Veen (courtesy Dr. Simon Hart, Amsterdam). The Amsterdam parnassim apparently attended to procuring passports for several of these emigrants (PJCAA 239, pp. 175, 179).

27 See below, footnote 64.

28 Cone, *ibid.*, p. 152.

29 Max Grünwald, *Portugiesengräber auf deutscher Erde* (Hamburg, 1902), p. 24.

The Company apparently did not renew De Yllan's contract, probably because he had not sought its renewal. But it is certain that Drago was in Amsterdam in April, 1655,[30] and that De Yllan shipped a cargo of paintings from Amsterdam in 1658 to one Jan Barasco in Cadix, probably a relative of De Yllan's father.[31] In 1666 he figured among Shabbethai Zevi's followers in Amsterdam. As such, on February 5, 1666, he petitioned the king of England to give him a pass for a Dutch ship to transfer some fifty Jewish families to Jerusalem. Since Holland was then at war with England, he wanted to be sure that he, his ship, and his passengers would not be molested en route by the English fleet.[32]

In spite of his difficulties with Rodenburch, De Yllan remained on good terms with the Company. In 1668 he requested that they furnish him salt from the isle of Bonaire.[33] In 1675, as an agent for others, he offered to supply the Company 1,500-2,000 slaves from Rio Calabary.[34] As for Drago,[35] he retained a certain interest in Curaçao. He will be met later as an agent for Jews and Christians desiring to settle there.

COLONIZATION ATTEMPT BY DAVID NASSI IN 1652

While De Yllan was struggling with his colonists and smarting from Vice Director Rodenburch's failure to assist him, one David [Cohen] Nassi, also known as Joseph Nunes da Fonseca and as Christovaõ de Tavora, obtained a patent from the Company on February 22, 1652, for the installation of fifty colonists in Curaçao.

[30] GAA 975B, Not. Baddel, April 16, 1655. Drago apparently left Amsterdam again and returned in 1661 (PJCAA, Acordos, p. 494). In 1664, at the age of 36, he married Abigail Naar, 26, in Amsterdam and received a dowry of 10,000 florins. She was accompanied by her uncle Jacob de Pina, alias Manuel Naar (GAA 3187, Not. Outgers, f. 108, May 27, 1664; DTB 686, f. 49v, erroneously gives Abigail's surname as *Nassi* instead of Naar).

[31] GAA 3583, Not. Snel, Dec. 14, 1668, refers to the sale made in 1658.

[32] Cecil Roth, *A History of the Jews of England* (Oxford, 1941), p. 175; Gershon Shalom, *Shabbethai Zevi* (Tel Aviv, 1957), pp. 439-40.

[33] Hamelberg, *ibid.*, p. 45. Bonaire is one of six islands of the Netherlands Antilles.

[34] RA, WICA 330, March 7, 1675, p. 113. It seems that De Yllan remained in Amsterdam all along, for he figures among the synagogue donors between 1666 and 1677. In 1671 he donated 50 florins for the construction of the Portuguese synagogue in Amsterdam (PJCAA 216, pp. 781, 919; Acordos, p. 696). Because of his modest circumstances in 1677, he was assessed only five florins' community tax (PJCAA, Fintas, ano 5437). He died childless in Amsterdam in 1696 whereupon his membership in the "Dotar" passed on to Mosseh Israel Nunes (Dotar, Termos E, p. 11).

[35] In re Drago and family, see PJCAA, Acordos, pp. 294, 693.

Nassi, then forty, had spent a period of time in Brazil.[36] It is likely that he took the decision to colonize Curaçao at the suggestion of De Yllan's companion Drago.[37] Burdened with the war in Brazil and the heavy drain which Curaçao occasioned, the Company welcomed Nassi's proposition. For the nonce they put aside thoughts of abandoning Curaçao and gave him a contract similar to De Yllan's.[38] Under its terms, the fifty colonists had to devote themselves to agriculture and, eventually, to cattle-raising. The Company reserved for itself the working of the salt pits and the timber they called *stockvish hout* — logwood.

Nassi was granted two miles of land along the seacoast for every fifty persons (art. 5), divers tax exemptions for ten years (arts. 6 and 8), and the right to capture and deliver to the Company Portuguese vessels under certain conditions (art. 9). Patroon and colonists were guaranteed that Vice Director Rodenburch would assist them and defend them by all means against hostile attack and that, if they wished, he would sell them guns or muskets for their self-defense (art. 10). The 12th and last article clearly and definitely sets forth that the patroon would enjoy the same privileges that the Company accorded to the patroons of colonies in New Netherland, "as much at least as the present situation of that island shall permit."[39]

Provision for religious liberty is conspicuously absent. However, art. 11 prohibits Nassi from forcing Christians to work on Sundays or from molesting them in the exercise of their faith.

There are cogent reasons for believing that Nassi failed to accomplish his project. The war between Holland and England (1652-54) may have been responsible. Perhaps Nassi did not even reach Curaçao. If he did, he probably was unable to muster as many as De Yllan's twelve colonists. It is significant that Rodenburch's letter to Stuyvesant of April 2, 1654, refers to De Yllan and the Jewish colonists but is silent about Nassi. That omission indicates that Nassi was neither in Curaçao in 1654 nor had definite plans for colonization. There is not a single reference in the valuable manuscript notes of

[36] He appears as "Christoffel de Tavera, alias David Nassi," in the list of residents of Dutch Brazil who had indemnity claims against the Portuguese Crown (Emmanuel, "SCBJ," *AJA*, p. 56).

[37] This is surmised from these facts: Nassi was married to one Rebecca, a.k.a. Maria, Drago; his son Samuel of Surinam kept in close touch with Abraham Drago years after the latter's return from Curaçao.

[38] The directors of the Company at Amsterdam wrote Stuyvesant on April 4, 1652: "We have granted a like privilege [Jean Dillan's] to a Portuguese Joseph Nunes de Fonseca, alias David Nassi" (Cone, *ibid.*, pp. 148-50).

[39] This contract was published for the first time by Cone, *ibid.*, pp. 148-50. Regarding the Jews in Curaçao, see Jossy M. L. Maduro, "De Portugeesche Joden in Curaçao," published in the *Gedenkboek Nederland-Curaçao 1634-1934* (Amsterdam, 1934), pp. 69-78.

the late A. M. Vaz Dias (painstaking investigator of numerous notarial documents of Amsterdam of that era) that Jews of Amsterdam left for Curaçao in 1652 or 1653. The author did not find any clue to Nassi's project either in the records of the Portuguese Jewish community of Amsterdam or in the decisions of the States General of Holland and the West India Company for 1652.[40]

Nassi was in Amsterdam in November, 1656.[41] The following year he entered into a contract with the Company to found a colony in "Essequebo."[42] Two years later he signed an agreement to colonize Cayenne. Neither the Cayenne contract nor the minutes of the States General of Holland applying to Nassi — without the alias — refers to his Curaçao contract.[43] Was the Company's reservation of certain rights to itself, if Nassi did not plant his Cayenne land grant within four years, an indirect allusion to his possible failure to colonize Curaçao? If Nassi had really founded a colony in Curaçao, it is doubtful that he would have left his colonists to their own devices so soon and set out to start another colony. He had expected to stay on the island for ten years and for that reason had asked for a partial exemption of taxes.

Confronted with their failure to colonize Curaçao,[44] the States of Holland

[40] For the reasons given by I. S. Emmanuel in *Precious Stones of the Jews of Curaçao, Curaçaon Jewry, 1656-1957* (New York, 1957), pp. 143-44, the grave of Judith Nunes da Fonseca, y. 1668 (?), cannot be that of a member of the David Cohen Nassi family. It probably belongs to the family of Isaac [Nunes?] da Fonseca who had been trading with Curaçao since 1656. Nassi was proud of his name Cohen as is shown by his tombstone in Amsterdam where there is engraved the usual symbol of the priestly family, namely, the hands extended in blessing. Therefore, if Judith Nunes da Fonseca was a relative of his, he would have had her gravestone read, Judith Cohen Nassi.

[41] He attended the wedding of his daughter Sara, 22, to Ishac Drago, 29, both born in Amsterdam (GAA, DTB 683, f. 45). Nassi had planned to send his son-in-law to Cayenne in 1660 (GAA 2889, Not. Padthuysen, June 26, 1660). Later on, Ishac Drago settled in Curaçao where he acted as Bridegroom of the Law in the Feast of Tabernacles, 1681 (see appendix 12, y. 5442).

[42] OWICA 41, Nov. 26, 1657.

[43] Staten Generaal, Loket Kas; OWICA 42, Sept. 11 and 12, 1659. This contract was first published anonymously in *Essai Historique sur la Colonie de Surinam*, vol. 2 (Paramaribo, 1788), pp. 113-28, without giving source. Reprinted by Frederick O. Dentz in his *De Kolonisatie van de Portugeesch Joodsche Natie in Suriname* (Amsterdam, 1927), pp. 40-44, again without source. Hamelberg's *Documenten*, p. 108, discussing art. 7 on religious liberty, cites the archives but not the tome.

[44] Curiously, Nassi's name is thereafter absent from the Dutch records on Curaçao and appears only with relation to the Cayenne colony. On the other hand, the names of Jan de Yllan and Abraham Drago figure prominently, the first to the year 1675, and the second to 1680. In 1662 Nassi declared before Not. Lock in Amsterdam that he had received for his Cayenne colony 52 negro slaves from Abraham Cohen [do Brazil] who had paid the Company 2,995.50 florins cash for them, and that he would reimburse Cohen within three years (GAA 2213, Not. Lock, Sept. 26, 1662). Barrios relates that Nassi, with great erudition, wrote the first Spanish volume of "Geographia Blaeuiana" (*Relación de los Poetas y Escritores Españoles de la Nación Judáyca Amstelodáma*, p. 63). Nassi died in Amsterdam on Elul 1, 5445 (Aug. 31, 1685).

and West Friesland decided to offer better inducements for migration to Curaçao and to extend attractive facilities for trading with the Caribbean islands. They ordered the Town Council of Amsterdam to announce this to all merchants (December 17, 1652).[45]

The Jews of Amsterdam, however, were not interested in weathering the hardships of an arid, undeveloped island. The few Jewish settlers in Curaçao were fast drifting away. A German Jew, as already observed, had sailed for Europe in 1654. Others departed in 1656. Governor Mathias Beck's letter of March 21, 1656, to Peter Stuyvesant relates that he granted the petition of four Jews to leave Curaçao "as their presence here is more injurious than profitable."[46]

The task of bringing Jews to Curaçao on a solid basis fell to Isaac da Costa.

THE SETTLEMENT OF 1659

After ruling continuously for twenty-four years, the Dutch had to abandon Brazil. Some 600 Jews left with them, most of whom returned to Amsterdam[47] in the summer of 1654 while De Yllan was still in Curaçao. They swelled the number of Amsterdam's Jewish families to some 400. To help these refugees in their dire circumstances, the States of Holland and West Friesland convened on July 29, 1654, and decided to grant them divers tax exemptions. The Portuguese Jewish community also lent assistance, but other measures had to be adopted. Some Brazilian refugees left for New Netherland, but many were soon driven back by Stuyvesant's open hostility.[48] Others went to London, Barbados, Martinique and Essequibo.[49]

[45] Resolutions of the States of Holland and West Friesland, meeting of Dec. 17, 1652.

[46] Cone, *ibid.*, pp. 154-55; Edward Peterson, *History of Rhode Island and Newport* (New York, 1853), p. 181; Jacob Mendes de Solla, *The Jewish Student's Companion* (New York, 1880), p. 169, states that Jews from Curaçao settled in Newport in 1657; Max J. Kohler, "The Jews in Newport," *PAJHS* 6:63-64, correctly points out that Peterson was mistaken in the year which actually was 1694. Kohler also discloses that another author had doubted Peterson's statement (*MGWI*, vol. 4, 1855, p. 299). According to Samuel Oppenheim, it was probably the Jews of Essequibo who went to New York, via Curaçao, in 1658 (*PAJHS* 34:7).

[47] Samuel Oppenheim, *PAJHS* 19:39; Emmanuel, "NLEAJ," *AJA*, 1955, p. 60; "SCBJ," *AJA*, 1962, pp. 40-48. Oppenheim devoted his entire lifetime to compiling from various archives a wealth of material about the Jews of Brazil. He was the first to translate the *hascamoth* (regulations) of the Zur Israel community of Recife from Portuguese into English and numerous other documents from Dutch into English, to which he added accompanying personal notes. His priceless archives are kept at the library of the American Jewish Historical Society in Waltham, Mass.

[48] Emmanuel, "NLEAJ," *AJA*, 1955, pp. 15-18, 48-56.

[49] Emmanuel, *ibid.*, pp. 18-20. In re Martinique, see Emmanuel, "Les Juifs de la Martinique et leurs Coreligionnaires d'Amsterdam au XVIIe Siècle," *Revue des Etudes Juives* [= *REJ*], CXXIII, 1964, pp. 511-16.

Surely, colony-minded Jews must have heard about De Yllan's colonization project from Drago and other ex-residents of Curaçao. They also must have learned to their dismay that neither Rodenburch nor Stuyvesant allowed the purchase of slaves, without which colonization in the tropics was doomed from the outset. The refugees therefore flocked to beckoning Barbados with its rolling sugar plantations. Before long the Dutch West India Company — which was concerned more with trade than with politics — took practical measures to stem this flow to Barbados and to compete with the lively English trade. Jeosuah Henriquez, who was in Curaçao already in 1656, also did his part to encourage friends in Amsterdam to join him.[50] Between the Company and Henriquez a goodly number of Jews decided to set out for Curaçao.

With a grant accorded by the Company on March 31, 1659, Isaac da Costa headed the group. A nephew of Uriel da Costa,[51] he probably was among the first Jewish settlers in Brazil. In Recife he had been counted among the prominent Jewish merchants and his father and uncles were outstanding personalities of the Portuguese Jewish community of Amsterdam. Da Costa felt that he could depend on them for help if he ran into difficulties with the Dutch authorities in Curaçao, and he also set great store on the cooperation of Governor Mathias Beck,[52] who had lived in Brazil for many years. Surely Beck must have known of him and some of his companions, and would be friendly.

A sprinkling of Brazilian refugees who knew Da Costa had enough confidence in him to go along. Thus he was able to gather several families, "making more than 70 souls, adults as well as children of our nation."[53] A group such as his would not venture forth without a Holy Scroll of the Law — the sainted book which had always accompanied Israel on her journeys. The Portuguese community of Amsterdam entrusted one to him under certain conditions on May 11, 1659.[54]

Da Costa's settlers have been regarded by all succeeding generations as the forebears of Curaçoan Jewry.[55] These pioneering families of 1659 — pro-

[50] WICA 243, pp. 171-72; see Emmanuel, *Precious Stones*, pp. 197-98, and particularly pp. 203-4, for full details on Henriquez and his family.

[51] Uriel da Costa had three brothers with children: Mordechay, Abraham and Joseph. Three of Abraham's sons — one of them Isaac — had been in Brazil; Joseph also had a son called Isaac. Most probably our Isaac was Abraham's son. See Isaac da Costa, *Israel en de Volken* (Utrecht, 1876), p. 474.

[52] He had a claim of 235,986 florins against the Portuguese Crown for assets abandoned in Brazil (Emmanuel, "SCBJ," *AJA*, 1962, p. 57).

[53] WICA 243, no. 127, p. 17.

[54] Emmanuel, "NLEAJ," *AJA*, p. 20. See appendix 4B; illus. 4.

[55] WICA 205, p. 157.

genitors of today's Portuguese Jews of Curaçao — were Aboab, Aboab Cardozo, Chaves, Henriquez Cotinho, Jesurun, De Leon or Leaõ, Marchena, De Meza, Oliveira, La Parra, Pereira and Touro.[56] There is reason to doubt that some of them, especially the La Parra or De La Parra family, ever set foot in Curaçao. The omission of the name Da Costa is also surprising. That other families accompanied Da Costa, or followed him, after a short time, is clearly borne out in the notarial records of the City of Amsterdam. Those documents show that the following persons had settled their affairs preparatory to embarking for Curaçao between 1659-60: Philippa Nunes (widow of Michiel de Crasto, alias Michael Namias) and her son Simon Nehemias and daughter Hana Nunes;[57] Isaac Serano and family with their mulatto servant;[58] Sara (alias Leonore de los Angeles), widow of Abraham de Marchena,[59] with her two minor children Jacob and Esther, and her son Ishac and his wife Ribca; Jeronimo Nunes Navarro (alias Isak Navarro),[60] and Jacob Frances (alias Jacob Lopes).[61] These people either formed part of Da Costa's contingent or followed him directly afterwards. Among the merchants and colonists of 1659-60 were David Seraiva,[62] Isaac Pereira Coutinho (who represented his prosperous merchant uncles Abraham and Isaac Pereira of Amsterdam in 1660),[63] and Joseph da Silva.[64] The Portuguese Jewish Community, on its

[56] Joseph M. Corcos, *A Synopsis of the History of the Jews of Curaçao* (Curaçao, 1897), 48 pp., p. 7.

[57] Aron da Fonseca, a worker in Manuel [Namias] de Crasto's tobacco factory, freed himself of his engagement to marry Hana, d. of Michiel Namias de Crasto, by paying her 8,000 florins in the presence of her mother Philippa and her brother Simon on the guarantee that Hana would go with her brother Simon "who is about to leave for Curaçao" (GAA 1558, Not. Oli, May 6, 1659). In re the first Namias in Curaçao, see Emmanuel, *Precious Stones*, pp. 169-73; about the first Namias in Amsterdam, see Jac Zwart, *De Eerste Rabbijnen . . . van Amsterdam* (Amsterdam, 1929), pp. 114-16.

[58] GAA 2989, Not. Lavello, p. 185, June 17, 1659.

[59] Abraham had been in Brazil (Emmanuel, "SCBJ," *AJA*, p. 51). Re Marchena's departure for Curaçao, see GAA 2206, Not. Lock, June 17, 1659. See about the first Marchena in Curaçao, Emmanuel, *Precious Stones*, pp. 155-56, 162-63, 165, 178, 214-15.

[60] GAA 2207, Not. Lock, Nov. 17, 1659. Jeronimo, alias Isak, had three brothers: Jacob to whom he gave his power of attorney before going to Curaçao, and Moses and Aron who, like him, had lived in Brazil.

[61] Before leaving for Curaçao, Jacob Frances gave a power of attorney to Jacob Belmonte, alias Jacob van den Berge (GAA 2207, Not. Lock, Nov. 23, 1659).

[62] GAA 2209, Not. Lock, Sept. 16, 1660.

[63] GAA 1558, Not. Oli, Nov. 12, 1660.

[64] GAA, Not. Lock, March 3, 1660. A few months earlier, Abraham Cohen [do Brazil] and Antonio Luis chartered the *Hamburch*, under the command of Captain Jacob Martss Cloot, to transport cargo and passengers, including several Jews, to Cayenne and Curaçao (GAA 2207, pp. 279-82, Not. Lock [courtesy Dr. Simon Hart, Amsterdam]).

part, gave financial assistance to several emigrants bound for Curaçao between 1659 and 1660.[65]

PRIVILEGES GIVEN TO DA COSTA *et al.*

Da Costa's contract is missing. It is neither at the Royal Dutch Archives at The Hague nor in the archives of the Portuguese Jewish community of Curaçao. Hamelberg, one of the first to make an orderly study of the Royal Dutch Archives at The Hague, as far as they relate to the Company, revealed that already in 1664 important documents concerning the Company could not be found.[66] Unfortunately, the same holds true for the old archives of Curaçao for the years 1634-1707. Although the present author made a painstaking search, the contract did not turn up. In their petitions or letters to the Dutch authorities, the Jews of Curaçao often referred solely to Da Costa's arrival in 1659 or to the privileges accorded that year.[67]

However, certain pertinent facts concerning these privileges came to light in 1825. In that year Curaçoan Jews were "emancipated" and put in a position of equality with other citizens. In return the Jewish community had to surrender its old privileges. In their letter of December 2, 1825, the parnassim (wardens) furnished Governor Cantz'laar a list of the old privileges they had enjoyed.[68] It also included those given to Da Costa *et al.* and was designated in these terms:

> No. 1. Concession given by the Directors of the West India Company, at Amsterdam, under date of March 31, 1659, to Isaak da Costa and Company concerning the free exercise of their religion here, [the right] to be protected [by the authorities], the privilege of building houses, and other privileges, etc.[69]

As the parnassim Jacob de Jeosuah Naar and Eliau Lopez, who had signed the letter, had only the original and no copy of this or other privileges obtained over the years, they wrote the governor that these documents were being

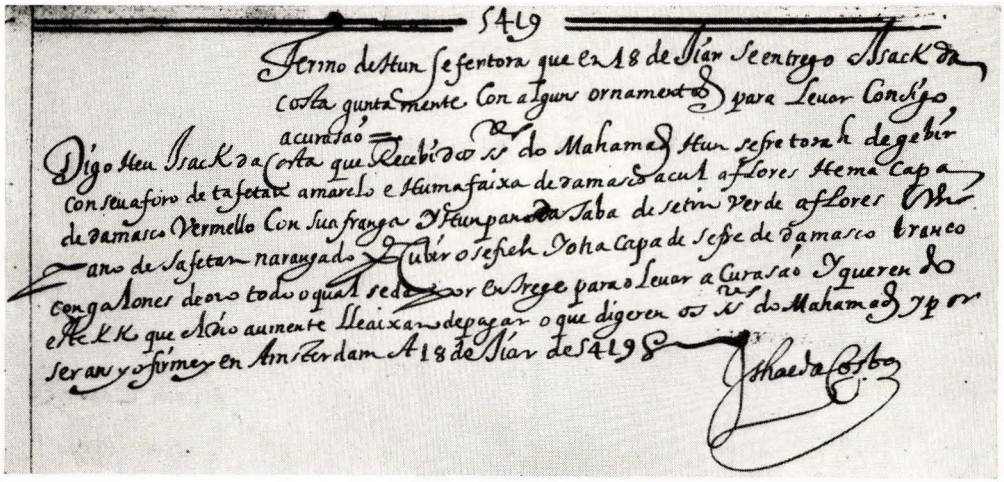
[65] PJCAA 240, pp. 102-103.

[66] Hamelberg, *Documenten*, p. 14.

[67] WICA 566, pp. 574-76, y. 1702; WICA 205, p. 157, y. 1713; WICA 216, statement made on April 29, 1727, by Jacob Curiel, treasurer of the community, to the Court of Justice; OAC 2, no. 224, y. 1728; WICA 243, pp. 171-72, y. 1739; OAC 315, no. 780, y. 1825; Archives of the High Commission for Jewish Affairs, their letter of Dec. 25, 1855, to the Minister for Colonial Affairs (RA, Eeredienst). Probably basing himself on some of these archives, Dominie Bosch, *Reizen in West Indie*, vol. I (Utrecht, 1829), p. 268, gives 1659 as the year of settlement of the Jews in Curaçao.

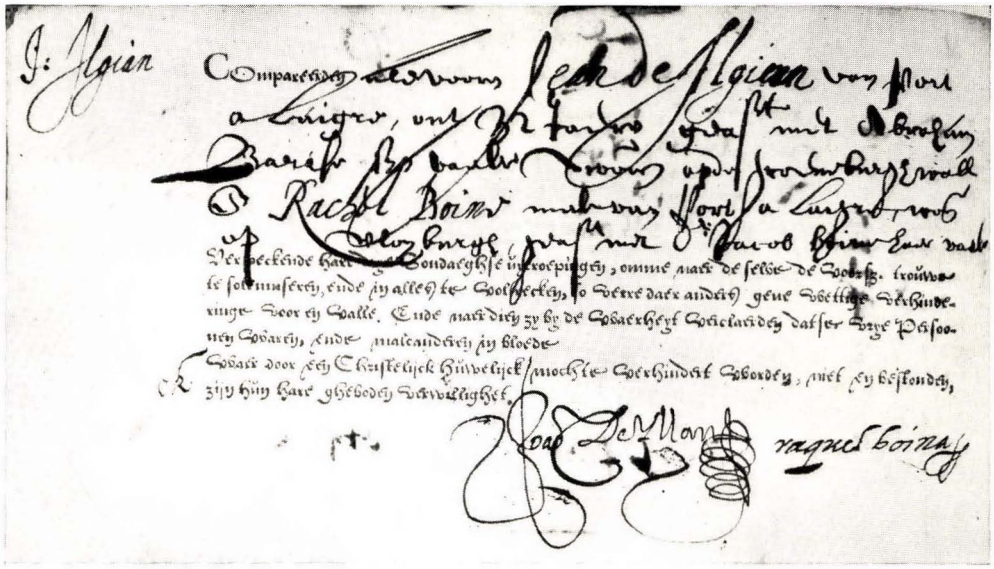
[68] See below, p. 335.

[69] OAC 315, citizens' letters to the governor, no. 780, Dec. 2, 1825.



4. RESOLUTION OF THE AMSTERDAM PORTUGUESE JEWISH COMMUNITY GRANTING PIONEER ISHAC DA COSTA A SEPHER TORAH FOR CURAÇAO, 1659

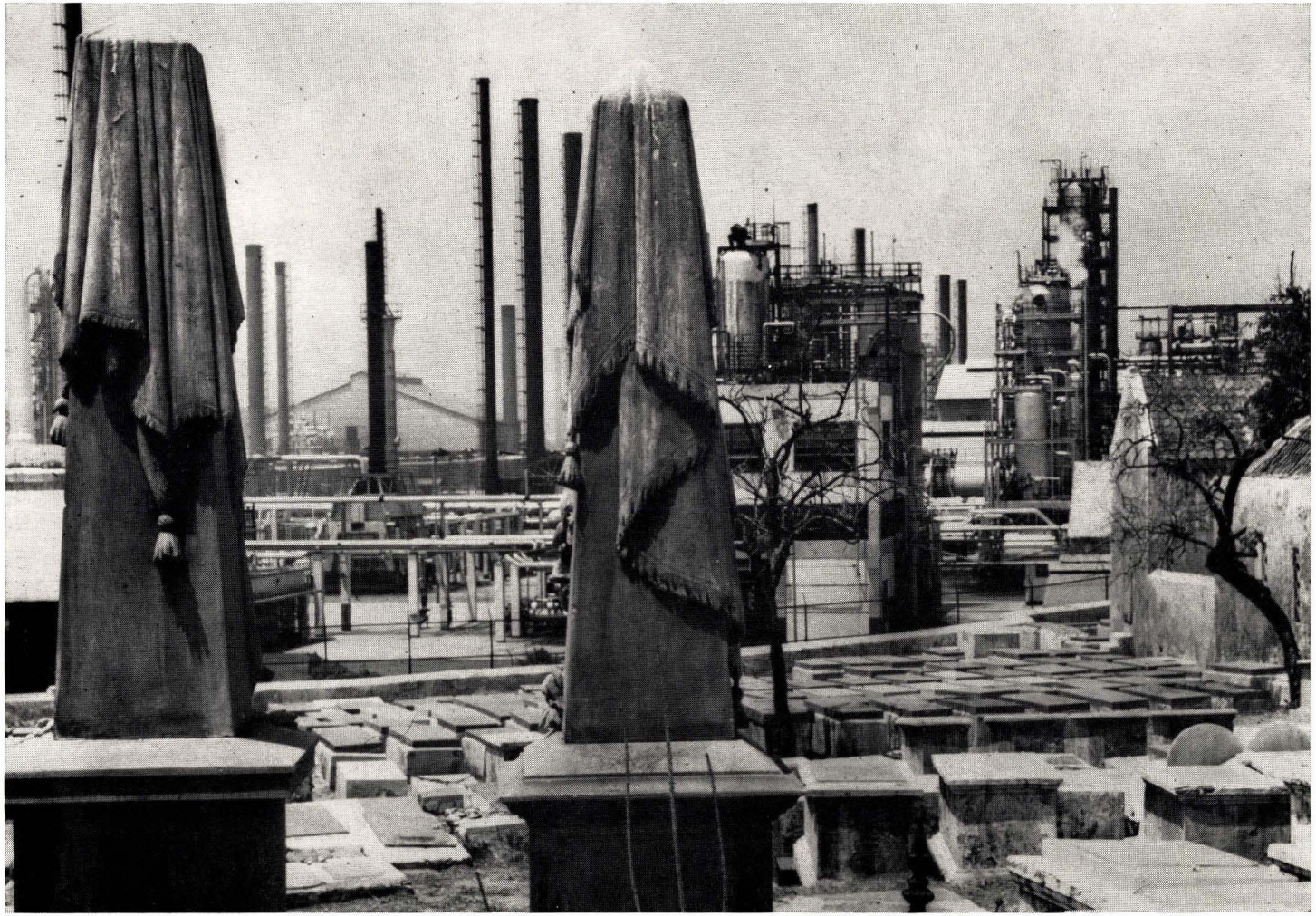
5. SIGNATURE, SAMUEL COHEN, CURAÇAO'S FIRST JEW, 1634



6. CIVIL MARRIAGE RECORD OF JOAO DE YLLAN, AMSTERDAM, 1641

7. THE OLDEST TOMBSTONE IN THE OLD JEWISH CEMETERY, CURAÇAO, IEUDITH NUNES DA FONSECA, 1668 (?)

8. THE ABOVE TOMBSTONE ERASED BY THE OIL REFINERY GASES



9. OIL REFINERY INSTALLATIONS BORDERING THE OLD JEWISH CEMETERY

10. DETAIL ON THE TOMBSTONE OF RACHEL DE CHAVES, 1705

11. DETAIL ON THE TOMBSTONE OF ESTER,
WIFE OF SELOMOH SENIOR, 1714

submitted *ter visie in Lecture* — to be seen and read — in other words, to be returned to them. Those priceless papers therefore were in Curaçao in 1825 and probably remained there until 1897 when Hazzan Corcos wrote his *Synopsis*.

Da Costa's privileges were superior to those earlier given to De Yllan and Nassi, because

1. The Jewish community could, to a certain extent, expect support from the local government in disciplining its members.

2. The Jewish colonists were allowed to buy slaves directly from the *asientos* — slave deposits — and build houses.

3. The Jews were specifically granted religious freedom. Da Costa's was the first privilege of this nature accorded to Jews in North and Central America. Neither the Nassi nor De Yllan Curaçao contracts provided for religious freedom; Nassi's Cayenne contract was issued five months later.

In addition to these privileges, Da Costa was armed with excellent recommendations from the Company to Governor Beck who was ordered to supply patroon and colonists with aid, slaves, horses and land.[70] Beck gave them two miles of land along the seacoast between the area currently known as Habaai[71] and Blein Heim where the Old Jewish Cemetery is located. In time this strip of land was enlarged. As late as 1852 it was recognized as the *Joode Quartier* — Jewish Quarter.[72] Beck also sold the settlers slaves. So important was this concession that already in December, 1659, Stuyvesant, by way of complaint, asked the Company to grant the settlers of New Netherland "if not more, at least the same privileges and . . . the same terms as to the usurious and covetous Jews."[73]

[70] OAC 2, no. 224, p. 5.

[71] Alteration of the name Gabay [Henriquez], former owner of this plantation (Marten D. Teenstra, *De Nederlandsche West-Indische eilanden*, vol. I [Amsterdam, 1837], p. 98). See appendix 2, plantation "Welgelegen."

[72] The *Joode Quartier* originally extended from the Habaai plantation to the Valantijn and included the plantations Marchena, Gasparito, De Hoop, Blein Heim and Asiento. It bordered the public highway leading to the Hato plantation. It became enlarged over the years and according to the records of the period embraced these plantations: Beraha Vesalom (OAC 880, y. 1761), Buena Esperanza (WICA 580, p. 683v, y. 1732), Cattenberg (OAC 807, y. 1737), Goed Gezigt (OAC 1103, no. 59, y. 1801), Klijn Thuijn (OAC 807, no. 90, y. 1744), Nieuwe Wereld, alias Eensamheid (OAC 824, y. 1750), Puerto Escondido (OAC 826, y. 1752), Roose Tak, alias Gasparito (WICA 591, p. 744v, y. 1739), Rosendaal (OAC 907, no. 74, y. 1770), Rustenberg (OAC 806, y. 1737), St. Kruis, alias Koeimans (y. 1748), Sta. Maria Magdalena (OAC 1107, no. 64, y. 1805), Savaan (OAC 1086, no. 93, y. 1784), Spijkertuintje (WICA 578, p. 55v, y. 1724), Starckenborgh (CGAR 111, y. 1826), Cunucu de Uijtvlugt (OAC 1091, no. 27, y. 1789), Vredenberg (OAC 904, y. 1767), Vrijheijt (OAC 822, y. 1749) and Zorgvliet (OAC 904, no. 50, y. 1770). See appendix 2 for more details.

[73] Cone, *ibid.*, pp. 155-56.

The Jewish pioneers had an auspicious start. They were given the opportunity, the land, animals and slaves. They had the cooperation and assistance of the local government. And they also had the inspiration — religious freedom — and the willingness to work. The directors of the Company recognized the Jews as a useful element that could be depended upon to develop Curaçao. History has borne them out, as the ensuing chapters will unfold.

CHAPTER II

FOUNDATION OF CONGREGATION "MIKVE ISRAEL"

ALTHOUGH BORN in "lands of idolatry," as Spain and Portugal were called, De Yllan and Drago were eager to follow a Jewish way of life on their plantations. De Yllan surely improvised a synagogue out of a small house in 1651, and that first house of worship probably stood in the fields where the colonists toiled. If, as is probable, David Nassi and his group did not reach Curaçao, community life did not have a chance to take shape before 1656 when a few more settlers — perhaps a sprinkling of disappointed Brazilian refugees from New Netherland and from the French Antilles[1] — joined the tiny Jewish group. Though some Jews left Curaçao between 1654 and 1656, the Jewish community of a sort founded by De Yllan and his group in 1651[2] became definitely consolidated in 1659. Religious leaders of the community, from the earliest years up to 1855, recognized 1659 as the year of the community's foundation.[3]

The immigrants of 1659 included men who had served as parnassim in Recife, Brazil. Such a one was Eliau Namias de Crasto[4] described in a document of 1681 as being one "of the oldest [settlers] of Curaçao."[5] Others had been directors of one or another religious organization in Amsterdam. Still others, like Ishac de Marchena, had studied at the famous Ets Haim Seminary of Amsterdam.[6] The immigrants of 1659 can be properly considered the founders of the community, significantly called by the earlier settlers Mikvé Israel — Hope of Israel. Persecuted and exiled for their religious beliefs, they had every right to place their hopes in a tolerant, hospitable country.

[1] A family from Martinique was helped by the Portuguese Jewish community of Hamburg on 24 Tishri, 5415 (1654) [M. Grünwald, *ibid.*, p. 23].

[2] Samuel Oppenheim cites a fragment of a letter in Spanish addressed by one Ishack Rodrigues Cunha, while out of Curaçao, "to the Illustrious Gentlemen, the Mahamad of the Holy Congregation Mikveh Israel, Curaçao," on Ḥeshvan 2, 5415 (Oct. 13, 1654). This fragment was copied in 1897 by Joseph M. Corcos, hazzan of Congregation Mikvé Israel, Curaçao (*PAJHS* 29:50-51). Through this letter we know that already in 1654 the name of the Jewish community of Curaçao was K[ahal]. K[adosh]. Mikvé Israel. This name was given most probably by De Yllan and his group in 1651.

[3] See note 67, Chapter I.

[4] Emmanuel, *Precious Stones*, p. 171.

[5] WICA 617, pp. 90-93.

[6] Emmanuel, *ibid.*, p. 215.

The founders of the community promulgated various regulations which they termed *hascamoth* or resolutions.[7] These were based on the regulations of their mother community in Amsterdam, but adapted to the conditions of life on a tropical island. The first set took definite form in 5431 (1670-71), but ratification by all the members had to wait until 12 Tishri, 5449 (October 6, 1688).[8] These *hascamoth*, to be discussed later, were enforced by means of the excommunication. Such a formidable weapon could be wielded only by a competent rabbinical authority. So the next step was to engage a spiritual leader who could command the respect and gain the cooperation of the heterogeneous group such as made up their congregation. Some of these settlers had been reared as Christians for two generations or more. Some may have been ex-colonists of Essequibo, Cayenne or Tobago who had returned to Amsterdam in 1661 for want of bare necessities.[9] Others may have been disheartened emigrants from New Netherland, whose leader Abraham de Lucena restored to the Amsterdam Portuguese community the Holy Scroll of the Law previously entrusted to him.[10] What is certain is that after 1660 every Curaçao-bound ship from Holland carried a Jewish family on board. Interestingly enough, often it was our friend Abraham Drago of the De Yllan colonization project who, as a licensed broker, arranged to get them the necessary passports[11] from the Dutch West India Company. From time to time some Ashkenazi appeared who had indentured himself to the service of a Sephardi coreligionist. So it was with Ezekiel Moses. In 1671 he signed a bond, in Hebrew, indenturing himself for five years to Elias van Daalen [otherwise Dovale] who was sailing to Curaçao with his family. Ezekiel stipulated that he was to eat [*casher*] and sleep in Van Daalen's house.[12]

Community treasurer Ishac de Marchena therefore had good reason to select his former professor[13] at Rotterdam, Haham Josiau Pardo.

7 See appendix 1.

8 Letter of May 21, 1748, of the Curaçao parnassim to the Amsterdam parnassim (PJCAA, bundle).

9 PJCAA, Acordos, pp. 493-94. Compare Emmanuel's "NLEAJ," p. 23.

10 Emmanuel, *ibid.*, pp. 15-18, 48-56.

11 Abraham Drago applied to the Company and obtained passports on Aug. 23, 1675, for "some Portuguese" desiring to go to Curaçao (WICA 330, p. 182); on March 14, 1680, for seven families (WICA 335, p. 108); on Sept. 20, 1680, for Don Juan de Sandoral and his wife (WICA 335, p. 244v).

12 GAA 2904, Not. Padthuysen, Aug. 27, 1671. About Elias Dovale as Curaçao planter, see Emmanuel, *Precious Stones*, p. 149.

13 Daniel Barrios, *Triumpho del Govierno Popular*, p. 114.

HAHAM JOSIAU PARDO, 1674-1683

Haham Pardo, who probably was born in Amsterdam about 1626,[14] was descended from rabbis. His grandfather Joseph[15] and his father David, native-born Salonikans, had served as rabbis of the Amsterdam community. A classmate of Baruch Spinoza, he studied at the Ets Haim Seminary and was counted among Haham Saul Morteira's star pupils. While still in his early twenties, he was appointed in 1647 by the Pinto brothers — Don Gil Lopes Pinto, otherwise Abraham de Pinto, and Don Rodrigo Alvares Pinto, otherwise David Pinto — as rector of their *Yeshibah de los Pintos*[16] founded that year. This was the famous academy celebrated in verse and prose by Barrios and Menasseh ben Israel. Pardo did brilliantly. All the students — there must have been at least twelve to represent the tribes of Israel — did their master credit. They became writers, teachers, rabbis or cantors in Amsterdam, London, Middleburg and Surinam.

About 1648, and perhaps earlier, he was officiating as haham of Rotterdam where there had been a synagogue ever since 1610.[17] When Pardo had achieved a certain economic stability, he married Sara, the daughter of his professor, Saul Levy Morteira.[18] During his years in Rotterdam, Josiau mourned the loss of his father in 1657, his father-in-law[19] in 1660, and in

[14] In 1673 Pardo declared before Not. Tixerandet at Amsterdam that he was about 46 years old, which would mean he was born between 1625 and 1626 (GAA 3681, Oct. 30, 1673). His mother Rachel, daughter of Josias, otherwise Francisco, Sanches, died in 1627.

[15] Rabbi Joseph Pardo studied in Salonika, formerly the largest center of Sephardic Jewish theological sciences. His departure from that city is mentioned in the Ribbi Shelomo Hacohen *Responsa*, vol. 1 (Salonika, 1587), p. 120a. His sons Abraham and Isaac were among the directors of the Salonika community in 1625 (Isaac R. Molho and Abraham Amarillo, "Yalkut Hascamoth Saloniki beladino," *Sefunoth*, vol. 2 [Jerusalem, 1958], p. 52). For the Pardos of 16th century Salonika, see also Emmanuel, *Mazavoth Saloniki*, vol. 1 (Jerusalem, 1963), nos. 627, 746, pp. 274, 328; *MGWJ*, vol. 8, 1859, pp. 386-90.

[16] For details on the Pintos of Rotterdam, their academy and students, see Jac Zwart, *Hoofdstukken uit de Geschiedenis der Joden in Nederland* (Zutphen, 1929), pp. 88-117, appendices 1-2, pp. 3-6.

[17] When the Pintos arrived in Rotterdam in 1647, they founded this synagogue in the home of David Namias, also known as Joaõ da Veiga, a relative of the famous shipowner, Manuel Rodrigues Vega (J. Zwart, *ibid.*, p. 62).

[18] No record of Josiau's marriage could be found in Amsterdam. He was already married by Tabernacles, 1649, when he expressed a desire for children ("Mizbaḥ Hazahab," vol. 2, ms. at Ets Haim Library, p. 88).

[19] Haham Morteira's will, made in Amsterdam on Feb. 4, 1660, thanked his sons David and Jonathan for marrying off their sisters (Reina to Isaac Franco Castanho in 1640; Rachel to David Dovale in 1647; Sara to Josiau Pardo in or about 1648). To each of his two granddaughters, he left 150 florins for their marriage. His sons were enjoined to pay their mother, Esther Morteira, the 3,405 florins' dowry and jewelry she had brought him on their marriage the 14th of Kislev, 5477

1667 his mother-in-law[20] whose death caused inheritance difficulties between her sons and daughter.

Meanwhile Abraham Pinto, one of the founders of the academy, died. In accordance with his will, the academy remained open for another year. Then, in 1669, it was transferred to Amsterdam and placed under the direction of the Hahamim Isaac Aboab, Jahacob Sasportas and Josiau Pardo.

With the added financial demands of a growing family, Pardo had to augment his earnings. In 1670 he became haham of Amsterdam's oldest and most outstanding society — the Gemiluth Hasadim. The salary was 180 florins a year.[21] To tide him over his financial difficulties, they paid him a year's salary in advance. He remained in their employ probably until his departure for Curaçao in 1674. According to poet Barrios, he also officiated as haham of the Honen Dalim Society.

Although well qualified and the son and son-in-law of officially recognized hahamim, Pardo does not seem to have held any official post in the Amsterdam community.[22] Economic pressure must have forced him to take his family with him to Curaçao and leave behind friends, students and, most important to him, Amsterdam, then the largest center of Jewish culture in Western Europe.

Before setting sail, Pardo requested and obtained from the directors of the Company an exemption from the 2% customs duty on his modest baggage.[23] Lack of wind kept his ship at Texel for ten days. One can imagine the mounting

(1616). He named David and Jonathan as his heirs and left them everything, including his "papers and library." This will was signed in the presence of testamentary witnesses Ishac Lobo and David Pardo (GAA, Not. Padthuysen, Feb. 4, 1660). Morteira died at 66 years of age since he admitted to being sixty in 1654 (GAA 972, Not. Baddel, Aug. 10, 1654).

[20] "Itur Soferim," ms. at Ets Haim, pp. 15-16b.

[21] PJCAA, Libro de Cuentas, p. 45.

[22] In 1673 he and Haham Aboab signed a declaration as "Rabbis of the Jewish nation here in this city . . . that for many years they have been rabbis of that nation" (GAA 3681, Not. Tixerandet, Oct. 30, 1673).

[23] The Company minutes for May 31, 1674, read as follows:

> There appeared Josua Pardo, Jewish Rabby, requesting a sailing permit to Curaçao for himself, his wife and six children, and an exemption of the usual 2% customs duty to the Company on his furniture and/or household effects (consisting of a half cupboard, six chairs and a box of brass and tin utensils). After due deliberation, this was consented to (WICA 16, p. 256; Hamelberg, *ibid.*, p. 102).

Books were possibly tax-free as they are not mentioned as part of his effects. As for his six children, we know of Rachel married in Amsterdam to Emanuel Baruch, founder of the Baruch Pardo family of Amsterdam; Abigail and Esther whose uncle, Jonathan L. Morteira, bequeathed 3,000 florins to them in 1673 for their marriage (GAA 2886, Not Padthuysen, Nov. 19, 1673); David, Joseph and Saul.

tensions of a man, bound for alien shores, held indefinitely in suspense. From Texel he wrote to the treasurer of the Portuguese Jewish community of Amsterdam (July 17, 1674), detailing the hardships he was suffering and that he was forced to delve into his baggage for necessaries.[24] Clearly, our Haham was in dire need of that Curaçao post — fortunately for Mikvé Israel. He finally embarked at the end of July, 1647, and arrived in Curaçao either a little before or during the High Holy Days of Tishri, 5435 (October 1-23, 1674). Needless to say how happy the community was to receive their first haham.

The moral state of the island those years apparently was not too high. In his letter of April 26, 1673, to the "Classis" or Synod of Amsterdam, the Reverend Philippus Speght decried Governor Dirk Otternick's complacency toward prostitution — "ports and prostitution go together and Curaçao is no exception" — and his neglect to curb it.[25] The governor retaliated by complaining to his superiors about the minister's business activities. Speght sold wines, beer and brandy although he enjoyed the enviable salary of 800 florins a year. Tactfully the Company advised him to restrict himself to religious matters.[26]

This state of affairs had its influence on some Jews. A young woman, Esther Israel — obviously a Marrano who had been given the name Israel — had come to Curaçao on the *Estrelaz* with the Maduros. Shortly after her arrival, she married David Roiz, a nephew of Rabbi Jacob Jeudah Leao.[27] She began to conduct herself so reprehensibly that the parnassim requested Governor Jan Doncker to banish her on the strength of the Da Costa privileges and article 13 of the Hascamoth. She defended herself, alleging that she was not a Jewess. The parnassim, Daniel Aboab and Isaac de Marchena, reported the matter to their Amsterdam colleagues[28] on April 20, 1674. They lamented that a religious divorce could not be given in Curaçao in the absence of a competent religious authority and that the woman had already departed for

[24] PJCAA, bundle.

[25] GAA, the old archives of the "Classis" of Amsterdam, correspondence with Curaçao, 1640-1670, no. 68.

[26] WICA, Resolution of Jan. 12, 1673.

[27] He set up the famous Temple of Solomon, which was one of Amsterdam's attractions in its day.

[28] PJCAA, bundle. This is the second oldest document written by the Curaçao Jews. The parnassim were obviously uncertain of Haham Pardo's imminent arrival; otherwise they would not have troubled to write. This letter was delivered to Imanuel Alvares [Correa]. It could not be determined whether he had left for Amsterdam with it or whether it had been given to him in Amsterdam for delivery to the Amsterdam parnassim.

Amsterdam. They enclosed an authorization in the husband's name, empowering the hahamin of Amsterdam to grant the divorce. If that could not be done, then David Roiz was willing to go to Amsterdam for it. With Haham Pardo's arrival six months later there was no need for Roiz to make the trip; Haham Pardo could send the woman a *get* from Curaçao.

THE EARLIEST COMMUNITY REGULATIONS

The first years on the island must have been very busy ones indeed for our haham. Surely he had to make several amendments to the community regulations drawn up in 1671. Following is a summary of the regulations then in force:

1. The community shall be administrated by a Mahamad or Council consisting of two Parnassim and a Gabay (treasurer). They shall be elected by the outgoing Mahamad on Rosh Hashanah Eve.[29]
2. The Mahamad shall elect on Shabu'oth Eve a Parnas of Talmud Torah (i.e., an administrator or supervisor of schools). [Thus, education[30] — then religious only — was the immigrants' first concern.]
3. Duties of the Parnas of Talmud Torah, the Ruby (teacher), the Cantor and the Ritual Slaughterer.
4. Those creating disturbances in the synagogue shall be severely punished.
5. Arguing or holding forth on the street in the synagogue district is prohibited.[31]
6. Members having a dispute among themselves shall be obliged to submit to arbitration by the Mahamad. The disputant refusing that intermediation shall pay a fine of 12 florins to the Community Chest. If he refuses to pay it, he shall not be admitted to the synagogue until it is settled. Meanwhile he shall not be permitted to buy casher meat; if he or any member of his family dies, burial shall be denied them. (The object of this article was to discourage members from suing each other in the courts of Curaçao.)
7. Imposta da Naçaõ or community tax. (Since 1670-71 the members paid an import tax of 1/4% on all goods coming from Holland. In 1688 this

[29] This was the same system of elections in 17th century Salonika. Menasseh ben Israel had the courage to criticize this undemocratic method of voting in one of his sermons, and was strongly reprimanded by the parnassim (PJCAA, Acordos, p. 383).

[30] See details I. S. Emmanuel, "Jewish Education in Curaçao (1692-1802)," *PAJHS* 44:215-36.

[31] In 1751 the synagogue district embraced the area from David Senior's house, which touched the synagogue, up to the city wall, including the *medrasim* or schools (MS, 29 Elul, 5511). There was a similar prohibition in the regulations of the Amsterdam community.

was extended to all merchandise imported from the Caribbean Isles. Later it was also applied to all real estate transactions).[32]

8. The Mahamad may employ Community Chest funds up to 25 pesos for unforeseen expenses. For larger sums it shall consult the Council of Seven. (This Council, so casually mentioned in the regulations, consisted of the three members of the Mahamad, the outgoing Mahamad and an outstanding member. As the amount of money is designated in pesos rather than florins, this article must have been enacted after Haham Pardo's rabbinate.)

9. Seating arrangement in the synagogue. (The inference is that the synagogue was not large and hence the seats were limited.)

10. The synagogue functions shall be attended to by a Parnas. He shall call the members to the Torah and distribute the honors without neglecting anyone. The Haham of the Community shall be called to the Torah, as in Amsterdam, on the Saturdays when the Ten Commandments are read,[33] on the seventh day of Passover, on Shabu'oth, and on the Saturday when the Song of Moses is read.[34]

11. It is absolutely forbidden to found another synagogue. The offender shall pay a fine of 48 florins to the Community Chest. If he persists, the governor's intervention shall be sought. (According to the privileges, the governor was supposed to back the parnassim in preventing the establishment of another synagogue in order to avoid disunity in the community.)

12. It is forbidden to open another's mail. The offender shall pay a penalty of 24 florins.

13. The Mahamad shall twice warn a member leading a scandalous mode of life. If he persists in his ways, the Mahamad shall petition the governor to banish him from the island. (On more than one occasion the governor expelled Jews from Curaçao at the insistence of the parnassim. They used this powerful weapon, sometimes unjustly, throughout the 18th century.)

14. Anyone writing verses, sonnets or satires injurious to another shall pay 24 florins to the community. If he persists, he shall be excommunicated.

15. Questions of honor between members shall be studied by the Mahamad with the greatest discretion. The slanderer shall pay a fine of 24 florins to the Community Chest.

16. The hascamoth shall be read [in the synagogue] every six months: on the first day of Passover and on the first day of Tabernacles. Nothing may be

[32] From a letter written by Ishac Haim Rodriguez da Costa of Curaçao to the Amsterdam parnassim in 1763 (PJCAA, bundle). The Salonikan Jews of the 16th century paid taxes and duties even on foodstuffs (Emmanuel, *Histoire des Israélites de Salonique*, pp. 125-26).

[33] Exodus 20:1-17; Deuteronomy 5:6-18.

[34] Exodus 15:1-26.

added or deleted without the prior consent of the [Council of] Seven, who are the incumbent Parnassim and the four others who sign these regulations.

17. It is forbidden to insult or curse non-Jews, or to discuss religious subjects with them.

18. When a bridegroom is in the synagogue, no more than nine persons may be called to the Torah in his honor, as is customary in Amsterdam, "whom we should follow."

19. If a member must be ejected from the synagogue for misbehavior, only the Mahamad is qualified to do this.

20. If a member does not contribute voluntarily to the Community Chest, the Mahamad and its Junta may tax him as they see fit. (This article reveals that there were *adjuntos* or other councillors, possibly former parnassim. It also shows that there was no fixed communal tax as in Amsterdam.)

21. The Treasurer must deliver the hascamoth to his successor on Rosh Hashanah. If he refuses, he shall pay a fine of fifty pesos, half of which shall be distributed among the island's poor.

These are the oldest *hascamoth*, elaborated upon possibly in 1651, and enlarged from 1659 to 1688. They were enforceable by the "small ban" — the *beraha* or blessing (euphemism for *kelala* or curse) — and even by the anathema. In certain cases the "civil power was to extend the necessary aid to the Community Council . . . in executing the Council's sentence against its members who did not fulfill their religious duties, or, on the complaint of the Community Council, the civil power was to prosecute such Jews not punishable under the general penal code."[35]

It is quite certain that Pardo, as Mikvé Israel's first haham, was responsible for many of the uses and customs preserved until 1963 in the synagogue. He founded the Yeshibah Es Haim, later called Es Haim ve Ohel Yahacob — tree of life and tent of Jacob. That name was indubitably given in honor of a large donor to its building fund — one Jacob[36] whose surname is unknown to us. This academy was still referred to as late as 1829.[37] If Pardo's remarkable success at the Yeshibah de Los Pintos is taken as a criterion, then this must have been the most important academy in Mikvé Israel's history.

Religious law forbids a Jew to leave his home on the Sabbath with something

[35] B. de Gaay Fortman, "Curaçao en onderhoorige eilanden, 1816-1828," *WIG* 9:516.

[36] We know of the following colonists with the first name Jacob who arrived in Curaçao between 1659 and 1680: Frances, de Marchena, Namias de Crasto, Touro, Nunes da Fonseca, Dovale, Henriquez Cotinho, Ulloa and Naar.

[37] Letter of Sept. 2, 1829, of Moise Cardoze to the High Commission for Israelitic Affairs in Holland (RA, Eeredienst, no. 448).

in hand unless the city is so bounded that it can be considered as a single domain. It is unknown whether in Curaçao, as formerly in Salonika,[38] the community symbolically "bought" the city from the governor as the representative of the Company. Although the capital city of Willemstad was encircled by walls, Haham Pardo held that "the street behind the [Protestant] Church from the Kat[39] to the battery where the flagpole stands" was not surrounded. That street was therefore declared off limits for Jews on Saturday. The parnassim, however, petitioned Governor Doncker to close it up, which he did, so that it could be included within the city.[40]

Haham Pardo had the joy of seeing two synagogues built in Curaçao during his rabbinate — one in the city and the other in the country. Shortly before his arrival, various members had lent the community 168 florins toward the construction of their city synagogue.[41] The other synagogue was erected during Governor N. van Liebergen's term (1679-82) near the Jewish plantations to replace the synagogue of early settlement days.

To carry out the religious functions of the community he had the following men assist him as teachers, cantors or ritual slaughterers: Ishac de Marchena, Moseh Levy Maduro[42] and son, David Bueno Vivas and Daniel Aboab Cardozo. Daniel Delgado performed the duties of *samas* (sexton).

Haham Pardo was highly esteemed. It is significant that a declaration given by the community in favor of Governor Van Liebergen in 1681 carries his signature above those of the parnassim. He deserved their respect for his rabbinical learning and for his achievements in Curaçao.

His duties apparently took up all his time or the tropical climate sapped whatever energy might have remained for writing. Thus, the only writings that have been preserved are those confined to his Amsterdam-Rotterdam period. These include:

1. A poem[43] in Hebrew dedicated to his father-in-law, Rabbi Saul L. Morteira, whose *Giv'ath Shaul* (Amsterdam, 1645) was published by Pardo and five other disciples.

38 Emmanuel, *Histoire des Israélites de Salonique*, p. 292.

39 An elevation near the fortress.

40 See appendix 1, p. 548.

41 MS, p. 1; MC, p. 29. This is further proof that Dominie Bosch was misguided in stating that the Jews were prohibited from living in the City of Willemstad (*ibid.*, p. 268). Jeosuah Henriquez already had two town houses in 1660 (OAC 1534, no. 57). The Jews had a house of worship in the city in 1671, and built a proper synagogue there in 1674.

42 See Emmanuel, *Precious Stones*, pp. 209-12, for details about him.

43 *Giv'ath Shaul*, p. 116b. This book consists of fifty sermons on the Pentateuch selected from the 500 written by Rabbi Morteira, and a list of all 500.

2. "Mizbaḥ Hazahab," a collection of fifty-six sermons, in two volumes, delivered in Rotterdam between 1648 and 1650 (ms., Ets Haim Library).[44]

3. Correspondence in Hebrew exchanged during his Rotterdam days mainly with his colleague, Rabbi Ishac Saruco. These letters form part of "Itur Soferim."

4. A diploma in *sheḥita* (ritual slaughter) issued to the young man, Ishac Aboab, on 12 Sivan, 5426, in Rotterdam (ms., Ets Haim Library).[45]

5. A Hebrew poem praising Yacob Yeudah Leon Templo's translation into Spanish of the Book of Psalms which he called *Kodesh Hilulim — Alabanças de Santidad* (Amsterdam, 1671).

6. Approval in Portuguese to the book by Abraham Israel Pereira (otherwise Thomas Rodrigues Pereira), *Espejo de la Vanidad del Mundo* (Amsterdam, 1671).

DEPARTURE OF HAHAM PARDO

Haham Pardo served Congregation Mikvé Israel nearly nine years. Then, in the summer of 1683, he left to occupy a rabbinical post in Jamaica where it is thought he perished in the devastating earthquake of June 7, 1692.[46]

Pardo's departure for a small community is surprising. It is customary in the rabbinate for one to "ascend and not descend." The Curaçao community was much larger and older than that of Jamaica. Did he have misunderstandings with the parnassim? In 1683 during the presidency of Eliau Namias de Crasto, there seem to have been differences among the parnassim. Was this unrest a direct result of our haham's resignation? Or was Pardo's resignation due to this crisis? Or did a son or son-in-law established in Jamaica persuade him to go there? Surely, financial worries were not responsible for his departure. The Jews of Curaçao were economically better off than, or on the same level, as their Jamaican coreligionists and could afford to pay their haham a respectable salary.

Whatever the reason, the community lost a competent leader at a time he

[44] Poet Barrios extols Pardo's eloquence: "Josijahu Pardo, the eloquent/ his father and father-in-law emulates" (*Arbol de las Vidas*, p. 72).

[45] See appendix 18.

[46] This was one of the most frightful earthquakes known in the West Indies during which 3,000 persons perished in the space of three minutes. Nearly the entire city of Port Royal was destroyed (William H. Alexander, *U. S. Department of Agriculture Bulletin No. 32* [Washington, D.C., 1902], p. 71, referring to Southey's *Chronological History of the West Indies*, vol. II [London, 1827], p. 161). See the following note.

was most needed. That Pardo was loved and esteemed is patently clear. The Jews of Curaçao still venerate his memory in keeping with a resolution adopted in 1691.[47] He was the first rabbi for whom they introduced a special memorial prayer or *hashcabah*. It is offered for him and his successors at every festival. His descendants still live in Curaçao.[48]

[47] This decision, taken in Tishri, 5452 (September-October, 1691), appears twice in the book of old *hascamoth* (pp. 546, 554). If the date of the resolution is correct, then Haham Pardo did not die in the earthquake which took place nine months later on June 7, 1692.

[48] *In re* his son Saul, see Emmanuel, *Precious Stones*, pp. 198-99; for other Pardos in Curaçao, *ibid.*, pp. 239-40, 327-28.

CHAPTER III

ECONOMIC ACTIVITY

AGRICULTURE

WITHOUT SLAVES the early colonists made little progress at farming. Their successors of 1659 tried to apply themselves more diligently to tilling the two-mile strip along the seacoast which the Company had granted to them. That area was called the *Joden Quartier* — the Jewish Quarter. In fact, one of the earliest plantations went by that name in 1660, and possibly earlier. Later it was known as *Judio* and still later as *De Hoop* in deference to the Jewish community Mikvé Israel. It belonged to Jeosuah Henriquez and stayed in the family up to 1800.[1] There were numerous Jewish plantation owners[2] in the last quarter of the 17th century. Early in the 18th century

[1] When Rachel Naar, widow of Mordechay Henriquez, died in 1758, her heirs did not have the deed and other papers to the *Joden Quartier* plantation and therefore had to advertise three times, through the Government Secretary, for all claimants to come forth. It was described as being in the Jewish Quarter, between Jan Lixraaven's plantation and the *Klyn Thuyn* owned by this estate. The heirs declared that the *Joden Quartier* plantation had belonged to Jeosuah Henriquez since 1660; that on his death in 1704 it passed on to his son Mordechay; that on Mordechay's death in 1715, his widow Rachel Naar Henriquez inherited it (OAC 1534, no. 57, May-July, 1758). Since no one claimed it, her son Benjamin Raphael Henriquez received it in accordance with her testamentary wishes. With its 15 slaves, large canoe, lands, etc., it was valued at 10,000 pesos (OAC 837, July 25, 1758). Benjamin's will of 1783 bequeathed this plantation with the *Klyn Thuyn* to his brother Jeosuah's grandson, Jacob. Both plantations with the 32 slaves, etc., were then appraised at 17,000 pesos (OAC 1086, no. 139). On July 18, 1800, Jacob sold them with eleven slaves to Johannes Martyn for 11,000 pesos (OAC 1102, no. 125).

[2] The oldest Jewish planters appearing in the WIC archives were David Levy, y. 1679; Eliau de Vale, y. 1680; Jacob [Nunes da] Fonseca, Jacob Ulloa, Josua Aboab, Manuel de Pina, Hester Marchena, Abraham Touro, Daniel Aboab Cardozo, the Widow David Carilho and Isaque de Marchena in 1682 (WICA 335, p. 136v; WICA 336, p. 133v; WICA 617, pp. 317-19); Manuel Pinto before 1707. Surely there were others whose names are unknown to us because of the missing archives. In April, 1721, Corporal Hendrik Evertsz with soldiers and Indians destroyed 218 farms on lands belonging to the WIC. At the Government's demand the following Jewish planters signed a statement certifying that their plantations had not been ravaged: Gabriel Levy, Abraham Ulloa Sr., Isaac Levy Maduro, Josua Henriquez by order of his mother; Isaac de David Senior, Josua Henriquez, Jeosua Naar, David [Nunes da] Fonseca, Daniel Aboab Cardozo, Selomoh de Mosseh Levy Maduro, Ishac Touro, Selomo Levy Maduro as representative for the Widow Gomes, Abraham de Campos Pereira, Jacob Hizquiau de Leon, David Senior and Abraham Penso (OAC 797, no. 125; WICA 576, pp. 274-76v; WICA

Jews owned more than twenty-five plantations and gardens surrounding the Old Jewish Cemetery and also in other parts of the island.[3]

Already in 1702 those flourishing Jewish farms aroused a tinge of envy. That year Governor Nicolaas van Beck wrote to the Company that "the Jews own the best tillable lands."[4] At first the Jews tried to cultivate sugar cane and tobacco. Later they were encouraged by Governors Jan Doncker (1673-79) and Nicolaas van Liebergen (1679-82) — the latter a great friend of theirs — to grow indigo, lemons and oranges. There also were attempts with cotton. The Jews may have introduced certain fruits and vegetables like the cantaloupe, watermelon, eggplant, okra, etc. One Aron Sasso, manager of Gabriel Pinedo's "De Wacauw" plantation, planted potatoes, white Jamaica beans and melons as late as 1792.[5]

Three factors determined the value of a plantation. Did it have a large number of slaves? Was the soil arable? Did it have a well of drinkable water? The last was the subject of many fiery disputes among the Protestant planters (the Catholics did not then own plantations). In the absence of fixed land boundaries during those early days a planter did not know definitely whether the well was on his farm or on his neighbor's. It was exactly as in the time of the Patriarchs Abraham and Isaac and the Philistines. In 1719 Planter Brugman had a bitter fight with the Widow Apero van der Hoeven over a well between the St. Jan and the Engelberg plantations. He maintained that it belonged to the Company and was thus public property, while the widow said it was hers.[6] A similar case cropped up that year between Jan Ellis of the Savonnet plantation and William van Utrecht. Ellis insisted that the well in front of his plantation was his, while Utrecht alleged that it belonged to the Company and was therefore part of the public domain. In both cases the Island Council held that those were public wells.[7]

The Jews, as old plantation owners neighboring the disputed wells, were called to testify. Fortunately such cases between Jewish planters did not

220, giving the entire file on the matter). The fence of David Benjamin da Costa d'Andrade's plantation was damaged, as was the saltpan of Abraham Ulhoa, owner of plantation St. Sebastiaan. On the other hand, David Namias de Crasto, Elias Pareira and the Widow Mordechay Namias de Crasto complained about this raid to Holland. They alleged that the Island Council had forced them to sign, under duress, that they had suffered no damage (WICA 576, pp. 653-58). Other plantation owners in 1721 included Abraham Orobio de Matos and Raphael Alvares Correa.

3 See appendix 2 for Jewish-owned plantations between 1660 and 1968.

4 WICA 566, p. 556.

5 OAC 996, no. 189.

6 WICA 207, p. 721.

7 WICA 577, p. 81v. During the Ellis-Utrecht dispute 218 WIC farms were destroyed by Corporal Evertsz in protest to the Island Council's ruling (WICA 220).

reach the courts because the *hascamoth* compelled the Jews to submit to arbitration and abide by the ruling of the Mahamad. We like to think that such quarrels were settled by having the daughter of one of the disputants married to the son of the other, so that the plantations and the disputed well eventually went to the young couple.

Years later the government obliged plantation owners to specify in the bill of sale whether or not the well adjoining the plantation was public or private. A striking instance is the Klyn St. Michel plantation bought by Salomon de Samuel Levy Maduro in 1806. The bill of sale explicitly set forth that the well on the *hoftje* (yard with trees) was public.[8]

Cattle-breeding and cattle-trading was monopolized by the Company in the 17th century.[9] Luckily for the planters, it was not overstrict about maintaining this monopoly. In 1682 Jewish planters sold Governor Van Liebergen small livestock (goats, sheep) as food for the Company's slaves. Governor Bernagie (1694-1700) removed this restriction by selling some of the Company's plantations with unlimited right to pasture big livestock. Gabriel Levy and Aron Levy Maduro took advantage of the offer and each purchased two plantations. Certain plantation owners obtained the right to pasture a limited number of head of cattle on Company land. The planter, however, had to battle a calamity that was considered "worse than the drought" — cattle-rustling — even as late as 1886.[10]

The frequent droughts in Curaçao permitted neither the Jewish nor the Protestant planters to make much progress. Hardly did they emerge from the effects of one drought that another was upon them. Those in the years 1697, 1701, 1707, 1709-12 and 1717-22 were especially severe. So disastrous was the drought of 1711 that "the cattle died for lack of water and soon there will be no water for the inhabitants to drink,"[11] according to Governor Jeremias van Collen's report to the Company. Most likely these frequent dry spells weakened the fruit trees so that they easily succumbed to the pests that attacked them. In 1838 Moshe Cohen Henriquez sustained the loss of about 110 coconut trees on his Bloempot plantation.[12]

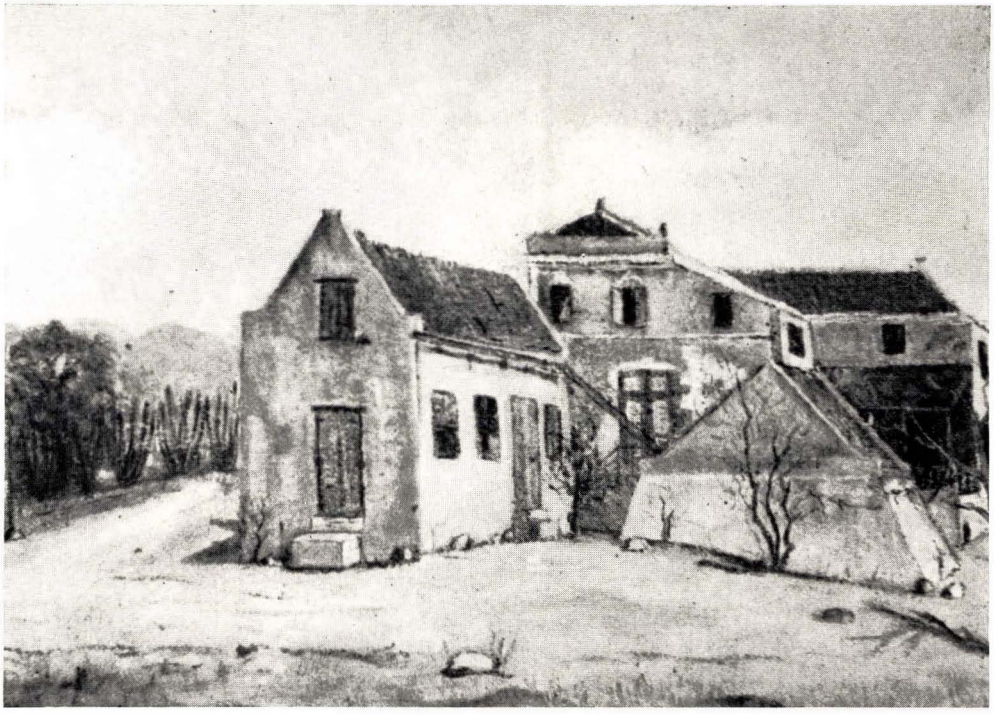
[8] OAC 1039, no. 25.

[9] Hamelberg, p. 92; Ph. F. de Haseth Evertsz and C. S. Gorsira, in their very interesting study on agriculture and cattle-raising in Curaçao, published in *Koloniaal Verslag*, 1910, p. 4.

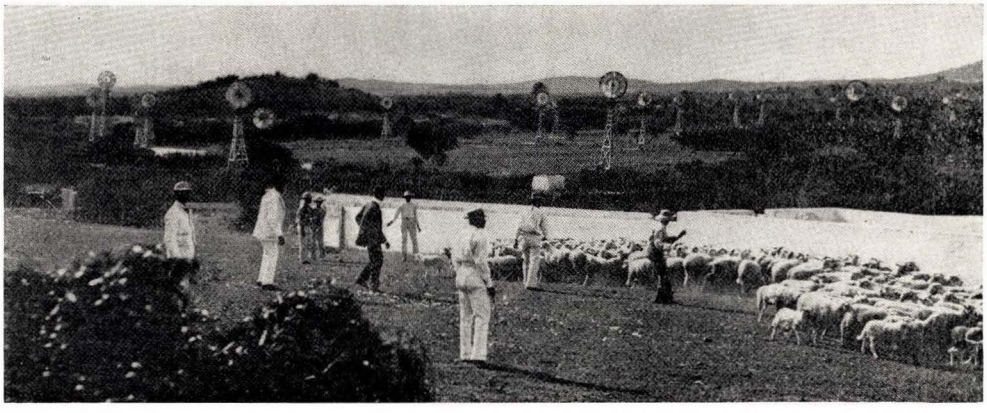
[10] According to a complaint made to the governor in 1886 by 54 plantation owners, 16 of whom were Jews. See also *Curaçaosche Courant* [= *CC*], June 27, 1868. In 1766 the planter Willem Stuyling resorted to cutting the ears of his goats in order to discourage rustling (OAC 900, no. 18).

[11] WICA 566, p. 534; WICA 567, p. 106v; WICA 570, p. 710; WICA 577, p. 8v; WICA 202, p. 463v; WICA 203, p. 510v; WICA 204, p. 176v.

[12] *CC*, Aug. 20, 1842.

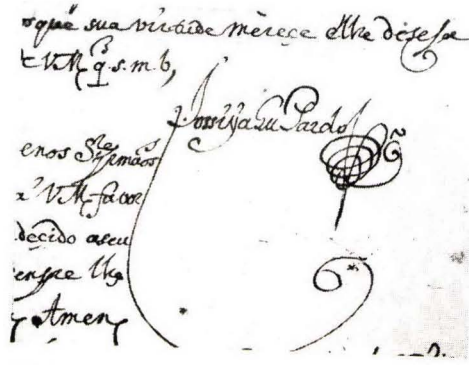


12. COUNTRY HOUSE AT THE DE HOOP PLANTATION OF THE HENRIQUEZES, 1660-1800, PAINTED BY D. DE RIJKE IN 1941 BEFORE ITS REMOVAL BY THE OIL REFINERY

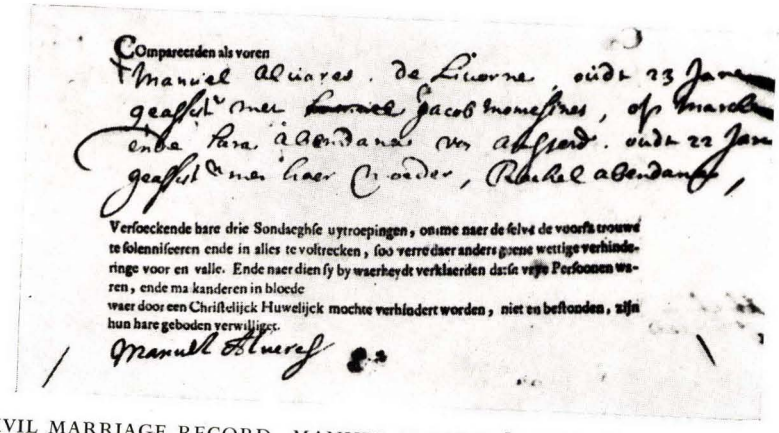


13. ST. JORIS PLANTATION FORMERLY OWNED BY DR. ISAAC SENIOR

14. DETAIL ON THE TOMBSTONE OF ISHAC SASSO, 1784



15. SIGNATURE, HAHAM JOSSIYAHU PARDO, 1674, PAGE 53



Compareerden als voren

Manuel Alvares. de Livorne, oudt 23 Jaren geassist met Jacob Momesines, op March ende Sara Abendana van Amsterd. oudt 22 Jaren geassist met haer moeder, Rachel Abendana,

Versoeckende hare drie Sondaeghse uytroepingen, om me naer de selve de voorsz trouwe te solenniseeren ende in alles te voltrecken, soo verre daer anders geene wettige verhinderinge voor en valle. Ende naer dien sy by waerheydt verklaerden dat se vrye Persoonen waren, ende ma kanderen in bloede
waer door een Christelijck Huwelijck mochte verhindert worden, niet en bestonden, zijn hun hare geboden verwilliget.

Manuel Alvares

16. CIVIL MARRIAGE RECORD, MANUEL ALVARES [CORREA], AMSTERDAM, 1673

17. DETAIL ON THE TOMBSTONE OF ELIAU NAMIAS DE CRASTO, 1717

18. DETAIL ON THE TOMBSTONE OF JAHACOB A. CORREA, 1714

19. DETAIL ON THE TOMBSTONE OF GABRIEL ALEVY, 1725, PAGE 93

20. DETAIL ON THE TOMBSTONE OF LEA HANA,
WIFE OF IACOB DE DAVID SENIOR, 1745

In spite of their gruelling struggle with nature, the Jews did not abandon hope. In 1706 Aron Henriquez Moron of Amsterdam requested the Company to sell him for the account of Abraham Henriquez Moron of Curaçao the plantation "Arroyo de Canarias," a.k.a. "Roy Canarije."[13] Asked for his opinion, Governor Jacob Beck advised the Company to keep that plantation as well as the "Piscaderis" and "Hato," but to sell the "Noordkant," "Oostpunt," "Clements Grip" and the "Duivels Clip."[14]

In 1717 the Company's plantations were in a deplorable state as a result of the devastating droughts. Governor Jonathan van Beuningen was finally obliged to rent several to the highest bidders. Gabriel Levy[15] rented the magnificent "Roy Canarije" for six years at 291 pesos annually.[16] After renting most of the Company's plantations, the governor then sold at public auction the livestock therein, large as well as small. Out of a total sale of 2,885.7 pesos, the Jewish planters had bought 2,170 pesos' worth.[17]

[13] WICA 1, pp. 267-68; WICA 69, meeting of April 16, 1706.

[14] WICA 202, p. 187. On this occasion Beck evaluated the Company's Curaçao plantations in 1707, as follows:

Plantation	*Slaves*	*Value*
Lelienbergh	65	Pesos 12,857
S[an]ta Maria	64	14,509
Piscaderis	106	23,010
Hato	77	16,953
Noortkant	53	10,929
Roij Canarije	73	16,921
Oostpunt	5	1,500
Duivelsklip	11	4,172
Tabacks Coraal	?	2,921

(WICA 202, pp. 190-91).

[15] See Emmanuel, *Precious Stones*, pp. 240-43, for his biography.

[16] The other WIC plantations were rented to the following at the annual rentals designated:

De Duivels Klip	Thomas Meyer	Pesos 220
Tabacks Coraal	Jan Dorcas	128
D'Noordkant	Piettier de Meij	41
D'Oost Punt and Clements Grip	Commissioner Willem de Bij	55
Piscaderis	The Widow Apero van der Hoeven	373
Lelienbergh	Jan Martin & Jan Stonhouse	100
St. Maria	Marten Daale	117:4

(WICA 206, p. 467v, June, 1717). Years later some like "Piscaderis" were rented to and subsequently purchased by Jews.

[17] Among the buyers were the Jewish planters Gabriel Levy; Samuel, Isaac and Salomon Maduro; David de Crasto, Jacob Salom, Abraham de Pina, Elias Parera, Raphael Alvares [Correa], Davit

Following the example of rabbinic authorities in the past, the rabbis of Curaçao composed a special prayer invoking divine aid for rain which was recited at a pre-determined fast, e.g., that by Haham Eliau Lopez (1694-1713). Years later Haham Mendes de Sola arranged an entire ritual on this subject which was added to and published by his son-in-law, the Haham Jacob Lopez da Fonseca, in 1773.[18] On every New Moon the hazzan recited a prayer for rain.[19]

Frequent droughts, cattle-rustling and the compulsory 10% tax to the Company on all produce and animals were the trials of every planter. The Jew had still others of a religious order: He could not make his slave work on Sabbaths and Jewish holidays, and could not compel them to work on Sundays without first obtaining a costly[20] legal permit; he was obliged to follow a number of religious laws relative to agriculture and cattle-breeding,[21] and so doing he lost part of the produce of his plantation, as a witness testified as late as 1825.[22]

Despite these serious obstacles, the Jews of Curaçao did not abandon agriculture. This tenacity evoked the admiration of a Protestant minister in the early 19th century who expressed himself thus: "I am astonished to find here [in Curaçao] some Jewish farmers . . . who are engaged in a useful profession not only because the farmer is a useful member of society . . . but also because the Government treasury is not indifferent when several Jews are proprietors of plantations."[23] The traveler Teenstra, too, in 1830, very often took note of the Jewish planters and considered it a "peculiarity" to find "many Jewish farmers"[24] in Curaçao. So it is not surprising that of 134

[Nunes da] Fonseca, Daniel Aboab Cardosa, David Dovalle, Isacq Aboaff, Isacq Toura, Isaq Marchena, Raphael Rodriguez, Josua Henriquez, Ferro & (Nerro) [Neira] and S. Gommes. The average prices for the animals were as follows: Cows, 9 pesos; sheep, 1 peso; goats 25 for 15 pesos (WICA 206, pp. 472-73).

[18] It treats of the book, *Seder Tefiloth Lesheelath Matar* (Amsterdam, Adar, 5533 [February, 1773]), 122 pp. It has the approbation of the Haham of Amsterdam, Shelomo Salem, and a preface by the proof-readers Elyashib Netanel Sarfatti and Isaac de Eliau aCohen Belinfante. One of the peculiarities of this ritual was the frequent blowing of the *Shofar* during the prayer; that held the slaves spellbound.

[19] According to an old prayer book with marginal notes, in manuscript, in the archives of the community. From time to time, the Protestant governors would issue special proclamations setting a day of fasting and prayer during the drought years. Solemn prayers for rain were recited in the synagogue in 1708, 1722, 1746, 1748, 1749, 1750, 1751, 1755, 1758, 1763, 1767, 1770, 1771, 1777, 1858, 1899 and 1903. Of course they recited the same prayers in other years too.

[20] Bosch, *ibid.*, vol. I, p. 207.

[21] See Joseph Caro, *Shulḥan Arukh*, Yoreh De'ah, nos. 293, 294, 306, 310, etc., and 321.

[22] Bosch, *ibid.*, pp. 206-7.

[23] *Ibid.*, p. 205.

[24] M. D. Teenstra, *ibid.*, vol. I, p. 59.

plantations and 131 vegetable farms on the island in 1817, a good part of them belonged to Jews.[25]

All this changed in 1863 when the slaves were emancipated. The freed slaves refused to work in the fields even though they received high wages.[26] With the dearth of working hands several Jews and their non-Jewish colleagues were forced to sell their plantations or transform them into country homes. Nevertheless, some sturdy souls with a scientific bent continued at the cost of great sacrifices. As late as 1897 Sol Cohen Henriquez made some attempts at cultivating the "furcraea" or "sisalana-pita" on his family's Van Engelen plantation. He even rented from the government 48 hectares of land for twenty-five years and devoted twelve of them for his experiments. Brave, fruitless venture![27] Some plucky Jews continued farming until the early part of this century. The Government archives cite Angel Cohen Henriquez in 1907 and Alfredo Jesurun in 1918.

Although faced with so many trying setbacks,[28] the Curaçoan Jews for two and one-half centuries carried on agriculture side by side with their coreligionists in Jamaica and Surinam. Once again they proved Jewish aptitude for farming especially when pursued in a country affording equal protection and consideration to all its inhabitants. This has been characteristic of the liberal Dutch and Curaçoan governments.[29]

THE PLANTER AND THE SYNAGOGUE

Prayers for rain were offered on the eighth day of Tabernacles. To the eldest planter went the honor of opening the doors of the Holy Ark that day. Who was better qualified than he to entreat God to drench the parched earth with life-giving rain? The planter was exempted from attending certain religious functions in the community. However, when a noted person in the community died, a special messenger was dispatched to the plantations to announce the hour of burial, and the funeral was delayed somewhat to allow the planter

[25] See appendix 2.

[26] *Koloniaal Verslag* [= *KV*], 1864.

[27] *KV*, 1898; Hamelberg, *Een nieuwe cultuur voor de colonie Curaçao* (Amsterdam, 1898), p. 25. In 1951 James George Capriles tried to develop an ultramodern dairy business with selected, imported cows he raised in Curaçao.

[28] A report to the Dutch government in 1854 states that the Curaçoan colonist, with some exceptions, was obliged to sell — aside from several agricultural products — coal, drinkable water, cigars, straw hats, and so forth (*CC*, Jan. 27, 1857).

[29] The Jews of Jamaica possessed fifteen sugar plantations in 1730 and enjoyed a certain comfort. But as they were objects of hatred, several of them left the island. Compare L. Knappert, *WIG*, 1929-30, p. 255.

sufficient time to arrive. For this consideration the grateful planters would send their slaves, when necessary, to repair the quay facing the cemetery. Under orders of the Mahamad it was strictly forbidden to pick the fruit off the planters' trees along the way to the cemetery. Appreciative of this measure, the planters often opened their homes to convalescents of the community. Hospitable, generous and co-operative, the Jewish planters enjoyed the respect of Jew and non-Jew alike.

COMMERCE

Farming could not be depended upon to provide what a large family needed, which was one reason why the Curaçoan Jews also turned to trade and shipping. At least there was promise of a better and more certain income. Geographically, Curaçao was ideally situated. It enjoyed a large, natural harbor and was a stepping stone to the other islands in the Caribbean and the Spanish Main. Moreover, the Jews had excellent connections in the New World as well as in the Old. So from the outset they engaged in trading.

Ever since 1652 De Yllan was exporting horses and high quality timber. Ostensibly these were exchanged for European finished goods needed by the small population of Curaçao. In 1656 the Jewish settlers had already been trading with their coreligionists in New Netherland. By the end of that year one Jeosuah Henriquez was importing merchandise from New Netherland. Also in that year Isaac [Nunes?] da Fonseca of Barbados brought a cargo of flour, bread, brandy, beer and dry goods valued at 3,000 florins. After studying the matter, Vice Governor Mathias Beck agreed to accept the cargo in exchange for fourteen horses and a quantity of fine timber. Fonseca presented letters of recommendation from the governor of Barbados to allow him to continue plying his trade between both islands.[30] Large-scale trading by the Jews really started with the arrival of Da Costa's colonists of 1659. The following abstract from a commercial agreement attests to the big activity already in 1660.

> Abraham and Isacq Pereira, parties of the first part, and Jeremias and Gasper van Collen, parties of the second part, all merchants of Amsterdam, agree that the cargo which the said Pereiras have in Curaçao in charge of their nephew Ishac Pereira Coitinho, according to the bill of lading, amounts to Forty-one Thousand One Hundred Forty-Four florins and 14½ placas (Fls. 41,144.14 1/2), less 290 florins for ten ounces of musk. It shall be delivered to Capt. Juan Schuling who is leaving from Amsterdam on the "S'Francisco" to

[30] Cone, *ibid.*, pp. 153-55.

pick it up. The Collens undertake to furnish a crew of fourteen men and to arm the ship with nine pieces of artillery. As soon as the boat docks in Curaçao, Coitinho shall hand over the cargo to Schuling who will take it to Honduras for trading. The Collens assume all risks and shall receive two-thirds of the profits.

This agreement was signed in Amsterdam on November 12, 1660, by the Collens and the Pereiras.[31] As was customary in the 17th century, the Pereiras gave the governor of Curaçao a gift of various articles of wearing apparel worth over 308 florins.

There were great risks involved in these transactions, as a declaration made in Amsterdam on September 16, 1660, indicates. Abraham Israel Henriquez, a resident of Livorno, aged about 28, on the demand of the Isaac Abraham Pereira Company, stated that he had been four months at Cortolo (a.k.a. Versis) on the island of St. Eustatius. There he met one David Seraiva, supercargo of the vessel *Abraham (Onerandel)* [*Offerandel*]. Seraiva related that he had set out from Curaçao with 24 horses. At Curaçao the captain had put on board thirty to forty goats. These soiled the hay meant for the horses. As a result, 21 horses died en route and were thrown overboard. The remaining three died shortly afterwards.[32] Thus the capital investment of 3,600 florins in the horses was totally lost because of an epidemic contracted on the boat.

Joao de Yllan also lost all his money in Curaçao.

The Company entered into business relations with the Jews, or their representatives in Amsterdam,[33] from the earliest days of their settlement. In 1662 Joseph Frances, erstwhile merchant of importance in Brazil, empowered his nephew Jean d'Yllan to receive a bill of lading from the Company for 4,600 pounds of fine timber that had arrived for him from Curaçao. The Company used to sell the Curaçoan Jews items on which it held a monopoly: horses, fine timber, livestock and slaves. The Curaçoan Jews, on the other hand, supplied the Government of Curaçao everything necessary for the garrison and slaves.[34]

Imports consisted of all kinds of goods manufactured in Europe, comestibles, books, building materials, boat supplies, and even arms and munitions. The

[31] GAA, Not. Oli. In the same period Isak Pereira lived in Martinique. Both he and Jacob Abendana received merchandise from Amsterdam in 1661 (GAA 2210, Not. Lock, Jan. 20, 1661). See Emmanuel, *Precious Stones*, p. 188, regarding the early Pereiras.

[32] GAA 2209, Not. Lock, Sept. 16, 1660.

[33] GAA 2213, Not. Lock, Sept. 26, 1662.

[34] In 1676 the Company issued Jacob Lucenas, a merchant of New York, a passport to bring comestibles to Curaçao in exchange for slaves (OWICA, Notulen, Chamber of Amsterdam, y. 1676, p. 204).

Jews used part of their wares for local consumption. The major portion was destined for the Caribbean Isles and the Spanish Main. In exchange they would accept tobacco, lemon juice, indigo, ginger, vanilla, cochineal, hides, cotton, coffee, sugar, scrap metal, silver, gold (usually powdered), raw materials in general and cacao (which in 1682 brought between 22 and 25 pesos the hundredweight).

Like the other inhabitants, the Jews had to pay import and export duties. Toward the end of the 17th and the beginning of the 18th centuries, these were relatively reasonable as the following figures indicate:

Port entry tax on boats	2 Pesos
Ad valorem duty on weights	½%-1%
Duty on all exports (except cocoa, 2½%)	2%
Ad valorem duty on all imports (except meat and lard, 4%)	8%
Tax on all merchandise sold at auction	2½%

The last covered, in the main, products from the Company plantations, slaves, animals, boats and merchandise captured at sea or confiscated in Curaçao by the government. The Jews bore the brunt of it as they were the principal buyers at auctions. Sometimes extraordinary taxes were levied on the merchants. This occurred during the war between Holland and France in 1705 when all taxes were raised one-third.[35]

The strength of the Curaçoan Jewish merchant lay in his having capable, dependable representatives in Amsterdam, in other European cities[36] and elsewhere. Generally, these were relatives — sons, brothers,[37] brothers-in-law or cousins — with whom they were sometimes in partnership. Then, he shipped the merchandise in his own bottoms and thereby reduced costs considerably. He also had the advantage of knowing the commercial language of the day, usually Spanish. Lacking some of these advantages, his Protestant colleague of the late 17th century naturally was somewhat resentful and fault-finding. One, no less powerful than Balthazar Beck, Commissioner of Slaves, was guilty of this tendency. He complained to his Amsterdam representative on February 3, 1685, that "the Jews here [in Curaçao] shamefully

[35] WICA 203, p. 4v.

[36] David Bernal's will of 1716 made in Curaçao named as his legatees: his married sister Ana Bernal of Bayonne, his brothers Manuel and Isaac of Amsterdam, his brother Juan of London, and his brother-in-law Francisco Nunes de Bernal Miranda of Bahia, Brazil (OAC 799, no. 194).

[37] In the PJCAA is an interesting business correspondence exchanged from 1708 to 1726 between the Hoheb brothers: Isaac of Amsterdam and David of Curaçao. The WIC records divulge that almost every top-ranking Curaçao Jewish merchant had either a son or son-in-law, uncle or brother in Amsterdam.

give away merchandise at practically cost price."[38] This accusation was unfair. The Curaçoan Jew enjoyed a good business reputation.[39] Economically, it is impossible to sell at cost price. If he offered lower prices, it was that the merchandise cost him less than it did the others.

BRITISH CONCERN OVER CURAÇOAN COMMERCE

During the early years of the 18th century the commerce of Curaçao developed sufficiently to give concern to the Council of Trade and Plantations of the Americas. One circular sent by the Council to the governors and proprietors of plantations shows that there was illegal commerce between Curaçao and the English colonies. It is of interest for the history of Curaçao, particularly with regard to the commercial activities of its Jewish community, to give extracts from three memorials (by Peter Holt?) relating to this "illegal trade carried on between Curaçao, St. Thomas and the British Plantations in America" as follows:

> From the English Plantations upon the mainland the inhabitants of Curaçoa have all sort of provisions, as bread, flower, butter, cheese, pease, rice, beef, pork and corn; from Pennsylvania and New York strong and small beer; from Carolina and New England pitch and tarr; from the Charibbee Islands and Jamaica rum, sugar, cotton, ginger, indigo, and tobacco; in return of which our Plantations have chiefly cocoa, linnens, muslins, silks and other goods for wearing apparel, with great quantity of riggings, sail, canvas, anchors and other sorts of iron-work, powder and shott, which is never taken notice of by our men of war, when they meet with any sloop from thence. There is commonly at this Island 1600 sea-faring men and 2 of them English, some of them having run away from men of war, and some from merchantmen, and some having been taken prisoners and brought to St. Thomas's come down to Curaçoa for subsistence, which always makes Curaçoa full of men; for when a sloop comes down from any of our Islands, they commonly bring three times their complement of men, and at the same time our own ships at Barbadoes, Antigua, Mountserat and Nevis have offered £25 and £30 for only the run home from the West Indies, and cou'd not have men for that; and their men at Curaçoa have gone without shoes upon their feet or shirts upon their backs, their common wages being 14 pieces of 8/8 per month; and when they have been out 5 or 6 months, and have about 70 pieces of 8/8 to receive, they cannot stay on shore

[38] GAA, Biniamin Burlamachi archives (courtesy Dr. Simon Hart).

[39] In 1664 Van Sommelsdijck, governor of Surinam, wrote to his superiors in Holland: "I must vouch . . . for the . . . probity of the Jewish nation here" (R. Bijlsma, *WIG*, 1923, p. 437). "De Joden [in Curaçao] zyn eerlyker dan de broeders in de oude wereld" (Cirod Chantrans, *Reisen eines Schweizers in . . . America* [Leipzig, 1786], cited by B. de Gaay Fortman, *WIG*, 1935-36, p. 357).

a month before all their mony is gone, which makes so many English in so poor a condition; and shou'd an English man of war come into Curaçoa, and offer to impress any men, the Governor wou'd not suffer him. Several merchants told me that they had not less than 12 or 1500 tun of bread and flower, and as much beef, in one year from us; and that they cou'd never see, but one time with another, it was as dear among our own Islands as at Curaçoa; and that if they had not provision from us, their trade wou'd be ruined. In 6 months (that) the inhabitants wou'd be forced to go down to Jamaica, for Holland cou'd not supply the place with provision, so that their trade wou'd be of advantage to them, they having had commonly £50,000 in provisions in a year from our Plantations, which has most of it been returned in Dutch goods; besides rum and sugar, cotton and indigo, and pitch and tar, to above 2 times the value, which the merchants at Curaçoa wou'd much wonder at, that our European trade shou'd suffer so much, and not be taken notice of. They have but 3 sloops at the Island, but what was built in our Plantations; at Rhode Island, New York, Pennsylvania, Carolina, Bermudas, and the Bahamas, and most of them the best sailers in America. This is the chief of their trade with the English Plantations, without which they cou'd not live . . . There is hardly any Plantation in America that belongs to H.M. but has a correspondence with Curaçoa, and not many but what have raised themselves by it. The last part of the trade the Dutch have with the Spaniards is, the Spaniards come to Curaçoa with their own sloops, and bring them mony for goods. Curaçoa loads home for Holland in one year about 50 sail of ships, and most of them are richly laden, and a great part of their loading comes out of the English Plantations, chiefly sugar, cotton, tobacco, indigo and ginger; of their own produce by trade with the Spaniards, cocoa, hides, tobacco, logwood, stockfish wood and mony. When a fleet is loading at Curaçoa, the Charibbee Islands have a good trade for what they bring down to Curaçoa; sugar commonly 4½ pieces 8/8 per hundred, cotton and indigo runs higher than at other times, and provision much carryed away by ships that have laid long in the harbour, which are obliged to our Plantations for that, to carry them home. When two sail of our northern vessels come in together with provision, the Jews will blow upon it, if not consigned to them. I cannot say that the Jews are owners of most of the vessels that supply that place with provision (because I never sailed in that Trade, only from Antigua), but they have that power over most of them when they are there, that they can turn out, or put in what Master they please . . . April 18, 1707, came in to Curaçoa a brigantine and a sloop, both French. The sloop about 6 weeks before had sailed out of Curaçoa, and belonged to one James Handes of this place, an Englishman. The sloop had been taken and carryed into St. Domingo and condemned to the French, and these two vessels were sent to Curaçoa to be sold. When Mr. Handes saw his own sloop come into the harbour, he went to the Governor and demanded her again, but the Governor wou'd not let him have her, but put both brigantin and sloop out of the harbour, and when out, they lay by, and in 3 hours time sent on shore a canoe with a considerable quantity of mony, which was landed

> at one Philip Senyor's, a Jew merchant,[40] and the Governor's chief favourite, which was to buy provision for them to carry to Martinico . . . July 1st came in a flag of truce from Martinico, laden with furs and claret, and lay in the harbour all night, and next day went out to little Curaçoa . . . and one Samuel Brice, an Englishman, was sent with a sloop of Philip Senyor's after her, and brought her lading to Philip Senyor, and two days after carryed the Frenchman, his sloop's loading of provision.[41]

Although, as has just been seen, Curaçao carried on an active trade with the French and English colonies nearest at hand, the principal market — then largely in Jewish hands — was the Spanish Main, what now comprises the coast of Venezuela and Colombia. At times the Spanish colonial government itself was a customer of the Curaçoan Jewish traders who supplied even arms and ammunition.[42]

By the force of events this trade — as that of the English[43] of Jamaica with Venezuela — very often was clandestine for Spain and absolutely legal for Holland and England, since the trader had acquitted himself of all export duties. "If the English and the Dutch," recounts the traveler Robert Lade in 1725, "drew considerable advantage from this illicit commerce, the Spanish smugglers derived even more profit from it."[44] A French traveler and a Venezuelan historian[45] extol the Dutch of Curaçao for their part in this trade, and opine that as a result the Spanish colonists were able to devote themselves seriously to agriculture and exchange their produce for all sorts of articles. (Spain was then concentrating on Mexico and Peru.) "There was mutual need of help, of work and of courses between two rival nations avid for wealth."[46] To put a halt to this illicit traffic the Spanish colonial govern-

[40] Philip Senior, known as Philipe Henriquez, was in partnership with ex-Governor Jan Doncker (1692-96) and with Governor Jeremias van Collen (1710-15) [*Precious Stones*, p. 305; WICA 572, p. 709].

[41] *Calendar of State Papers, Colonial Series, America and West Indies, 1710-June, 1711*, at the Public Record Office, edited by Cecil Headlam (London, 1924), pp. 13-16. My thanks to Dr. Jacob R. Marcus who drew my attention to this memorial.

[42] In 1697 the brothers David Senior and Philipe Henriquez sold the Spanish governor of Cartagena 5,000 pesos worth of arms and ammunition. See below, p. 82. The sale of weapons was not a Jewish specialty, although Jews are found selling arms to Venezuela in the 19th century.

[43] See below, p. 222.

[44] *Voyage du Capitaine Robert Lade*, vol. I (Paris, 1744), pp. 51-52.

[45] F. Depons, *Voyage à la partie Orientale de la Terre-Ferme dans l'Amérique Méridionale* (Paris, 1806); Rafael-Maria Baralt, *Resumén de la Historia de Venezuela* (Paris, 1841). Compare *WIG*, 1935-36, pp. 25-26.

[46] Guillaume Thomas Raynal (1713-96), *Histoire . . . des Etablissements et du commerce des Européens dans les Indes*, vol. III (Geneva, 1780), p. 288.

ment had recourse to the clergy. They wanted all Catholic smugglers excommunicated from the Church. The anathema, so formidable a weapon in Europe, proved ineffective in America.[47] Smuggling continued in Venezuela until about thirty-five years ago.

THE BUSINESSMAN AND HIS CONGREGATION

In a relatively small community such as Curaçao everyone had to guard his reputation zealously. If he did not, he stood to lose his credit and honor, and to be ostracized by his friends. So of necessity he was forced to trade fairly and honestly. When a dispute arose with a coreligionist, he had recourse to the Beth Din or religious tribunal presided over by the Chief Rabbi. Very often its decision upheld the prevailing business practices. Sometimes the Mahamad or a person of great influence had to intervene in order to avoid a trial before the courts of the land. Community regulations, as mentioned earlier, compelled the parties to abide by the ruling of the religious court and of the Mahamad on pain of excommunication or suspension from all religious assistance.

For religious reasons the Jewish merchant could not charge interest on loans to his coreligionists.[48] This was a great hardship when large sums were involved. To avail himself of this source of income, he was obliged to lend money to non-Jews. During the 18th century the interest rate varied between 6% and 12%, depending upon the debtor's solvency and the security offered.

The Jewish merchant had acclimated himself so well to Curaçao business life that he could not exist without it. Neither could the government nor the Curaçoan people do without him. Both needed each other and both contributed toward making Curaçao one of the largest trading centers of the Caribbean.

THE SLAVE TRADE

While the Jews of many European countries were subject to numerous trade restrictions, those of Curaçao were free from discriminatory laws. Like the

[47] Bosch, *ibid.*, vol. I, p. 299.

[48] Various promissory notes, even those involving large sums, specified that the loan carried no interest "because those of the Jewish nation, for religious reasons, cannot claim them from each other" (OAC 1144, act of Aug. 3, 1741). In some instances the mortgage holder occupied the mortgaged premises rent-free, as a "gift" from the owner (OAC 1142, act of Nov. 4, 1739). Sometimes the loans ran for a short term. Jacob David Senior took a 3,300 pesos' mortgage from Elias Levy on March 6, 1737, "without interest," and paid it several months later on July 15, 1737 (OAC 1140, act of March 6, 1737). The parnassim generally lent community funds to Jews without interest and to non-Jews at interest varying between 6% and 8% (*ibid.*, act of June 17, 1737). Nevertheless, the records cite several instances of Jews claiming interest from their coreligionists (WICA 216, May 31, 1729).

other inhabitants, however, they could not pursue certain occupations, among them the slave trade, which was the exclusive monopoly of the Company. In this day and age with independence given to the peoples of Africa — formerly the chief slave source — it is hard to understand the slave trade. Slavery arose when the world was young. It goes back to when Noah cursed his grandson to be a "slave of slaves." What is incredible is that it was not viewed as wicked or inhuman. It was an institution well accepted even in high circles. Neither kings nor nobles, neither intellectuals nor humanitarians, neither the devout nor prelates of the high Catholic hierarchy[49] saw in this traffic a degradation of the human race. It was just another business.

Ever since 1641 the Company had been trying to make Curaçao the largest slave center of the Caribbean.[50] Not achieving that goal, the new Company of 1674 threw more energy into developing the trade.[51]

The Jews had interested themselves in this business when they were in Brazil, and they continued it in Amsterdam[52] either as buyers or sellers. In 1673 N. & N. Deliaan offered the Company 500 African slaves for consignment to its Cadix agents.[53] Two years later Jan de Lion (i.e., Joao de Yllan), as the agent of others, proposed selling the Company 1,500-2,000 slaves from Rio Calabary.[54]

The colonists of 1659 received a certain number of slaves to work on their plantations. This number was increased by natural reproduction and by purchase from the Company of *macarons* — weak or sickly slaves. The inhabitants could not buy sound slaves for their private use until 1674. That year the Company also permitted them to buy slaves for the export trade.

A Spanish-Jewish nobleman of culture and refinement, high in royal and religious circles, had no qualms about carrying on the slave trade. He and a gentile associate conducted it on an extensive scale, of course with Company participation. He was none other than Don Manuel Belmonte of Amsterdam, count palatine and representative of her Catholic Majesty before the High

[49] The Bishop of Madeira bought from a pirate of Zeeland 20-25 Moorish slaves captured in 1634. This statement was made by Joseph Palache, Amsterdam agent for the Moroccan king (GAA 942, Not. Bredan, May 9, 1634).

[50] Cornelis Ch. Goslinga, *Emancipatie en Emancipator* (Assen, 1956), p. 11.

[51] Meeting of the "Ten" [directors of the WIC] of Dec. 21, 1674 (WICA 831, p. 28); subject reopened at the meeting of July 9, 1678 (*ibid.*, p. 446v).

[52] David Israel and Abraham Querido of Amsterdam bought a number of slaves from the WIC in 1658 (GAA 2859, Not. Coornhart, May 15, 1658). In 1662 Abraham Cohen do Brazil bought 52 slaves from the WIC, while Jeudah Henriquez of Amsterdam bought 12 (GAA 2213, Not. Lock, Sept. 26, 1662; GAA 2995, Not. Lavello, Dec. 12, 1662).

[53] OWICA 16, meetings of Sept. 7 and Oct. 9, 1673, pp. 183v, 192.

[54] WICA 330, meeting of March 7, 1675, p. 113.

States General of Holland.[55] Known also as Baron de Belmonte, he was recognized in the Amsterdam synagogue as Isaac Nunez. Jointly with Moseh Curiel he represented the Jews before the Dutch government.[56] He formed an association with Jean Cooymans, ex-sheriff of Amsterdam, to ship slaves in large quantities to Curaçao.[57] In accordance with this arrangement, he issued a power of attorney to Governor Willem Kerckrinck of Curaçao to receive three shiploads of slaves; to extend all possible aid to Francisco (alias Moshe) Lopez Henriquez[58] and to audit the books under Balthazar Beck's control.[59] (Beck, then fourth-ranking government official, had been the Company's Commissioner of Slaves since 1668). Finally, Belmonte virtually appointed Lopez Henriquez as Kerckrinck's assistant because of Henriquez' knowledge of Spanish.[60]

That, most probably, was the start of Jewish participation in the Curaçao slave trade. Other enterprising coreligionists of Lopez Henriquez who engaged in this risky business included Manuel de Pina (a.k.a. Jahacob Naar),[61] Manuel Alvares [Correa],[62] and most outstanding of them all, Philipe Henriquez, and his brother David Senior.

His case being unique in Jewish history, Philipe Henriquez (a.k.a. Jahacob Senior) merits a few words. Born in Amsterdam to distinguished parents circa 1660,[63] he was the only Jew to whom the Holland Board of Admiralty ever granted a concession to fetch slaves from Africa and transport them in his vessel, *De Vrijheid*, to Curaçao. The Admiralty stressed this exception in its records.[64] Friends of this ex-captain of a Dutch warship during Dutch-

[55] In 1685 he was ambassador-extraordinary of Holland to England. As ambassador to Madrid, and later to Lisbon, Belmonte rendered outstanding services to Holland (J. C. De Jonge, *Geschiedenis van het Nederl. Zeewezen*, vol. III ['s Gravenhage, 1837], pp. 428-29, 672. Compare W. R. Menkman, "Slavenhandel . . . op Curaçao," *WIG*, 1935-36, p. 18). It is odd to find a Jew as ambassador at the court of Madrid and Lisbon during the height of the Inquisition.

[56] PJCAA, Livro de Eleiçoems, 5440-5472, p. 23.

[57] Belmonte is met for the first time in 1676 as a slave trader. A year later he and one of the greats of Spain, De Lira by name, entered into a contract with the WIC for the purpose of bringing slaves to Curaçao (OWICA, Notulen, y. 1676, p. 117v; y. 1677, pp. 155a, 158).

[58] For particulars about him, see Emmanuel, *Precious Stones*, pp. 207-8.

[59] WICA 617, 2nd part, p. 27.

[60] *Ibid.*, p. 47v. Belmonte executed his power of attorney in Amsterdam on Dec. 23, 1687, before Not. Padthuyzen.

[61] For his biography, see Emmanuel, *Precious Stones*, pp. 174-75.

[62] For details about him, see *ibid.*, pp. 230-32.

[63] His father, Mordechay de Jeudah Senior, and his mother, Sara Lopez, belonged to Amsterdam's most respected Jewish families. Sara Lopez was the sister of Antonio Lopez Suasso, Baron of Avernas le Gras (GAA, DTB 691, f. 51).

[64] J. C. de Jonge, *ibid.*, vol. III, p. 276, according to the Vaz Dias manuscript notes.

French hostilities put up a 20,000 florins' guaranty in 1692 for this undertaking. Seven years earlier he had landed in Curaçao with his brothers David, Solomon and Isaac.[65] There he served as director of the Curaçao *asiento* — slave deposit — of the Royal African Company, one of the largest slave-trading firms of the day. Jointly with his brother David Senior and associate Johan Goedvriend he would reship these slaves to other parts, chiefly to Cartagena. That was where the director-general of the Royal African Company resided. On such a run in 1699 Henriquez was taken prisoner by the Inquisition. He told the Inquisition, among other things, that a Father belonging to the Dominican Order had been converted to Judaism in Curaçao, taking the name Abraham de Paz. Despite his admirable defense Henriquez was imprisoned for 73 days. Released on payment of a fine and costs,[66] he was forbidden to navigate in Spanish waters. Nevertheless, he dared continue his heavy slave traffic along the Spanish Main, according to a record of 1711.[67] It is patently clear that on June 30, 1701, he chartered *Het Wappen van Holland* from Curaçao Governor Nicolaas van Beck to get slaves from Africa at 9,375 florins the trip. For this well-armed Company ship he offered as security all his assets and the value of the anticipated cargo.[68] The risk involved was enormous. Governor Beck's report to the Company tells us that out of the 664 slaves placed on board at Africa, 205 died en route to Curaçao. Such were the huge losses in this traffic of human beings!

PURCHASE AND SALE OF SLAVES

Upon their arrival at Curaçao the slaves were examined by a Company expert. Jacob Calvo d'Andrade[69] had been one of these experts from 1701, and possibly earlier, until his death in 1705.[70] The slaves were classified according to age and physical condition. Part of them were destined for exportation

[65] Emmanuel, *Precious Stones*, pp. 302-7. At one time Henriquez was accused of being "the governor's favorite." Actually, in the course of his business career, he was in partnership with at least two governors. Specifically, before 1692 and up to 1696, he and his relatives (brother David and brothers-in-law Jeudah Senior and Abraham Fundam) were associated with ex-Governor Jan Doncker. In 1716 he was the partner of Governor Jeremias van Collen (WICA 572, p. 709).

[66] The Philipe Henriquez report made at Governor Van Beck's insistence, as found in the Hamelberg Collection, Royal Library at The Hague, ms. no. 120, E 10. See p. 83 below, footnote 99.

[67] WICA 204, pp. 150-50v.

[68] WICA 1282, Kamer op de Maze te Rotterdam, Letters and Papers of Curaçao, y. 1701, letter of N. van Beck.

[69] WICA 200, pp. 242, 277.

[70] He was parnas of the burial society in 5448 (1687-88). See Emmanuel, *Precious Stones*, pp. 57, 535.

and part for auctioning to the planters. Jewish participation in the slave trade with the Company was large in the twenty-five years between 1686 and 1710, as the following figures show:

Purchaser	*Slaves*	*Value in Pesos*	*Year*
Philipe Henriquez & David Senior	30	2,483	1700
Idem & *Idem* & Juan Goedvriend[71]	249	22,816-5-2	1701
Manuel Alvares Correa	482	46,754	1701
Abraham Lucena & Gabriel Levy	10	1,000	1701
Moses [Levy] Maduro	11	1,100	1701
Philipe Henriquez & David Senior	102?	10,200	1702
Mordechay [Namias] de Crasto	156	14,800	1705
Idem & Moseh Lopez Henriquez	29	2,900	1705
Moses [Levy] Maduro	10	1,000	1705[72]
Jacob Benjamin Jesurun Henriquez	?	1,850	1705
Ferro & Neyra	46?	4,572	1710[73]

During this period Manuel Alvares Correa gave the governor of Curaçao a draft for 123,784:8:0 florins[74] for a slave purchase, payable by Antonio Alvares Machado (otherwise Moses Machado)[75] of Amsterdam. Almost every Jew bought from one to nine slaves for his personal use or for eventual resale. Prominent among such purchasers were the cantors David Pardo in 1701 and David Lopez Fonseca in 1705, and the physician Isaacq da Costa in 1705.

After that time the slave trade diminished steadily. It seems that the firm represented by Philipe Henriquez et al. ceased operating about 1722,[76] or possibly shortly after Henriquez' death in 1718. In 1730 any resident of Curaçao could import slaves on the payment of a head tax of four pesos. In spite of this facility, the Jew did not bring slaves in large numbers. If he did import a slave, it was usually in payment for merchandise. The Jews, as a whole, were not too interested in exporting slaves born and reared in Curaçao. These would not fetch the same price as slaves from other provinces and the new owner could not expect to derive much benefit from a slave accustomed to kindness.[77]

[71] A Gentile. In 1709 he was a member of the Island Council and captain of the Civil Defense Corps (WICA 203, p. 78).

[72] GAA 4775, p. 1069.

[73] WICA 200, pp. 369, 486; WICA 203, p. 78; WICA 566, p. 258.

[74] WICA 566, p. 225; WICA 1782, Kamer op de Maze.

[75] He was the noted provision supplier to the Dutch and English armies.

[76] Hamelberg, p. 76.

[77] Governor I. J. Rammelman Elsevier Jr. of Curaçao wrote to the Colonial Minister of Holland in 1849 that "the slave in Curaçao is freer than a domestic in Europe" (quoted by Goslinga, *ibid.*, p. 34).

The slaves employed by Jews were generally treated more humanely. A few were even given an education,[78] and they rested completely on Saturdays and on Jewish holidays. Their masters saw to it that no one violated their rest. When in 1701 Governor Nicolaas van Beck, an anti-Semite, ordered the Jews to send their slaves to repair the city walls on Saturday, he was vigorously opposed.[79] Very often the slave owned by a Jew did not work on Sunday either, since a stiff tax was charged for a permit, and if the slave worked without it, the Jewish master made himself liable to a fine of fifty pesos.[80] An eyewitness in 1720 recounts, "This is why the savages would say: 'Who enters a Jewish home is blessed by God.'"[81] Is it surprising that the slave conserved a great respect for this religion which gave him complete rest on at least 64 days of the year?

It was customary for a Jewish proprietor to free several slaves in his will.[82] This occurred so often that space does not permit their recital. They freed not only the old slaves, but the children also and, at times, entire families. Here are several examples. Abraham Mendes de Castro in 1752 freed "Seraphina, her children, grandchildren and entire family."[83] Moses Henriquez in 1764 liberated a slave with her three children.[84] Isaac Cardozo da Costa freed seventeen relatively young slaves in 1775.[85] Hana Capriles freed five in 1811,[86] and Abraham Isaac Henriquez fourteen in 1830.[87]

Some truly considerate testators would insist that a mother slave be sold with her children as a unit. In her will of November 5, 1713, Judith Baruch Carvalho, widow of Jacob Henriquez Moron, ordered that when her slaves were disposed of "each of them be sold with their children, without separating

[78] Every year the government would publish a report on the punishment meted to the slaves, with their masters' names, under the title: "Staat van Straffen aan Slaven alhier . . ." Only a very few Jewish-owned slaves were brought before the chief of police for punishment. Was it that they behaved better or that their masters were kinder?

[79] WICA 566, pp. 574-76, 680-81.

[80] According to an ordinance of Dec. 8, 1812, renewed on Feb. 27, 1820 (*CC*, March 4, 1820).

[81] *WIG*, 1922, p. 169. This refers to the Jews of Surinam. But the same can be said for the Jews of Curaçao. The truth is that upon their emancipation in 1863 a large number preferred to remain with their former masters. See also *Tweede rapport der Staatscommissie* (The Hague, 1856), p. 236, testimony of ex-Governor Rammelman Elsevier of Curaçao, regarding the good treatment accorded slaves by their Jewish masters.

[82] This custom was followed by the Jews in Jamaica, Barbados, Surinam, etc., and even in Salonika. See Emmanuel, *Guedolé Saloniki Ledorotam* (Tel Aviv, 1936), p. 141.

[83] OAC 887, no. 26.

[84] OAC 193, no. 115.

[85] OAC 204, nos. 86, 102.

[86] OAC 1033, no. 29.

[87] CEOE 754, no. 27.

a mother from her children." Abraham Henriquez Juliao in 1847 freed two slaves, aged 37 and 57 years, respectively. He also enjoined his heirs to care for the 81-year-old slave Maria who was to be given a decent burial on her death. Also, that "the slave Clara of seventy-two years . . . be treated humanely and justly."[88] Very often a testator not only ordered the freeing of a slave, but also left him a bequest of as much as one hundred pesos.

Frequently the Jewish masters did not wait until death to set their slaves free. They would allow them certain free hours daily to earn some money. With their accumulated earnings the slaves could buy their freedom. This system of enabling a slave to free himself so worried Governor Jacob van Bosveld that he appealed to the Company for advice. They replied, "Defend the interests of the slaves since they do guard duty."[89] Many a time the Jewish master freed a slave for services rendered.

All this explains the relatively large number of slaves freed by the Jews, according to the annual gubernatorial proclamations up to a little before 1863. Of the 702 slaves liberated in Curaçao between 1846 and 1863, the Jews had emancipated 191 or 27% of the total. This is noteworthy since proportionately the Jews owned fewer slaves than their non-Jewish neighbors, including the Government.[90]

NAVIGATION

Ever since their arrival in Amsterdam in 1581 the Jews entered the shipping field either as owners or charterers. There is no definite proof, but it is likely that one or another Jewish family migrated to Curaçao on a ship owned wholly or partly by relatives in Amsterdam. The 17th century Amsterdam Morteiras, Curiels and Cotinhos, whose kin later settled in Curaçao, had vessels which used to make the Curaçao run.[91]

Already in 1651-52 the Jews were skilled seafarers navigating on their own account. That is inferred from the contract accorded by the Company to De Yllan and Nassi. It authorized them, among other things, to capture Portuguese vessels under certain conditions.

When General J. van Walbeeck occupied Curaçao in 1634, he wrote to

[88] CGA, Not. acts, Jan. 19, 1847.

[89] WICA 210, March 1, 1763.

[90] CGA, "Slave Register," 8 vols., ms. at the Finance Dept. Between 1812 and 1863 the *CC* published the names of slaves freed by their masters. The ratio of those liberated by the Jews was strikingly large. Contrary to the Catholic version, most of the slaves freed by the Jews were certainly relatively young.

[91] WICA 15, y. 1669, p. 79; WICA 335, y. 1680, p. 332v; WICA 336, y. 1681, p. 383v.

the Dutch West India Company that the greatest prize was the island's fine port. The Jews of Curaçao, and especially their young men, took advantage of this natural position to go forth as sailors and traders. "Here, in Curaçao," wrote David Levy Mendes to his brother Manuel Duarte of Amsterdam in 1697, "the young men have to take to the boats in order to earn their livelihood."[92] They had their own ships, which sailed to the ports of the Spanish Main and even those of North America and Europe.

The merchant or his representative sailed his "floating store" to neighboring ports. There he exchanged his goods — manufactured principally in Holland — for raw materials destined for Curaçao or for the export trade. He was exposed to constant peril. Pirates of various nations infested the Caribbean waters and the Spanish Main, often with the consent and cooperation of their respective governments. So thick was the area with buccaneers that no ship dared venture from Curaçao when Holland was at war with England and France in the second half of the 17th century. In 1697 twenty-six French ships were harassing Dutch and English shipping in the Caribbean. Finally a fleet of twenty English vessels called at Curaçao, picked up four Dutch vessels and together set sail to wipe out the French fleet.[93] Between 1703 and 1704 the brothers Philipe Henriquez and David Senior lost to English privateers four ships with their rich cargo valued at 68,715 pesos.

As a result of these staggering losses, the States General of Holland decided to equip two ships with fifty cannon to convoy Curaçoan ships between Holland and Curaçao. To meet this outlay it was proposed to levy an ad valorem duty of 2 1/2% on shipments from Holland to Curaçao and 3% on those from Curaçao to Holland.[94] Evidently it was difficult to carry this into effect. Not until 1708 did the States General vote the sum of 200,000 florins necessary for a convoy to Curaçao.[95] Such convoys, however, could not protect the shipping between Curaçao and the surrounding islands. For that reason thirteen merchants of Curaçao — eleven of them Jews — banded together and obtained Company permission to arm two privateers in order to defend themselves against the French and Spanish.[96] Like those petitioners,

[92] Ms., Ets Haim Library.

[93] Letter of May 29, 1697, written by Gabriel Levy at Curaçao to his uncle Manuel Duarte, Amsterdam (Ets Haim Library, loose papers).

[94] Resolutions of the States General, meeting of June 22, 1705.

[95] *Ibid.*, meeting of Dec. 13, 1708.

[96] The eleven Jews were Philipe Henriquez, David Senior, Manuel Alvares Correa, Mordechay Namias de Crasto, Elias Parera, Gabriel Levy, Abraham Henriquez Moron, Mordechay Henriquez, Abraham and Josua de Pina and Elias de Crasto. The two Gentiles were Aubin Neau and Jacob Kemp. Seven merchants opposed this petition, among them very surprisingly, the Jewish firm of Ferro & Neyra (WICA 203, p. 310, meetings of Sept. 4 and 10, 1709).

the majority of the marine insurers were Jews. Naturally they were keenly interested in the convoy. Proportionately, they had been sustaining far greater losses than their non-Jewish associates.

The Jews had to contend with religious fanaticism. The following incidents will illustrate their difficulties with the Inquisition and the inadequate defenses of Curaçao which drew the pirates to her shores.

Benjamin Carvalho, one of Curaçao's outstanding merchants, went to Jamaica where he became a citizen. Returning to Curaçao for his family, he and his ship with wares for Curaçoan traders were seized by a Spanish privateer bent on hauling his prize to Havana. Born a Christian, Carvalho ran the risk of falling into the clutches of the Inquisition. He persuaded the captor to take him and his boat to Curaçao where friends would pay a ransom. The corsair agreed and landed at Caracas Bay on the outskirts of Curaçao on August 19, 1683. He demanded 20,000 pesos. According to Governor Jan van Erpecum's report to the Company, the Curaçoan Jews interested in the cargo and release of Carvalho urged him to let them negotiate with the pirate. At a loss to understand why Carvalho ran such a great risk for his religion, Erpecum finally acceded to their entreaties. They managed to settle the matter by paying a ransom of 3,500 pesos.[97]

Unlike Carvalho, daring Philipe Henriquez was a Dutch citizen, born a Jew. He had navigated in West Indian waters for twelve years. He had been a guest of the ex-governor of Cartagena and even of the ex-Inquisitor General. He held excellent recommendations from the Bishop of Santa Marta. During a three months' stay in Cartagena in 1698 he was known to be a Jew. Yet, when he arrived there on June 10, 1699, on his *Juffr. Gerebrecht* with a cargo of 115 slaves, he ran into difficulty. The Inquisition seized him and his vessel despite the intervention of Don Gaspar de Andrade, director-general of the Royal African Company. The pretext was that only a Catholic could travel in the West Indies. This, of course, was untrue since Dutch and English Protestant captains called at Spanish ports, and there was even a Protestant church in one of them. The prime interest was to learn how much money Henriquez had, who was indebted to him and for how much. He replied that some people in Cartagena owed him insignificant sums, but that "the king of Spain owed him and his friends much money for arms and ammunition;" that he had come to collect 5,000 pesos from the ex-governor for arms and ammunition. Accused of slaughtering chickens according to Jewish rite before his passengers and saying prayers in Hebrew in front of his crew, Henriquez defended

[97] GAA, WIC 54. The matter seems to have been settled otherwise as that same week Carvalho and the governor had a disagreement over it (Hamelberg Collection, 120 B 1).

himself remarkably well. Accused of slaughtering in Santa Marta, he declared that he did not have a rabbinical license to slaughter animals, but that other Jews had killed animals for him in Santa Marta in 1698.[98]

Following true to form, the Inquisitor-General demanded the confiscation of all his belongings and putting him to the torture. He was thrown into the dungeon. A priest was sent to indoctrinate him in Catholicism. Luckily he was freed after 73 days when De Andrade paid his fine of fifty pesos as well as litigation and maintenance costs. He was admonished to stay out of Spanish waters on pain of two years' imprisonment and 2,000 pesos' fine.[99]

Sometimes a Jew, although born a Jew, met death at the hands of the Spaniards. Jeudah aCohen of Curaçao was such a victim. He was killed in Puerto Rico in 1723.[100] Even in the face of such a fate, the Jews unhesitatingly gave their ships Jewish names.[101] In spite of the risks and perils that this profession occasioned them, Jewish merchants and sailors bravely kept on without interruption. Documents of 1721 and 1727 assert that "nearly all the navigation of Curaçao was in the hands of the Jews who even equipped the privateers"[102] to defend themselves against the pirates. Another document of the period states that there was no Jewish merchant who did not own a vessel.

Despite the elements, pirates and the far-reaching Inquisition, they loved the sea. Some wanted to be remembered for their calling long after they had passed on. There are five instances where relatives had a ship[103] engraved on the tombstone of a navigator proudly to denote his profession.

[98] It is noteworthy that there was a ritual slaughterer in Santa Marta in 1698.

[99] Philipe Henriquez made a detailed report of this frightful experience at the behest of the governor of Curaçao. It is preserved in the government records of Holland (Hamelberg, *ibid.*; see pp. 76-77 above). Henriquez died a Catholic in 1718 in Havana whereupon his membership in the Santa Companhia de Dotar Orfas passed on to his brother David Senior.

[100] WICA 578, p. 11.

[101] For instance, in 1671 Jonathan, son of Haham Saul Levy Morteira, bought *De Koning van Sweden* from Antonio Lopez Suasso in Amsterdam; he renamed it *Het Huis Levy* [House of Levy] (GAA 2903, Not. Padthuysen, April 26, 1671). Isaac Henriquez Cotinho of Amsterdam in 1681 had a ship called *The Prophet Elias* which plied between Holland and Curaçao (WICA 336, p. 383v). Curaçoan Jews generally named their boats for their wives or children and sometimes for biblical characters. See appendix 3.

[102] Hamelberg, p. 137; letter signed by prominent Curaçoan Jewish merchants in 1721 to the parnassim of Amsterdam (PJCAA, bundle).

[103] Illustrations 14, 230, 231, 232, 233.

CHAPTER IV

ADVANCES AND SETBACKS

THE JEWS were making great strides in the development of agriculture, commerce and navigation in Curaçao. Their prosperity aroused the jealousy and hostility, not of their fellow inhabitants, but of some high government officials. In those days the governor and his official family were not barred from business activity. Although holding them in the highest regard, the Jews could not defer to them in the competition for business. The Jewish merchant consequently suffered much at the hands of a particularly obnoxious official who had once vowed to be a "second Haman."

BALTHAZAR BECK, THE SECOND HAMAN

Ever since 1668 Balthazar Beck, brother of Governor Mathias Beck, had been serving as Slave Commissioner. As such, he ranked fourth in the government hierarchy: directly after the governor, the quartermaster and the Protestant minister. Simultaneously he was captain of the Civil Guard. As such he was automatically a member of the Island Council and therefore a judge as well.

He used to import and export merchandise like any other merchant. It rankled him that the Jews had the advantage in trade. Unjustly he complained to his Amsterdam representative that the Jews sold their goods almost at cost price. Beck's malice toward the Jews moved Governor Van Liebergen to lament to the Company that "ever since they arrived here Beck has held an irreconcilable hatred for the Jews because business is in their hands."

Beck harbored a rabid dislike for one Moseh Henriquez Cotinho who had come to Curaçao in 1679 from Holland via Jamaica. Moseh was the son of Sebastian (Isaac) Cotinho, a highly respected citizen of Amsterdam and owner of *The Prophet Elias* which made the Amsterdam-Curaçao run in 1681. The Cotinhos were upright, they knew what they wanted and tolerated no insolence.

As a judge in the Island Council, Beck easily succeeded in imprisoning Cotinho on the testimony of two slaves. Protests by the parnassim were fruitless. Only after his father had taken the matter before the Company directors was Cotinho set free and restored to his honorable place in society.[1]

[1] WICA 336, meetings of April, June, Nov. and Dec., 1681, pp. 111v, 190v, 343v, 383v.

But until his release, Cotinho had languished a year in prison. That was enough punishment to frighten any uncooperative Jewish merchant. Disgusted with Beck's highhandedness, Cotinho went to Surinam where he left a rich plantation on his death in 1723.

In an effort to prevent similar outrages, the parnassim wrote many letters to the Company about Beck's malignity. They also asked to be excused from Saturday guard duty and to have their privileges amplified on the order of those enjoyed in Brazil.[2] At the request of their Curaçao colleagues, the Amsterdam parnassim appeared before the Company directors and were assured that the matters would be studied favorably.[3]

In 1675 the Company imposed a 10% tax on all produce and cattle. The indignant islanders refused to pay it. Five years later Governor Van Liebergen was ordered to enforce it.[4] Balthazar Beck, a plantation-owner, would not pay the tax. In fact, he invited some twenty-five businessmen, including four Jews, to his home on March 16, 1681. The object: to lodge a protest with the governor and to sign a petition to have a representative fight the tax in Holland. When he branded the Company directors "just as tyrannical as the Duke of Alva,"[5] the four Jews refused to sign. Beck then blamed the "demon Jews" for the tax of five to ten florins collected on each slave.[6] Thirteen days later, on Saturday, March 29, the Jews were in trouble. Beck began harassing them again.

The parnassim appealed for help to the Company and to the Messrs. Jacob Brandon[7] and Jeronimo Nunes da Costa (a.k.a. Moshe Curiel), a large shareholder in the new Dutch West India Company.[8] Accompanying the appeal was their full authorization to Moshe Curiel, Luis Gonzalves d'Andrade and Isaac Brandon to represent them before the Company.[9] This intervention resulted

[2] They wrote on Oct. 19, 1680, and on April 8 and 11, 1681 (WICA 24); meeting of June 24, 1681 (WICA 336, p. 179v; WICA 617, pp. 94-95).

[3] WICA 330, meeting of May 17, 1680, p. 109v.

[4] WICA 832, y. 1679-83, meeting of Oct. 30, 1680. The directors referred to their decisions on this tax taken on Jan. 21, 1675, and May 19, 1679.

[5] According to the declaration, in Portuguese, addressed to the Company directors on April 11, 1681, by the four Jews at that meeting: Elias de Crasto, Isaque de Marchena, David Abendana and Benjamin Carvalho (WICA 617, p. 102).

[6] WICA 617, p. 405.

[7] The Brandons were brothers-in-law of Eliau Namias de Crasto, then community president.

[8] Curiel's investment in the Dutch West India Co. of 1674 was 46,200 florins whereas Antonio Lopes Suasso's was 107,667 (H. Bloom, *The Economic Activities of the Jews of Amsterdam* [Williamsport, 1937], p. 125).

[9] WICA 617, pp. 96, 101. The signatories to this letter of April 8, 1681, were Elias [Namias] de Crasto, Daniel Aboaf, Isaacq de Marchena, Joseph da Costa d'Andrade (whose wealthy, generous

in the Company's notifying the governor, in certain terms, "that the Jewish Nation on the Island of Curaçao is free to exercise its religion and also engage in the trades as is allowed [the Jews] in Amsterdam . . ."[10]

In spite of this protection, Beck "swore that he would be a second Haman to the Jews," according to Governor Van Liebergen's report to the Company. Beck was true to his threat. On Holy Thursday of 1682, Spanish sailors on a slave ship strung to the top of their mast a *Juda* (Judas) too closely aping the person of Haham Pardo, and gave Jewish names to the sheep. The Jews were so incensed that many of their armed youths wanted to fight it out with the Spaniards.[11] The governor ordered the *Juda* removed, and by proclamation forbade the giving of Jewish names to the sheep. Offenders were to be subjected to a fine of 100 pesos, arbitrary punishment and banishment.[12]

The Spaniards protested that the hanging of the *Juda* was a religious custom. As the Spaniards had staunch supporters in such devout Roman Catholics as Beck's mother-in-law, brother-in-law and children, the governor was prevailed upon to let the *Juda* hang in non-Jewish Otrabanda or Altena. The governor later reported to the Company that only because of his precautions had a massacre between the Jews and Spaniards been averted.[13] Beck was dismissed as captain of the Civil Guard and censured for his conduct even though in Van Bell he had a powerful protector on the Company Council.[14] An inveterate troublemaker, he later bedeviled Governor Kerckrinck (1686-92) whom he regarded as an usurper.[15]

During those years and throughout the 18th century, the government of Curaçao was as steeped in intrigue as a Byzantine court. Governor Van Liebergen's predecessor, Jan Doncker (1673-79), had voluntarily resigned from office in order to devote full time to his business enterprises. In fact, he later became associated with David Senior, Senior's brothers and brothers-in-law.[16]

brother Abraham lived in Amsterdam), Josua Henriques, David Abendana, Isaacq Parrera, David Carillo, Benjamin Carvalho and Manuel de Pina (a.k.a. Jacob Naar).

[10] WICA 832, y. 1679-83, meeting of July 4, 1681, p. 276v.

[11] According to the Van Liebergen report of April 25, 1682, to the Company (WICA 617, pp. 149v-50).

[12] Hamelberg, *ibid.*, p. 68; W. R. Menkman, "Slavenhandel en Rechtsbedoeling op Curaçao op het einde der 17e eeuw," *WIG*, 1935-36, p. 15. The author saw the original documents at The Hague in WICA 617, pp. 94-154.

[13] WICA 617, p. 154v.

[14] Beck had a pamphlet printed in his defense: *Vertoog . . . van Balthazar Beck . . . te Curaçao*, 1683, 52 pp., folio. The few Jews who had been intimidated declared in his favor (*Vertoog*, pp. 38, 46-47).

[15] WICA 617, p. 72, 2nd pagination.

[16] According to David Senior's will (OAC 821, Nov. 4, 1749). For more details on this association, see Emmanuel, *ibid.*, facing p. 169.

As Doncker's brother-in-law, Beck had aspired to filling Doncker's place and naturally despised Van Liebergen for "usurping" the governorship. Governor Van Liebergen, like his successor Kerckrinck, had been a Company director and deserved the respect and consideration of his assistants. But Beck and his party were very strong and tried by every means to overthrow him. To prevent that, the parnassim sent the Company a statement in Liebergen's favor.[17] Beck was aware of all that was happening through his personal correspondence with Van Bell. During these intrigues, Liebergen's opponents accused him of accepting a silver cup and saucer from the Jews. They also accused him of placing Company slaves at the disposition of the Jewish Nation for the construction of their country synagogue. Haham Pardo and eight parnassim asserted that they had always offered such a gift to every new governor;[18] that Liebergen accepted it only after much insistence on their part.[19] As for the second accusation, Jacob da Fonseca declared that he had arranged with the factor to pay nine placas daily for each slave, plus rations.[20] Liebergen had so many enemies that he was finally dismissed. Beck, his mortal enemy, triumphantly summoned the Jews who had signed the letter to Jeronimo Nunes da Costa. He wanted to know why they had touched on his honor. The frightened parnassim answered evasively. Only Elias de Crasto had the courage to say: "Because the citizenry (i.e., Beck) was hostile toward the [Jewish] Nation and we wished to correct that."[21]

These difficulties with the governors placed the community leaders in an unfavorable light. Surely they were roundly criticized by the members for not coming out with the truth and defending themselves honorably as was expected of them. This failure on the part of the parnassim to take a firm stand may have been one of the reasons for Haham Pardo to resign in June, 1683, and leave for Jamaica.[22]

[17] This statement was signed by eight parnassim on April 8, 1681. For a photo of these signatures, see Emmanuel, *ibid.*, opp. p. 169.

[18] The Amsterdam parnassim would also offer similar gifts to their sovereigns.

[19] Hamelberg, *Documenten*, p. 101. The text, in Portuguese, appears in WICA 617, pp. 63-64.

[20] WICA 617, p. 319.

[21] *Ibid.*

[22] On his departure in Sivan, 5443, he was paid his salary for "three-quarters of the Jewish year" (MS, Os HHm [Hahamim] . . . deste K: K:).

GROWTH OF THE COMMUNITY, 1684-1694

Despite this tense situation, the Jewish community kept growing with new arrivals. The infamous Black Code[23] of Louis XIV precipitated one of these waves. Unhampered by a successor after Colbert's death to protect Jewish commerce with the French Antilles, Louis XIV took this means to drive the Jews out of Martinique in 1685. Those who took refuge in Curaçao included Jacob Andrade; Sarah and Esther, daughters of Benjamin da Costa d'Andrade and of Luna d'Oliveira;[24] Haim Franco Athias, Benjamin de Casseres,[25] Isaac da Gama, Abraham de Molina and his son Jacob, Moseh Pereira, David Pinheiro, Abraham Vas or Vaes, and the family of the big sugar cane planter Benjamin d'Acosta whose son Joseph had preceded him long before.[26]

About the same period there was an influx of Jews from Amsterdam. These immigrants of 1680-90 were of better stock. They included Balthazar (a.k.a. Abraham) de Leon, Abraham Penso, Dr. Gomes Casseres, Jacob Jeudah Leao, the families Naar, Senior, Casseres-Spinoza, Lopez Henriquez, and Cohen Henriquez. The families De Leon, Gomes Casseres and Senior were economically well-fixed, while the Pensos, Naars and Lopez Henriquezes had the excellent credit backing of their Amsterdam relatives.

With so many newcomers, the synagogue of 1674 could not accommodate all the faithful. The parnassim therefore bought a larger house in 1690 for 463 pesos and ordered another Scroll of the Law from Amsterdam.[27] They dedicated this, their fourth synagogue, in Passover, 1690. As the congregation had been without a rabbi since 1683, the religious services were conducted by Isaac de Marchena, Daniel Aboab Cardozo and Moses Levy Maduro and his sons. Cardozo and the Maduros also served with David Bueno Vivas as

[23] The Frenchman Father Jean-Baptiste Labat, who visited Martinique for the first time in 1694, speaks of this expulsion with a certain bitterness:

> " . . . and the associates of Benjamin [da Costa] did not make any difficulties in stripping him in order to benefit from the spoils. After the peace of Risvick [1697] the heirs of Benjamin d'Acosta and several other representatives obtained permission from the king to return to the Isles in order to get what was owed them; but their trip was as useless as that of a Dutch agent, to whom was due some very considerable sums for the advances made to the inhabitants at the commencement of the Colony" (*Nouveau Voyage aux Isles de l'Amerique*, 2nd ed. [Paris, 1742], vol. I, pp. 92-93, 211-12). See also M. D. Teenstra, *ibid.*, vol. II, pp. 25-26.

[24] OAC 796, June 26, 1721.

[25] Abraham Cahen, "Les Juifs de la Martinique au XVII siècle", *REJ*, II, pp. 93, 115-16; Emmanuel, "Les Juifs de la Martinique et Leurs Coreligionnaires d'Amsterdam au XVIIe Siècle," *REJ*, CXXIII, 1964, pp. 511-16.

[26] In re the Da Costa d'Andrade family, see Emmanuel, *Precious Stones*, pp. 200-2. In 1682 Benjamin was "agent des affaires de la Couronne de Portugal en Hollande" (Cahen, *ibid.*, p. 106).

[27] It cost 259:4 pesos (MC, y. 5434, 5450).

the community's ritual slaughterers. Jacob Ulloa and Daniel Delgado were the teachers. Michael de Samuel de Casseres (nephew of the philosopher Spinoza)[28] was their scribe or writer of the Torah. Abraham Lopes da Silva was the sexton. A circumciser or *mohel* surely accompanied the earlier immigrant families. The circumcisers from 1698-1719 were Selomoh Levy Maduro (1698), Ishac Touro (1699), Mordechay Henriques (1706), and Joseph Israel Touro (1719).[29]

The community took care of its sick poor and had its own physicians and surgeons. The earliest physicians known to us are Dr. Yshack Gomes Casseres and Dr. Yschac Raphael Orobio de Matos. The former, a graduate of Lisbon, returned to Judaism in Amsterdam where he remarried his wife Ribca religiously. He succumbed to the epidemic ravaging Curaçao in 1693.[30] Dr. Orobio de Matos also seems to have studied in Portugal; he died in Curaçao in 1698.[31] The "surgeons" assisted the doctors by drawing blood (with leeches), giving enemas, cupping, and taking general care of the patients. Jacob Israel St. Croos,[32] encountered in 1718, is the earliest surgeon known.

The ritual bath or *tevilah* (*mikveh*) must have been installed prior to Haham Pardo's arrival, as there could be no marital relations without it. The *tevilah* was managed by a *banadeira* or bather. Esther Mendes was the first banadeira.[33]

Such a flourishing community could ill afford to remain without a rabbi. But it proved exceedingly difficult to fill the vacancy. The community demanded too much of a rabbi, and a prospective candidate insisted on having the prerogatives of a *Haham Mayor* or Chief Rabbi. In 1692 the parnassim requested Haham Aboab of Amsterdam to send them one of these three people as their rabbi: Ishac Saruco,[34] Joseph Franco,[35] or Selomoh Templo de Leon.[36] They

[28] Emmanuel, *ibid.*, pp. 193-95.

[29] OAC 804, Jan. 3, 1735; OAC 864, no. 199; PJCAA, bundle.

[30] Emmanuel, *ibid.*, pp. 185-86. [31] *Ibid.*, p. 196. [32] PJCAA, bundle.

[33] MS, section *Banadeira*. This service continued until the middle of the 19th century. The *banadeiras* after Esther Mendes, from 1714 to 1818, were the Widow Isaac Calvo de Andrade, the Widow Abraham de Leao, Sara Calvo de Andrade, Reyna Mello, the Widow Mordechay Calvo, the Widow Benjamin de la Rosa, the Widow Pereira, the Widow Jacob Noble, Sara Israel [Santa Croos?] [Ricardo?], Rachel Osorio, Ribca de Abraham Pereira, Hana de Samuel Levy Maduro and Ribca Berucha Louzada. The last two bathers paid the community a monthly rental of six pesos in 1816 and were paid for their services by the ladies (MS, MIA, Parnassim, meeting of July, 1816). The bathhouse was in back of the synagogue on an alley still called *Hanchi de Banio* or Bath Street, today's Kuiperstraat.

[34] A disciple of Haham Aboab, Saruco officiated for a certain time as haham of the Portuguese community of Neveh Salom in Maarsen. At the inauguration of the Portuguese Synagogue of Amsterdam in 1675, he delivered the third sermon, after the Hahamim Aboab and De Oliveira. Some of his writings are preserved at Amsterdam's Ets Haim Library.

[35] Teacher at the Ets Haim Seminary since 1681. He was engaged as haham of Surinam.

[36] Teacher at the Ets Haim Seminary.

were offering a yearly salary of 600 florins and free lodgings.[37] None of these worthy hahamim was interested. Finally, after an eleven-year quest — a very long time when such a large number of distinguished rabbis was available in Amsterdam and the eastern Sephardic communities — the Curaçao community engaged Rabbi Eliau Lopez. His annual salary was 800 florins, plus free living quarters, and other benefits.[38] The community paid the fare for him and his large family.

HAHAM LOPEZ

Haham Lopez, as observed on another occasion,[39] was born in Malaga, Spain, in 1648. He arrived in Amsterdam a Marrano. A disciple of Haham Aboab, he became a preacher of the Yeshibah Temime Darech of Amsterdam and was associated with the Yeshibah de los Pintos of Amsterdam. In 1678 he went to Barbados as Congregation Nidhe Israel's first haham. He therefore was no stranger to Jewish life in the colonies and at the age of forty-six could easily adapt himself to his new congregation.

During the negotiations with Lopez in 1693, a deathly epidemic swept Curaçao and mowed down many members. Some ninety souls fled to Newport, R.I., and a number of others to Tucacas, Venezuela.[40] Despite this exodus, the community was still numerous. For the first time in their history they were able to realize earnings on their principal. A year later they remitted 500 pesos to Amsterdam for two more Scrolls of the Law, presumably for their country synagogue. They took care of their cemetery. On it they built the *Casa de Rodeos*,[41] a house where they held prayers for the deceased. They also repaired the cemetery wall at a total cost of 753 pesos (1696-98). Other disbursements for that year included the annual salaries of the haham and his assistants, which amounted to 1,000 pesos; the upkeep of schools, aid to the poor, fares and assistance to needy transients, ransom of captives, annual contribution to the Holy Land, religious supplies, costs of administration, and so forth.

For the smooth, successful administration of the community the parnassim

[37] MS, y. 5452.

[38] *Ibid.*, y. 5454.

[39] Emmanuel, *Precious Stones*, pp. 216-19.

[40] According to Corcos, pp. 17-19, without giving source. It is strange that the Spanish government in 1698 authorized the Jews to settle in their colonies in spite of the far-reaching arm of the Inquisition. A Jewish settlement apparently existed in Santa Marta, Venezuela, in 1698. See p. 83 above.

[41] In re the Jewish cemeteries of Curaçao, their growth and administration, services for the dead, and so forth, see Emmanuel, *Precious Stones*, pp. 33-141.

needed extra powers. These they could attain through their haham, who had the power to impose the dread *ḥerem* or excommunication.

There were some who wished to free themselves of their communal obligations and pretended not to be affiliated with the congregation. Drastic measures had to be taken. These people were given three days to declare themselves members or not. After that period they were automatically excluded from the synagogue and from all religious assistance. Each member had to make a voluntary contribution toward the expenses of the community. The negligent were taxed as the Mahamad saw fit.

Some of the Jews were addicted to playing games of chance. To root out this evil, the Mahamad restored its old ban and enforced it by fine and excommunication. Members knowing who the players were and failing to report them were held equally guilty.[42]

The parnas in charge of distributing the honors in the synagogue was obliged to dispense them impartially, with special consideration for age and seniority. Sometimes a member expected an honor higher than that assigned to him, and he would refuse to perform it. To avoid the inevitable discussions and disturbance in the synagogue, the Mahamad imposed a fine of four pesos on anyone declining an honor. There were members who notified the Mahamad that they would accept no honor during their incumbency. These the parnassim punished with a three-year excommunication. As custodian of the Book of Regulations which also contained a list of the fines, the treasurer had to see that the fines were paid promptly.

Haham Lopez was bound to find irregularities in a community that had been without a rabbi for ten years. The sale of *casher* meat had to be regulated. By resolution adopted in 1696, Lopez required *casher* seals to be affixed to the meat. He would not allow *casher* beef to be purchased from Gentiles unless the *samas* or another Jew was present to certify to its *kashruth*. Jews had to accompany their slaves when sent to kill chickens or buy *casher* fat. Some Jews who went to sea frequently were permitted to slaughter for their private use only. Sometimes they abused this privilege by killing for Gentile butchers and placing the *casher* seal to the detriment of the community's accredited ritual slaughterers.

The parnassim, like their powerful colleagues in Amsterdam, ruled that no one could contradict or offend them, or raise his voice in protest or reproof for the manner in which the synagogue honors were distributed. The penalty

[42] A similar prohibition with the penalty of excommunication existed in Amsterdam in 1658 (PJCAA, Acordos, 10 Hesvan, 5419). Modified in 1693, it eliminated the excommunication and limited the fine to ten florins (PJCAA, Livro de Eleiçoems, p. 170).

was excommunication and a fine of twenty-five pesos. In 1717 Rephael Rodrigues and Salomo [Nunes] Netto offended the Mahamad with regard to certain assistance extended to the daughters of one [Isaac?] Pretto. They were excommunicated. Frequent travellers to the neighboring islands, Rodrigues and Netto had a permit to slaughter for their private use. The parnassim declared their meat not *casher*. Three days later Rodrigues and Netto came forth and each paid his 25 pesos' fine. During the services, immediately after the section on confessions, they ascended the pulpit. They declared their repentance "for having sinned against the Blessed Lord and His Sacred Law, for having offended the gentlemen of the Mahamad and Adjuntos, [and] the members of this Holy House," and asked the Blessed Lord, the Mahamad and Adjuntos for pardon.[43] As they had confessed against their will, Rodrigues and Netto kept grumbling against the Mahamad. This august body complained to the Chief of Police. The offenders were warned that, unless they stopped vexing the Mahamad, they would be fined 400 pesos and banished.[44]

The parnassim generally took undue advantage of their power. It was therefore resolved that before taking office the new parnas would solemnly swear before the altar, in the presence of the haham, that he would treat everyone equally and without bias; that he would follow the regulations and not divulge what occurred at a meeting. (This oath was compulsory until about 1864.) In 1712 David Senior was excommunicated by the president Abraham Henriquez Morão in connection with a matter involving the brotherhood over which Senior presided. Senior had the governor intervene. Morão had to remove the ban;[45] in disgust, he resigned.

Being parnas of such an easily-offended, heterogeneous element was difficult. Many preferred to pay the 25 pesos' fine rather than accept the office. To discourage this trend, the Mahamad raised the fine to 50 pesos for refusing to serve as parnas of the community, and to 25 pesos for refusing to act as parnas of Talmud Torah or of Hebra [Kaddisha], or for declining the honor of Bridegroom of the Law.[46] The "office-dodger" who would not pay the fine

[43] MS, 2-6 Tamus, 5477.

[44] *Ibid.*, 6 Tamus, 5477.

[45] PJCAA, bundle; OAC 860, no. 100. This incident shows that Haham Lopez, the only authority qualified to excommunicate and absolve, was really powerless. He had to follow the parnassim's orders. That is why David Senior complained against the president and not the haham.

[46] The privilege of *Ḥatanim* (Bridegrooms of the Law) entailed huge expenses. Aside from having to make a sizable donation to the synagogue and to the officiants, the *ḥatanim* also had to hold a banquet for everyone in the congregation. As a result of the depression of 1702-08, many declined this honor (see appendix 12). To combat this trend, the parnassim raised the fine in 1708 from 25 to 50 pesos. One could not aspire to being treasurer before serving as *ḥatan*. Since members did not care to hold that office, they avoided being *ḥatan*. In compensation, many honors were bestowed upon the *ḥatanim*

was excluded from all religious assistance, including the circumcision of his sons and the burial of himself and his family in the cemetery.

THE SYNAGOGUE OF 1703

Thanks to these regulations — unconstitutional by today's standards but in 1696 indispensable — the parnassim were able to build their fifth synagogue and thus replace the house of worship of 1690. The new synagogue had to be large enough to contain at least 200 seats for the men and boys and another eighty seats in the gallery for the women. That deduction is made from the income tax record of 1702[47] in the Company archives at The Hague. It lists 101 Jewish families among the taxpayers of Curaçao, and to this number may be added twenty-five more families[48] whose modest earnings were non-taxable.

Funds for the synagogue were raised in various ways. By good fortune the community came into a legacy in 1699 from Abraham and Sarah da Costa,[49] and with those funds was able to purchase a house for 977:1:4 pesos.[50] Following the pattern of their Amsterdam colleagues, four men of means — Eliau Pereira,[51] Mordechay Hisquiau Namias de Crasto, Abraham Henriquez Morão,[52] and Gabriel Levy — outbid one another for the privilege of purchasing the four cornerstones.

Various members donated furnishings or equipment or decorations. Isaac Haim Senior[53] and his wife Rachel supplied the *tebah*. Mordechay Namias de Crasto offered a Sepher Torah. Their names are respectfully mentioned every year on the Feast of Pentecost in homage to their religious zeal.[54]

from Yom Kippur Eve to the Saturday when the first Sabbatical portion — *Bereshith* — is read. To them was reserved the honor of accompanying the *hazzanim* to the pulpit on Yom Kippur morning. They and their wives were flanked by two best men and bridesmaids as though they were newlyweds. In their honor each member called to the Torah had to donate something to the synagogue. The crowning glory: the *ḥatan* was called *Melekh Israel* — King of Israel.

47 WICA 567, p. 365-72.

48 Taxpayers for 1707 included 104 Jewish families (WICA 572, pp. 369-75b; see appendix 8).

49 MIA, Hashcaboth Register, vol. I, months of Kislev and Tebet; Emmanuel, *Precious Stones*, p. 539, nos. 2095-96.

50 MS and MC, y. 5459, 5462.

51 From 1719-28 Eliau Pereira and Jacob Jeudah Leao served as the community's first representatives to the government. See appendix 13.

52 He died in Amsterdam in 1718, leaving five sons and four daughters and a fortune of 61,000 florins (PJCAA, bundle).

53 Isaac died in 1726. See Emmanuel, *Precious Stones*, opp. p. 305, for the illustration of his beautiful tombstone.

54 MIA, Hashcaboth, vol. 2, "Shavuhoth."

Jacob de Efraim Jesurun Henriquez offered a silver spice box for the *habdalah* service in 1703. It is, in our opinion, the oldest synagogal object bearing a definite date.[55] A few years later Henriquez also gave an artistic silver lamp for the Ḥanukkah service. It is still in use.[56]

The business depression resulting from the war between Holland and France and the severe drought that parched the island did not permit the members to build a new altar. They had to make the old one do until a later day. They preferred remaining with their cash balance of 596:4 pesos and be prepared for any emergency.

When the synagogue was completed, the Mahamad and councillors assigned seats to each member. The men and women were forbidden to bring chairs to the synagogue or to occupy a neighboring seat. Anyone who voiced his displeasure in the synagogue over the seating arrangement ran the risk of excommunication. Only the Mahamad and none other could dispose of an empty seat. In the women's gallery several seats of honor were reserved for brides or "brides of the Law" — wives of the *ḥatanim* — and their matrons of honor. As soon as the distribution of seats was settled, the fifth synagogue was inaugurated.

The inauguration took place in Shabu'oth, 5463 (May 21, 1703).[57] This was indeed a most joyous occasion for the Mahamad (i.e., president Abraham Penso,[58] vice president Gabriel Levy, and treasurer Jacob Belmonte), the Haham Lopez, the councillors and all the members. For some members like Manuel Alvares Correa, Abraham Chaves, Abraham Penso, Benjamin de Casseres, Eliau Benveniste and David Senior, it recalled another impressive ceremony: the inauguration of the Amsterdam synagogue of 1675.[59] Haham Lopez, as one of the seven privileged to speak in 1675, certainly must have made a comparison in his sermon between the mother and daughter congregations.[60]

In 1704 the Mahamad purchased a more commodious house on Kuiperstraat

[55] It bears this inscription in Portuguese: "Jacob de Efraim Jesurun Henriquez fez Kodes asanta Esnoga do K[ahal]. K[ados]. de Mikvé Israel Curaçao Sendo Hatan Beresit no anno 5464." The date corresponds to Oct. 3, 1703 (illus. 71).

[56] See illustration 55.

[57] Until 1865 during Haham Chumaceiro's rabbinate, the community used to celebrate the anniversary of this synagogue which they always referred to as the Old Synagogue.

[58] See Emmanuel, *ibid.*, pp. 321-25, for details about him and his family in Amsterdam and Curaçao.

[59] The picture of the inauguration of the Amsterdam synagogue appears in J. Mendes dos Remedios, *Os Judeus Portugueses em Amsterdam* (Coimbra, 1911), opp. p. 126.

[60] It is strange that neither the Rev. Nicolaas Verkuijl nor Governor N. van Beck nor any other high government official made mention of the building and inauguration of this synagogue in their letters to the Company directors.

to serve as the home of Haham Lopez and his successors. In the same period they asked for and obtained contributions for the new altar. This was built five years later by the joiner Pieter de Mey[61] at a cost of 731 : 4 pesos.

Other ornaments were presented to the synagogue. Abraham de Chaves and the brothers Abraham, Isaac and Jacob de Benjamin Henriquez Morao — the first in 1706 and the others in 1709 — gave two of the four beautiful chandeliers of twenty-four lights each which still hang from the ceiling of the present synagogue.[62] Eliau Namias de Crasto gave a silver Torah crown in 1711. His father Mordechay bequeathed another silver crown in 1716, on the day of his death, to adorn the Scroll of the Law he had previously offered. Thanks to this religious zeal, the synagogue was magnificently ornamented for the glory of God.

RELIGIOUS ADMINISTRATION

Haham Lopez, like his predecessor, presided over all questions relating to religious administration. His success in this area was complete. Under his rabbinate the first synagogue as such — since the others were houses transformed into synagogues — was constructed in the city. He and his Beth Din settled questions dealing with the levirate and inheritances; defended and protected the rights of orphans, and resolved matters pertaining to the Marranos who kept arriving (e.g., Abraham de Paz, "Father of the St. Dominican Order,"[63] and Daniel Suares, Father of the Franciscan Order,[64] to mention two). Haham Lopez, also like Haham Pardo, took particular care of the religious school and of the Es Haim ve Ohel Yahacob. This academy trained cantors and rabbinical assistants who later served different communities in the Americas.

The parnassim on their part gave much importance to education which was then exclusively Jewish. The subjects offered were elementary reading, writing, prayers, Pentateuch, Prophets in Ladino, Ethics of the Fathers, Song of Songs, Ruth, Lamentations, Ladino translation, grammar, Rashi and Talmud with commentaries. Haham Lopez taught the last three subjects. Two Parnassim de Talmud Torah had been appointed, since Haham Pardo's rabbinate, as

[61] The first Pieter de Mey known was encountered in Brazil. He was entitled to receive 10,000 florins from the Portuguese Crown for assets abandoned in Brazil (OWICA 62, Loket Kas K, Littera L).

[62] See illustration 21.

[63] Philipe Henriquez, a.k.a. Jacob Senior, of Curaçao, in his deposition to the Inquisitor-General of Cartagena in 1699 (Hamelberg Collection, ms. 120 E 10).

[64] M. A. Schabel, "Relatio itineris," pp. 72, 105, courtesy of the late J.M.L. Maduro.

administrators and supervisors of the *medras.*[65] They were supposed to see that the teacher did not let the children make noise during services and that the fathers did not bring youngsters under four years to the synagogue. In 1707 when the teen-agers refused to continue with their studies, the then Parnassim de Talmud Torah, Gabriel Levy and Joseph Fidanque, were authorized to punish the children without parental interference. Under the *hascamoth* the parents were compelled to send their sons of six years and above to school and a neglectful father ran the risk of excommunication. Several *irmandades* or fraternal organizations and *yeshiboth* were founded during the Lopez rabbinate for the purpose of studying the Torah and helping the needy of Curaçao (pages 125-28 below) and of the Holy Land (pages 154-65 below).

Synagogue services were considerably slowed down by the long recital of *hashcaboth*. Haham Lopez and the parnassim decided to limit those prayers to nearest relatives,[66] with preference for those buried in Curaçao. He also initiated the *legado*. This was a bequest of forty pesos or more to the synagogue for the saying of perpetual memorial prayers for a deceased on his death anniversary and on Yom Kippur.[67] This institution still remains a source of income for the community. Interest on the Legado Fund has served to cover expenses for religious purposes and of administration.

Haham Lopez had the following men under him: Manuel and Jahacob Alvares Correa[68] as general assistants without pay; David Haim, son of Haham Pardo (d. 1702 after a year's service), as hazzan; David and Abraham, sons of Haham Lopez, and Samuel L. Maduro as hazzanim; Jacob Lopez Fonseca, third son of Haham Lopez, as ritual slaughterer.

ADMINISTRATION OF THE COMMUNITY

A successful religious administration depended on a solidly organized community. From 1670, if not earlier, the community was managed by a Mahamad or committee of three: a president, vice president, and treasurer (*gabay*). These men were elected by the outgoing parnassim and later on by the councillors. On important matters the *yeḥidim* or entire membership were called together. As it was not always feasible to convoke so large a number, twelve councillors were elected, of whom four *adjuntos de giro* (councillors in rotation) were called to assist the Mahamad.

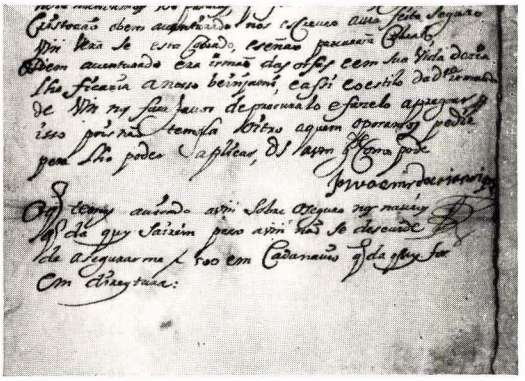
[65] See Emmanuel, "Jewish Education in Curaçao," *PAJHS* 44:227-34, for list of the parnassim from 1690 to 1802.

[66] See Emmanuel, *Precious Stones*, p. 94, for details.

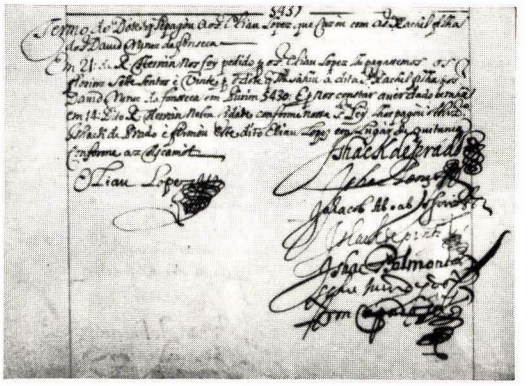
[67] See *ibid.*, pp. 94-95, for details.

[68] See *ibid.*, pp. 221-22 and 230-32 about them.

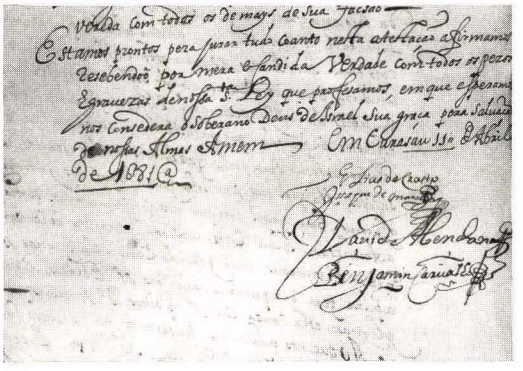
21. CHANDELIER, SYNAGOGUE MIKVE ISRAEL-EMANUEL, CURAÇAO, DONATED ABOUT 1709



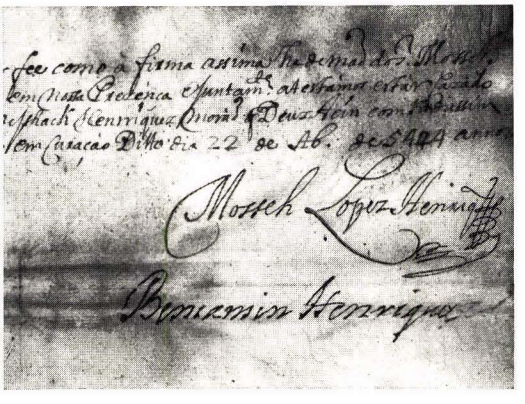
22. SIGNATURE, JEOSUAH MORDECHAY HENRIQUEZ, CURAÇAO, 1668



23. SIGNATURE, HAHAM ELIAU LOPEZ, AMSTERDAM, 5437 (1676)



24. SIGNATURES, PARNASSIM: ELIAS DE CRASTO, ISSAQUE DE MARCHENA, DAVID ABENDANA, BINJAMIN CARUALHO, CURAÇAO, 1681



25. SIGNATURES, MOSSEH LOPEZ HENRIQUEZ AND BENIAMIN HENRIQUEZ, CURAÇAO, 1684

The community derived its funds from voluntary donations offered in the synagogue; the communal tax of 1/4% collected on all imports and on the sale of real property;[69] fines; profits from the sale of *casher* meat; *legados*; interest earned on the capital fund; rental of community houses; the sale of cemetery plots. Toward the end of Haham Lopez' rabbinate the community realized an annual income of some 3,000 pesos.[70] Out of these monies the following expenses were paid:

1. Salaries of the officiants: Haham, cantors, teachers, ritual slaughterers, sexton, physician, surgeon, and so forth.
2. *Haspacoth* — sums given at fixed times to widows, orphans and the needy.
3. Medical care.
4. Fares and assistance to needy transients.
5. Repairs to the synagogue, maintenance of schools and other community real estate.
6. Care of the cemetery; free burial for the poor.
7. Ransom of captives.
8. Contributions to Terra Santa (the Holy Land).
9. Administration expenses.
10. Unforeseen expenses, which were frequent in those years.

The treasurer had to make all payments, keep the accounts in order and see that the capital fund was augmented. He also took charge of the Marriage and Circumcision Registers. Called *Livro de Circuncisiones*,[71] the latter was instrumental in saving a number of Curaçaon Jews captured at sea by the Spaniards. Through it the captives were able to establish Jewish birth in Curaçao and thus escape the rigors of the Inquisition.

Funeral services were well organized. Their dead were given decent burial and very often the funerals were conducted with great pomp.[72] A Parnas de

[69] A similar tax was instituted by the Portuguese Jewish community of Amsterdam from its inception. See appendix 1, pp. 543-44, 556, 561, 600.

[70] It is estimated that during the year the Jews imported merchandise worth 300,000 pesos and sold real estate and sailing vessels for a total of 100,000 pesos. The community tax on those two items brought in 1,000 pesos. In addition the community realized some 400 pesos from *legados*, 100 pesos from fines, 100 pesos from the sale of *casher* meat, and from 800 to 900 pesos in freewill offerings. The difference of 500-600 pesos represented rentals on community houses, interest on principal, and the sale of cemetery plots.

[71] PJCAA, bundle.

[72] See Emmanuel, *Precious Stones*, pp. 33-96, for details. John de Pool, *Del Curaçao que se va* (Santiago de Chile, 1935), p. 58, states that "burials in Curaçao were always celebrated with much pomp." At p. 60 he describes an especially impressive Jewish burial of 1877.

Hebra [Kaddisha] appointed by the Mahamad took charge of all the details and kept the Death Register as well. He was assisted by the Guemiluth Hasadim, the oldest brotherhood of its kind.

All in all, the parnassim followed the identical administrative procedure of the parent community at Amsterdam. Only they adapted it to life in the tropics. Their work was made more arduous when they had to cope with intolerant island officials. The next chapter will discuss the many injustices suffered by the Jews toward the end of the 18th century and how they defended themselves.

CHAPTER V

JEWISH RELATIONS WITH THE DUTCH WEST INDIA COMPANY AND THE CURAÇAO GOVERNMENT

ALREADY TWO CENTURIES before the French Revolution Holland was the only Christian country to accord the Jews, if not perfect equality, privileges[1] and considerations enjoyed not even by the Catholics of that era. The reason for this is threefold. (1) The Portuguese Jews were shareholders in the Dutch East and West India Companies, particularly in the second Dutch West India Company. (2) In religious matters they were brothers in suffering. The Protestants, like the Jews, had from time to time been driven from the French and Spanish colonies. Four hundred Calvinist refugees from Brazil, who had settled in Martinique, were forced to evacuate in 1658.[2] (3) The Jews were considered a faithful, helpful element. The Dutch had known the Marranos from times past and appreciated them. In the revolt of the Netherlands, the Gueux forcibly opposed the introduction of the Inquisition. To achieve their independence from Spain, the Dutch solicited the aid of Don Joseph Nassi, Duke of Naxos, a powerful figure in the Ottoman Court of that day. Through Nassi's intervention, Duke William of Orange counted on the Turks to declare war on Spain and thus force Spain to recall her troops from Flanders.[3]

For all these considerations the relations between the Jews and the council of the Company were cordial. The Company's aims were primarily commercial rather than racial or political. As good merchants the Dutch sought every available means to conserve and satisfy an element whose industry and reverses assured the Company's prosperity.

Such harmony did not always prevail in Curaçao as the preceding chapter made clear. Although they had formal orders to respect the privileges granted to the Jews, certain unscrupulous governors, or their assistants, took it upon themselves to harass them. As a result, the Jews were often compelled to

[1] In their meetings of July 17, 1657, and Sept. 24, 1658, the States General of Holland recognized the Jews as Dutch citizens and defended them as such when the Jews were captured at sea by the Spaniards.

[2] J. Rennard, *Tricentainaire des Antilles, Guadeloupe-Martinique* (Thonon, 1935), p. 131.

[3] E. Charrière, *Négotiations de la France dans le Levant*, vol. III, (Paris, 1848-1860), p. 61.

appeal to the council of the Company at Amsterdam for protection. Here are a few instances.

In 1701 Governor Nicolaas van Beck ordered the Jews to have their slaves work on the fortifications Saturdays. The Jews refused because that was contrary to their privileges. When he persisted, they addressed themselves on August 9, 1701, to the Company directors and to the Amsterdam parnassim Baron de Belmonte and Alexander Nunes da Costa (otherwise Salomon de Moses Curiel) who were shareholders in the Company.[4] Their petition again stressed that in time of peril the Jews had done voluntary guard duty on Saturday. That was in 1673 when the French attacked the island; in 1678 when French Commander Count d'Estrée's formidable squadron was approaching Curaçao and was miraculously shipwrecked[5] a few miles off the coast; and lastly on a Saturday in 1684 when they sent their slaves in their stead to defend the island against attack by the dreaded pirate Lorensilla.[6]

The Company directors thereupon ordered Beck on November 5, 1701, to satisfy the Jews, as otherwise "it would be to the considerable detriment of the trade and the people of the aforementioned island."[7] To assure compliance, they wrote him again on January 11, 1702, reminding him, among other things, that "the Jews have not, in case of danger, neglected their service even on the Sabbath." They suggested that the Jews could send double the number of slaves on Monday to hasten the completion of the fortifications.[8] Again they insisted that the Jewish Nation there should be properly maintained and allowed to exercise their privileges without impediment.[9] Beck finally assured his superiors that he would carry out their directions.[10]

While the parnassim were struggling with Governor Beck, the brothers Philipe Henriquez and David Senior were insulted by a high dignitary, Pieter van Straaten. On the recommendation of the Company directors at Amsterdam, the Island Council tried him and after due deliberation found him guilty. They ordered him to apologize to the brothers.[11] Straaten, himself

4 WICA 357, p. 15.

5 Every year, until 1800, Jews and Gentiles offered prayers of thanksgiving in church and synagogue to commemorate their deliverance from this catastrophe (WICA 569, p. 177).

6 WICA 566, pp. 574-76.

7 "We have deemed it necessary to notify your Excellency and seriously recommend that measures are taken to permit the abovementioned Jewish Nation there to have their former liberty and privileges" (Hamelberg, *Documenten*, p. 109).

8 WICA 566, p. 554-56.

9 WICA 471, p. 6.

10 WICA 566, pp. 680-81.

11 WICA 567, pp. 329-60; WICA 471, p. 43.

a member of the Council, refused. Sometime later he was accused of misusing 44,000 pesos; to make restitution he was forced to sell his houses, plantations and slaves at public auction.[12]

GOVERNOR BECK AND THE JEWS, 1704-1709

Contrary to what Jesuit Father Michel Alexius Schabel[13] states, Governor Jacob Beck did not seem to hate the Jews as much as his brother Balthazar Beck.[14] Jacob Beck was one of Curaçao's very few native-born governors.[15] Although he held a degree in law and had practiced in Utrecht, Beck devoted himself to commerce, and transacted business with the Jews according to the inventory of his estate.

An advocate of free immigration to Curaçao, he informed the Company: "Since the island depends on commerce for its existence and that is what brings in and augments your income, any stranger, no matter of what nationality, is encouraged and received decently by me so that he will settle here."[16]

This liberal attitude attracted Jews to Curaçao. Several years later, when a large number of Jewish families were expected from Barbados, his successor Governor Abraham Beck, requested his superiors on August 9, 1710, to notify him whether or not to collect the entry tax of twenty pesos per family.[17]

In that era the eastern side of Heerenstraat, running along the city wall, was not completely built up. Governor Jacob Beck sold Mordechay Namias de Crasto several parcels of Company land in this undeveloped area for the

[12] WICA 568, pp. 550-52, y. 1706.

[13] The Reverend Nicolas Verkuijl apprised the WIC on June 1, 1707, of these particulars about Schabel: Born in Prague, he spent a long time in Brabant. He used to preach in Spanish and German (WICA 569, pp. 492-94). In 1715 he lived in the home of the Widow Christiaen Boom. He used to export merchandise to Holland regularly. In 1716 he bought a house for 1,600 pesos. The diary of his life and stay in Curaçao (manuscript often cited by the Catholic clergymen of Curaçao) must be read with great reservation. Almost everything he discusses about the Jews is subjective, tendentious and exaggerated. He is definitely not reliable.

[14] GAA, Burlanchy archives; Not. Archives 5113, p. 787.

[15] Letter of the Rev. Verkuijl to the WIC directors of Jan. 25, 1709 (WICA 570, p. 200). Jacob Beck's second marriage was to Emmerentia Nuijts, widow of Governor Willem Kerckrinck. He died in Amsterdam in July, 1709, leaving a mutual will made in Curaçao in 1708 (GAA 5422, Not. Livinus Meyer, pp. 217-26). He left an estate appraised at 120,000 florins. According to the inventory, money was due him from the following Jews: Moses Levy Maduro, 3,000 pesos at 8%; Manuel Gomes, 5,000 ps. at 8%; Jacob and Abraham Ulloa Jr., 3,500 ps. at 10%; Mordechay de Crasto, 3,787 ps.; Jacob Andrade, 180 ps. and Philipe Henriquez, 367 ps. (GAA 5424, pp. 713-69).

[16] WICA 201, y. 1704, p. 385v.

[17] One has the impression that Gov. Abraham Beck wanted to collect the twenty pesos' tax from each family, perhaps to discourage immigration (WICA 203, p. 515). As the majority of those families originated from Amsterdam, they were probably exempted from this tax.

stupendous sum of 28,000 pesos.[18] And yet, the Jesuit Schabel glibly states that Beck did not permit Jews to buy "one square foot of land" on which to build a house![19]

Curaçao then numbered barely 425 white families. They were served by 3,500 slaves, excluding those owned by the Company. Endowed with fertile imaginations, the domestic slaves often magnified what they saw or heard. They would delight their boyfriends with sensational, fantastic stories and gossip. Some slaves were inclined to overestimate the little money occasional Spanish buyers brought to the island. Vivid imaginations transformed silver pesos into gold doubloons and semi-precious stones into diamonds and brilliants. These tall tales brought untold grief in 1705 to one Daniel Suares (a former Franciscan Father)[20] and his wife. A Spanish Catholic who had lodged at their home died after a brief illness. The Suares' and two Portuguese Catholics were accused of poisoning him for his rumored precious stones. The doctor and Catholic surgeon (the Jesuit Schabel's brother-in-law) who examined the corpse declared that the man had been poisoned. Dr. Isaac de Acosta, who had attended the deceased during his illness, proved in his report, written in Spanish, that death from poisoning was impossible. The accused did not confess their guilt because they were innocent. But the public prosecutor ordered them to be tortured. The Jewish doctor, according to one of the absurdities in Schabel's diary relating to this case, was never re-elected parnas of the community because he had defended the Suares'. De Acosta, in effect, was president in 1710 according to the community records.[21]

When Governor Jacob Beck, whom Schabel styles as "no friend of the Jews," reported this death to his superiors, he revealed that the Island Council, over which he presided, was not unanimous in its decision. The Spaniard's effects, consisting of a few emeralds of little value,[22] were all found and inventoried. The Suares' were sentenced to be branded and banished from Curaçao. On the demand of the Jewish community they were not branded, but had to leave the island with their innocent children. This was not unusual in an era when Catholic clergymen, and even high-ranking government officials, were driven out of the island on a mere whim.

[18] WICA 568, pp. 465-68, Jan. 20, 1706. The land purchased was so large that Namias was obliged to open two streets, as he did.

[19] Another proof that Schabel's diary is subjective, unreliable and must be read cautiously.

[20] Communication of the late Jossy M. L. Maduro.

[21] MS, MC, "Parnassim," y. 5471; see appendix 12, y. 5471.

[22] ". . . en de sentimenten van den Raad divers sijn . . . esmeraude steenen . . . van wijnigh waarde" (WICA 201, pp. 387v-88; WICA 202, p. 12, letter of Aug. 1, 1705; WICA 213, documents 1-20).

A few months later while the Suares' case was still on their lips, the Jewish community experienced one of its deepest tragedies. Since 1702, and possibly earlier, one Dr. Daniel Ishac Lopez had been dwelling among them. Obviously a person of some consideration, he shared honors with Gabriel Levy in Tabernacles of 1705 as Bridegroom of the Law, a costly function. It is unknown whether a scandalmonger — and the island was teeming with them — goaded him to do his grisly deed. Less is known as to how he came to suspect his young wife, Lea de Jacob Naar, of infidelity.

Most of the Jews were related to one another and lived in close proximity. There was much familiarity, but of a harmless nature. Questions of honor did, nevertheless, crop up often enough to justify the parnassim to enact a stringent regulation. Under it no Jew could prosecute another Jew in such matters in the courts of the land. He had to refer it to the Mahamad, the only body qualified to handle it with the utmost discretion. If Dr. Lopez had grounds to suspect his wife, he certainly was wrong to take the law into his hands and take her life on April 7, 1706. Immediately afterwards he gave himself up to the governor and confessed his crime. After a trial lasting barely four days, he was sentenced to death on April 15. His uncle Mattos was unable to help him. Five days later Lopez was brutally executed. His corpse was slung on a wheel and dragged through the city streets,[23] to the shame of the Jewish community. His two-year-old son Benjamin was thereafter reared as Naar and not Lopez.[24]

Fiscal Willem de Bij had called Rachel Naar Henriques, sister of the murdered woman, and two family friends of the firm of Ferro & Neyra as witnesses for the prosecution. He did not trouble to consult the parnassim to learn whether the doctor[25] was mentally unbalanced, whether he had been incited by a troublemaker or whether his wife's conduct was indeed irreproachable. Not infrequently criminals walked about freely in Curaçao and often managed escaping from the island if they could "reach" the prosecutor. The Cotinho case will bear this out.

The dead doctor's brother-in-law — Abraham de Pina (a.k.a. Naar) and Moseh Lopes Henriques (uncle and father-in-law of Pina-Naar) — sold the medicine chest to the governor for 200 pesos and paid the court costs.[26]

While the president Ishac de Marchena was still grieving over the untimely,

[23] WICA 568, p. 485; WICA 569, p. 11; Document "F" dealing with the entire lawsuit is missing from the WIC records.

[24] Communication of the late Jossy M. L. Maduro.

[25] His grave could not be found in the cemetery; his wife's epitaph cites only her maiden name Naar (Emmanuel, *Precious Stones*, p. 529 [C 1644]).

[26] WICA 568, pp. 82-83; WICA 569, p. 14v.

tragic death of Dr. Lopez and his wife, the community found itself in conflict with one of the big cattlemen, Hendrick de Groot Davilaar. Barred from owning large cattle in their early settlement days, the Jews had to buy their meat from Gentiles. Of course it was butchered by the ritual slaughterers of the community. Davilaar, also a big planter — as invariably all cattlemen were — probably aspired to being sole meat supplier to the Jews. He must have been guilty of some irregularities to merit the boycott pronounced by Haham Lopez and the parnassim. He lodged a protest with the governor. The boycott was removed after the governor presumably settled the differences between the parties.[27]

Meanwhile Curaçao was going through a severe drought and a paralyzing business depression brought on by the war between Holland and France.

THE CASSARD SIEGE

A society was formed in France in 1712 with the object of arming a squadron of ships to plunder the rich Dutch, English and Portuguese colonies. Jacques Cassard (1679-1740), a commander of the French fleet, was its largest shareholder. Having already stripped Surinam of a ransom of 800,000 florins and St. Eustatius of 3,000 pesos, he headed for Curaçao. The French had coveted the lush island for a long time and twice during the 17th century had vainly tried to seize it.

With Cassard's invasion imminent, Governor Jeremias van Collen directed the inhabitants to guard the island at various posts. The Jews did guard duty even on Saturday with the sanction of Haham Lopez because some of the Company's sailors were deserters and hence untrustworthy. Cassard apparently took his time, and a certain calm pervaded the island. Considering the situation less dangerous than it really was, the Jews asked to be excused from Saturday guard duty. But they offered to provide gentile replacements and to pay sixty pesos for them. The Jews also offered, of their own accord, to replace Gentiles who attended church on Sunday.[28] The governor denied their petition and fined them 420 pesos for absenting themselves on seven Saturdays.

Meanwhile Haham Lopez organized a solemn prayer to entreat God to spare the island and its inhabitants from misfortune.[29]

For psychological rather than military reasons, the garrison hesitated to

[27] PJCAA, Correspondence of Curaçao.

[28] This petition was signed by forty Jews on Feb. 3, 1713 (WICA 295, pp. 36v, 157-59).

[29] MS, MC, y. 5473.

engage in battle. Renowned for his boldness, Cassard knew how to inspire terror in the Caribbean waters. The defenders of the island became demoralized. Thus Cassard was able to land on February 16, 1713, and push through a gap that has since been known as "Cassard's gat." This path was so inaccessible that "two men would have been sufficient to stop the enemy" according to a report Governor J.Rodier submitted to the Company in 1774. But, writes the historian Hamelberg, "it appears that the two men could not be found among the eight hundred that the governor and councillors had led to the battlefield."[30] The French fired 115 bombs and caused great panic in the population. As the Dutch militia was too small to attack the 2,000-3,000 enemy soldiers, the governor called for volunteers. At this stage, forty Jews were charged to defend "Cornetsbaai" (Boca Juliau) and the waters of Marie Pampoen,[31] under the command of Captain Mordechay Henriques, Lieutenant Aron Levi Maduro and Standard-bearer Samuel Gomez. Demoralized as they were these Jews, like the soldiers led by the Protestants Gerrit van Uytrecht and Nathaniel Ellis,were unable to defend their positions. Cassard profited by this confusion. During the shelling Elias Pereira's house was hit and two negro children in it met their death.[32]

To spare the island from destruction the governor, his council and the inhabitants agreed to negotiate with the enemy. He appointed a committee of ten — with Gabriel Levy and Mordechay [Namias] de Crasto representing the Jews — to deal with the invaders and to tax the inhabitants. The French officers delegated by Cassard then met on the plantations[33] of Mordechay Crasto and of the brothers Gaspar (alias Jeudah) and Isaac Toiro.[34] Cassard consented to refund the booty if the treaty of peace between France and Holland

[30] Hamelberg, p. 127; *Documenten*, p. 178.

[31] WICA 205, p. 151.

[32] A contemporary of 1713 in Curaçao, who wrote some satiric verse ridiculing the "heroes" who "defended" the island against the Cassard invasion, included, among others, the names Uytrecht, Ellis, Maduro, Henriquez and Gomez (B. de G. Fortman, *WIG*, 1936-37, pp. 353-63). After Cassard's departure, high-ranking employees blamed each other for the defeat. Captain Gerard de Mepsche reported to the WIC that Uytrecht had deserted his post at St. Michiel (WICA 205, pp. 487v-88v; WICA 206, p. 149). Fiscal J. F. van Halamde wrote his superiors that 200 men could have defended themselves against 2,000 invaders, even with stones (WICA 205, p. 374). The governor deplored the lack of cooperation on the part of the commanders on board the ships. Isaac Hoheb of Amsterdam wrote his brother David in Curaçao that ship captains returning from Curaçao reported that the governor did not have trained soldiers (PJCAA, Correspondencia Isaac Hoheb).

[33] Apparently the "Plantersrust" and "Welgelegen" plantations. Jewish homes were obviously equipped to receive very important persons. Several days earlier Dutch captains had met at the home of Benjamin da Costa (grandson of Benjamin da Costa of Martinique) on his "Malpais" plantation.

[34] Not Vooro. For details about them, see *Precious Stones*, pp. 147-48, 222-23.

had already been signed.[35] As peace was not declared until April 11, 1713, Cassard kept the ransom. The governor insisted that the Jews should be taxed as a group and that the parnassim should be held responsible for the payment. The parnassim naturally would not hear of such discrimination when the Protestants were being taxed as individuals. This became such a sore issue that the parnassim eventually had to complain to the Company at Amsterdam.

Thanks to the presumably good offices of Mordechay de Crasto,[36] an accord was reached to pay only 115,000 pesos of the 400,000 Cassard demanded. As that much money was not available, the Jews suggested making payment in merchandise, slaves and money.[37] Some Jews like David Hoheb and Daniel Cohen Henriquez paid entirely in merchandise. Cassard preferred receiving scarce items, and spices in particular. Each taxpayer was taxed according to his financial state and had to pay six percent of the value of his holdings. Of the 151,800 pesos[38] collected from all the taxpayers, including the 12,000 pesos on Company holdings, the Jews contributed 35,460 pesos. One Gentile — Matthys Brandau — and one Jew — Philipe Henriquez — were delegated to evaluate and turn over the merchandise and slaves to the French. After collecting the ransom Cassard removed the siege on March 22, 1713.

In Holland there was great anxiety over the peril in which the besieged Curaçoans found themselves. The Amsterdam parnassim closed their letter of August 10, 1713, to their colleagues in Curaçao with these words: "We sign this with praises to the blessed God for having so mercifully delivered you from deep distress. May the Almighty keep you and all the children of Israel from all anguish, and may there be peace."[39]

Because the amount paid by the Jewish taxpayers clearly reflects the financial situation of the Jewish families of 1713, we present a list of the Jewish taxpayers with their correct names and respective contributions.[40] The

35 WICA 472, p. 47.

36 We arrive at this hypothesis because his epitaph describes him as "precurador da Paz." See Emmanuel, *Precious Stones*, pp. 229-30.

37 Not one-third as stated by the *Curaçaosche Courant* of January 29, 1825 (see OAC 1532 for more details). Of the ninety slaves Cassard received, sixteen adults and a youngster were furnished by the Jews. Valued at 120 pesos each, the slaves therefore accounted for almost 10% of the total ransom (WICA 205, p. 514).

38 Aside from the 115,000 pesos delivered to Cassard, there were other expenses.

39 PJCAA, Copiador de Cartas, 5462-5479.

40 Hamelberg, *Documenten*, pp. 117-29, presents the complete list of contributors, of Jews and Gentiles together, with several errors. A.J.C. Krafft, *Historie en Oude Families van de Nederlandse Antillen* ('s Gravenhage, 1951), pp. 47-48, lists the Jews separately; he repeats Hamelberg's errors and adds two non-Jews.

numbers in parentheses alongside the names refer to the catalogue of the Old Jewish Cemetery given in *Precious Stones* (pages 495-548). Seventy-four out of almost one hundred contributors repose in that cemetery; most of the others are mentioned in divers records and in appendices 8, 9 and 12.

Taxpayer	*Contribution*	
Jacob Abenatar (1176)	Pesos	30
Sara Abendana (1183)	„	150
Widow Josua[41] Aboab and son (app. 9)	„	60
Isaaq Abrahamsz (app. 8, 9)	„	120
Abraham Rodrigues d'Aguilar (app. 8)	„	200
Jacob Andrade (1004), including holdings of Joseph Garcia, a Catholic	„	300
Jacob Belmonte (671)	„	60
Widow Aboab Cardoza (app. 8)	„	50
Daniel Aboab Cardozo (1999)	„	90
David Aboab Cardozo (929)	„	240
Widow [David] Carillio (1086)	„	150
Benjamin de Casseres (906)	„	900
Abraham de Chaves (2092)	„	1,200
Isaaq de Chaves (1703)	„	60
Samuel I(n)danha de Casseres[42] (748)	„	30
Daniel Coheijn [Henriquez] (app. 8, 9)	„	90
Manuel Alvares Correa (2075)	„	3,600
Benjamin da Costa [de Andrade] (1249)	„	90
Doctor [Isaac] Da Costa (2023)	„	120
Widow Joseph[43] da Costa [d'Andrade] (1202)	„	50
Isaaq Henriques Coutinho (1898)	„	80
Elias [Namias] de Crasto (2016)	„	360
Jacob [Namias] de Crasto (2019)	„	120
Mordochay [Namias] de Crasto (2017)	„	2,600
David Lopez Dias (app. 8, 9)	„	1,200
Isaaq Lopez Dias (546)	„	50
David Vaes Faro (1721)	„	60
Anthonie Fereira	„	20
Ferro & Neira = Jacob Semah Ferro (2079) and Joseph Athias de Neyra (950)	„	3,000
Joseph Fidanque (598)	„	850
Widow Jacob [Nunes] Fonseca (2013)	„	60

[41] The first name, Josua, omitted by Hamelberg.

[42] And not I. Daniel de Casseres as given by Hamelberg.

[43] Not Josua, as given by Hamelberg. In re Joseph, see Emmanuel, *Precious Stones*, pp. 200-2.

Taxpayer	*Contribution*
Isaaq de Gama and son (1951, 1949)	pesos 120
Jacob Gaon (app. 8, 9)	„ 60
Abraham Israel Gomes	„ 30
Manuel Gomes (1710)	„ 360
Samuel (949?) & Aron Gomez (app. 8)	„ 600
Jacob Guttieres (app. 8)	„ 600
[Abraham] Gradez (2053) & [David] Machora[44] (app. 8)	„ 120
Isaaq Hallaz (2086)	„ 30
Henriques & Francisco Henriques, alias Josias Gabay Ferro (1954) and David Israel Bernal (1955)	„ 2,000
Jacob Efraim [Jesurun] Henriques (916)	„ 200
Josua Henriques (630 ?)	„ 360
Widow (Manath)[45] [Menaseh] Jesurun Henriques (1947)	„ 30
Mordochay Henriques (1245)	„ 1,200
Philypo Henriques, alias Jacob de Mordechay Senior (app. 8, 9)	„ 500
David Hoeb (925)	„ 120
Benjamin Ieserun (1773)	„ 180
Abraham Jeserun (1741)	„ 50
Abraham Lopez de Leon (1712)	„ 120
Widow Balthazar, alias Abraham, de Leon (1111, 1112)	„ 1,200
Jacob Juda Leon (1067)	„ 600
David Levy (1704)	„ 25
Gabriel Levy (1739), including Joseph Garcia and (Rina) [Rica] Toura	„ 2,200
Isaaq [Levy] Maduro (756) and Mother (1672)	„ 360
Salomon [Levy] Maduro the elder	„ 300
Pascual, alias Mordechay Abinun, de Lima	„ 120
Widow Lopez [Henriques] (1641)	„ 120
Abraham Lopez (1862)	„ 60
Elias Lopez "Jewish Haham"[46] (2033) and sons	„ 60
Isaaq Barugh Lousado (1736)	„ 20
Estate of Abraham de Marchena (1048)	„ 600
Aron de Marchena (1038)	„ 300
Abm.[47] Orobio de Matos (app. 12)	„ 50
Abraham Henriques d'Misquita (app. 8) & Aron Levy Maduro (1670)	„ 120

[44] Two and not one contributor as indicated by Hamelberg.

[45] Not "Manath" as Hamelberg gives.

[46] The Jesuit Father M. A. Schabel was also taxed 60 pesos. The estate of the Rev. N. Verkuijl, who died in February, 1713, was included in the taxation of H. W. van Kinswilder. The assets of the Protestant Church and of the Jewish community were not taxed.

[47] First name not given by Hamelberg.

Taxpayer		*Contribution*
Jacob Molina (1076)	pesos	150
Abraham Henriques Moraon (app. 8, 9)	„	2,000
Widow Jacob Henriques Moraon (1865)	„	30
Daniel Moreno [Henriques] (1071)	„	480
Benjamin da Motta (602)	„	30
Moses Vaes de Olivera	„	90
Widow Pardo (app. 8, 9)	„	25
Elias Parera (767)	„	480
Moses Parera (1420)	„	30
Widow Benjamin de Paz (2004?)	„	40
Abm[48] Penso (1134)	„	200
Abraham de Pina, alias Naar (706)	„	500
Josua de Pina, alias Naar (299)	„	300
David Pinjero = Pinheiro (app. 8, 9)	„	30
Aron Cohen Rodrigues (510)	„	60
Jacob Salon [= Salom] (969)	„	60
David (867) & Isaaq Senior (1034), including J. Garcia	„	700
Salomon Senior (1037 ?), including J. Garcia	„	400
Jacob Telles [da Costa]	„	20
Isaaq Touro (1751)	„	120
Judah Touro (953 ?, 881 ?)	„	50
Abm. & Abraham Ulloa (1747, 1837 ?)	„	320
David (1987) & Isaaq Bueno Vivas (app. 8, 9)	„	120
Fine paid by the Jewish Nation for not doing guard duty on seven Saturdays	„	420
Total ransom paid by the Jews[49]	Ps.	35,460

Several Jews who are not listed, e.g., Moses Cohen Henriques, Jacob Curiel, Daniel Delgado, the Widow Carlos de Leon, Samuel L. Maduro, Salomo de Medina, the Widow Isaac Netto, and others, had their tax paid by relatives or business associates. In addition, there were about twenty indigent Jewish families who naturally were not taxed. The Jewish population at that time therefore came to 140 families as against some 320 white non-Jewish families.

The Jewish Poor Chest showed the strain of the huge taxation met by the

[48] Not M., as given by Hamelberg.

[49] The value of the peso of eight reales fluctuated greatly. In the 17th century it was worth 2.40 florins Dutch money. With the introduction of counterfeit or altered currency, it gradually depreciated. For a long time it was exchanged for 2.00 florins. By Government Decree no. 104 of 1826 the peso was fixed at 1.33 1/3 florins.

members. At the end of 5474 (October, 1713), it had a deficit of over 138 pesos.

After Cassard's departure,[50] Governor Jeremias van Collen ordered the Jews to report for Saturday guard duty. Naturally they objected, but he was adamant. The parnassim appealed to their Amsterdam colleagues and the Company directors for assistance. They scored his abuse of power and unfairness in trying to tax the Jews as a group in the Cassard affair. Through the intervention of the Amsterdam parnassim, the Company directors instructed Van Collen to tax the Jews individually and to excuse them from Saturday guard duty. There was nothing he could do but assure his superiors that he would comply.[51]

TROUBLES WITH OFFICIALDOM

Following the example of their mother community at Amsterdam, the Curaçoan Jews also formed "hermandades" or societies for the purpose of giving mutual assistance in time of need. In August, 1715, the sick wife of one Abraham Serra was on board a Jamaican ship anchored in the harbor. At her husband's request, five young men of Curaçao's most respected families — Manuel de Mose Vaes Nunes, Mordechay Pereira, Jacob Curiel, Jeudah Obediente and Eliau Levy — went to take her in their canoe. At the fort they were ordered to turn back. Although they obeyed his orders, Army Captain G. van Mepsche arrested and jailed them. They were held incommunicado and fed on bread and water. The fiscal vainly tried to set them free and even offered bail. One of the five prisoners — Eliau Levy — was the son of the community president. The enraged parnassim complained to the governor who immediately released the young men.[52]

Hardly was this incident closed when the parnassim again had to press charges against Captain Mepsche. With the governor's permission an Ashkenazic soldier, Hendrick Hendricks (a.k.a. Eliezer Henriques), attended the Rosh Hashanah services of 1715, which fell on a Saturday. Captain Mepsche fined him 140 pesos which the Jewish community paid out of its Poor Chest. Fifteen days later when Eliezer attended services on the Feast of Tabernacles, he was bodily removed by one of Mepsche's sergeants. This profanation of

[50] On June 30, 1713, Isaac Hoheb of Amsterdam wrote to Jacob de Crasto of Curaçao that after Cassard had received a ransom of 120,000 pesos from Barbados, he sailed toward Martinique; three of his ships reached Toulon with a booty of 2,500,000 florins (PJCAA, Correspondencia Isaac Hoheb).

[51] WICA 3, p. 219; WICA 70, pp. 98v-99; WICA 205, pp. 36v, 80v-81v, 125, 501; WICA 368, pp. 166, 195; PJCAA, Copiador de Cartas, letter of Aug. 10, 1713.

[52] WICA 206, pp. 151-52.

the sanctity of their synagogue so aroused the parnassim[53] that they called at once upon Governor van Beuningen. They deplored this flagrant violation of their privileges and the precise instructions of the Company to the governors of Curaçao. Captain Mepsche called at the home of the president to offer his apologies. The parnassim insisted that he should be made to apologize publicly in order to stop such outrages from being repeated. As the governor was not overfond of Mepsche, the man was dismissed from his post and expelled from Curaçao.[54]

Not always was it so easy for the Jews to obtain satisfaction. The mail used to be distributed at the governor's mansion. Evidently there were some irregularities and indiscretions. The parnassim were forced to punish, with excommunication, anyone found guilty of opening another's mail. As late as 1870 the lawyer, Abraham M. Chumaceiro, decried the shameful violation of letters. One Isaac de Moises Henriquez Cotinho called for his mail at the governor's mansion. According to the clerk in charge with whom Cotinho exchanged words, Cotinho had entered through the window and insulted the Gentiles. Jewish eyewitnesses insisted it was just the reverse. Cotinho was jailed. When he was about to swear "on the Law of Moses" (the Bible) that the clerk had lied, the Council refused to admit his oath.

The parnassim intervened in his behalf without success and then turned to their Amsterdam colleagues and the Company directors for justice. The result was a strongly-worded Company directive, dated January 12, 1717, to the governor and his council. (A copy was sent to the Amsterdam parnassim.)[55] They were enjoined: To mete out equal justice to the Jews and their fellow Christian inhabitants; to see that the oath was made with covered head as otherwise the Jewish Nation would consider it invalid.[56] On the arrival of orders from Holland for his release, Cotinho was set free after an unjust imprisonment of over ten months.[57]

Anarchy was so rife in Curaçao that this same Cotinho was murdered by three Frenchmen on November 4, 1720, in his home.[58] Fiscal Van Bergen

[53] The parnassim who signed the complaint to the governor were Manuel Alvares Correa, B. d Casseres, Abraham Penço, Abraham de Chaves, [Dr.] Ishak de Acosta, Gabriel Levy, David Senior, Abraham Henriquez Morão, M. de Crasto, Elias Parera, Isaac Touro, Jacob Belmonte and Jacob Abenatar (WICA 206, pp. 174-75).

[54] WICA 206, p. 149v.

[55] PJCAA, end of Copiador de Cartas, 5462-5479. The Amsterdam community sent a copy of it to the parnassim of Curaçao according to a notation in MS, 6 Tamus, 5477.

[56] WICA 472, p. 156; WICA 573, p. 252.

[57] WICA 573, pp. 747v-48.

[58] See Emmanuel, *Precious Stones*, p. 535, no. 1898.

let the assassin and his accomplices escape in their boat to Martinique. Cotinho, who had been serving as treasurer of the community, left behind four children and his widow Ribca with child.

In the absence of a governor, the parnassim addressed themselves to the junta of three then representing the Government of Curaçao: C. A. van der Burgh, J. P. van Collen, and F. Eck. The parnassim lamented the grave insecurity under which they lived. In reply, the Jews were ordered not to protest but obey. This frightening dictum was laid down by Fiscal Van Bergen, a man whose excessive drinking had evoked the rebuke of the Company.[59] The parnassim bitterly complained to their Amsterdam colleagues about the tragic Cotinho matter. They even threatened to leave the island if protection was not forthcoming. They pointed out, among other things: "It is we who keep the business going with our vessels, as among the Christians there are hardly any who engage in shipping; Heaven help the land [Curaçao] if we are not here."[60]

To calm the Jews the Island Council condemned the criminal *in absentia*. After he had allowed Cotinho's murderer to escape, Van Collen hypocritically apprised the Company directors that he had given "all assistance to the Jews."[61] He and his colleague Eck harbored a deep-seated hatred for the Jews, as will be seen later. In our opinion Cornelis A. van der Burgh, whom Van Collen despised, and Hendrick de Wit were the fairest of all the councillors. With a drunkard for chief of police and greedy governors primarily concerned with promoting their private interests, only confusion and lawlessness could be expected.

Unlike their colleagues in Holland, the judges of 18th century Curaçao were not upright. As Company employees it behooved them to find for the government (i.e., the Company) if they wished to hold their jobs. With such a set-up the chances of winning a civil suit against the "government" were remote. That is why the deputies of the Jewish Nation in Curaçao — Eliau Pereira and Jacob Jeudah Leao — urged the Amsterdam parnassim to intercede with the highest government authorities in Holland for the appointment of neutral judges chosen from the Curaçoan citizenry rather than from the Company officials.[62] Pereira and Leao, like their fellow Curaçoans, had to wait three more generations for fair, impartial judges. That

[59] WICA 70, p. 176; WICA 574, pp. 355-56.

[60] This letter, dated Feb. 17, 1721, was signed by Jacob de Efraim Jesurun Henriques, Abraham de Chaves, S. D. Casseres, Gabriel Levy, Isaac Touro, (Daniel) [David] Lopez Dias, Abraham Naar and Jacob Jeudah Leao (PJCAA, bundle).

[61] WICA 574, pp. 575-78; 627.

[62] PJCAA, bundle.

was realized only in 1791 when the Dutch West India Company was liquidated.

In spite of the inequities which prevailed seventy years longer, the Jews served as the principal purveyors to the government. In January, 1713, a little before the Cassard siege, Abraham de Chaves and Isaac Touro promised to obtain food sorely needed for the slaves, gunpowder, and even drinking water.[63] During this period Aron Cohen Rodrigues provided 1,805 loaves of bread while David Senior supplied divers munitions. A year later, to relieve the famine, Governor Jeremias van Collen asked Philipe Henriquez to sell him 2,000 bushels of corn. Henriques dispatched his ships to the coast of Caracas and delivered the first 500 bushels on February 10,1714.[64] This corroborates what the deputies of the Jewish Nation later wrote to the Amsterdam parnassim, that they were sustaining the island.

This statement is further confirmed by the correspondence exchanged between Isaac Hoheb of Amsterdam with his brother David in Curaçao from 1708 to 1726,[65] and by the correspondence between Nathan Simson of New York-London and several Jewish merchants in Curaçao between 1713 and 1726.[66] In their letters of February 22, 1722, and June 1, 1722, Abraham Ulloa and Isaac Levy Maduro of Curaçao informed Simson that, despite the trade difficulties created by the new governor at Caracas, 150,000 pounds of cacao had reached Curaçao from the mainland in less than three months and had been sold at 13.5 pesos the hundredweight. In an earlier letter of 1721 to Simson, Ulloa and Maduro wrote that they had bought 30,000 pounds of indigo from a Frenchman whom they had paid half in cash and half in merchandise.

The Dutch West India Company records of 1722 tell us that the merchants of the Spanish colonies owed Curaçoans 400,000 "Rijczdaalders" or a million florins.[67] Since it was mainly the Jews who visited the ports of the Spanish Main with their boats and sold the merchandise on credit in the expectation of being paid at the harvest of the cacao, indigo, coffee, etc., the bulk of this huge sum was therefore owed to the Jews. All of which shows that the Jews really were sustaining the island's commerce.

The Jews, like the other inhabitants, also contributed toward the cost of fortifying the island. In 1716 these costs amounted to 20,000 pesos.[68]

[63] WICA 205, p. 86.

[64] *Ibid.*, p. 420.

[65] PJCAA, Correspondencia Isaac Hoheb.

[66] Simson Papers, pp. 322-23; 882-83 (photographic copy at the AJA). My thanks to Dr. Jacob R. Marcus for drawing my attention to this record.

[67] WICA 577, p. 13.

[68] WICA 206, p. 401.

Sometimes the Jews were victims of their unquestioning faith in the integrity of highly placed individuals. During the years that Curaçao was blockaded by French and Spanish pirates, Governor Jan Noach du Fay proposed arming a ship to ward off the buccaneers. He appealed for private loans. The parnassim cooperated by lending the government 2,600 pesos from the Poor Chest at 7% per annum at a time when tight money made 8% and 12% the legal rate of interest. During Du Fay's tenure, the community received regular interest payments on the loan. His successors refused to honor the debt on the pretext that Du Fay had not signed the obligation in the name of the government. The parnassim applied to the States General of Holland. Fearing that the Jews would win their case, Governor Faesch wrote clandestinely to the Company directors to influence the high authorities in rendering a verdict unfavorable to the Jews.[69] Finally, after a costly, exhausting seven-year fight, the community lost its case.[70]

RELATIONS BETWEEN CHRISTIANS AND JEWS, 1700-1725

The relations between Christians and Jews in the first quarter of the 18th century were generally cordial. They lived on the same street and sometimes in the same building. Jewish landlords rented their houses to Protestants and Catholics, and vice versa. A census of houses taken in 1715[71] shows that there were 218 houses in the area now known as "Punda." At the "Fort" stood the governor's mansion, the Protestant Church with its nine houses including the minister's dwelling, and various offices. There were probably another fourteen houses in Otrabanda.[72] Of the 218 houses in Punda only 85 then belonged to the Jews, and these included the synagogue, the *medrasim* on Joode [Kerk] Straet and three community-owned houses, two of which were on Kuiperstraet.[73] Only on Prinsenstraet, today's Madurostraat, were the

[69] WICA 590, p. 51.

[70] PJCAA, Correspondencia de los Parnassim de Curaçao; States General, meetings of Nov. 28, 1742, Dec. 21, 1744, Jan. 2 and 25, 1745, and July 12, 1748; MIA, Accounts of 5509. Governor Faesch was right in assuming that the Jews could win their case, because Governor Du Fay had given them, as security, a mortgage on "de gemeene Lands middelen van het Eyland Curaçao andersints genamt het een per cento." Du Fay had signed the mortgage as administrator of this income "with the consent of the citizenry for the benefit of commerce and navigation." His co-signers were two councillors and the Government Secretary (WICA 590, pp. 81-81v).

[71] WICA 206, pp. 35-41; see appendix 9.

[72] In 1707 Gov. Jacob Beck sold fourteen parcels of land at 1,000 ps. each for the construction of homes in Otrabanda, but building lagged for want of funds (WICA 202, p. 187v). In 1717, for military reasons, Gov. Van Beuningen prohibited the building of houses in Otrabanda (WICA 70, p. 161v).

[73] In 1716 the parnassim bought another house on Windt Straet (WICA 572, Dec. 22, 1716).

houses — eight of them on the eastern side of the street opposite the city wall — owned by Christians exclusively. As the Jews could not cross the canal on Saturday, Otrabanda was naturally "off limits" for them until a synagogue went up.

To sum up: the Jews were free to live where they wished; in 1715 they owned up to 39% of the real estate in Punda; they probably represented 36% of the white population. If they appeared to be more numerous than they actually were, perhaps it was because of (1) their natural exuberance of spirit; (2) the celebration of their festivals and ceremonials with much manifestation, and (3) their practical control of Curaçoan commerce and navigation.

This living together side by side helped maintain the good relations existing between Jews and Gentiles. It was a healthy atmosphere — Jew and Gentile followed his tradition without seeking to impose his way of life upon the other.

CHAPTER VI

RELIGIOUS ZEAL
1717-1740

FOR NINETEEN YEARS Haham Lopez shared the joys and trials of his community — the especial joy of dedicating the Synagogue of 1703 and the piercing anguish of the Cassard siege. On July 22, 1713, four months to the day after Cassard's departure, the Haham passed on at the age of sixty-five, leaving behind a large family,[1] a good reputation, and the injunction to his community to keep up the study of the Torah, i.e., the *yeshiboth* and schools.[2] He was put to rest with two discarded Scrolls of the Law.

The parnassim immediately entered into correspondence with Haham David Nunes Torres who had a congregation at The Hague. A brilliant disciple of Haham Aboab according to Barrios, Torres was famous for his published sermons and his *Shevet Mishor* (a work on *Moharsha* or Samuel Edels), printed in Amsterdam in 1707. This man had the courage to oppose Haham Aelyon and the Amsterdam parnassim with relation to the Sabbatian Nehemiah Hayon's '*Oz Lelohim*, and was excommunicated.[3] The parnassim of Curaçao sent 320 pesos for the trip. At the last moment Torres decided to remain with his congregation. The Curaçao community directed that the money be applied to the Holy Land fund and asked their Amsterdam colleagues to select a spiritual leader for them.

HAHAM REPHAEL JESURUN

During this time the Ets Haim Seminary was headed by the illustrious Rabbi Selomoh Aelyon. He and the community leaders chose Rabbi Rephael Jesurun to guide the Curaçao congregation. Briefly, Jesurun was born in 1678 in Hamburg where his father Ribbi Moshe was Haham of the community. He

[1] His wife died on May 20, 1699, when he was only fifty-one. He apparently did not remarry.

[2] According to Haham Aelyon's letter of Ab 5, 5476, to the Curaçao parnassim.

[3] Ms. at the American Jewish Historical Society, courtesy Rabbi Isidore Meyer; MS, MC, y. 5474. In re Torres and his dispute with the Amsterdam parnassim, see Emmanuel, "Polmos Nehemia Hiyya Hayon be-Amsterdam," *Sefunoth*, IX (Jerusalem, 1965), pp. 218-19. Torres agreed to go to Curaçao probably because of his difficulties with the Amsterdam parnassim, but his community evidently wanted him to remain.

continued his studies in Amsterdam, starring among Haham Aelyon's pupils.[4] Later he married Rachel, the daughter of Abraham Sasportas[5] and grandchild of Haham Jahacob Sasportas. The Amsterdam parnassim departed from their traditional reserve when they wrote to their Curaçao friends on July 24, 1716, and on April 9, 1717. They praised Jesurun for his learning, his ability and pacific nature. He was engaged at an annual salary of 800 florins, with free lodging, plus a yearly fee of 100 pesos from a *yeshibah*. In addition he was entitled to receive *ketuboth* or marriage fees, voluntary offerings, *matzoth* for Passover and gifts from two other *yeshiboth* or societies. He reached Curaçao with his wife and four children in March, 1717.

Disorder and discord were rampant in the interval between the death of Haham Lopez and the arrival of Haham Jesurun.[6] School attendance had dropped. The teachers often stayed out of class. To stop this practice the parnassim imposed a fine of fifty pesos on all teachers who gave private lessons during school hours. The affluent sent their sons to private schools. One Joseph Abudiente, perhaps a wealthy man who preferred private tutoring, refused to send his boy to school. He was excommunicated, but went about as though nothing had happened. To avoid a precedent, the parnassim had the governor intervene. As a result Abudiente had to send his son to the *medras*.[7]

Once Haham Jesurun was installed, the leaders resolved that all boys had to attend school until they were sixteen. Haham Jesurun wisely went about obtaining salary increases for some of the teachers so that they would not find it necessary to absent themselves from class in order to augment their earnings with other employment. The teachers were warned that the parnassim of Talmud Torah could dismiss them for staying out of class without permission.

Several members of the community applied to the Governor and Island Council for relief from the parnassim's rulings. Such appeals were forbidden unless the parnassim and Haham had been consulted first.[8] Various Jews, who were allowed to kill cattle, fowl, and so forth, were barred from doing so until they obtained new permits from the Mahamad. The members were forbidden to buy Dutch cheeses, although stamped *casher*, unless such were accompanied by the certificate of the Amsterdam Rabbinate attesting to the

[4] Emmanuel, *Precious Stones*, pp. 292-96. Rabbi Rephael Jesurun probably was the grandson of the Hamburg Haham Isaac de Abraham Haim Jesurun (d. Hamburg, 1655) who wrote *Livro de Providencia Divina* (Hamburg, 1663).

[5] He wrote the preface to and published *Oel Jahacob* (Amsterdam, 1737), consisting of his father's *Responsa* and famous account of Shabbethai Zevi.

[6] According to the Amsterdam parnassim's letter of July 24, 1716, to their Curaçao colleagues.

[7] MS, Adar 24, 5476. Cf. Emmanuel, "Jewish Education in Curaçao," *PAJHS* 44:218.

[8] MC, y. 5478.

kashruth. From time to time a couple would go through a religious marriage ceremony in the presence of two witnesses without the attendance or supervision of the Haham. Those marriages were prohibited on pain of excommunication.

On Shabu'oth it was formerly customary to chant the Book of Ruth in Ladino in the evening and at night to pray from various biblical texts, from the Mishna, etc. This practice also extended to the night of Hosha'na Rabbah and was called *Ticun*. As each member wanted to pray or chant different chapters — or elegies on the occasion of Tish'ah be-Ab — disturbances in the synagogue were inevitable. It was therefore resolved that only those who made prior arrangements with the Haham could pray or chant on those holidays.

In addition to establishing order and harmony, Haham Jesurun's rabbinate also saw the founding of the renowned Hesed ve Emeth society. It took care of bathing the dead and functioned until 1918.

ARRIVAL OF THE MARRANOS AND FRAY JOSEPH DIAZ PIMIENTA

Numerous Marranos thronged to Amsterdam early in the 18th century according to the circumcision records of the Portuguese Jewish Community of Amsterdam[9] and the correspondence exchanged between the Amsterdam parnassim and the administrators of the Holy Land funds. Some Marranos went directly to Curaçao from Spain or Portugal. There were three Catholic priests among them: a Dominican friar, a Franciscan Father and a shoed priest. The first took the name Abraham de Paz[10] on his conversion to Judaism in Curaçao before 1699 and, according to the Jesuit Schabel "[that prelate] whose name I must conceal," married a Jewess after his conversion "to the

[9] Various circumcisers recorded the names of those Marranos, their age and circumcision date. Between 1705 and 1728 Mosseh Athias de Neyra circumcised 20 Marranos ranging from seven months to 70 years. The 70-year-old was Ishac Henriques Fereira. Between 1721 and 1730 Abraham Semah Aboab circumcised 19 Marranos aged 14 months to 35 years. Between 1725 and 1728 David Nunes Carvalho circumcised four Marranos aged 10 to 70 years. The 70-year-old was Abraham Fernandez. Between 1725 and 1731 Isaac Semah Aboab circumcised eight Marranos, several from Spain, ranging between four and 60 years. The 60-year-old was Abraham da Costa da Mesquita. Between 1726 and 1731 Selomoh Curiel Abaz circumcised seven Marranos aged three to 56 years, among them Jacob (a.k.a. Joseph) Alvares Correa, 22, in 1729. From 1730 to 1731 Moseh Rephael da Veiga circumcised five Marranos aged 11 to 56 years (PJCAA, compiled from the lists of fourteen circumcisers). Surely there were many other circumcised Marranos whose names were not recorded. What is extraordinary is that 70-year-old men willingly risked their lives when undergoing this delicate operation in order to die in their ancestral faith.

[10] Philipe Henriquez in his deposition to the Inquisition at Cartagena in 1699, p. 77 above.

consternation and sorrow of Catholicism."[11] The second convert took the name Daniel Suares (page 102 above). The third, known as Fray Joseph Diaz Pimienta, had held a mass in 1714 at Marconado near Rio Hacha, Venezuela. After leading a tumultous life, he went to Curaçao where he expressed the wish to enter the faith of his mother and grandmother. For two months he studied the Jewish religion and on May 21, 1715, was circumcised and known as "Abraham." The Curaçoan Jews gave a large banquet in his honor and a gift of 300 pesos so that he could start a business. Shortly afterward he departed for Bahia Honda, later to return and go into business with Captain Pieter Pietersz. He sailed out of Curaçao, was captured by a corsair near Aruba and taken to Jamaica. There he was helped by a Jew. Wishing to continue in business, Diaz Pimienta became associated with an Englishman. But misfortune struck again. This time he was seized by Indians, hauled to Rio Hacha and then to Cartagena where he was arrested by the Inquisition. He feigned lunacy. For twenty days he prayed as a Jew and for twenty days as a Christian. He was tried and set free on condition that he returned to his Order. Sent to Cadix, he fled to Xeres and from there to Seville and Lisbon. The Inquisition seized him when he returned to Seville. He declared himself a Jew. When they threatened to burn him alive at the stake, he confessed to being a Catholic. He was strangled and burned.[12]

While the Curaçoans were discussing Pimienta's adventures, one Abraham Campanal, a native Rhode Islander, came to their shores. It seems that he was circumcised on Gabriel aLevy's plantation in 1718. Perhaps the circumcisers in Curaçao were not so skilled as their Amsterdam colleagues in operating the elderly, for Abraham died, possibly from an infection. As a result, the Jewish community found itself in difficulty with the Fiscal and could no longer circumcise Christians.[13] This ruling was contrary to the spirit of the privilege of 1715 which tacitly allowed them, like the Amsterdam Jews, to circumcise New Christians arriving from Spain and Portugal without the prior consent of the local authorities.[14] Surely this did not discourage other Marranos from

[11] According to Father Schabel's ms. on his travels in Curaçao. Father Euwens of Curaçao saw this manuscript and sent several notes about it to the late Jossy M. L. Maduro, who graciously passed them on to the author.

[12] Governor Jonathan van Beuningen's report of Feb. 5, 1718, to the WIC directors gives events up to February, 1718, and corresponds substantially with Pimienta's statements to the Inquisition at Seville (WICA 573, pp. 353-54); Richard Gottheil, "Fray Joseph Diaz Pimienta, alias Abraham Diaz Pimienta and the Auto-da-Fé held at Seville, July 25, 1720" (*PAJHS* 9:19-28); *Jewish Quarterly Review* 14:701.

[13] PJCAA, bundle.

[14] OAC 315, no. 780.

flocking to Curaçao. Unlike the earlier Marrano immigrants, however, those entering between 1725 and 1735 were indigent and had to be helped and befriended by the Curaçoan Jews. The last Marrano refugee to arrive from Portugal was one J. Fonseca who brought along his three children in 1822.[15]

CONSTRUCTION OF THE PRESENT SYNAGOGUE

The High Holy Days of 1729 found the parnassim hard put to seat all the faithful in the synagogue. Natural increase and immigration had swelled their numbers. They went about collecting funds for a larger building and obtained a total of 6,456:2:3 pesos. As in the construction of their earlier synagogue, the Mahamad sold the honor of laying the first four cornerstones to the highest bidders. This time the happy buyers were Mordechay Alvares Correa[16] who paid 410 pesos for the first cornerstone; Samuel de Casseres,[17] 315 for the second; Jacob Henriquez Morao, 325 for the third, and Manuel aLevy, 355 for the fourth.[18]

After Shabu'oth, 5490, the synagogue of 1703 was demolished. While the new building was going up, services were held in the homes of Eliau Jeudah Leao and Ishac de Marchena. The latter died before its completion.

The land was not large enough. At the time the government was considering the possibility of tearing down the city wall along the "Steene pad" extending to Fort Orange, currently Madurostraat. Both wall and fort were in utter disrepair. It thought of breaking down the wall and filling in the sea behind it in order to extend the city which had already become too small for its population. It planned to sell the reclaimed land to the residents and with the proceeds build a new wall and fort. The parnassim approached Governor Du Fay and requested him to sell them a strip of land measuring twenty feet along the side of the synagogue on today's Columbusstraat with a depth of twenty feet along Kuiperstraat since the city wall slanted from the synagogue. Du Fay went to inspect the place with Jan Kock, the Building and Fortress Inspector. Then, as representative for the Dutch West India Company, the

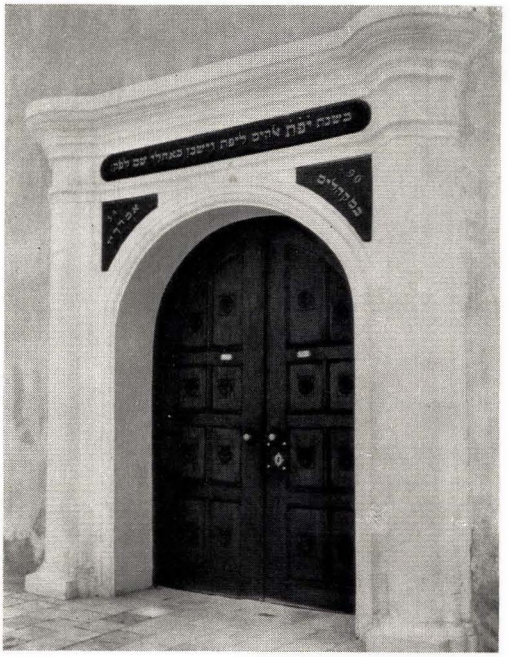
[15] CEOE 310, May 14, 1822.

[16] For details about him, see Emmanuel, *Precious Stones*, pp. 308-12; also, pp. 199-201 below.

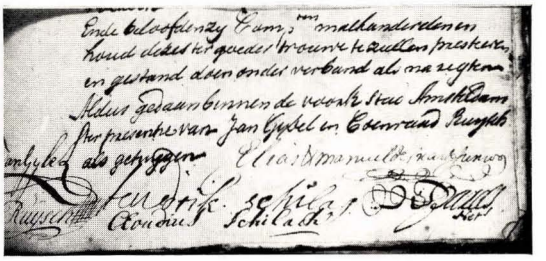
[17] For details about him, see *ibid.*, pp. 338-39.

[18] MC, 13 and 15 Nisan, 5490. These 1,405 pesos, at the rate of two florins the peso, exceeded by 500 florins the sale of the first four cornerstones of the Amsterdam synagogue in 1671 (J. S. Da Silva Rosa, *Geschiedenis der Portugeesche Joden te Amsterdam 1593-1925* [Amsterdam, 1925], p. 91), and, of course, cannot be compared at all to the modest figure of 22:16 pounds or 67:2 pesos obtained from the sale of the four cornerstones of the Mill Street Synagogue of New York City in 1729 (David De Sola Pool, *The Mill Street Synagogue* [New York, 1930], p. 32).

26. SYNAGOGUE MIKVE ISRAEL-EMANUEL, ENTRANCE AT COLUMBUSSTRAAT



27. INTERIOR PORTALS OF THE SYNAGOGUE, 1730



28. SIGNATURES, CONTRACT TO BUILD THE SYNAGOGUE, AMSTERDAM, 1730

29. INTERIOR, SYNAGOGUE MIKVE ISRAEL-EMANUEL

owner of the city wall and the sea behind it, he sold the Jews the right to tear down twenty feet of the wall for the steep price of 800 pesos. That amount also included the cost of demolishing the wall on those premises and rebuilding it after the Company had drained the sea water in back of it.[19] Governor Du Fay transferred to the community ten feet "on the front part," perhaps the section where the Holy Ark now stands. There still remained to be delivered ten more feet of frontage and twenty feet of depth for the enlargement of the community's schools built against the city wall.[20]

On Sivan 15, 5490 (1730), they started digging. When they struck water, they filled up the area with stones. On this occasion the Mahamad convoked the councillors and members, probably to have each and everyone of them add a stone to the foundations and thus experience the joy of actually taking part in the construction. Then, in the presence of the entire community, Haham Jesurun declared:

> This building rises forth in the name of God and for the glory of His Holy Name on condition that, if at some future date the gentlemen of the Mahamad or councillors so decide, they are at liberty to rebuild or sell the site once the building has been razed.[21]

In other words, future leaders were empowered to dispose of the land only after razing the building. Abraham Jesurun Henriquez was appointed Building Treasurer in charge of costs and construction.

In the absence of a master builder to tackle an edifice of such magnitude, the parnassim charged Elias and Manuel Namias de Crasto Jr. of Amsterdam with the task of finding a skilled, competent carpenter. The Namiases hired one Hendrick Schielagh, master carpenter, on July 26, 1730. These were the conditions of the employment contract:

1. Passage to Curaçao in Captain Pieter Valck's *De Vogel Phenix*, with food for him, his wife and child; freight on four boxes containing his building tools, all at the expense of the parnassim of Curaçao. He and his family to dine in the captain's cabin.
2. Salary of 60 florins payable monthly from the day of his departure from Texel.
3. No work on Saturdays and Sundays.
4. After visiting the Curaçao parnassim, he was to take orders from Pieter

[19] WICA 580, pp. 738, 951-53. See below, p. 138.

[20] According to the Curaçao parnassim's letter of Tebet 1, 5493, to their Amsterdam colleagues (PJCAA, bundle). See below, appendix 14 C.

[21] MC, Sivan 15, 5490.

Roggenburg, chief of master carpenters, for assistance in tracing and designing the plans and divisions of the synagogue in suitable proportions and according to architectural rules and building craftsmanship; also, for building the synagogue to its completion.

5. In the event of his dismissal, the parnassim to pay for his passage to Holland.
6. A gift of 100 florins to be offered to him if he wished to remain in Curaçao after finishing the work.
7. Three florins to be deducted from his salary for each day he failed to work.
8. No other employment permitted until the completion of the synagogue on pain of his paying a fine of 250 florins.
9. Obligation to pay costs and damages to the parnassim if found incapable of doing the work.
10. Obligation to aid the Namiases in purchasing the necessary building materials, for which he would be paid two florins daily; the Namiases to advance him 120 florins on account of his salary.

The carpenter's brother, S. Claudius Schielagh, a master wigmaker, appeared as the guarantor.[22] Before signing the contract, the Namiases acquired from Jacobus de Witt of Amsterdam a large quantity of building materials which was to accompany Schielagh on the ship to Curaçao. This was paid with the 1,200 pesos received from Curaçao.[23]

Schielagh set to work immediately upon his arrival, but soon was distracted by various private projects. He was quickly brought to his senses by a warning issued by the parnassim through Fiscal Van Schagen. Unless he reported for work at once, he would be liable for costs and damages.[24]

Before long there was need for more funds. This time the Mahamad raised it by selling to the highest bidders the honor of laying the foundations for the four interior columns. The proud purchasers were Daniel Aboab Cardozo (C 1999) and his wife Ribca (C 1036) who paid 155 and 142 pesos, respectively; Abraham Aboab Cardozo (C 2001) and his wife Lea (C 2000), 140 and 156 pesos, respectively.[25]

Meanwhile, Isaac and Esther de Marchena donated a brass chandelier of twenty-four branches similar to those offered by Chaves and Moron for the synagogue of 1703. For their generosity, bidders and donors alike were rewarded on the anniversary of the synagogue. During their lifetime they received an annual blessing (*misheberakh*) and at death, a memorial prayer.

[22] GAA 8817, Not. Jan Barels, no. 451, July 26, 1730. See illus. 28.

[23] *Ibid.*, no. 416, July 7, 1730; *ibid.*, no. 399, about the 1,200 ps. the Namiases received from Curaçao. See appendix 15.

[24] OAC 800, Oct. 8, 1731.

[25] MC, Tebet 7 and Adar Seni 4, 5490.

In effect, these nine donors are remembered every year on the first day of Passover.[26]

With costs far exceeding their calculations, the members had to raise another 2,315:6:2 pesos and send their slaves to help the laborers. Finally, after superhuman efforts and the abounding good will of all the members, the synagogue was completed at a staggering cost of 20,941:4 pesos,[27] excluding the price of the land. (In 1730 that sum was the equivalent of five costly parcels of real estate along today's Heerenstraat.)

Haham Jesurun designated the year of construction by having this significant verse from Genesis 9:27 engraved on the portal: "May God enlarge the boundaries of Japheth, and may he dwell in the tents of Shem." Here "Japheth" represented the Dutch Government which had accorded religious freedom to the Jews or "Shem." Perhaps the most beautiful synagogue in Central America, this edifice combines Dutch architectural style with the Jewish spirit. It is 23.40 meters long, 17.5 meters wide and 15 meters high. Designed in massive mahogany,[28] its interior recalls the mother synagogue in Amsterdam. The Holy Ark, reconstructed in 1751, measures 17 feet in height and 15 feet in width. The pulpit, later reconstructed during Haham Chumaceiro's rabbinate, is 5.5 meters by 3 meters.[29] There are 400 seats for the men and another 200 in the women's gallery (illus. 3, 26, 27, 29, 53-54, 68).

Like the tabernacle in the wilderness in Moses' time, this richly ornamented synagogue is still paved with a layer of fine white sand. Until the end of the past century, part of this sand was imported from Jerusalem.[30] The Marranos in Portugal used to cover the floors of their clandestine synagogues with sand to muffle the sound of their footsteps. While enjoying the broadest tolerance, the Jews of Curaçao have perpetuated this custom.

In a special solemn service arranged for the occasion, Haham Jesurun consecrated the new synagogue on the first day of Passover, 1732. The Mahamad, consisting of President Jacob Ephraim Jesurun Henriquez, Vice President Jacob Curiel, Treasurer Moses Penso, the Buildings Treasurer Abraham Jesurun Henriquez, the councillors, the contributors, and all the members could well be proud of their brilliant achievement. Like the Aboab Cardozos, surely other women helped in one way or another. Elegantly dressed, as women in Curaçao generally were, they occupied the seats in the gallery which then was latticed in the style of the mother synagogue in Amsterdam.

[26] MIA, Hashcaboth Register, vol. II, Pesah.

[27] MC, Nisan 15, 5492.

[28] The Mahamad of 1876 had the mahogany ceiling painted white in order to obtain more light.

[29] Father Euwens, "De Joodsche Synagogue op Curaçao," *WIG*, 1934-35, p. 228.

[30] Communication of the late J.M.L. Maduro.

Certainly Haham Jesurun or another composed a special hymn for this occasion to be sung by the cantors and teachers. It is a pity that no painting of this majestic inauguration has been preserved. Stranger still is the fact that neither Governor Van Collen nor his councillors saw fit to report this stirring event to their superiors in Amsterdam.

The synagogue has evoked the admiration of all who visit it. Despite its 237 years of existence, it is in excellent state. The four chandeliers of twenty-four branches, the imposing Holy Ark crowned with the Ten Commandments in massive silver letters and housing eighteen Scrolls of the Law with their rich silver ornaments, the brass candlesticks, the silver ornaments donated by Jacob Senior that flank the pulpit, the disposition of the pews, the mahogany benches, the Haham's upholstered chair in the center, the *Banca* of the parnassim in the left center of the synagogue — all these give the seal of antiquity. On each side of the entrance there are two seats which were formerly occupied by the Parnas de Fabrica to the right and by the Parnas de Hebra to the left. For the schoolmasters there were four special seats to the left; for the two sextons, a seat flanking either side of the parnassim's bench so that they could easily carry out their orders.

Admiring all this, one senses the deep devotion put into this magnificent monument by Haham Jesurun, the parnassim of 1730-32[31] and the generous contributors. For several centuries the synagogue has given a Jewish seal to Punda and for many years it was Curaçao's most imposing house of worship. Along with the numerous epitaphs of the Old Jewish Cemetery,[32] it testifies to the community's religious fervor during the first third of the 18th century and clearly shows that those people had taste and order and employed their wealth to glorify God in the traditional Sephardic rite.

CHARITY

The Jews of 18th century Curaçao tried to put into practice Simeon the Just's maxim that the world stands on three things: the study of the Law, work, and good deeds. The rabbis and parnassim insisted on the religious education of the boys and the study of the Holy Law. The merchants and sailors, who

[31] The presidents, vice presidents and treasurers for the years 1729-31 were as follows:
1729-30: Ishac Levy Maduro, Ishac de Marchena, Jeosuah Henriquez Jr.
1730-31: David Senior, Eliao Jeudah Leao, Samuel Idanha de Casseres.
1731-32: Jacob Ephraim Jesurun Henriquez, Jacob Curiel, Moses Penso.
(See app. 12, y. 5490-92.)

[32] See Emmanuel, *Precious Stones*, pp. 33-52, 97-144, 495-555, for a study on the Old Jewish Cemetery, its epitaphs and sepulchral art.

were unusually active for residents of the tropics, braved heavy seas and pirates in order to earn their livelihood. Every individual did his share in helping others. Charity took these forms during the 18th century: 1) contributions in favor of the *Sedaca* or Community Chest; 2) the synagogue appeal or *nedabah* to raise funds for local and overseas welfare institutions; 3) the institution of *Hermandades* or *Yeshiboth* — societies — having the twofold object of rendering a definite charitable service and of studying the Torah; 4) aid extended anonymously, often through the discreet offices of the Haham, to respectable families who refused relief from the Sedaca; 5) *Legados* or bequests in favor of the Sedaca, an Hermandade, or the Dotar Fund for marrying indigent orphan girls.

The Sedaca fund, intended to help the poor, could not always adequately meet the demands made upon it. So it was inevitable for charitable organizations to burgeon forth almost from the time the Jews arrived in Curaçao. These societies are listed in chronological order.

1. Guemiluth Hasadim (Deeds of mercy) — To help the sick and at death to contribute toward the burial expenses.
2. Es Haim (Tree of Life) — To study the Torah.
3. Ohel Yahacob (Tent of Jacob) — To study the Torah. Founded in the 17th century by a generous man named Yahacob, it later merged with the Es Haim. Only a select few were privileged to join this *yeshibah* where the Talmud, too, was studied.
4. A brotherhood whose *Ros* or chief in 1712 was David Senior.
5. A society founded in 1715 ostensibly to aid transients. In collaboration with the Sedaca, it helped various emigrants settle in Tucacas, Venezuela. In token of gratitude for the hospitality and assistance extended to them, those settlers later remitted with their thank-you letter of September 2, 1720, 340 pesos for the purchase of a Scroll of the Law with its ornaments for the use of the Curaçao synagogue.[33]
6. Pene Shabath (Faces of Sabbath) — As the name indicates, this society's avowed purpose was to gather on Saturday to sing religious hymns, study the Torah and probably to send some money on Friday to poor families for Sabbath needs. Later it merged with the Shahare Sedek, no. 20.
7. Honen Dalim (Graciousness to the needy) — Primarily for raising money for Hebron in the Holy Land.

[33] Corcos, *ibid.*, p. 19. According to Corcos, "the great quantity of letters now extant are an excellent evidence of the good work this society accomplished" (Corcos, *ibid.*). The correspondence of that period has disappeared, for the author could find no record of it in the archives of the Curaçao community.

8. Yagdil Torah (May the Torah be enlarged) — It existed in 1726 and was founded much earlier.
9. Hesed ve Emeth (Kindness and truth) — Founded in 1726 to bathe the dead.[34]
10. A society founded to contribute for the dowry of orphan girls. As in Amsterdam, three lots were drawn for the dowry of three girls.[35]
11. Jadrech Anavim ve Hozer Dalim (He will guide the meek and help the needy) — Founded on the 14th of Ab, 5490 (1730).
12. Hatereth Bahurim u-Malbish Harumim (Crown of youth and clothier to the naked) — Founded on the 4th of Sivan, 5491. It paid a yearly allowance of 52 pesos to a student attending the Es Haim ve Ohel Yahacob Yeshibah, fifty pesos to the chief Haham and twelve pesos to every schoolteacher. It also distributed certain sums to the poor on Yom Kippur Eve and Purim. It was still in existence in 1811.
13. Mishpat Habanoth (Justice to the daughters) — Founded the 4th of Tammuz, 5491, to aid needy mothers of newborn daughters. Visiting such a home, the society's singers sang liturgies and verses of circumstance to boost the morale of a family depressed over the birth of a girl.

    (N.B. — Societies 11, 12 and 13 were founded during the membership drive for funds to build the new synagogue. The Jews were convinced that nothing should interfere with aiding the needy.)

14. Abi Yetomim ve Dayan Almanoth (Father of the fatherless and judge of the widows) — Founded the 12th of Ḥeshvan, 5494 (1733), on the initiative of Joseph da Costa Gomez, Jacob Dias Guadelupe and Joseph Bueno Vivas. As the name implies, its object was to aid widows and orphans. From time to time it also sent some money to Hebron.
15. Neve Sedek (Dwelling of charity) — To contribute 25 pesos annually to Hebron and Tiberias.
16. Mehil Sedaka (Robe of charity) — To prepare the graves of the poor.*
17. Tobath Marhe (Beautiful) — Founded during the bitter conflict between Haham De Sola, Moses Penso et al. (Chapter IX). Under the leadership of Ribbi David Aboab, it extended mutual aid to its members, helped travellers, and devoted certain hours weekly for Torah study.
18. Beth Yahacob (House of Jacob) — Founded on Iyar 13, 5513 (1753).

[34] Details in Emmanuel, *Precious Stones*, pp. 63-68.

[35] MIA, loose papers.

* Nos. 15 and 16 were founded on Ḥeshvan 19, 5503 [1742].

19. Anse Hesed (Men of charity) — A pallbearers' society founded in 1754. Its members had to carry the corpse from the residence to the funeral barge.[36] This society merged with no. 23 before 1821.
20. Pene Shabath ve Shahare Sedek (Faces of Sabbath and gates of charity) — It maintained a dowry found for orphan girls.
21. Hebrath Kanahim (Company of the zealous) — Founded by the parnassim of 1769 for raising funds to meet the community budget.
22. Or Torah (Light of the Torah) — Also called Collegio or Yeshibah, it was founded before 1781.[37]
23. Habodat Akodes (Service of saintliness) — Founded in 1783 to carry the dead. A serious quarrel it had with the Hesed ve Emeth in 1808 was not patched up until 1832. It was still in existence in 1844.[38]
24. Limud Torah (Study of the Torah) — Founded by Hazzan Moses Benveniste and Daniel Lopez Penha in 1785.
25. Maskil el Dal (Concern for the poor) — This society came to notice on October 31, 1813, when the parnassim asked for an accounting and discovered that it had a capital of 300 pesos. On this occasion the society initiated several reforms.[39]
26. 'Oneg Shabath (Delight of the Sabbath) — Founded by Eliau de Isaac Rodriguez Miranda on December 14, 1814, for the purpose of meeting every Thursday night to read the Sabbatical portion and the "Targum," its Aramaic translation. This society was involved in the bitter fight over Hazzan Piza (Chapter XV).
27. Nasim Sadcaniyoth (Women of charity) — Founded in 1857 to bathe the corpses of women. Like the Hesed ve Emeth (no. 9), this society was composed of 18 members.[40]

[36] Emmanuel, *Precious Stones*, p. 68.

[37] Emmanuel, "Jewish Education in Curaçao," *PAJHS* 44:220-22. See appendix 18.

[38] For details see Emmanuel, *Precious Stones*, pp. 68-72. Basing himself on the Moses Lopez Penha Chronicle (chronologically unreliable as indicated in *PAJHS* 44:225 and in *Precious Stones*, p. 425), the author stated at page 72 of *Precious Stones* that the Habodat Akodes was dissolved in 1811. Only after *Precious Stones* was printed did he get to see part of the old Mikvé Israel Community records, including the Hesed ve Emeth archives, which had been in the safekeeping of an influential member of the community. The quarrel between these two brotherhoods occurred in 1808 and not in 1811. The Habodat Akodes was not dissolved. Only in 1832, when the parnassim declared it to be in the right, did the Habodat Akodes become reconciled with the Hesed ve Emeth (MIA, archives of the Hesed ve Emeth, meeting of July 18, 1832).

[39] MIA, Records of the Parnassim, 1811-1819, meeting of Oct. 31, 1813.

[40] MIA, Hesed ve Emeth Archives. The founders of this sisterhood were Sarah, widow of David Capriles; Sarah, widow of Jacob Lopez Penha; Lea Jacob Henriquez, Abigail Fereira, Esther Fereira, Clara de Isaac Henriquez Moron, Esther de Manuel Alvares Correa; Widow of David de Castro Jr.,

28. Mahazike a Torah Ets Haim (Torah supporters and tree of life) — Founded by Haham Aron M. Chumaceiro in 1858.
29. Guemiluth Hasadim (Deeds of mercy) — Founded by those people who had separated themselves from Congregation Mikvé Israel in 1864. Object: to bathe the dead of their newly-formed community. Like the Hesed ve Emeth, it had a membership of eighteen men.[41]

These societies took care of the poor from birth to death. Although they enjoyed a certain degree of autonomy, all except nos. 17 and 29 were under the surveillance and protection of Mikvé Israel's parnassim.

THE SANTA COMPANHIA DE DOTAR ORPHAS

The Santa Companhia de Dotar Orphas of Amsterdam ranked high in favor among the Curaçoan Jewish charities at the end of the 17th and throughout the 18th centuries. As the name denotes, its purpose was to provide dowries for needy orphan girls. Haham Joseph Pardo organized it in 1615 and it is still in existence. Fortunately, the archives of this Jewish Portuguese society have preserved for us the names of the Curaçao members and contributors, and also the names of those orphan girls of Curaçao who were entitled to participate in the drawings. Lists of those donors, members and participants in the drawings follow.

DONORS

Mosseh Henriquez Cotinho — the same person who was unjustly imprisoned by Balthazar Beck. On marrying Rachel, the orphan daughter of Ishac Henriquez Morao, in Curaçao in 1682, he turned over to the society the 300 florins they intended to give him as her dowry.

Isaac Touro repeated this gesture when he married Lea, the orphan daughter of Jacob Ulloa, in 1688. He turned over to the society the 240 florins they intended to give him as her dowry.

Abraham de David da Costa Andrade, alias Luiz Gonzales d'Andrade, of Martinique-Curaçao-Amsterdam, donated 2,000 florins to this society in 1685.

Clara de Jeosuah R. Henriquez; Sarah, widow of Jacob Curiel; Abigail, widow of Isaac de Castro; Rachel, widow of Mordechay Alvares Correa; Abigail Delvalle Henriquez, Esther Daniel Cohen Henriquez; Ribca, widow of Isaac Abenatar, and Hana de Moses Cohen Henriquez. The names of the last two are missing. They drew up a set of bylaws consisting of twelve articles.

[41] For details see Emmanuel, *Precious Stones*, p. 74, and p. 383 below.

Haham Eliau Lopez remitted fifty pesos of an anonymous donor in 1697.
Isaac de Abraham Henriquez donated 62:10 florins in 1718.
Manuel de Jeudah Touro donated 50 florins in 1722.
Eliau de Mordechay Namias de Crasto gave 25 florins in 1727; and so on.*
Ribca Cardozo, widow of Dr. Ishac da Costa (or De Acosta), d. 1728, bequeathed her entire estate of 776.50 florins to this society.[42]

MEMBERS

There were many Curaçoan members of this society. Membership was acquired directly or inherited. Prominent among these Curaçoan members were João, alias Jeudah, de Yllan, 1651; Benjamin Henriquez, 1668; Abraham de Mosseh de Chaves, 1680; Philipe Henriquez, 1685; Mosseh Henriquez Cotinho, 1692; Eliau de Manuel de Eliau Namias de Crasto, 1699; David de Mordechay Senior, 1702; Ishac de Abraham Touro, 1704; Abraham Penso, 1708, his son Moses in 1738 and his grandson Abraham in 1775, as descendants of Joseph Penso who was related to one David Passarinho; Mordechay de Selomoh Senior, 1711; Selomoh de Mordechay Senior, 1715; Jacob de David Lopez Silva, 1725; Manuel Namias de Crasto Jr., 1730; Mordechay de David Senior, 1731; the sons of Moseh da Costa Gomez: Abraham, 1736, Jacob, 1766, and Isaac, 1767; David de Mordechay Haim Senior, 1740; Mordechay Namias de Crasto, before 1752; his brother Abraham, 1752; Moseh de Abraham de Chaves, 1754; Moseh de Souza Britto, 1754; Jacob da Costa Athias, 1755; David de Ishac Haim Senior, 1755. Membership passed on to descendants of these "brothers" until the end of the 18th century.

ORPHAN GIRLS ENTITLED TO SHARE IN THE PURIM LOTTERY

The orphans listed below were born or resided in Curaçao and took part in the annual Purim drawings held in Amsterdam between 1667 and 1787. They were the daughters, granddaughters, nieces or descendants of members of this society. (Many newcomers to Curaçao between 1659 and 1700 had wealthy relatives who could afford the costly membership fee of 120 florins.)

Sarah and Lea de[43] Jeosuah Aboab, 1667, 1669
Esther, Sarah and Gracia de Abraham de Jeosuah Aboab, 1669, 1670, 1675
Rachel and Jael de David Alvares Torres, 1677, 1678

* The last three donors figured among the Jewish travellers from Curaçao to Amsterdam who invariably made donations to the society for their safe crossing.

[42] See Emmanuel, *Precious Stones*, pp. 233-34, for details.

[43] "De" before a given name denotes *daughter of*.

Rachel de Abraham da Fonseca Motta, 1677
Esther de Abraham da Fonseca, 1678
Rachel and Esther de Isaac Henriquez Moron, 1680, 1683
Lea and Raquel de Jacob Ulhoa, 1683, 1688
Raquel and Sarah de David Pineyro, 1688, 1691
Simha de David Israel, 1689
Sarah de Daniel Pineyro, 1690
Rachel de Eliau Dovale of Curaçao-New York, grandchild of Haham David Pardo, 1692
Esther de Moses Serfatin, 1695
Ribca de Jacob Vaz Martines, 1695
Sarah and Hana de David Machoro de Leon, 1697, 1701
Branca de Daniel Abendana, 1700
Jael de Benjamin Fidanque,[44] sister of the first Fidanque to reach Curaçao, 1710
Sarah de Mosseh Nunes Redondo, 1714
Sipora and Raquel de Isaac Habilho of Curaçao-St. Eustatius, 1715, 1720
Abigail de Abraham Lopes Silva, 1724
Sarah de [Ribi] Moseh Alva, 1739
Sarah de Mordechay Penso, 1749
Sarah de Isaac de Jacob Rodriguez Pereira, 1753
Sarah and Clara de Abraham Monis, 1754, 1775
Hanah and Sarah de Daniel Israel Ricardo, 1761
Deborah de Selomoh Jeudah Leao Templo, 1766
Esther and Ribca de Abraham de Selomoh Curiel, 1778, 1787
Ribca de Selomoh de Jacob Curiel, 1787[45]

In a day when marriage was closed to a girl — especially a poor orphan — this society opened portals of hope. A lucky winner in the Purim lottery could expect to receive from 240 to 1,000 florins on her wedding.

CONTRIBUTIONS TO OTHER COMMUNITIES

The Jews of Curaçao were known for their generosity. When Congregation Shearith Israel of New York City planned to build the Mill Street Synagogue, they naturally turned to Curaçao for a contribution. They wrote on Shebat

[44] The lucky girl won 1,000 florins which was later paid to her husband, David Hoheb.

[45] This information was culled from the Santa Companhia de Dotar Archives (PJCAA, Dotar, Termos A-E, 1615-1787).

3, 5489 (January 3, 1729). Although he himself had the problem of raising funds to build his synagogue, Haham Jesurun nevertheless organized a subscription. The response was gratifying: 136:12:1 3/4 pounds sterling. The Haham's letter accompanying the remittance made it a condition, in accordance with the donors' wishes, that the "ritual and minhag of the synagogue should remain Sephardic,"[46] and that the Ashkenazic members should not have more votes than the Sephardis. To make certain that they would fulfill this condition, Jesurun instructed them to send him a copy of the communal minutes in this respect. The success of that appeal was due largely to the close ties existing between the Curaçoan Jews and their coreligionists in New York. The rabbi-hazzan of Shearith Israel then was none other than Mosseh Lopez da Fonseca,[47] son of Haham Lopez. Serving since 1720,[48] he was the second hazzan from Curaçao, after Saul Pardo (son of Haham Josiau Pardo),[49] to lead the congregation. Next to the contribution of the New York parnassim, Curaçao's was the second largest. In recognition of this generosity, Shearith Israel recites special prayers twice yearly for the health of Congregation Mikvé Israel of Curaçao.

A few years later, in 1738, Mikvé Israel responded with its usual magnanimity to Selomoh de Leao's request for funds to build a synagogue in neighboring St. Eustatius.[50]

In spite of the strain which these contributions imposed on their budget, Congregation Mikvé Israel admirably kept maintaining the four Holy Land communities of Jerusalem, Safed, Hebron and Tiberias, as Chapter VIII reveals.

[46] David de Sola Pool, *ibid.*, pp. 21, 26, 40, 49; *PAJHS* (Lyons Collection) 27:3-5; p. 165 below.

[47] For the biography and epitaph of Mosseh L. Da Fonseca, see Emmanuel, *Precious Stones*, pp. 315-17.

[48] Communication of Dr. Jacob R. Marcus, Director American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati. Da Fonseca already was in New York in 1714 as a businessman.

[49] See Emmanuel, *Precious Stones*, pp. 198-99, re family details and epitaph of Saul Pardo.

[50] MS, MC, Tebet 18, 5498.

CHAPTER VII

OPPRESSION AND INJUSTICES
1726-1745

GOOD RELATIONS between the governor and the Jews during the 18th century often depended on the whims of his councillors. He, of course, had orders from his superiors to treat the Jews well, as they were vital to the island's economy.

In December, 1720, a Company galiot with a precious cargo containing, among other things, 15,000 pounds of elephant tusks and fifty-eight pounds of gold, was shipwrecked in the Port of Carretillas along the coast of Coro. The Spanish Creoles took possession of everything. The governing body in Curaçao sent their eminent Jan Pott to Coro to claim the cargo. He got nowhere. Then they dispatched Juan Hernandes Lossada, otherwise Moses Baruch Louzada.[1] The Inquisition Commissioner at Coro forbade anyone to talk to this emissary because he was a Jew. Louzada nevertheless managed to bring the claim before the court, but without effect. Meanwhile a new governor arrived in Curaçao: Jan Noach du Fay. He sent "Captain" David Senior, "who in times past served her Catholic Majesty — may God protect her and her subjects," with letters of recommendation to the governor of Coro. Senior, who took Louzada along as secretary, was also charged to negotiate for the return of several runaway slaves and to purchase corn. He demanded the return of the eighty elephant tusks and the gold that had been salvaged. The governor of Coro visited Senior on board his ship and tried to show the futility of pressing the claim. Everyone in Coro, he explained, was related to one another and as interested parties would give false testimony. And so it was. Senior returned to Curaçao without the salvaged items. For his trouble Louzada received seven pesos and three reales; Senior took nothing.[2] His good offices in this instance, as in many others, were not always appreciated by the governing body in Curaçao.

[1] He was married to the daughter of Moses Lopez Henriquez.
[2] WICA 208, pp. 323-30, 370b, 410, 413, 416-19, 432-33.

THE SAILORS HOSPITAL

A Spanish pirate in this era was crippling Curaçoan shipping. Finally a heavily armed vessel left the harbor, captured the corsair and killed his aides. Friends of the dead men attacked three Curaçoan ships, burned one with her captain and steered the two damaged vessels to Santo Domingo. The sea battle over, the wounded sailors were brought to Curaçao. But there was no hospital to care for them. As a direct result of this combat, Governor Du Fay was ordered by the Company to convoke all the inhabitants with a view to founding a hospital.

In January, 1727, the governor invited leading Jews and Gentiles to his mansion. Representing the Jews were community president Isaac Levy Maduro and David Senior. Other Jews present were Jacob Semah Ferro, Jacob Jeudah Leao and David de Crasto, members of the committee of "Senhores authoridades sobre as Cousas da Terra" — Experts on Affairs of the Land.

The governor proposed a one percent increase on import duties[3] to cover the cost of erecting and equipping a hospital, the purchase of arms, and so forth. The Jews readily assented to it. Frederick Eck, a member of the Island Council, in an effort to make little of their cooperation, warned that the Jews would be "resorting to trickery and not pay." David Senior reminded him that Eck's father-in-law Willem Meyer still had not paid his share of the Cassard ransom exacted in 1713. Cornelis Berch (also Bergh), defending his colleague Eck, branded the Jews as "d-d smonches" who dealt with Spaniards when the trade was prohibited. That ban was in name only, for the governor replied that the Company was aware of those dealings. Berch complained that the Jews were in virtual control of shipping and that they armed their vessels with the idea of privateering.[4]

During this tirade Jan Martin pushed David Senior and threw him to the floor. Both came to blows. Maduro called out to the governor, who had withdrawn, whether they had been summoned to be insulted. The governor separated the men and reproached Martin for the discourtesy shown in his home. Some of the men shouted: "Let's fall upon the Jews and throw them

[3] There had been a similar tax since before 1720 in favor of the "Een Per Cento Aende Caperij" — 1% in favor of the Privateering Fund (Simson Papers, p. 105, photographic copy at the AJA, Cincinnati).

[4] The author knows of only one instance of piracy involving Jews: the partnership of Willem de Groot and Philipe Henriquez (a.k.a. Jacob Senior), owners of the brigantine *St. Jan* in 1709. Yet, piracy was not their object, but the recovery of ships pirated from them or other Curaçoans (RA, Resolutien van de Staten Generaal, meeting of Nov. 27, 1710).

over the wall" (i.e., into the sea). Eck threatened to strike Senior. Sixty-three-year-old Senior assured him that he could defend himself.

The governor ejected several of the troublemakers and opened the subscription. Eck gave nothing. His father-in-law signed for twenty pesos which were refused. On the governor's insistence Eck made a pledge of 200 pesos for himself and his father-in-law. Per capita, the Jews subscribed above that figure. The smallpox[5] epidemic which felled many inhabitants later that year may have given renewed impetus to the fund-raising campaign. In any event, it was realized that the goal should be a hospital not for sailors only, but for all the islanders. The hospital was eventually erected and maintained by the "Kaapvaartkas," the island's richest fund in 1745.[6]

The Jewish community was aghast to see its representatives so loosely insulted. Never before had such a scene taken place in the presence of the governor. Haham Jesurun, at the parnassim's request, declared the anathema on any Jew transacting business with the anti-Jewish trio: Eck, Martin and Bergh. Once before, in 1707, the Jews used the boycott against Hendrick van Groot Davilaar when he had tried to maintain a monopoly on meat. Eight days later Governor Jacob Beck frustrated their design by demanding the removal of the anathema.[7] That weapon was employed, with good effect, by the Jews of Turkey to impose their respect upon the Christians. Don Joseph Nassi organized the famous boycott against the papal port of Ancona in 1556 in reprisal for the burning of twenty-four Marranos by Pope Paul IV.[8] "The Spanish Hebrews," says Chambers,[9] "occupied so high a position in Spain and Portugal, that even in their compulsory exile their peculiarly high and honourable principles, their hatred of all meanness, either in thought or act, their wealth, their exclusiveness, and strong attachment to each other, caused their community to resemble a little knot of Spanish princes." If Congregation Mikvé Israel was not made up of Spanish princes, it surely was made up of free people, conscious of their dignity and honor.[10]

5 WICA 578, p. 861v.

6 Hamelberg, p. 206. This fund, swollen to 131,993 pesos, was confiscated by the English during their occupation (1807-1816) and transported to Jamaica. Later it was restored to the Curaçoans on their demand (Bosch, I, pp. 366-67).

7 PJCAA, the Curaçao parnassim's letter of Adar 18, 5487, to their Amsterdam colleagues. See p. 104 above.

8 Emmanuel, *Histoire des Israélites de Salonique*, vol. I, p. 165.

9 William and Robert Chambers, "History of the Jews of England," *Miscellany of Instructive and Entertaining Tracts*, vol. 10 (London-Edinburgh, 1847?), p. 17.

10 During the English occupation in 1815, a Scotsman writing anonymously in the *Curaçao Gazette*, directed some satiric poetry against Abraham St. Croos, surgeon and general practitioner. Among the responses received from Jews and published by the philosemitic editor William Lee, there is one

The boycott against Eck et al. was justified. These gentlemen had accused the Jews of dishonesty and evasion in the payment of their debts. The Jews therefore wanted to have no business dealings with these men. Eck and Martin used to sell the Jews meat butchered by the community's ritual slaughterers. Because of Haham Jesurun's proclamation, the slaughterers did not report for duty. Martin protested before the governor who promptly ordered the Haham to send them to work. The slaughterers went, but the irate Jews refused to buy meat that day. The anti-Jewish trio took their plaint to Fiscal (Chief of Police) Jacob de Petersen, one of the most dangerous characters with whom the Jews had to contend.

Governor Du Fay should have studied the matter calmly, as befitted a doctor of laws.[11] It was he who had separated the grappling Martin and Senior, and reprimanded Martin for his boorishness. He should have tried to give the parnassim a certain satisfaction and used his influence and authority to restore peace between those three gentlemen and the Jewish community. Instead, he openly supported the trio. Immediately he broadcast "with tambour and bell to the four corners of the city" — something never done before — a proclamation compelling the Jews to annul the boycott. When they subsequently reported the matter to their Amsterdam colleagues, the parnassim rejoiced that at least there was no repetition of the disturbances experienced two years earlier "in the case of the Morenos."[12] At that time the guilty gentile sailors had gone unpunished. In the face of such flagrant partiality, the parnassim removed the boycott. Sarcastically referring to the parnassim as the "Sanhedrin," Fiscal Petersen summoned them to the Council and demanded payment of a 2,500 pesos' fine for the three-day boycott. The parnassim asked for time to answer, especially since there was no one [among the Jews] on the island who could write correct Dutch. They also wanted to refer to their privileges. Of course, Petersen denied their plea.

The parnassim apprised their Amsterdam colleagues of the injustices perpetrated by the government. The governor sent Petersen's accusation to the Company without including the parnassim's reply and defense. His excuse: there was no time since the ship was ready to depart. Du Fay's report contained half-truths and omitted everything that might uphold the parnassim.

demonstrating the pride of the Curaçoan Jew. It ends with these words: "My signature is that which I have never in all Christendom been ashamed or afraid to announce. I am, Mr. Editor, your obedient servant, A JEW" (*The Curaçao Gazette*, later *Curaçaosche Courant*, of August 11, 1815).

[11] He presented his doctoral thesis in law at the University of Leiden on July 7, 1706.

[12] Sons of Daniel Moreno Henriquez, owners and captains of ships plying between Curaçao and Holland. In re the Morenos as seafarers, see Emmanuel, *Precious Stones*, p. 354, and illustrations 230, 232, 233.

The defense set forth that even before the boycott the three gentlemen had voiced their unwillingness to trade with the Jews. The Jews therefore felt it was their privilege not to deal with them. The parnassim referred to the Da Costa privileges of 1659 which obliged the governor to protect them. Their "protector" and his council sentenced them to pay a fine of 2,000 pesos.

Meanwhile the Amsterdam parnassim intervened. They reported to their Curaçao friends that the three gentlemen would waive payment of the fine if the parnassim admitted that they had erred. But the governor, surely at dangerous Petersen's instigation, was not so disposed. The fine was reduced to a thousand pesos; so, in a measure, the Jews were victorious. Enlightened by the Amsterdam parnassim of the true facts, the Company directors wrote a general letter to the governor, and on this subject as follows:

> . . . That this [Jewish] Nation took upon itself much liberty in issuing the said proclamation. On the other hand, we are surprised that Frederick Eck, Jan Martin and Cornelis Berch did not refrain from insulting the said Nation in such scandalous, injurious terms, in the presence of His Excellency and other residents convened in solemn assembly . . . That the said Frederick Eck, Jan Martin and Cornelis Berch should have been censured for their insults, but we fail to find that they were rebuked. This slight gave the Jews reason to complain; yet they were not given the least satisfaction for the insults suffered at the hands of the aforesaid individuals . . . and it is our desire that peace be restored between Christians and Jews. To this end we recommend that His Excellency carry out his duty in having these three people make up with the Jewish Nation . . . and see that harmony exists between Christians and Jews.[13]

Du Fay did nothing to foster peace between the litigants and find an honorable way out. Instead, he wrote his superiors on September 18, 1728, that "the Jews should not be allowed to come out triumphant, particularly since business is in their hands, and the Island Council will be regarded in a poor light if the sentence is voided."[14] He neglected to state that several of the five councillors had blood or business ties with one or another of the three gentlemen.

In a sarcastic, offensive vein Petersen also wrote to the Council of Ten, recommending punishment for the Jews.[15] He stated that "the number of Jews on this island exceeds that of the Christians." That, of course, was untrue. According to the May 31, 1727, report of the Reverend Johannes Ferrarius,

[13] WICA 473, pp. 130, 138v.
[14] WICA 579, p. 39.
[15] WICA 578, p. 992.

the Protestant community then numbered about 300 members,[16] who constituted probably some 240 families. The maximum Jewish population in 1728 may have been 180 families.

Unhappily the parnassim were unable to defend themselves. They should have appealed their case to the States General of Holland. They also should have sought damages from the trio who had insulted them at a meeting where Jews had been called to contribute money for the general welfare. This precedent encouraged Petersen to keep maltreating them. In spite of themselves, the parnassim had to pay the fine, now reduced to 500 pesos. The spoils were divided equally among the fiscal, the governor and the Company.[17]

This was not the only abuse committed against the Jewish community. Private individuals also suffered at the hands of the Island Council. Mordechay Alvares Correa, attorney for Manuel Namias de Crasto of Amsterdam, was trying to collect long overdue debts Christians owed his client. As the Island Council did not care to judge the cases, Namias de Crasto applied for relief to the Company directors. His petition set forth that he was a merchant of Curaçao; that since 1671 he had been in Amsterdam on business; that during the war [with France] he had delivered Company mail to the islands and helped on the convoys. He also stated that he had turned over his business to his son-in-law and nephew who were supposed to receive the monies owed him through Mordechay A. Correa. He requested them to force the Island Council to assist Correa. The directors ordered Du Fay to execute immediate justice and help Correa.[18]

Du Fay had served on the Council of Ten in Amsterdam. Although prosperous on his arrival at Curaçao, he nevertheless emulated his predecessors by engaging in big business ventures. In 1726 he came into an additional fortune of 87,945 florins,[19] the dowry brought by his wife Anna Levina Leendertsz. A few years later appalling business reverses compelled him to send his family to Amsterdam. He finally resigned and fled secretly to Coro where he was held. His debts amounted to a staggering 150,749:3:5 pesos. At public auction his assets brought only 10,190:1:2 pesos.[20] The parnassim sustained heavy losses on this occasion because of Du Fay's failure to credit the Jewish community with the payments they had made to the Company account.

[16] WICA 578, p. 961.

[17] PJCAA, Correspondence between the Curaçao and Amsterdam parnassim; MS, Adar 28, 5487, Tisry 14 and Kisleff 29, 5488; OAC 2 (Raad), nos. 213, 214, 217, 222-24, 229-31; OAC 798, nos. 131, 151; WICA 578, pp. 859-68, 987, 992, 1028; WICA 579, pp. 8, 13-45, 249-51, 309-11, 456v.

[18] WICA 473, p. 120v; WICA 578, p. 863.

[19] GAA, Not. Juriaan Verbeck, act of Feb. 27, 1726.

[20] WICA 580, pp. 868-71; WICA 216, y. 1731-32.

GOVERNOR VAN COLLEN AND THE JEWS

Du Fay[21] was replaced by Juan Pedro van Collen, Councilman and Slave Commissioner since 1720. The historian Hamelberg listed various "unhappy vexations and oppressions inflicted upon the citizenry by the Director [Governor Van Collen] and other employees [Jacob de Petersen and Jan van Schagen] of the Company." Although he concluded that nothing much could be said to the credit of Van Collen's administration,[22] Hamelberg omitted to state the vexations, oppressions and injustices suffered by the Jews at Van Collen's hands.

The parnassim, as Chapter VI disclosed, had purchased from the Company, through Governor Du Fay, some land by the dilapidated city wall[23] for 800 pesos to enlarge the synagogue and the schools. Van Collen refused to turn over the remaining ten feet of frontage and twenty feet of depth although the Jews had already broken down two or three feet of the wall for their purposes during Governor Du Fay's tenure. His pretext: It would cost 3,000 pesos to rebuild the fortress and Du Fay had not entered the community's payment in the Company ledgers. Jan Kock, still Inspector of Fortresses and Defenses, could have clarified the matter. But he would not testify for fear of contradicting his master, the governor. The Company directors acted more uprightly. They recognized the transaction, but would not pass upon it. They instructed Van Collen to refund the 800 pesos to the parnassim.[24] It seems that this was never done.

Like Du Fay, Van Collen also engaged in big business ventures in Curaçao. He was associated with dangerous Jacob de Petersen and operated as "Van Collen & Comp." He also ran a gambling house behind the "Fort." Both partners hated the Jews whom they regarded as stiff competition, and both did their utmost to oppress them. In promoting Petersen to Quartermaster (*Commissaris van train & viveres*), Van Collen made him the second ranking official of Curaçao. Together they ruled Curaçao, almost despotically, for seven years.

[21] Du Fay is encountered in Curaçao in 1731 when he sold a ship to Joseph Fidanque. He died there in December, 1731 (OAC 800, act of Dec. 24, 1731).

[22] Hamelberg, *ibid.*, pp. 143-47.

[23] Exactly, "by Stadsmuuren naar de Steene pad, welke stadsmuuren sluijten op 't Orange fort" (PJCAA, copy of the parnassim's petition to the WIC).

[24] WICA 314, Van Collen's letter of Dec. 17, 1732, to the WIC; WICA 71, p. 79; MS, Sivan 2, 5495. See appendices 14, A, B, C.

THE PEREIRA AND NEYRA AFFAIRS

Mordechay Pereira — family man, merchant and influential member of the community — was accused by Fiscal Van Schagen (Petersen's successor) of committing adultery with a non-Jewish woman who owed him money. Imprisoned, Pereira was not released until the parnassim furnished bail of 2,000 pesos and he delivered to the governor a quantity of jewels as security. Van Schagen demanded a fine of 2,000 pesos and Pereira's banishment. The Island Council acquitted Pereira by a 3-2 vote, Governor Van Collen and his partner Petersen[25] having cast the dissenting votes. Exceeding his powers, Van Collen held that his vote was worth two of any other councilman. Therefore, he declared a "tie" and held the case for retrial. Fruitlessly the other three councilmen tried to explain that his vote counted as two only in an actual tie. He wanted to make certain that Pereira was found guilty. New judges were accordingly appointed. Schagen's brother-in-law was on the panel since a third of the fine was destined for Schagen. Their decision: Pereira had intended to commit adultery and the intent was just as punishable as the crime itself. He was fined 400 pesos.

During this time a prominent merchant, who had been living on the island thirty-three years, was accused of fathering the child of Susje Backer, widow of Jacob Scholten. The accused was Joseph Athias de Neyra, then about sixty. Until a short while before, he had large business transactions with the governor and Petersen in ships which plied between Curaçao and Rio Hacha. The unholy partners knew that Neyra was rich and that an extortion plot against him would be fruitful.[26] As proof of Neyra's guilt, the governor's accusation recited that the child was born circumcised. The widow had lived for a long time with bachelor Petersen on his plantation, part of which he presented to her when she was with child. Her sister was the governor's girl friend. Governor Van Collen was attached to the sisters. He adopted the boy; earlier, in 1733, he became the godfather of and adopted the widow's daughter Jacoba of whom Dominie Rasvelt had noted in the Church Register: "Vader defuncto nomine."[27]

In the course of his business dealings with Petersen and Van Collen, it was quite natural for Neyra to know the widow and her sister. State's witness against Neyra was Petersen's slave. This witness swore that a slave of the widow's sister had told him of Neyra's visit to the widow's home. As her protector, the governor demanded that Neyra pay a fine of 3,000 pesos and

[25] WICA 583, pp. 173-78.

[26] In 1713 the firm of Ferro & Neyra paid the staggering ransom of 3,000 pesos to Cassard.

[27] WICA 583, p. 246; G. Kalff, *De Illustere Baronnen de Petersen* (Amsterdam, 1952), p. 64.

leave the island forever. His report to the Island Council accounted for that figure: ". . . so that the widow and her two children may be able to live from the interest therefrom."[28] Indeed, it was certain to eliminate or ruin a close business rival! Neyra protested the charges but was not granted sufficient time to defend himself. Summoned to the governor's mansion under false pretenses, minutes later Neyra was confronted by Petersen who demanded a confession. On Neyra's refusal, Petersen beat him up brutally and hurled him out of the mansion bleeding.

Pereira and Neyra wrote to the Amsterdam parnassim and to the Company directors, lamenting, among other things, that Fiscal Van Schagen had denied them a copy of the necessary papers. The Company thereupon ordered Van Schagen and Van Collen to deliver the documents to the defendants. Had the directors suspected business rivalry and Petersen as the father of the widow's child? They prohibited Petersen from sitting as judge in the case and from further engaging in business.

At the same time an indignant member of the Island Council wrote to the Company against Van Collen and Petersen and in favor of Pereira and Neyra. Courageous Dominie Wigboldus Rasvelt fearlessly preached against these injustices during services attended by the governor and Petersen. The governor complained to his superiors about the "stinging" sermons and "offensive" texts, particularly Psalms 62, 98 and 140 and Zephaniah 3:3, referring to oppression and injustice: "Her princes within her are roaring lions; her judges are evening wolves; they gnaw not the bones till the morrow." The governor and his quartermaster had their ally, the opportunist Van Schagen, accuse Rasvelt of trying to seduce a slave. Only, unlike Joseph of biblical lore, Rasvelt remained with cloth in hand, according to the slave. Far from being intimidated, he kept attacking the Van Collen-Petersen abuses. So it was not surprising that Rasvelt, like the honest judges of the Island Council, was ousted from his post. With the strong backing of his congregation, he left for Holland to defend himself, and emerged victorious.[29] This unexpected turn of events sent the governor and Petersen scurrying to various individuals for statements in their favor. Among these declarations were two by Isaac Levy Maduro against Neyra[30] and strongly for the governor and Petersen.

[28] WICA 583, p. 231.

[29] For full details on the Rasvelt conflict, see WICA 243, nos. 53-61, pp. 70-83; nos. 135-36, pp. 180-82.

[30] OAC 806, May 23, 1737. The WIC directors reproved the governor for his handling of the Neyra case. They considered his *insinuatie* (summons and complaint) of July 1 and 18, 1736, against Neyra "zeer vreemt en onbehoorlyk" — very strange and unseemly (WICA 71, p. 112v). See also the Captain Cornelis Schryver report on the Van Collen-Petersen excesses (WICA 243, nos. 8-10, 12-13).

Maduro and his son Jacob had been brokers for Van Collen & Company since 1731 and it was in their interest that the governor remained in office. Maduro attacked the Neyra report. He denied that the governor had refused to grant Neyra sufficient time[31] to answer the charges against him although there is a document showing only a six-day stay. Though not a witness to the Neyra beating, Maduro alleged that Petersen had not beaten and bloodied Neyra while the governor looked on. So did opportunism goad Maduro to trample upon a Jewish victim! No one better than Maduro knew that the child was Petersen's. For in the Company archives are two love letters[32] — one by Petersen "embracing the widow a thousand times," and another by Van Collen to the widow's sister — which were sent to the directors of the Company by Jan Gales, the governor's successor.

THE VAN COLLEN-VAN SCHAGEN REPORTS AGAINST THE JEWS

Van Collen and Van Schagen did not confine their hatred to Pereira and Neyra. They found fault with everything about the Jews and reported open lies to their superiors. These were some of their glaringly unfounded complaints: That the Jews accounted for almost three-quarters of the island's population. That no decent houses remained for the Christians. That "the Parnassim of this island have built a large, imposing church to make a name for themselves." That there were many needy Jews. In this regard, Van Collen and Schagen threatened to send back Jewish immigrants from England or the islands either to their homeland or to Amsterdam so that they could be cared for by the Amsterdam parnassim.[33]

Seven months later Van Collen sent the Company another of his manifold anti-Jewish complaints: There were "seven Jews to one Christian," and "like the Jesuits they were taking over." The new Jewish arrivals were poor or of ill conduct. The Jews had provoked the Spaniards by building a synagogue on the coast of Caracas.[34] They were reducing the prices of merchandise and ruining the island. That although Neyra had sworn his innocence before the

[31] The lawsuit continued for years, not because the governor had given Neyra a stay, but because Neyra, with the support of one of the former councillors, was trying to defend himself as best he could.

[32] WICA 585, pp. 844-44v.

[33] WICA 582, pp. 521v-22. Very surprisingly, the WIC agreed not to grant passports for Curaçao to poor Jews (WICA 208, pp. 698v-99).

[34] His letter of June 7, 1737 (WICA 583, p. 295). Nowhere could the author find a reference to this synagogue in Venezuela. As Curaçoan Jews carried on a brisk trade with Rio Hacha and Sta. Marta, there probably was a synagogue in either of these places, but it is very doubtful. Perhaps Van Collen considered Curaçao as the coast of Caracas.

Haham, Van Collen did not believe it since "according to the Talmud one may deceive another." Finally he urged his superiors to ignore any and all petitions by Pereira or Neyra.[35]

Fiscal Van Schagen, in his accusation against Pereira and Neyra, deplored that the Jews lived among the Christians and urged their separation "as in other parts of Europe." He claimed that in Governor Doncker's day the Jews lived in a ghetto far from the city. His letters to the Company directors, always fully backing Van Collen and Petersen and denying the various allegations made by the Jews, were replete with anti-Jewish complaints. The Jews, in his opinion, had not helped in the development of the island, but were responsible for its large mulatto population. He lamented that they had arrived poor with only the credit of Hollanders, and since building their large synagogue, "Jews were flocking from everywhere." The Jews, he stated, quarreled for the honor of placing the four cornerstones of their synagogue and "for this reason sold them at auction." To prove his point, Schagen set forth that after Jacob Henriquez Morao had purchased one of the cornerstones, he went into bankruptcy and paid his creditors only 14% on their claims. He accused the Jews of being involved in ten out of every eleven bankruptcies, and so on.

More calumnious letters than these of high officials against the Jews could not be found in the Company archives or in the Old Archives of Curaçao. The directors very well knew that only a few Christian and Jewish immigrants to Curaçao were wealthy. Most of the Protestants had come as soldiers, sailors or Company employes. Some, but not all, of the governors were prosperous before their arrival. Several poor German families did enter in the 17th century as colonists. Some Jews brought money along, but the majority had large credit extended to them by rich relatives in Holland. Schagen said this, but implied that those Hollanders were non-Jews. It is positively known that the Jews continually risked their lives, as well as their ships and rich cargoes, to sustain themselves and the commerce of Curaçao.

One need but scan the Company archives toward the end of the 17th and the beginning of the 18th centuries to see the large-scale transactions conducted by the Jews in the purchase of slaves and products sold by the Company.[36] The Company, as earlier shown, depended on the Jews as purveyors and suppliers. (Even Van Collen could not function properly without his Jewish broker, Isaac L. Maduro.) It is untrue that the Jews lived only in the

[35] WICA 583, p. 294.

[36] In 1702 the Belmonte-Suasso heirs remitted 60,000 florins to the WIC of Amsterdam for slaves bought [through their Jewish representatives] in Curaçao (WICA 471, Jan. 20, 1702, p. 3v). See pp. 75-76, 78, 113 above.

country during Governor Doncker's administration (1673-1679). Already in 1660 Jeosuah Henriquez owned two houses in the city[37] and in 1671 the Jews had their synagogue in the city where they had dwelled ever since their arrival.

These slanderous letters accused the Jews of controlling business and of reducing prices. Van Collen was more merchant than governor. It irked him that the Jews were competition just as it had irked Balthazar Beck fifty years before. It was this lively trading by the Jews that swelled the earnings of the Company.

Van Collen bewailed the lack of houses for Christians. He himself had reported earlier that the Jews had been permitted to build homes outside of the city walls — in the area now comprising Pietermaai and Otrabanda. The Company archives reveal that most of Heerenstraat was built by the Jews. On that Street there still stands a building inscribed with its Hebrew date "5466" (1706). It was precisely during the Du Fay and Van Collen administrations that Jews began erecting homes in Otrabanda. Among them were Jacob Calvo, Abraham Nunes Redondo and later his brother Salomo, Salomon and Jahacob Levy Maduro, Abraham Campos [Pereira], Moses Penso, Mordechay Alvares Correa, Elias Levy, and others. One Elias de la Torre built a house outside of the Fort, which he called "Beth Eliau" or Eliau's House. Joode Kerk Straat was built up mainly by Jews. In 1936 when various houses of the Jewish community were razed to widen that street, precious old mosaics depicting Old Testament scenes were found.

Many Curaçoan ships were captured by pirates infesting the Caribbean waters or by seafarers whose nations were at war with Holland. Very often ship and cargo represented the entire capital of a businessman who, as a rule, traveled on board. The loss of his ship usually spelled total ruin for the modest trader. Jewish merchants or seamen were often seized and taken with their ships to Spain during Van Collen's tenure, as that worthy tells us of Jacob Henriquez Morao who was exiled to Cadix. The Jews were chiefly merchants and sailors whereas the Protestants generally were planters or Company employes. Marine insurance brokers were principally Jews. In 1734 when Van Collen and the Island Council established the insurance rates on shipping, out of forty-four insurers, thirty-nine were Jews.[38] That meant that even though a ship was not Jewish-owned, the final loss was sustained by the Jews. A number of Jews had to sell their plantations and other holdings in order to meet those insured losses and thus preserve their honor.[39]

[37] OAC 1534, no. 57.

[38] OAC 803, Aug. 8, 1734.

[39] For example, David Senior. See Emmanuel, *Precious Stones*, p. 305.

During a business depression all the residents — Protestants and Jews alike — suffered huge losses. Governor Kerckrinck could not pay more than 40% on his debts in 1690.[40] The Island Council sold at public auction all of Councilman Pieter van der Straaten's belongings in order to realize the 44,000 pesos he owed. Governor Du Fay, who, as earlier stated, had liabilities of 140,000 pesos of which 26,832 pesos were owing to Jews, paid his creditors barely 7% on their claims. Van Collen himself owed the Company 29,448 : 5 : 2 pesos at the time of his dismissal.[41] On his death, Councilman Jan Gerard Pax left debts of 25,000 pesos without sufficient coverage.[42] Jan Jacob Faesch,[43] the governor's nephew, could not pay more than $12\frac{1}{2}$% on his debts. And there were many more non-Jewish bankrupts. Nevertheless, there was a great difference between the Protestants and the Jews as far as debts are concerned. On the whole, the Jews traded mainly among themselves and owed Jews for the most part. The Jews, and at times the parnassim, helped deserving Jewish merchants by paying at least part of their debts. During Van Collen's administration the Jews made a subscription among themselves to pay 20% on the debts of a certain Daniel Nunes da Costa. About the same period the parnassim lent Hazzan Jacob Lopez da Fonseca 1,097 : 4 pesos to satisfy his creditors. They withheld 200 pesos yearly from his annual salary of 300 pesos[44] until he repaid the loan.

Dominie Rasvelt tells us that the Protestant Church had 266 members[45] in 1731. That figure actually represented 216 families. There also were about fourteen Lutheran families and some ten white Catholic families.[46] All told, there were approximately 240 white Christian families in 1731 as against a maximum of 200 Jewish families. Those figures dispel Van Collen's wild claim of "seven Jews to one Christian." Only about the year 1750 did the Jews represent half of the white population.

While Van Collen's exaggerations were dictated by malice, those of J. C. van Laar, a practicing attorney and clerk in the Curaçao Government Secretariat, were the result of misinformation. Van Laar sent the Company directors a 101-page "Memoir" on the state of Curaçao in 1747. He gave the population as 70,000 and broke the figure down in this fashion: 7,000 re-

[40] GAA 4197, p. 237.
[41] WICA 585, p. 520.
[42] WICA 210, p. 385.
[43] OAC 891, no. 335.
[44] MS, R[osh Hodesh]., Iiar, 5489.
[45] WICA 580, pp. 330-35.
[46] In 1741 there were ten to twelve white Catholic families according to Gov. Faesch's letter of Sept. 12, 1741, to the WIC directors (WICA 588, p. 923).

30. DETAIL ON THE TOMBSTONE OF ISHAC HAIM SENIOR, 1726, PAGE 93

31. DETAIL ON THE TOMBSTONE OF RIBBI MOSSEH ALVA, 1737, PAGE 151

32. DETAIL ON THE TOMBSTONE OF DAVID SENIOR, 1749, PAGE 132

formed Christians, 300 Indians, 5,700 mulattoes and free Negroes, 3,000 foreigners, 44,000 slaves, and 10,000 Jews.[47] The last he classified as follows: 3,000 women, 5,000 youngsters under eighteen years of age, 100 sailors, 400 planters, 300 aged, and 1,200 able to do guard duty. Not until 1942 did Curaçao attain a population of 70,000 which included scarcely 700 Jews. A newcomer to Curaçao, Van Laar was short on the true facts. He was deeply prejudiced against the white Creole, whether Protestant or Jew.

Nothing could be further from the truth than that the Jews auctioned the privilege of laying the cornerstones of the synagogue because of wrangling among themselves for the honor. They merely followed the procedure of their fathers who had built the stately synagogue of Amsterdam in 1675. A generation earlier, Curaçoan Jews had used the same means to raise funds for their synagogue of 1703.

It is true that between 1725 and 1735 several impoverished Jewish families immigrated to Curaçao. But these unfortunates were assisted by the Jewish community, by relatives and by the many Jewish benevolent societies. Never did a needy Jew become a public charge.

In Curaçao as in other parts of South America the Jews, like the other colonists, did sire natural mulatto children. That was inevitable. After a residence of thirty-four years in Curaçao, Governor Rodier was moved to write his superiors: "It is generally known throughout the world that wherever there are colonies and slaves, it is impossible to adhere to European morality with relation to marriage, but that members [of society] live in concubinage with their slaves . . . in spite of ourselves we must tolerate this situation in our own homes if we wish to be served by slaves. If we wish to change this, it will be necessary for the ministers [of religion] to be the first to clean their homes."[48]

From another source it appears that not even in 1788 were there six families in Curaçao who did not have illegitimate colored relatives.[49] This situation was especially serious among the Protestant population. On different occasions decent, respectable Protestant families petitioned the States of Holland and West Friesland to forbid intermarriage between whites and mulattoes unless there was the prior consent of the white parents concerned. By a later petition, they were able to introduce in Curaçao Article 36 of the law of March 18, 1656, which compelled a white person to obtain his parents'

[47] WICA 596, pp. 274-375; in re the Jews, pp. 343-46. It is significant that even Van Laar estimated that the Jews represented 60% of the island's white population in 1747.

[48] WICA 211, pp. 59-60, letter of Jan. 25, 1773.

[49] According to a report on Curaçao addressed to the Prince of Orange-Nassau in 1788 by two delegates from Holland: W. A. S. van Grovestins and W. C. Boeij.

consent before he could marry a colored person. Curaçoan Protestants even sought legislation to annul intermarriages between whites and mulattoes.[50] As for the Jews, they did not enter into such marriages. The Jewish community would not recognize colored persons as members.

When reflecting on the Pereira-Neyra cases, one echoes Dominie Rasvelt's comparison of Governor Van Collen, Petersen and Van Schagen to lions and wolves that ". . . gnaw not the bones till the morrow." In the Pereira case, the leading witness against Pereira was none other than the plaintiff, the woman who owed him money. In the Neyra case, the lion (Governor Van Collen) and the wolf (Petersen) did not let their widowed sweetheart take the stand — she who deserved punishment for her scandalous conduct. Neyra denied the accusation and protested the governor's slanderous charge that he had been dismissed as councillor of the Jewish community for unseemly conduct. Actually Neyra had resigned from that office eight years earlier.[51] His defense set forth that he was a big businessman with many ships at sea and that he was the mainstay of his many workers who depended on him for their livelihood.

It is a pity that there was no attorney in Curaçao brave enough to name Petersen as the child's father and common-law husband of his tenant.[52] For years the child's mother had lived on Petersen's plantation. Neyra's lawyer was afraid of the governor and Petersen who were interested parties.

These calumnies were wrecking Pereira and Neyra's credit. Several friends intervened to make some arrangement with the fiscal since the real object of

[50] The petition of 1752 was signed by 58 men and women representing the cream of the Protestant community: Dominie Rasvelt, Specht, Dorcas, Ellis, de Mey, Houtschild, Redoch, Pletz, Steerlingh, de Wit, Plier, and others (Resolutien van de Staaten Generaal, meetings of July 28, 1752 and May 25-29, 1753; States of Holland and West Friesland, meetings of May 25 and June 2, 1753).

[51] MS, Kisleff 4, 5486.

[52] In accordance with Petersen's will made in Amsterdam in 1762 and the codicils of 1769 and 1774, his executors gave Jacoba Suzanna Backer, single, born in Curaçao and living in Amsterdam, an annuity of 4,600 *livres* of Paris (or 2,000 florins), yielding 10% (GAA 14436, no. 336, Not. Wessel van Kleef, June 9, 1762; vol. 14473, no. 1, same notary, Jan. 3, 1769; vol. 14495, no. 183, same notary, April 17, 1774; vol. 16329, no. 607, Not. Pieter Galenus van Hole, Nov. 17, 1780). This confirms once again that the widow was Petersen's mistress and the two children were his. (Kalff states that the boy, Benjamin, for whom there is no baptismal record, died several years later.) There is reason to believe that Henrietta Maria Dabenis, wife of Jan Lixraaven (lieutenant-governor of Curaçao in 1781), was another illegitimate daughter of Petersen. In his will he left her a garden and plantation for which he had paid 4,800 florins and spent another 5,000 florins for improvements (GAA 14436, act no. 336, Not. Wessel van Kleef, June 9, 1762). Most probably Simon Quirijn, son of the said Henrietta and Jan Lixraaven, to whom Petersen had bequeathed a house on the Keizersgracht in Amsterdam, was Petersen's favorite grandson (GAA 14473, act no. 1, same notary, Jan. 3, 1769).

the accusation was to extort money from rich Jews. Pereira and Neyra hesitated. Meanwhile a certain Jan Tomel killed Jacob Athias (a.k.a. Antony de Neyra),[53] husband of Lea de Chaves and father of four children. The victim was a nephew of Joseph A. de Neyra. It was suspected that the killer was in Petersen's pay. Master in spreading terror among the Jews, Petersen defended himself and the criminal got off scot-free. To avoid further risks, Pereira paid the fine of 400 pesos. A third of it went to Van Schagen, another third to the new governor who had meanwhile replaced Van Collen, and the remainder to the coffers of the Company.

The Neyra case was probably dismissed on the discovery of the Petersen and Van Collen love letters. But it is more likely that Neyra reached a settlement with the fiscal.[54]

While the Pereira and Neyra cases were still pending, Fiscal Van Schagen exercised his authority to mulct Jews of more money. One Eliau Jahacob Pereira had written his representatives in Amsterdam that the tobacco shipped by his cousin and brother-in-law Moses Penso was of poor quality. One of Penso's brothers-in-law, young Aron Henriquez Morao, brought suit against Pereira before Fiscal Van Schagen. Meanwhile, the parnassim intervened in accordance with the *hascamoth* and made peace between the litigants. Pereira paid a fine to the Poor Chest of the Jewish community and Penso withdrew his complaint. But Van Schagen was not satisfied with this settlement. He maintained that although this was a case between Jews, and brothers-in-law at that, the parnassim had no right to render a final judgment. He reopened the case and the Island Council sentenced Pereira to pay a fine of 200 pesos, one-third of which was naturally destined for Van Schagen.[55] Governor Faesch, the new incumbent, could have easily dismissed the case.

The Jews were not the only ones exasperated with their Governor and Petersen. Many influential Protestants were so indignant that they complained to the Company directors who, in turn, deplored Van Collen's poor relations with the island's "greats" and the handling of the Pereira-Neyra cases. Actually Van Collen was not so blameworthy; he had permitted himself to be led by

[53] MS, July 30, 1738.

[54] Archives consulted: Correspondence of Pereira and Neyra and correspondence exchanged between the parnassim of Curaçao and Amsterdam (PJCAA). Neyra's two influential brothers in Amsterdam, Abraham and Moses, also intervened in his behalf before the WIC (OAC 1524, May 31, 1737; OAC 1525, Oct. 2, 14, 1738; WICA 583, pp. 99v-102, 173-78, 206, 231, 249, 257-58, 269v, 273-78, 297v, 299; WICA 585, pp. 35, 512-13; 583-649). See above, p. 140, note 30.

[55] PJCAA, correspondence exchanged between the parnassim of Curaçao and Amsterdam; WICA 209, pp. 241-42, 471v-72.

ambitious, unscrupulous Petersen.[56] Van Collen finally resigned and died shortly afterwards in Petersen's home.[57]

During this period the island fortresses were in bad shape. In 1735 Van Collen appointed a commission to collect funds for repairs. Whether it was because of their straitened circumstances or unwillingness to cooperate with a hostile governor, the Jews contributed only 876 pesos of the 3,628 pesos realized.[58] On the other hand, almost every Jewish merchant took part in the Society of Commerce and Navigation founded on March 14, 1737, for the purpose of arming their vessels and protecting Curaçoan shipping. They furnished 10,900 pesos of the 28,300 pesos which launched this organization, and appointed Moses Penso to represent them in the administrative council. The society succeeded in arming four ships and ridding the blockaded waters of two pirates — a Frenchman and a Spaniard.[59]

PETERSEN DEMANDS THE EXCLUSION OF JEWS FROM THE CIVIL GUARD

Petersen's hatred for the Jews did not ease with the resignation of his accomplice Van Collen. Wherever possible he discriminated against them. The Jews, like the Christian inhabitants, patrolled the city streets at night and did guard duty. Petersen turned in a report that the Jews were not adept in the use of arms and should be excused from guard duty but made to pay a tax instead. The captain of the Civil Guard and Councilman Hermanus Storck objected to this proposal because the Jews formed half the population and the Civil Guard would be weak without them. Councilman Willem Meyer volunteered that Petersen's report concealed his passion and contempt for the Jews. "It is evident," he asserted, "that among the Jews are also men endowed with sufficient courage to protect the island in time of need and give their good blood beside the other residents." As other councilmen also

[56] While defending Van Collen before Governor Gales, Petersen protested that he was being blamed for all of Van Collen's wrongs (WICA 585, p. 491).

[57] Van Collen died on Dec. 9, 1738. The inventory of his estate listed a locked chest containing valuable objects and personal effects which was left in the custody of Isaac L. Maduro, the key to it having been entrusted to a slave. He bequeathed a small desk to Maduro (WICA 585, pp. 928v-29; OAC 842, nos. 21-23 and 32). In 1737 he sold his Rustenberg plantation in the Ruyters Quarter with 71 slaves to Gabriel Lixraaven for 22,000 pesos (OAC 806, June 18, 1737).

[58] WICA 582, pp. 11-23; OAC 804, p. 255; MS, Nisan 7 and 9, 5495.

[59] WICA 583, pp. 148-49, 152v-54, 334v-36, 338-39v. The Jews were so happy to be rid of the French pirate that they held a prayer of thanksgiving in the synagogue (communication of Van Collen to the Company [WICA 583, p. 655v]).

opposed Petersen's proposal, the Jews remained in the service.[60] Years later three Jews attained the highest rank in this corps — *Mayor comandante*. In conflict with various influential men, including the governor, Petersen finally left clandestinely for Holland to plot Governor Gales' downfall.[61]

GOVERNOR JAN GALES AND THE JEWS

When Jan Gales became governor he found rank disorder and confusion. Immediately he plunged into the task of straightening out matters. He had the overwhelming support of the Jews and for this incurred the enmity of Petersen and Van Schagen who slandered him in their letters to the Company. In his favor the Jews issued a statement signed by Haham Jesurun and 160 members of the Jewish community. Like the other islanders, the Jews discussed in public the troubles Petersen's brother was stirring up against the governor. Fearing possible repercussions, the parnassim promptly forbade all Jews from entering into any political discussions.[62] Governor Gales merited their friendship; every Thursday he received them, listened to their problems and treated them well. Discontented, Van Schagen wrote to the Company that Gales was "King of the Jews" and should be removed from office. Before his three-year term was up, Gales was dismissed.

During Gales' tenure the States General of Holland passed a law considering all marriages as community property arrangements unless limited by an antenuptial agreement. The Jews of Curaçao, like their Surinam coreligionists, objected, for a woman would no longer be protected by her *ketubah*. Through the intervention of the Amsterdam parnassim, the Jews of Curaçao petitioned for a modification which would recognize the *ketubah* with its dowry. After consulting with the Amsterdam parnassim, the States General held that the *ketubah* was an antenuptial agreement of separation of wealth and in support thereof enacted the "Octroy" of August 1, 1740.[63]

Governor Gales and the administrators of the Protestant Church Funds

[60] WICA 585, pp. 608v-28, Oct. 14, 1738. In November, 1748, of the 175 residents doing guard duty, 44 were Jews (WICA 210, pp. 55-76; OAC 10, y. 1748).

[61] While in Holland, Petersen published a pamphlet defending himself against his adversaries and particularly Gales. Calling it *Kort Vertoog aan de Edele . . . Beweinthebberen van de Generaale Geoctr. de W. I. Comp.*, he was careful not to write anything about his affair with the widow Scholten.

[62] MS, Sivan 20, 5499.

[63] Published in the "Groot Plakaat Boek," 6D, fol. 541. In 1825 when the Curaçoan Jews were "emancipated," that is, given equal rights with the other inhabitants, they had to surrender their former privileges. This, however, did not apply to the octroy which continued in effect (OAC 316, no. 161, Fiscal Rammelman Elsevier's letter of Nov. 18, 1825, to Governor Cantz'laar).

and the Island Orphan Chest required all Jews who had borrowed money from these sources, on the strength of their *ketubah* rights, to make new mortgages containing the wife's waiver of the "Octroy." The parnassim were agreeable to a wife's signing the new mortgages, but not to her renouncing the "Octroy". As Governor Isaac Faesch (Gales' successor) was hesitating, Haham Jesurun gave the parnassim a report on the *ketubah* laws governing inheritance that was subsequently explained to the governor. Thereafter the new mortgages were executed without waiving the "Octroy."[64] Jews married only according to Jewish law were given a month to have their marriage solemnized by a judge. After that deadline they incurred a fine of fifty pesos.[65]

[64] WICA 209, pp. 473v, 478; OAC 6, Raad, the parnassim's letter of May 29, 1741, to Governor Faesch; Resolutions of the States General, meeting of Aug. 1, 1740; MS, Ab 29, 5500; PJCAA, correspondence between the parnassim of Curaçao and Amsterdam.

[65] OAC 175, p. 89, Feb. 10, 1743.

CHAPTER VIII

MOTHER COMMUNITY OF ALL THE CARIBBEAN ISLANDS
1730-1765

THE VAN COLLEN-PETERSEN-INSPIRED DIFFICULTIES spurred the parnassim more than ever to unite their members, strengthen their communal institutions and promote a deeper interest in Judaism.

SCHOOLS

They went ahead and enlarged their schools despite Van Collen's refusal to turn over the land purchased from Governor Du Fay. Even before their synagogue of 1732 was erected, they obliged Haham Jesurun to open his classes to all Jewish children. Of course, he had a capable staff of teachers to assist him. Among them were Ribbi Ishac de Salomo Machoro[1] who served the community for thirty years (1715-45); Ribbi Moseh de Jeudah Alva[2] who had come with his wife from Amsterdam only to die in Curaçao in 1737 at the age of 41 years; Mordechay Levy Maduro, Selomoh de Semuel Levy Maduro, Samuel Gomes Silva; Ribbi Aaron Lopez da Fonseca and Ribbi Eliau de Jacob Lopes Fonseca, respectively son and grandson of Haham Lopez.

Soaring city rentals from 1730 onward induced several families to settle in Otrabanda, that is, on the other side of the canal. One of their number used his home as a synagogue in 1732. He called it Beth Shemuel — House of Samuel — probably in memory of a relative named Samuel. Those families asked the parnassim for a Scroll of the Law. It was refused because the parnassim would not sanction another synagogue which could lead to disunity in the community. The weekly portion therefore had to be read from a Bible. On the other hand, the parnassim gave full support to the opening of a local school for the exclusive use of the Otrabanda children. Its first teacher-cantor was Aron Mendes Machado. In his absence Abraham Nunes Redondo substituted as hazzan.

This synagogue they subsequently called "Neve Salom" — Dwelling of Peace. They drew up their own *hascamoth* or constitution. These were

[1] For details on Machoro, see Emmanuel, *Precious Stones*, pp. 279-80.

[2] His wife was related to the De Leon-Gomes Casseres families, *ibid.*, pp. 254-56.

signed on the first of Tebet, 5493 (December 19, 1732), by their treasurer Ishac Nunes and other members: Jacob Henriquez, Jacob Suares, Samuel Gomez, Abraham Nunez [Redondo], Isaac Henriquez Juliao, Samuel de Salomoh de Samuel Levy Maduro, Abraham Campos Pereira and Daniel (Dav) [Vaz] Nunes. They were also signed and approved by Jacob Levy Maduro (treasurer) for the Mahamad and Adjuntos of the Mikvé Israel.[3]

Curaçao thus boasted of two synagogues in 1732 and two schools in 1734. The schools were frequented by some 180 boys, rich and poor, between the ages of five and thirteen, and later to sixteen.[4] Girls did not attend school; a select few were tutored privately. The boys attended classes daily except Friday, Saturday and Jewish holidays, and two or three days preceding a holiday.[5] In 1740 Governor Faesch ordered the Jews to stop holding classes, private or communal, on Sunday, under penalty of a 25 pesos fine.[6] The parnassim moved to revoke the order since the Jews closed their stores and schools on Saturday. Faesch defended his action before his superiors on the ground that the Jewish schools "disturbed the neighbors."[7] Perhaps there was objection to the psalmody. If there was a large number of pupils as Faesch's ruling implied, their voices in unison might have molested their gentile neighbors. It is believed that Faesch eventually modified his order to allow Sunday classes without a chorus. In 1779 the Island Council formally allowed "religious" schools to open on Sunday.

[3] Ms. at the AJHS, courtesy Rabbi Isidore S. Meyer.

[4] A comparison between the Jewish and Protestant school systems during Reverend Wigboldus Rasvelt's time, which corresponds to the Jesurun-De Sola rabbinate, would reveal these facts: In 1741 the Protestants had one teacher, Laurents Pletz. It is not known whether Dominie Rasvelt also taught as did the Rabbis Jesurun and De Sola. Surely he must have lectured. The Protestants charged a monthly tuition of from a fourth of a peso to one peso, geared to a father's economic situation. With the Jews classes were free and compulsory. In 1741 Pletz received a yearly salary of 250 pesos. In 1745 the Jews disbursed 530 pesos among five teachers and 800 pesos between two rabbis who were also required to teach several hours daily. In addition, several societies paid 300 pesos yearly to rabbis and teachers for lectures delivered in their respective brotherhoods. The Es Haim ve Ohel Yahacob society maintained two adult rabbinical students on its staff. Before 1760 the Protestants founded a society called "School" to teach their children. Jan Cazelles Jr. was the master (OAC 878, Sept., 1760). It was evidently short-lived. In 1769 Governor Rodier gave licenses to run schools "Outside of the Gates" (Pietermaai) to Abraham Hanse, and in Otrabanda to Matthias Geerkens and Jan Luijdens. Johannes Hansz Lucasz, official city instructor, was doing excellent work. Efforts to open a private school in the city failed for want of teachers. In 1778 Nicolas Croes taught in Otrabanda (OAC 207, no. 23). Until 1840, the Protestants were more vigilant than the Jews in educating their daughters. In 1769 the Jews had a staff of five teachers besides the Haham Da Fonseca. In re the Protestants, see WICA 209, pp. 401, 406.

[5] Emmanuel, "Jewish Education in Curaçao," *PAJHS* 44:219.

[6] WICA 588, pp. 263v-64v, proclamation of Aug. 26, 1740.

[7] *Ibid.*, pp. 251-51v.

From time to time the parnassim paid for the tuition of some deserving young men who wished to continue their studies in Holland. In 1754 they helped Isaac Cardozo Jr., orphan son of Dr. Isaac Cardozo, realize his ambition of taking up medicine.[8] In 1760 they sent Jacob Lopez da Fonseca to Amsterdam's Ets Haim Seminary where he studied for five years before returning to Curaçao as their rabbi. His father-in-law, the Haham De Sola, having meanwhile died, the parnassim also contributed to the support of Da Fonseca's wife and two children.[9] In 1767 they made it possible for Samuel, grandson of Haham De Sola, to attend the same seminary. After they had provided the yearly tuition of 240 florins for six years, Samuel decided to remain in Amsterdam. There he served first as preacher and later as *Dayyan*.[10] Some members like Isaac Haim Rodriguez da Costa gave privately to the Amsterdam parnassim for the best students of the Ets Haim.[11] He used to remit fifteen florins monthly since 1753. Still others, and especially Daniel da Costa Gomez de la Penha, from 1783 on donated monies to the Amsterdam parnassim's education fund, and thereby enabled two Curaçoans to pursue rabbinical studies.[12] Those students were Jacob Haim De Sola (grandson of Haham De Sola) and Eliau de Aron Lopez da Fonseca. Both of them later numbered among Amsterdam's rabbis. Besides helping its promising young men to progress, the community also extended aid to the communities of *Terra Santa*, the Holy Land.

CONTRIBUTIONS TO "TERRA SANTA"

Ever since 1627 the Portuguese Jews regarded Jerusalem as "Patria Nossa" and helped it unstintingly.[13] Curaçoan Jews, emulating their fathers in

[8] MS, 14 Tebet, 5514; see below, pp. 419-20.

[9] MS, 3 Elul, 5521; MIA, loose papers.

[10] He dedicated his sermon of 25 Elul, 5544 (1784), which he had delivered in the Amsterdam synagogue at the age of thirty and published in 5545, "to the very worthy gentlemen of the MM (Mahamad) of the KK (Holy Congregation) Miqvé Israel." He thanked them and their Curaçoan representative in Amsterdam, David de Aharon Jesurun, for the "protection received."

[11] This subvention went to Ribbi Ishac de Eliau Belinfante, who ranked highest in a test given by the Amsterdam parnassim (PJCAA, Termos de Ets Haim, B2, pp. 98-99). Cf. Emmanuel, *Precious Stones*, pp. 385-86.

[12] PJCAA, Termos Ets Haim, 5488-5570, pp. 244, 274, 288, 364, 421.

[13] "It is necessary . . . that we help to the utmost of our ability that holy city, our Land" (PJCAA, Libro dos Termos da Ymposta da Naçao, 5382-5397, meeting of Feb. 7, 5387, p. [19b]). For contributions made to the Holy Land by the Portuguese Jews of Amsterdam between 1616 and 1914, see I. S. Emmanuel, "The Assistance of the Sephardic Communities of Amsterdam and Curaçao to the Holy Land and Safed," *Sefer Safed*, vol. I, in Hebrew (Jerusalem, 1962), pp. 399-424.

Amsterdam and Recife,[14] also did their part in maintaining the Holy Land cities of Jerusalem, Safed, Hebron, and later Tiberias. They contributed regularly every year, probably since 1671 if not earlier. They remembered the Holy Land on every important event. The birth of a son was a special occasion for rejoicing and donating to the Holy Land. This deep affection they also expressed by importing, until the 1880s, sand from Jerusalem to mix with the sand of Curaçao for covering the synagogue floor.[15] At death, they placed sand from Jerusalem on the eyelids of the deceased, as they still do, to symbolize a burial in Jerusalem.

They made their remittances through the Amsterdam community. The oldest receipt found was for fifty pesos. It was dated Kislev, 5463 (1702), and signed by the rabbis of Jerusalem.[16] In 1707 community president Isaac Levy Maduro sent "on account of the poor of Jerusalem" a certain sum in a small bag stamped "K[ahal]. K[ados]. T[erra]. S[anta]."[17] Generally their annual contribution was 100 pesos, partitioned as follows: Jerusalem, P. 50; Safed and Hebron, P. 25 each. In the 18th century several societies like the Honen Dalim, Abi Yetomim and Neve Sedek[18] provided a yearly subvention, especially for the rabbis of Hebron and Tiberias. Sometimes a testator left a legacy for the Holy Land. Jacob Andrade's mother did that in 1721[19] and so did Abraham Mendes de Castro (C 768) in 1762. De Castro's will specified that, after the payment of certain local bequests, half of the remainder of the estate was to go to Jerusalem and the other half to Hebron. The Holy Land bequest was not to be under 2,000 pesos. He directed each of those communities to buy a house in his name. These were never to be sold or mortgaged, and all rents earned were to be distributed among their poor.[20] After receiving proof of the purchase of the houses in accordance with the testator's wishes,[21] the Amsterdam parnassim remitted 1,900 florins each to Jerusalem and Hebron.

Knowing how generous the Curaçoan Jews were, Holy Land messengers

[14] Emmanuel, "NLEAJ," *AJA*, VII, January, 1955, pp. 35-37.

[15] Communication of the late Sexton David Lopez Penha to J.M.L. Maduro.

[16] PJCAA, bundles. See illus. 36 and appendix 6. These 50 pesos were part of the 125 pesos Curaçao sent toward the end of 1701 for Jerusalem, Safed and Hebron (PJCAA, Hascamoth, 5440-5472, p. 317).

[17] WICA 569, p. 371.

[18] See pp. 125-26 above.

[19] MS, y. 5481, refers to Book A of the community, folio 201, specifying the bequest. That book could not be found among the records.

[20] OAC 887, no. 26, y. 1762. See "Personalia," below, pp. 1097-99.

[21] PJCAA, the Amsterdam parnassim's letters of Aug. 20 and Dec. 29, 1765, to the Holy Land Fund Administrators at Constantinople; letter of June 26, 1767, to the rabbis of Jerusalem.

or fund-raisers braved the perilous trip to Curaçao. The community urged the Amsterdam parnassim to cancel those visits, as a gift for the messenger would be included with their contribution. They continued making their Holy Land contributions through the Amsterdam parnassim. Their remittances over a period of 200 years, are listed below, with the names of the visiting messengers (*sheliḥim*), as culled from the meager records available.

Year	*Amount and Remarks*
1701	Pesos 125: — P. 50 for Jerusalem, 43 for Safed and 32 for Hebron.
1702	Pesos 50: — for Jerusalem (illus. 36).
1707	A small, sealed sack with an unspecified amount of silver money sent to Amsterdam for "Terra Santa."
1713	Pesos 227:5 — One-half for Jerusalem; one-fourth for Safed; one-fourth for Hebron.[22]
1714	Pesos 320 for Terra Santa (= T.S.).[23]
1718	Pesos 345: — P. 100 for Jerusalem; 45 for Hebron and 200 for "Abraham ben Abraham Abinu of (Hebron) [Safed] to aid him in his work."[24]
5482 (1721/22)	Pesos 206: — P. 100 for T.S.; 56 for Safed and 50 for Hebron.
1724	Pesos 485: — of which P. 188 was for the mission of Ribbi Daniel Capsuto, fund raiser from Safed. As another statement listed the sum as 250 pesos, probably 62 pesos were for Ribbi Capsuto and the remainder for T.S.[25]
5486 (1725)	Pesos 308 for Hebron.[26]
1727	Pesos 106 for T.S.
1729	Pesos 100: — P. 50 for Jerusalem; 20 for Hebron; 20 for Safed and 10 for "Cortijos"[27] of Safed.

[22] The Amsterdam parnassim confirmed receipt on Aug. 13, 1713.

[23] MS, y. 5474.

[24] He was a Marrano who dedicated himself to cabalistic studies on professing Judaism. According to Abraham Yaari, *Shiluḥé Eres Israel* (Jerusalem, 1951), p. 429, this man settled in Safed and not in Hebron. He may have spent some time in Hebron before going to Safed.

[25] MS, y. 5484. In re Capsuto's mission, see Yaari, *ibid.*, pp. 428-29.

[26] MS, 5 Hesvan, 5486. From their letter of Ab 1, 5486, to their Curaçao colleagues, the Amsterdam parnassim apparently received only 280 pesos. The missing 28 pesos probably represented marine insurance premiums or the gift to Ribbi [David] Melamed. In re Melamed's mission, see Yaari, *ibid.*, pp. 488-90.

[27] "Cortijos" in 1729 denoted dwellings built around a court.

5497 (1736)	Pesos 200 for T.S.[28]
1741	Pesos 1,200 for Hebron.[29]
5503 (1742)	Pesos 1,600: — P. 1,400 for Tiberias; 100 for Shaliaḥ (fund raiser) Ribbi Haim Ventura; 100 for T.S. It was then decided to send 100 pesos yearly to Tiberias.[30]
5503 (1743)	Pesos 100 for T.S.
5504 (1744)	Pesos 620:5: — P. 500:5 for Safed; 100 for T.S. and 20 for marine insurance.[31]
1744	Pesos 751:-:1: — P. 667:5:3 for Jerusalem, apparently through the mission of Ribbi Abraham ben Asher;[32] P. 83:2:4 for Tiberias.
1745	Pesos 152:-:4: — P. 100 for T.S.; 41:5:2 for Tiberias and 10:3:2 for Hebron.
1747	Pesos 2,216:6:2 — P. 2,075:1 for Hebron through the mission of Ribbi Abraham (?) Guedalia; 100 for T.S. and 41:5:2 for Tiberias.[33] This was Curaçao's largest single Holy Land contribution. A truly remarkable achievement for a community torn with disunity (see Chap. IX) and which only a year earlier had raised P. 4,690:7:3 to build their synagogue in Otrabanda!
1749	Pesos 141:5:2: — P. 100 for T.S. and 41:5:2 for Tiberias.
Before 1750	First (?) emissary (fund raiser). Before 1750 a *Saliah da Terra Santa* called Ribbi Mosseh Haguel[34] visited Curaçao.
1750	Second (?) emissary. In 1750 the Ribbi Selomoh Zeebi of Hebron and his son Eliau arrived on a personal

[28] MS, 15 Tebet, 5497.

[29] MIA, loose papers.

[30] MIA, Treasurer's Book for 5503; MS, 19 Hesvan, 5503. The 1,600 pesos were sent to Aron de Jacob Jesurun, the Curaçao representative in Amsterdam. He remitted same to the Amsterdam parnassim at the exchange rate of two florins to the peso.

[31] MIA, Treasurer's Book for 5504; MS, (8) [9] Adar, 5504.

[32] In re Ben Asher's mission, see Yaari, *ibid.*, pp. 389-91.

[33] MIA, Treasurer's Book for 5507; MS, 11 Nisan, 5507. In re Guedalia's mission, see Yaari, *ibid.*, p. 499.

[34] According to a notation on the cover of MS listing several emissaries who had visited Curaçao in the 18th century. About the name Haguel, see I. S. Emmanuel, *Guedolé Saloniki Ledorotam*, p. 21; about the rabbis of this family in Salonika, see Emmanuel, *Mazavoth Saloniki*, vol. II, no. 1737.

fund raising tour. As the Ribbi was not an official emissary, a *nedabah* could not be held for him. Instead, two community leaders — Eliau Jesurun Henriquez and Jacob de David Senior — accompanied him on calls to the members. The women also participated in this subscription which yielded over 600 pesos. In addition, the community paid the Zeebis' fare of 67:4:5 pesos to Amsterdam. Before their departure in May, 1750, they took out insurance on the 600 pesos.[35] The Amsterdam parnassim wrote to Curaçao on July 8, 1750, that Ribbi Zeebi was able to win over the Curaçoans "more by his charming ways than by his wit." At the behest of the Amsterdam parnassim, a few months later the community made a *nedabah* in favor of Tiberias. It yielded 600:4 pesos. The Community Chest added another 100 pesos and also gave 30 pesos for Hebron.[36]

1752 Pesos 1,153:4: — P. 836:5:2 for Jerusalem; 175:2 for the fund raisers Ribbi Abraham Israel and Ribbi Mordechay Ruvio; 100 for T.S. and 41:5:2 for Tiberias.[37] Curaçao also remitted 420 florins for the Rabbis Haim Jeudah Gomez Patto and Abraham Castiel of Hebron.[38]

1753 Pesos 183:2:4 — P. 100 for T.S.; 41:5:2 for Jerusalem and the same amount for Tiberias.

1755 Florins 806:7 for Hebron, of which 75:5 was for Shaliaḥ R. Haim Joseph David Azulay.[39] The community may have made a further remittance for this

[35] MIA, loose sheets, dated May, 1750; MS, 25 Adar Rison, 5510.

[36] According to MIA, Accounts of 5511, the *nedabah* of 600 pesos was for Tiberias and not Hebron as erroneously noted in MS, 28 Kislev, 5511. The sum was remitted to the Amsterdam parnassim by Aron Jesurun, Mikvé Israel's representative in Amsterdam (PJCAA, the Amsterdam parnassim's letter of Dec. 12, 1751, to Curaçao).

[37] MIA, Treasurer's Book of 5512; MS, 10 Elul, 5512. In re Israel and Ruvio's mission, see Yaari, *ibid.*, pp. 398-99.

[38] PJCAA, the Amsterdam parnassim's letter of Jan. 6, 1756, to the Holy Land Fund Administrator in Constantinople, stated that "the gentlemen of Curaçao are very punctual."

[39] PJCAA, the Amsterdam parnassim's letter of Dec. 10, 1755, to Curaçao. The money was remitted by Isaac and Joseph Jesurun Lobo, brothers-in-law of Isaac Rodriguez da Costa of Curaçao, a big supporter of the Holy Land Fund in Curaçao.

mission.[40] Although a depression gripped Curaçao, drought and epidemics plagued it, and heavy losses were sustained at sea, the Jews nevertheless sent 400 pesos, and possibly more, to help Azulay's mission.

5516 (1755/56) In the month of Ab, 5516, Ribbi Hiyya Zeebi of Hebron visited Amsterdam in a private capacity. It is not known whether he emulated R. Selomoh Zeebi and went to Curaçao before 5516. There is reason to believe that he did go to Curaçao to collect funds for the marriage of his daughters, because Jacob Hisquiahu de Leon's will (made in Curaçao on February 19, 1755) left 200 pesos for the daughters of "Reby Guia," in equal shares.[41] The author does not know of any ribbi in Curaçao named "Guia" or "Hiyya."

5518 (1757) In Tishri, 5518, H[aham]. H[ashalem]. R[ibbi]. Eliau ben Araya, an elderly man, came to Curaçao with his servant Semah Guedella, apparently in behalf of Hebron. The customary *nedabah*, generally yielding from 500 to 1,000 pesos, was held for him. He also received 100 pesos from the Community Chest and 20 pesos for his servant.[42] Ben Araya, at least the third (?) emissary to reach Curaçao, may be one and the same person as Eliau Ben Orḥa whose mission was not mentioned by Yaari.

1758 In response to letters from the Amsterdam parnassim and their Haham Isaac Abendana de Britto, as well as a circular letter from the five administrators of the "Santa Jesiba Queneset Israel" of the Ashkenazim of Hebron, Curaçao made a subscription for Ribbi Haim Bağayo, fourth (?) emissary. It yielded 224

[40] Our hypothesis is based on the fact that the "Memorias Senior," well-informed as it is on the Holy Land contributions, states that the Community Chest paid the 400 pesos: 300 for Hebron and 100 for Azulay. Chronicler Senior tells us that it was decided to hold a *nedabah*, and that usually brought in a minimum of 500 pesos. It is likely that the amount realized was sent to the Jesurun Lobos for direct payment to Azulay and for that reason no record of the transaction could be found (MS, 19 Menachem, 5515). According to their letter of 25 Tammuz, 5515, to the Rabbis of Hebron, the Amsterdam parnassim remitted 5,194:6 florins to Hebron on Azulay's first mission.

[41] PJCAA, bundle. De Leon died on Feb. 24, 1760 (Emmanuel, *Precious Stones*, p. 517, no. 1067).

[42] MS, 11 and 27 Tisry, 5518.

pesos.[43] There was no *nedabah* because Bağayo had not come as official representative for Hebron.

1758 Simultaneously, the Curaçoan Jews were visited by the fifth (?) messenger: H[aham]. H[ashalem]. R[ibbi]. Moss[eh]. Malky, of Safed according to Yaari (p. 446). As he suffered from "shortness of breath and a chest ailment," he was permitted to deliver a sermon. A *nedabah* was held for him, and he received the same amount given to R. Eliau ben Araya.[44]

1760 *Nedabah* and 50 pesos from the Community Chest in favor of Tiberias, plus 50 pesos for the emissary [Ribbi Samuel Salem of Salonika].[45]

1762-64 Haham Ishac Haim Carigal of Hebron was Curaçao's sixth (?) emissary. He was well received, first as a messenger and later as their rabbi. The *nedabah* must have been exceptionally brilliant.[46]

5523 (1762) At their meeting of Kislev 9, 5523 (1762), the Amsterdam parnassim gave the Jerusalem emissary H: H: [Jahacob Ashkenazi de] Corona the letters of recommendation he desired for the Curaçao community and 30 florins for his trip.[47] He evidently did not reach Curaçao, for the community remitted 396:5 pesos for his mission and 37 pesos for him personally.[48]

1763 Florins 400 for T.S.[49]

[43] MS, 23 Adar Rison and 6 Tamus, 5518. Is he identical with Haham Haim Rahamim Bağayo?

[44] MS, 6 Tamus and 12 Menaguem, 5518. The original text reads: "6 Tamus [Anno 5518] Por suplica dos^{r} H. H. R. Moss: Malky y por padeser mal de peito & falta de respiraçao y selle permitiu nedabah na Esnoga y darse como se fes a os^{r} H. H. R. El^{o} ben araja" (f° 43). Malky left for Newport and New York where he is met in 1759. He died in Amsterdam on Sept. 21, 1763, leaving an estate of 2,616 florins and books valued at 32 florins. This went to his widow Jocheved in payment of her dowry. Later, she married Ribbi Nissim Samuel Eliau Bahar Meyuhas of Jerusalem and gave him this amount (PJCAA, Catalogue, 728).

[45] MS, 10 Tebet, 25 Sebat, 2 Nissan, 5520.

[46] See Emmanuel, "Jewish Education in Curaçao," *PAJHS* 44:223-25, 234-36; *Precious Stones*, p. 483; p. 249 below.

[47] PJCAA, Resoluçoes doss^{res} do Mahamad, 5511-5527, p. 192. In re Corona's mission, see Yaari, *ibid.*, pp. 396-97.

[48] PJCAA, the Amsterdam parnassim's letter of 29 Sivan, 5523, to the rabbis of Jerusalem (Resoluçoes doss^{res} do Mahamad, 5511-5527, meeting of 9 Kislev, 5523, p. 192).

[49] According to the receipt from Aron Jesurun & Filhos, Amsterdam, to the Gabay of Curaçao (MIA, loose papers).

1765 At the request of the Haham Salem[50] and the Amsterdam parnassim, Curaçao remitted 150 florins for Shaliaḥ Haham Haim Modahi and 1,443:6 pesos to relieve the victims of the Safed earthquakes of 1760.[51]

1765 At the same time the seventh (?) shaliaḥ visited Curaçao — H: H: Ribbi Aron aCohen. He received 150:4 pesos from the Community Chest on January 30, 1765, and free board and lodging during his eleven weeks' stay at the home of Moses Lopez Penha to whom the community paid 96 pesos.[52]

1765 Pesos 183:2:4 — P. 100 for T.S.; 41:5:2 each for Jerusalem and Tiberias.

1766 In this period the ninth (?) shaliaḥ arrived — Ishac Misrahi. He was given 25 pesos and fare to Jamaica.

1766-67 Ishac aCohen,[53] one of the rabbis of Hebron in 1774, was the eighth (?) shaliaḥ to arrive. The parnassim gave him 50 pesos and paid for his fare and baggage to Jamaica.

1768 The Amsterdam parnassim wrote to Curaçao at the request of Haham Issachar Abulafia, emissary of Tiberias, and recommended his mission. He enjoyed a *nedabah* and also a contribution from the Community Chest.[54] See next item.

1769 Florins 800 for T.S.[55] This remittance evidently was for the mission of Haham Issachar Abulafia, emissary from Tiberias.

1770 Pesos 600 for the mission of Haham Haim Rahamim Bağayo or Bazayo, Hebron emissary.[56]

[50] A letter of Haham Salem to Curaçao states that the Amsterdam community gave Haham Modahi 5,000 florins for Safed and 850 fls. for himself (MIA, loose papers).

[51] MIA, Accounts of 1765, precisely March 19, 1765. According to their letter of June 28, 1765, to Curaçao, the Amsterdam parnassim received only 1,100 pesos. The difference probably represented the gift for the messenger and the premium for marine insurance. Modahi was in New York in 1761, but was unable to visit Curaçao. For Modahi's mission to Amsterdam and the earthquakes of 1760, see Emmanuel, "Assistance . . . Sephardic Communities . . . to the Holy Land," pp. 406-7.

[52] MIA, Accounts of 1765. R. Aron is probably the same person as Shaliaḥ Ribbi Aron Joseph aCohen, emissary of Hebron who visited Amsterdam in 1778 (Yaari, *ibid.*, p. 595).

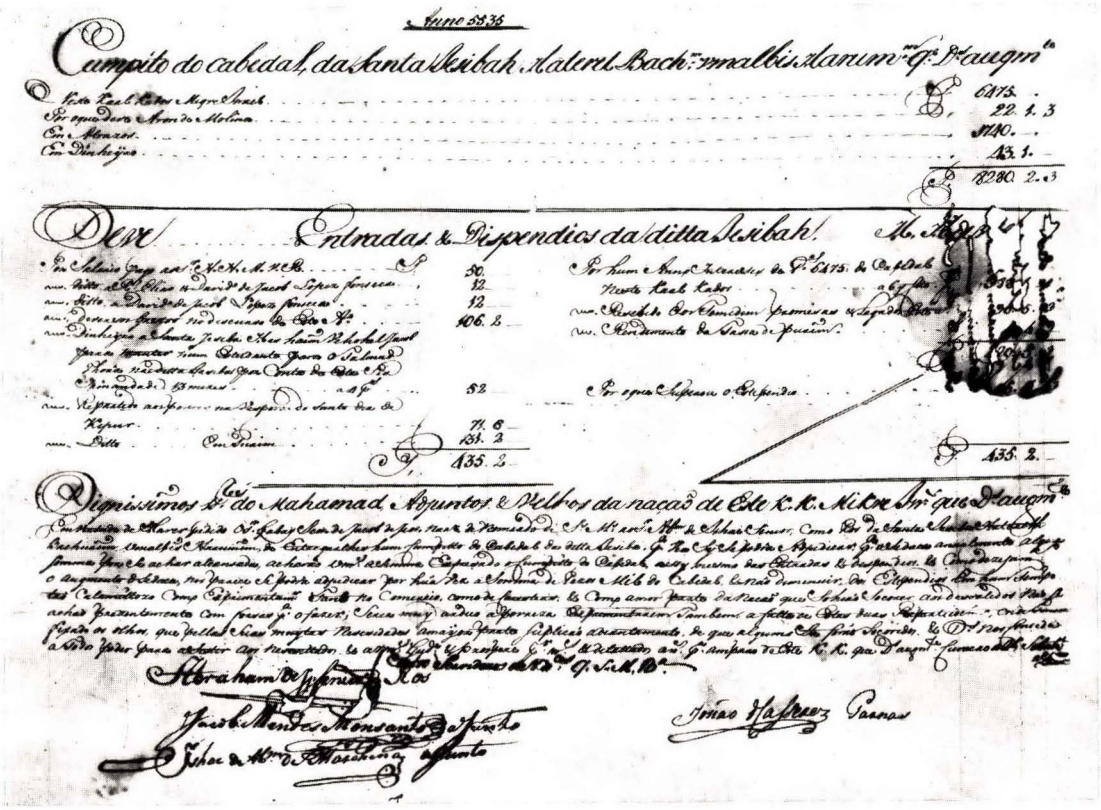
[53] Yaari, *ibid.*, p. 594.

[54] PJCAA, Resoluçoes, meeting of 10 Kislev, 5529, p. 90. The Amsterdam parnassim's letter of Sept. 22, 1769, to Curaçao acknowledged receipt of the money without mentioning the amount.

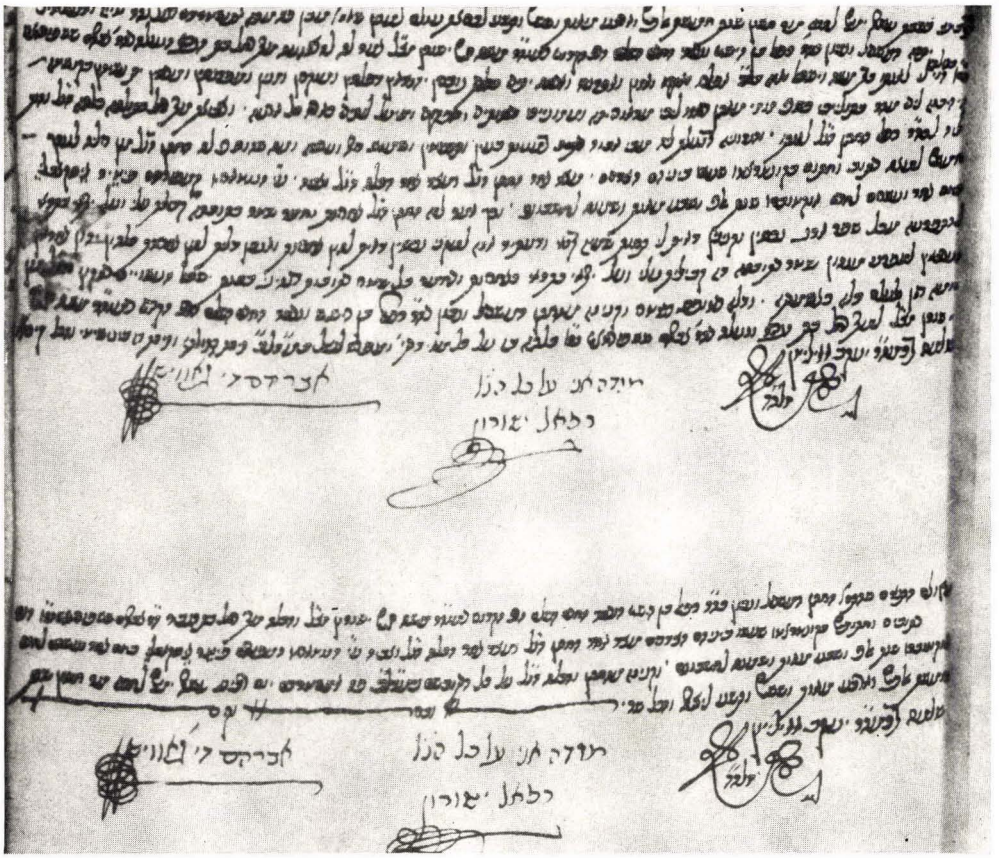
[55] MIA, Statement of Aug. 18, 1769, loose papers.

[56] According to the Curaçao parnassim's letter of March 26, 1770, to Amsterdam.

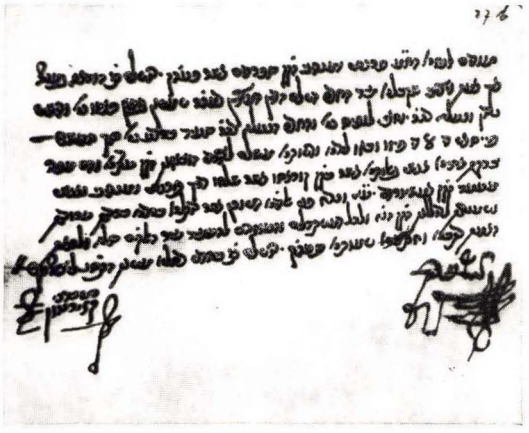
33. HESED VE EMETH ARCHIVES, FIRST PAGE, 1726



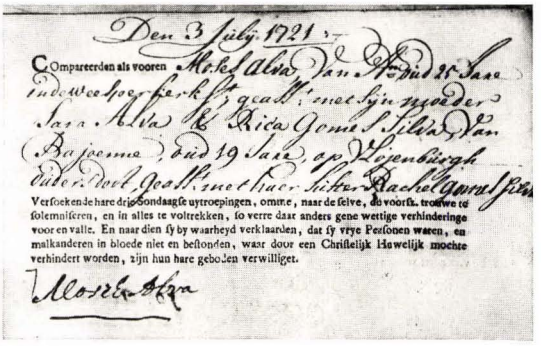
34. HATERETH BAHURIM U-MALBISH HARUMIM, STATEMENT OF ACCOUNT SIGNED BY ABRAHAM DE IS. SENIOR, DEAN; JACOB MENDES MONSANTO, ISHAC DE ABM. DE MARCHENA, JOSIAO D CASSERES, 1775



35. KETUBAH OF HAHAM REPHAEL JESURUN, SIGNED ALSO BY HIS TEACHER HAHAM AELYON, AMSTERDAM, 1708



36. CURAÇAO'S FIRST RECEIPT OF FUNDS SENT TO THE HOLY LAND, 1702



Den 3 July 1721

COmpareerden als vooren Moses Alva, Van N°. oud 25 Jaar in de weesoer herkst, geass.t met sijn moeder Sara Alva & Rica Gomes Silva, Van Bajoenne, oud 19 Jaar, op Vlojenburgh uiter dolt, geass.t met haer sister Rachel Gomes Silva

Versoekende hare drie Sondaagse uytroepingen, omme, naar de selve, de voorsz. trouwe te solemniseren, en in alles te voltrekken, so verre daar anders gene wettige verhinderinge voor en valle. En naar dien sy by waarheyd verklaarden, dat sy vrye Persoonen waren, en malkanderen in bloede niet en bestonden, waar door een Christelijk Huwelijk mochte verhindert worden, zijn hun hare geboden verwilliget.

Moses Alva

37. CIVIL MARRIAGE RECORD, RIBBI MOSEH ALVA, AMSTERDAM, 1721

1773 The Amsterdam parnassim requested the Curaçao community on August 16, 1773, to contribute for the Jerusalem emissaries Yomtob Algazi and Jacob Lebeth Hazan. They added that the Amsterdam community chest had donated 1,500 florins and that its members were lavish.[57] Curaçao must have responded with its usual generosity.

1774 With the permission of the Amsterdam parnassim, their Haham Salem gave letters of recommendation in Kislev, 5533 (1772), to Ribbi Samuel aCohen, Shaliaḥ of Hebron, "to travel to the islands of America." As aCohen was without funds, the Amsterdam parnassim gave him ten florins and lent him 150 florins for the voyage. They instructed Hebron not to send messengers in the future unless provided with the necessary funds.[58] Ribbi Samuel, the tenth (?) emissary, reached Curaçao on 24 Sivan, 5534, and throughout his stay lodged at the home of a member of the wealthy Senior family.[59] The community held a *nedabah* and the Community Chest contributed another 300 pesos. The Honen Dalim society gave him 115:2 pesos. Ribbi aCohen left for Newport, R.I.[60] On returning to Amsterdam, he repaid the loan of 150 florins and turned over the 2,060:5 florins destined for Hebron.[61] It is significant that despite their critical economic situation between 1768-76 (page 254 below) the Curaçoan Jews kept up their generous contributions to the Holy Land.

[57] PJCAA, Amsterdam's letter of Aug. 16, 1773, to Curaçao.

[58] PJCAA, Resoluçoes, meetings of 28 Kislev and 7 Sebat, 5533, pp. 272, 276.

[59] MS, cover. In re his mission, see Yaari, *ibid.*, p. 592. Yaari did not report aCohen's visit to Curaçao.

[60] In re his mission to North America, see *PAJHS* 10:18, 21:139, 27:157, 184, 250 and 32:32. The Sephardic community of London also sent a letter recommending aCohen's mission to the "S[enho]res Parnassim Gabaim das Santas Kehilot de America" on May 5, 5533 (Photostat, AJA, Cincinnati).

[61] PJCAA, the Amsterdam parnassim's letter of Aug. 4, 1775, to Curaçao and their letter of July 29, 1775, to the Livorno community. They did not include the 300 pesos given by the Curaçao Community Chest for this mission. That remittance was made directly to Hebron by the Amsterdam parnassim in the name of Curaçao (PJCAA, Resoluçoes, 5533-5538, meeting of 8 Tebet, 5535, p. 90).

1776	Florins 770 for T.S.[62]
1777	Florins 215:8: — for T.S.[63]
1778	At his sponsors' request, the Amsterdam parnassim gave Ribbi Haim Joseph David Azulay,[64] Shaliaḥ of Hebron, letters of recommendation to the communities of Curaçao and St. Eustatius. The response must have been excellent because of the island's prosperity toward the end of 1778, the Curaçoan Jews' deep attachment for Hebron and Ribbi Azulay's striking personality. The exact figure is lost to us as the Senior Chronicle lists fund raisers only up to 1775 and the old community archives are woefully incomplete.
1779	Florins 215:8 for T.S.[65]
1780-81	While the Ribbis Eliau Guedelya and Haim Salom Amar, emissaries of Tiberias, were visiting Amsterdam, R. Guedelya booked passage for Curaçao. It seems that his ship took refuge in an English port and he desisted from continuing on his journey "because of the storms." In his place went Benjamin Haim aCohen, the eleventh (?) messenger to Curaçao. The *nedabah* made for him brought in a recordbreaking 1,600 pesos, which evoked Amsterdam's appreciation.[66] R. aCohen left for Amsterdam in April, 1782.[67]
1785	In accordance with the Amsterdam parnassim's request of May 21, 1785, for a contribution, Curaçao held a *nedabah*[68] on Shabbat Naḥamu for the mission of

[62] Aron Jesurun & Filhos' letter of May 2, 1776, to Curaçao.

[63] MIA, Statement of April 2, 1777, loose papers.

[64] PJCAA, Resoluçoes, 5533-5538, meeting of 5 Sivan, 5538, p. 262; Copiador de Cartas, the Amsterdam parnassim's letter of June 5, 1778, recommending Azulay's mission to the Curaçao and St. Eustatius communities. Although disappointed over his refusal to serve as their chief rabbi, the Amsterdam community nevertheless contributed munificently to Azulay's second mission with florins 6,256:3:8 (*ibid.*, the Amsterdam parnassim's letter of June 8, 1779, to the Holy Land Fund deputies at Constantinople).

[65] MIA, Statement of March 23, 1779, loose papers.

[66] MIA, letters of Oct. 3, 1780 and Nov. 30, 1781, found among the loose papers.

[67] Before leaving Curaçao, aCohen received the authorization of Moseh Henriquez to collect a certain debt in Amsterdam. He signed it as follows: "Besalel Benjamin aCohen of the Holy Land" (OAC 936, no. 36, April 16, 1782).

[68] MIA, loose papers; PJCAA, Copiador de Cartas, 1784-1799, the Amsterdam parnassim's letter of Dec. 22, 1785, thanking Curaçao for this donation.

Haham Rephael Joseph Aben Rubi, emissary from Jerusalem. It must have reported at least 500 pesos.

1787-90 The Amsterdam parnassim issued letters of recommendation for the Americas[69] to these emissaries: Ribbi Haim Abraham Israel Zeebi of Hebron and Ribbi Selomoh Hazan of Safed in 1787, and to Ribbi Rephael Abraham Aryé of Tiberias in 1790. Aryé was unable to travel and sent letters instead. It is not known whether Zeebi and Hazan crossed the Atlantic. In any event, Curaçao must have responded with its usual liberality.

1812 On September 13, 1812, the 12th and 13th (?) messengers to Curaçao appeared before the parnassim with their credentials. They were Ribbi Haim Sebi and Ribbi Guedalya Alteve or Altaviv of Jerusalem. The community decided to hold a *nedabah* for them.[70]

1816-18 Florins 250 for the mission of Ribbi Abraham ben Hasson, emissary of Safed.[71]

1823 At the request of Haham d'Azevedo of Amsterdam, the Curaçao community held a *nedabah* for the mission of the Salonikan Ribbi Mordechay Aseo, emissary of Safed. The Community Chest also contributed 40 pesos.[72]

1824 In 1824 Ribbi Samuel Isacki of Tiberias arrived with his attendant as Curaçao's 14th (?) emissary. The Community Chest gave him ninety *patintjes* or 167 pesos in addition to a collection made among the members. Isacki also visited St. Thomas according to the Curaçao records, and New York.[73]

1850 Contribution sent to Philadelphia for the emissaries

[69] PJCAA, *ibid.*, pp. 101-2, and the Amsterdam parnassim's letter of Aug. 20, 1787, to the deputies of the Holy Land Fund at Constantinople, p. 246.

[70] MIA, Record of 1811-1819.

[71] MIA, Statements of July 9, 1816, and 12 Iyar, 5578, loose papers.

[72] MIA, Record of 1819-1824, meetings of Feb. 18 and May 19, 1823. For more details see Emmanuel, "Assistance . . . Sephardic Communities . . . to the Holy Land," p. 409.

[73] MIA, Parnassim, Aug. 17, 1824; David and Tamar de Sola Pool, *An Old Faith in the New World* (New York, 1955), p. 398. Yaari, *ibid.*, p. 855, assumes that this emissary was Samuel Ishaki Ashkenazi, which is rather odd since the records of New York's Shearith Israel and Curaçao's Mikvé Israel list him as Isacki.

from Jerusalem then visiting North America — Zadok Levy and Joseph Schwartz.[74]

1854 Florins 4,244.77 sent to Moses Montefiore for Jerusalem.[75]

1856-68 Haham Aron Mendes Chumaceiro took charge of the messengers and remittances for the Holy Land during this period. In 1863 he sent 653:48 florins to the Holy Land, plus 25 florins for the construction of a synagogue.[76] In 1865 he sent 300 florins, of which sum 80 florins were from the Curaçoan Jews settled in Coro.[77]

1872 The severe drought of 1869-70 led the rabbis of Hebron to send to Curaçao, among other communities, a 42-line manifesto printed in Hebrew, dated the end of Tebet, 5632, and signed by five rabbis, including David Hasson. They stated that they had sent their Chief Rabbi Eliau [Soliman] Mani as emissary to Egypt, and they appealed to every Jew to contribute a *grosh* (*piastre*) for the relief of the Hebronites.[78] Curaçao surely must have responded favorably to the Hebron community's appeal.

1874 The parnassim remitted 1,125 florins to Moses Montefiore for Jerusalem. Of that amount 500 florins came from the Community Chest and the remainder from a collection.[79]

1875 A remittance of 53 pounds sterling was made to Moses Montefiore for Jerusalem on July 20, 1875.[80]

1897 Ribbi Hay Ezekiel Melamed, originally of Hebron, was the 15th (?) Shaliaḥ to Curaçao. He sought funds for a hospital in Hebron.

1901 Ribbi Ishac Alhasif, 16th (?) emissary, came to collect funds in behalf of the "Bikur Holim" of Jerusalem.

74 *The Occident*, vol. VIII, y. 5611, p. 199; Yaari, *ibid.*, p. 797.

75 MIA, Minutas de Parnassim, Sept. 18, 1854.

76 MIA, Resoluciones Consistoriales, Libro de Avisos, no. 1, 1858-1891, p. 97, March 24, 1863.

77 *The Occident*, vol. XXIII, 1865, pp. 527-28.

78 MIA, File of 5671-72. While he mentioned Mani's mission (pp. 697-98), Yaari said nothing about the manifesto. See appendix 6C; illus. 239.

79 MIA, Copiador de Cartas, no. 6, 1868-1880, letters of Aug. 7 and 11, 1874.

80 MIA, *ibid.*, letter of July 20, 1875, to London.

In addition to the collection made for him by the members, the Community Chest gave 25 florins.[81]

1901 The same year J. N. Levy, the 17th (?) messenger, came to collect funds for a hospital and school in Safed. The community paid the expenses of his stay[82] and the Community Chest donated 50 florins. A collection was promptly organized for the purpose by Benjamin de Casseres Jr., who worked with unflagging devotion from 1868 to 1909 to raise moneys for the Holy Land.

1901 Several months after Shaliaḥ Levy's departure, Ribbi Melamed returned to obtain funds for the Hebron hospital, only to succumb on the island two weeks later.[83]

Surely other fund raisers from the Holy Land visited Curaçao. The four Holy Land cities regarded Curaçoan Jewry as a devoted helper and a vital community among its sister communities in the diaspora.

CONTRIBUTIONS TO OTHER COMMUNITIES

The generosity of the Curaçoan Jews was not limited to the Holy Land. It extended to other distressed areas. Here follows a chronological list of the communities which turned to Curaçao for assistance.

New York — In 1729 Curaçoan Jewry remitted 136 pounds sterling to Shearith Israel in response to its appeal for funds to build the Mill Street Synagogue (page 130 above).

St. Eustatius — After its reorganization in 1738, the St. Eustatius community set about building a synagogue they called "Honen Dalim" — gracious to the needy. They sent Salomon de Leon on a fund raising tour to Curaçao.

[81] MIA, Parnassim, meeting of Feb. 6, 1901. The money was sent directly to Jerusalem.

[82] MIA, Parnassim, meeting of Aug. 8, 1901.

[83] Melamed became an American citizen in 1892, and resided with his wife and children in New York City. On his second fund raising trip to Curaçao he bore letters of recommendation from the New York rabbis Meneler and Dr. H. Pereira. He arrived in Curaçao on December 3, 1901, and died there of heart failure in the evening of December 16, 1901 (letter of the American Consul of Curaçao to the Secretary of State, Washington, Despatches from United States Consuls in Curaçao, 1793-1906, The National Archives, Washington, D. C., courtesy AJA). See *Precious Stones*, pp. 471-72, for his epitaph and the title conferred upon him.

Because many Jews of St. Eustatius were native Curaçoans and had close business ties, the *nedabah*[84] must have been especially rewarding.

Smyrna — Although they had contributed 1,371 pesos that year (1744) to the Holy Land, the Curaçao parnassim received Haham Yahacob [de Hananya] Saul[85] with all respect. To this eminent rabbi of Smyrna, who had come to collect funds for his unfortunate community, they gave 1,102:4 pesos and free passage to Holland.[86]

Saida — In 1749 the community collected 350 pesos for Shaliaḥ Ribbi Ishac Colly of Saida, Morocco.[87]

Newport — On 28 Ab, 5514 (1754), the Community Chest contributed 100 pesos toward the construction of a synagogue in Newport, R.I. A like amount was donated for the same purpose in 1759, 1761 and 1768, respectively. In 1762 the Curaçao community made a loan of 200 pesos to Newport and followed this with a collection in 1768.[88] In token of appreciation, the Newport community would bless Congregation Mikvé Israel of Curaçao every year at Kal Nidre services.

Salonika — After the holocaust of 1759 and the devastating plagues of 1759-1761, the rabbis and parnassim of Salonika sent two emissaries to Holland for the first time. They were Haham Ribbi Daniel Florentin[89] and Ribbi Joseph Beraha. Florentin did not proceed to Curaçao. The Curaçao community nevertheless sent 50 pesos for the "most eminent" Shaliaḥ Florentin[90] along with the *nedabah* made for his mission and the Community Chest contribution of 75 pesos.

St. Eustatius — Several incidents between the Ashkenazim and Sephardim in 1761 drove the latter to seek relief from Curaçao. The customary *nedabah* was made and to it was added a contribution from the Community Chest.[91]

[84] MC, MS, 18 Tebet, 5498.

[85] A native of Salonika, author of *Responsa* and Talmudic interpretations under the title *Kol Yahacob* (Smyrna, 1760).

[86] MIA, Treasurer's Book for 5504; MS, 26 Kislev, 5504.

[87] MS, Kislev 7, 5510; the Amsterdam parnassim's letter of May 25, 1750, to Curaçao.

[88] MS, 28 Menaguem, 5514; 1 Elul, 5519, 13 Menagem, 5521; MIA, Treasurer's Book, Feb. 11, 1768. For the Newport parnassim's letter of 7 Tisry, 5525 (1764), asking Curaçao for assistance, see Dr. Jacob R. Marcus, *American Jewry, Documents Eighteenth Century* (Cincinnati, 1959), p. 88; Stanley F. Chyet, "A Synagogue in Newport," *AJA*, XVI, 1964, pp. 48-49. See appendix 21 for the original text and illus. 288.

[89] In re Florentin and his mission, see I. S. Emmanuel, *Mazavoth Saloniki*, vol. II no. 1638; Emmanuel, "Kesharim ben Kehiloth Saloniki ve-Amsterdam," *Guinzakh Saloniki* (Tel Aviv, 1961), pp. 24-25.

[90] MS, 8 Sebat, 8 Adar Rison, 5521.

[91] MS, 13 Menagem, 5521. In re St. Eustatius, see pp. 518-27 below.

St. Crus — In 1765 the Community Chest gave 200 pesos toward the construction of a synagogue in St. Crus (St. Croix), Danish West Indies. The parnassim also paid the fare for the hazzan newly engaged for St. Croix — Jeudah, son of Sexton Abraham Sasso.[92]

St. Eustatius — A contribution was made toward rebuilding the synagogue destroyed in the hurricane of August 31, 1772.

Smyrna — Toward the end of 1774 the Amsterdam parnassim gave Haham Abraham Lebeth Leon, Shaliaḥ of Smyrna, at his request, letters of recommendation to Curaçao and St. Eustatius. He sought funds to rebuild nine synagogues and numerous chapels which had burned down in a great fire of Smyrna.[93] It is not known whether he actually reached Curaçao. But it is certain that a *nedabah* was held for him in Shabu'oth of 1775.[94]

Philadelphia, Pa. — In 1782 the Jews of Philadelphia "appealed to the Jews of the West Indies for financial help on the occasion of the erection of the first Synagogue building in that city."[95] Since it was the largest and richest Jewish community of the West Indies, Curaçao surely was asked to and did contribute.

Maraha, Persia — In 1792 the Curaçao parnassim sent their colleagues in Amsterdam 70 florins for the Persian community of Maraha.

Charleston — In July, 1816, Curaçao sent a contribution "for the synagogue and Community of Charleston."[96]

New York — In 1818 a contribution of 600 pesos was sent for the reconstruction of the Mill Street Synagogue in New York City. The accompanying letter blamed the business depression for their inability to send more.[97]

Mogador — Abraham Abenatar, messenger from Mogador, Morocco, visited Curaçao in 1838. A subscription was made for him and he was also given 25 florins from the Community Chest.[98]

Caracas — A contribution was made in 1844 for the founding of a Jewish cemetery in Caracas.

Rio Hacha — A contribution of 100 florins was sent for the founding of a Jewish cemetery in Rio Hacha (y. 1850).

92 MIA, Treasurer's Book for 1765, Statement of April 15, 1765.

93 PJCAA, Copiador de Cartas, the Amsterdam parnassim's letter of Dec. 28, 1774, to the Curaçao and St. Eustatius communities.

94 *Ibid.*, the Amsterdam parnassim's letter of Aug. 4, 1775, to Curaçao.

95 Isidor Paiewonsky, *Jewish Historical Development in the Virgin Islands, 1665-1959* (St. Thomas, 1960), unpaginated (communication of the late J.M.L. Maduro).

96 MIA, loose papers; *ibid.*, Parnassim, meeting of July 9, 1816.

97 David and Tamar de Sola Pool, *ibid.*, pp. 49, 414. No record of this contribution could be found in MIA.

98 MIA, Parnassim, meeting of April 12, 1838.

Philadelphia — At the request of the Jews of Philadelphia for funds to build a synagogue, the Curaçao community on August 28, 1857, resolved to make a collection.[99] As Haham Chumaceiro kept a friendly correspondence with Philadelphia's Rabbi Leeser, most probably a contribution was sent.

Morocco — In 1860 the Haham A. M. Chumaceiro headed a subscription for the Jews of Morocco which yielded 1,030 francs.[100]

Smyrna — Abram Rephael Alfandari, emissary from Smyrna, arrived in Curaçao in 1863. A subscription made for him brought in 560 florins. The Community Chest paid 60 florins for the expenses of his stay in Curaçao, and Jacob Abraham Jesurun paid for the Shaliaḥ's roundtrip fare to St. Thomas.[101]

Rome — On November 14, 1864, Elias Jesurun Henriquez sent 2,800 francs through the *Archives Israélites* of Paris for the Coen family of Rome.[102] Two months later Congregation Mikvé Israel of Curaçao made a subscription in favor of Coen's eight children.[103]

St. Thomas — The frightful earthquake of November 18, 1867, moved Haham Chumaceiro and the parnassim to proclaim a day of fasting and prayer. As is customary in such circumstances, a *nedabah* for the relief of the victims must have been held.[104]

Morocco and Tunis — In 1868 the local branch of the Alliance Israélite Universelle at Curaçao transmitted to the Jewish communities of Morocco and Tunis 1,300 francs, plus 129 francs from Curaçoan Jews of Coro, plus 500 francs from Curaçoan Jews of Barranquilla.[105]

Barcelona, Ven. — In 1875, at the request of Salomon Pereira, president of Barcelona's Sociedad Benéfico Israelita, Congregations Mikvé Israel and Temple Emanu-El of Curaçao sent their contributions for the founding of a Jewish cemetery in Barcelona (illus. 256).

Kingston — At the request of the Kingston community in Jamaica, B.W.I., Curaçao remitted 1,241.50 florins toward rebuilding the synagogue which was destroyed in the fire of December 11, 1882.[106]

Surinam — In 1887 a contribution was sent for the Jewish poor of Surinam.

[99] According to a letter received by the author from the late J.M.L. Maduro who consulted the MIA.

[100] *Archives Israélites* (Paris, 1860), pp. 394-95.

[101] MIA, Parnassim, meetings of April 1 and 21, 1863; *ibid.*, Libro de Avisos, no. 1, p. 104.

[102] *Archives Israélites*, vol. 26 (Paris, 1865), p. 41.

[103] MIA, Copiador de cartas de Parnassim, letter of Jan. 25, 1865.

[104] *Ibid.*, Folder of 1866-67.

[105] *Archives Israélites*, Paris, 1868, pp. 665, 908.

[106] MIA, Minutas del Consejo de la Sinagoga, 1881-1889, meeting of Jan. 24, 1883.

New York — In 1898 Rabbi Henry Mendez Pereira of New York requested and obtained a contribution for the Rabbinical Seminary of New York.[107]

Colon — In 1913 Curaçao sent $100 for the construction of a synagogue in Colon, Panama.[108]

Surinam — In 1928, at the request of the Surinam community, Curaçao sent 100 florins to restore their "Joden Savanne" synagogue.[109]

MESSENGERS ON PRIVATE MISSIONS

Fund collectors from Europe and North America called often at Curaçao. They generally sought help for themselves or their families. Some probably solicited funds in behalf of a community. Following is a list of those visitors culled from the few, incomplete documents extant.

Jeudah Russo — In 1750 one Jeudah Russo,[110] a native of Smyrna, became converted to Catholicism. He went to Spain where he served as a soldier. When shipped to La Guaira, he took the risk of capture by Spanish corsairs and escaped to Curaçao. There he returned to his faith. The parnassim assisted him, paid his fare to Amsterdam and requested the Amsterdam parnassim to help him reach Smyrna.[111] He left for Holland with the emissary Ribbi Selomoh Zeebi and the latter's son Eliau.

Jahacob and Isaac de Haim aCohen — These brothers sought funds to rescue their families, captives in Turkey. As they were not official emissaries, the community authorized a collection instead of the usual appeal. Samuel Idanha de Casseres and David Namias de Crasto were appointed as patrons to accompany the aCohens on their calls. The parnassim started the collection by donating eight pesos each. The Community Chest donated 100 pesos and the fare of 98 : 1 : 5 pesos to Holland.[112] It is noteworthy that this collection and the appeal for Hebron took place the same week (1750).[113]

Michael Barzilay aCohen and Daniel Ventura — They were probably mes-

[107] *Ibid.*, Parnassim, meeting of March 7, 1898.

[108] *Ibid.*, Parnassim, meeting of Feb. 7, 1913.

[109] *Ibid.*, Parnassim, meeting of June 8, 1928.

[110] The name "Russo" — referring to a Sephardic family originating from Italy — is equivalent to the Spanish "Ruvio" (see Emmanuel, *Guedolé Saloniki Ledorotam*, p. 19, no. 62, and p. 61).

[111] PJCAA, the Curaçao parnassim's letter of June 12, 1750, to Amsterdam.

[112] MIA, Treasurer's Book for 5511; MS, Kislev, 5511.

[113] It is significant that the parnassim opened the appeal for Hebron with six pesos each, but with eight pesos each in the collection for the rescue of the Turkish captives.

sengers from Turkey who solicited funds in their own behalf. The community paid their fare from Curaçao in 1753.[114]

Abraham and Matatia aCohen — The Community Chest gave them 100 pesos in 1760.[115]

David Ergas — It is not known in whose behalf Ergas' mission was. Two patrons conducted a house-to-house drive for him while the Community Chest donated 50 pesos. The decision was taken not to appoint patrons for similar emissaries in the future.[116]

Joseph Misrahi — The community paid his fare to Amsterdam on July 9, 1764.

David Guedelia — The community paid his fare to St. Eustatius on July 14, 1764.

Matatias Corcos — The parnassim paid Moses Lopez Penha 28 pesos for boarding and lodging Corcos at his home during his seven-week stay. They also paid for his clothing on November 23, 1764.

Moseh Bassan — Assisted during his stopover in Curaçao, Bassan died there in December, 1764.

Joseph Israel [St. Cruz] — A qualified emissary, he arrived in Curaçao in July, 1765. His uncle, the surgeon Aron St. Cruz, reimbursed the parnassim for the 24 pesos paid for Joseph's fare to Jamaica.

Isaac aCohen and Ishac Misrahi — These emissaries arrived in 1766 and left for Jamaica with fares paid for by the community. Cohen left on July 24, 1766, and Misrahi on 24 Tishri, 5527 (1766).

Jacob Mesquita — In 1767 this emissary received 25 pesos from the Community Chest in addition to private donations.[117] He left for Jamaica.

Abraham bar Jeudah Levy Lissa — On November 15, 1769, the community paid 15 pesos for Lissa's fare to an undisclosed destination. This man was probably sent by the Jews of Lissa as an emissary to the Americas.[118] The Amsterdam parnassim had contributed 300 florins via the Berlin community for the relief of the victims of the Lissa, Poland, conflagration of 1768.[119]

Abraham Bazan — The Community Chest paid this emissary 17:7:2 pesos for wearing apparel on March 24, 1770, and no doubt gave him cash as well.

[114] MIA, Treasurer's Book for 5513.

[115] MS, 24 Kislev, 5521.

[116] MS, 2 Ab, 1762.

[117] MIA, Statement of Nov. 17, 1767.

[118] The notation about Shaliaḥ Lissa appears in the MIA in Dutch and not in the usual Portuguese.

[119] PJCAA, Resoluçoems doss^{res} do Mahamad, 5527-5533, meeting of 22 Kislev, 5529, p. 50.

Immigrants from Amsterdam — In 1772 the community transported to Surinam[120] several immigrants, apparently from Amsterdam.

Aaron Bosqualo — After visting New York, he sailed to Curaçao in July, 1774, at the suggestion of Congregation Shearith Israel.[121]

Aron Jeudah Corcos — He arrived in 1823 with excellent credentials from Haham d'Azevedo of Amsterdam, on a mission to rescue his wife and six children from the Greeks. The community decided to help him and paid for his four weeks' board and lodging.[122] He left for New York.

Ribbi Haim Lisbona — This emissary must have been a very important person, for the community assigned two prominent members as his patrons in 1824 — Mordechay Haim Senior and the treasurer David Semah de Valencia. The drive brought in thirty *portuguesas* or approximately 120 pounds sterling. The minutes fail to indicate the object of Lisbona's visit.[123]

Ribbi Abraham de Mordechay Zilberstein — He came in 1836 to collect funds so that he could pass his last days in Jerusalem. The community decided to help him.[124]

A Blind Man of Jerusalem — He arrived in 1886. The community decided to help him and pay his fare to the nearest port having a Jewish community.[125]

Jewish liberality was not limited to their coreligionists. From time to time the non-Jews were also assisted. The Jews responded royally toward the relief of flood victims every time Holland suffered from her periodic inundations, as in 1825, 1855, 1861 and 1953. Their contribution of 500 pesos in 1825 was the largest of all the religious communities.[126] Locally, they donated funds in 1745 for repairs to the fence around the Protestant cemetery, and for the construction or repair of various churches.

[120] OAC 944, nos. 72-73.

[121] *PAJHS* 20:117.

[122] MIA, Parnassim, meeting of May 28, 1823.

[123] MIA, meeting of July 19, 1824.

[124] MIA, loose papers.

[125] MIA, meeting of July 6, 1886.

[126] OAC 315, the parnassim's letter of July 4, 1825, to the Governor apologizing for their inability to give more generously because of the business depression. As they had no rabbi, Mordechay Ricardo took the pulpit to exhort the members to do their duty. For the Catholic and Protestant contributions, see OAC 315, letters sent to Governor Cantz'laar by Pastor Niewindt on July 5, 1825, and by the Protestant Church Council on July 19, 1825.

RECEIPTS AND DISBURSEMENTS OF THE COMMUNITY CHEST 1740-1768

DISBURSEMENTS

Between 1730 and 1770 the Curaçoan Jews contributed a yearly average of 1,000 pesos to Terra Santa and other communities. This is gathered from the scanty old archives and correspondence exchanged between the Curaçao and Amsterdam communities. True to the maxim that charity begins at home, they gave liberally to local needs. Aid to widows, orphans and invalids was dispensed weekly, monthly and at every festival. Before Passover, flour for *maẓoth* was dispensed to the officiants and needy families. Flour for this purpose for the years 1744, 1750, 1751, 1752, and 1768 was distributed in these quantities: 1,915 lbs., 2,360 lbs., 2,582 lbs., 2,570 lbs. and 3,189 lbs., respectively. Each allotment was approximately sixty pounds. That means that in 1768 at least fifty of the 240 Jewish families on the island were indigent. The community provided rent-free homes for several widows and the very poor. It also assisted needy emigrants with passage money, food, clothing, and so forth. These expenditures ran quite high. It is gratifying to note that descendants of those recipients listed below — Ashkenazim and Sephardim — later on made a name for themselves in the Americas.

Year	*Recipient*	*Amount Received*
5503 (1742-43)	Abraham Henriques Felis	Ps. 20:5:3
	Uliel Leallan	13:1:4
5505 (1744-45)	Joseph Bar Jacob[127]	23:7:-
	Joseph Bar Abraham	21:7:-
5510 (1749-50)	Rachel Bat Jacob	56:1:-
	Mehir Bar Abraham	5:4:-
5511 (1750-51)	Nehemia Baruch	30:-
	David Abraham and family	108:-
	Nathan bar Mosseh and wife[128]	42:-
	Widow of Mosseh Marache (Meers) and children, fare to New York	26:-

[127] One Aron Jacobsz died in Curaçao on Oct. 23, 1741, leaving "a quantity of written books" (OAC 808, no. 97).

[128] In 5505 (1745) he received 25:5 pesos from the Community Chest. One Benjamin Bar Aharon donated a half peso to the synagogue. Several of these Ashkenazim came as soldiers. Sometimes the community bought them out of the service by paying the governor the expenses of the trip to Curaçao. In 1742 the parnassim paid Governor Faesch 77:-:3 pesos in behalf of Jacob Josephs (WICA 590, p. 142v).

Year	*Recipient*	*Amount Received*
5512 (1751-52)	Michael Bar Zeeb(y)	20:-
	Ishac Bar Jahacob	24:-
	David Mordechay	10:-
	Huzy bar Abraham Mybers	15:-
1766	Joseph Nathan and son, fare to New York	44:3:3
	David Porto ditto	21:5:5
	Ishac Saldaña ditto	21:5:4
1767	The *Tudesco* (Ashkenazi) tailor Jeudah Barugh, fare to Jamaica	11:2:-

In 1767 the community transported twenty-five people to Jamaica at a total expenditure of 515 pesos.

In 1743 the community payroll for its officiants, teachers, ritual slaughterers and physician was distributed as follows: Haham Jesurun, Pesos 400; the hazzanim — Samuel L. Maduro, P. 350; Mosseh H. Lopez da Fonseca, P. 300, and David de Molina, P. 300; the four teachers, 60 pesos each; Sexton Sasso, P. 150; the ritual slaughterers Eliau and David Lopez Fonseca, 200 pesos each, and Dr. Ishac Cardozo [Sr.], 50 pesos. There were other employees — several assistant teachers, the meat stampers, the ritual bather for women, the surgeons and the bookkeeper.

RECEIPTS

Voluntary offerings made in the synagogue accounted for the community's main cash receipts. These represented 55% to 65% of the total income. During this time the community did not employ the *Finta* or communal tax as in Amsterdam.

The following figures gleaned from the archives for a few years of this period will give an idea of the financial standing of the Curaçoan Jews and their interest in the community.

Year	*Receipts*	*Disbursements*	*Principal*
5503	Ps. 13,046:2:3	Ps. 12,355:5:1	Ps. 45,561:2:4
5504	16,111:5:-	10,362:6:3	51,227:7:-
5505	16,493:3:4	12,092:4	67,151:1:3
5506	18,762:7:4	12,339:1:1	75,531:2:3
5507	20,361:6:-[129]	14,247:4:3	85,389:4:-
5508			96,766:4:5
5509	20,138:4:3	15,681:3:-	94,615:4:-[130]
5510	20,154:7:4	14,450:7:4	96,269:2:-
5511	20,719:-:1	15,230:3:2	
5512	17,682:5	17,605:7:1[131]	
5524		15,890:2:1	
5525		15,288:-:3	116,904:2:4
5526		13,436:5:4	
5527		14,248:-:3	
5528		14,140:5:3	
5529		11,815:7:2	56,000:-[132]

The drastic reduction in receipts during the business slump of 1768-76 forced the parnassim to draw on the capital fund to meet the expenses of the community, as pages 254-55 below attest.

EXCESSIVE POWER OF THE PARNASSIM

The Curaçao community, like the mother community in Amsterdam, was a body governed by aristocrats. The *adjuntos* or councillors — fourteen rich Jews chosen among themselves — would elect three of their number to direct

[129] The main receipts were realized from voluntary offerings, Pesos 10,286; poor boxes, P. 2,149; fines, P. 100; Purim Bowl, P. 97:6; Terra Santa Bowl, P. 29; twenty *legados* for memorial prayers, P. 830; *legados* to marry orphan girls, P. 279:4; rent on community-owned houses and interest on the capital fund. In 5509 and 5512 the interest earned on capital was P. 3,368:-:4 and P. 4,481:4:3, respectively.

[130] This decrease was due to the huge legal expenses disbursed in Holland to recover the 2,600 pesos lent by the community to Governor Du Fay. The community lost its case. See above, p. 114.

[131] Receipts fell off as a result of the stupendous losses the Jews sustained at sea. The community also had to aid those rendered destitute by the business failures of their formerly wealthy employers.

[132] The following capital fund figures of the Protestant Church for some of the years between 1740 and 1778 will serve excellently to compare its financial state with that of the Jewish community during the same period: 1740, Pesos 53,283:4:4; 1741, P. 54,701:-:4; 1743, P. 55,802:3:3; 1744, P. 56,673:4:4; 1745, P. 56.286:4:3; 1747, P. 59,846:6:4; 1750, P. 65,802:1-; 1751, P. 69,331:6:2; 1752, P. 72,044:1:4; 1753, P. 73,488:4:-; 1772, P. 88,145:5:3; 1778, P. 94,906:5:1 (GAA, Classis Curaçao, 1740-1768, C38h; OAC 8, y. 1743; OAC 11, July 31, 1747; OAC 15, y. 1751; OAC 16, y. 1752; WICA 211, pp. 221-22 and p. 739).

the affairs of the community. These directors — respectively, the *parnas presidente* (president), the *parnas* (vice president), and the *gabay* (treasurer) — were known collectively as the parnassim or Mahamad. On important matters these three gentlemen would convene with four councillors serving in rotation. Thus between fourteen and twenty families ruled over some 200-220 others. The prime requisite for a parnas was wealth. No one could aspire to that office before reimbursing the Community Chest for any and all assistance received by him or his parents. In 5504 Selomoh Nunes [Redondo] had to refund the 169 pesos given to his mother Debora between 1716 and 1722.[133] These privileged few often took unfair advantage of their power. At times they oppressed their rabbi, even one as erudite and pacific as Haham Jesurun. The following incidents will give an insight into their despotic rule and how they controlled criticism against themselves.

In 1728 Ishac de Jacob Abenatar, a youth between thirteen and sixteen years, refused to continue with his studies at the school. Invoking the *hascamoth*, the parnassim excommunicated his father and forbade Ishac to attend synagogue services. Although ordered to excommunicate Abenatar senior, Haham Jesurun deplored Ishac's expulsion from the synagogue. The parnassim demanded Jesurun's written opinion. Their action, he felt, was "a profanation of G-d's name."[134] Resentful of this strong disapproval, they compelled their peaceful Haham to make a public retraction of his stand.[135] He was in the right. It would have been punishment enough to detain the teen-ager in the synagogue with a teacher for an hour after services, and not to shut him out completely!

Two years later there were rumors that the three daughters of Samuel Iftag's wife Violanta were illegitimate. In prison probably for debt, Iftag was an Ashkenazi who had come from St. Eustatius before 1715. The parnassim demanded Haham Jesurun's written opinion on the subject. Not sure of indiscretion on the part of Violanta[136] who had meanwhile died, Jesurun refused to pronounce himself. For a year he procrastinated, hoping that the parnassim would drop the matter. He underestimated them. He was threatened

[133] MIA, Treasurer's Accounts for the year 5504. In re the Amsterdam community, see Emmanuel, *Precious Stones*, pp. 329-30.

[134] A similar abuse took place in 1719 when David de Crasto, the treasurer, would not allow the circumcision of Joseph Obediente's newborn child because Obediente had refused to send an older son to the *medras* (WICA 597, p. 412).

[135] MC, MS, 7-9, 16 Kislef, 5489.

[136] As administrators of her estate in 1731, the parnassim had Violanta's slaves brought to Curaçao from St. Eustatius.

with immediate dismissal unless he complied.[137] Three days before Rosh Hashanah, 5492 (1731), three proclamations were made in the synagogue. The public was apprised of what was happening and was told that their Haham had been discharged. The treasurer Samuel Idanha de Casseres, who was married to a niece of Haham Pardo,[138] wanted to avoid trouble before the New Year. He visited Haham Jesurun and entreated him to give his written opinion. The Haham delivered the report in a plenary session of the parnassim. He did not greet the most intransigent member, the president Jacob de David Senior. In the aura of peace surrounding the High Holy Days, president and Haham finally became reconciled.[139] What the Haham's reply was, is not known. The assumption is that it was in the girls' favor, for two of Iftag's daughters were properly married in Curaçao.[140]

Haham Jesurun married his daughter Gracia in 1739 to one David Dias Arias, who was given a splendid dowry. With this money Arias went into business. Like most businessmen of Curaçao he invested some of the dowry in a sailing vessel. He purchased the *Catharina Elizabeth* with Abraham Sasportas from Van Collen & Co. for 3,000 pesos after Van Collen's death. The Haham guaranteed payment of the purchases made by his son-in-law. Seven months after the marriage Arias was deep in debt. Governor Gales confiscated,[141] among other assets of the late Governor Van Collen, the *Catharina Elizabeth*, to cover the moneys Van Collen owed the Dutch West India Company. Frightened at his inability to satisfy his creditors, Arias fled to Jamaica. Houtschild, one of the creditors, sued the Haham. Instead of coming to his assistance, the parnassim warned him in writing that if the case went to court, he would be dismissed from service. The case was tried and the Haham was discharged. The parnassim, probably yielding to public pressure, eventually restored Jesurun to his post.[142] A year later Selomoh Nunes Redondo arrived at a settlement with Arias' creditors. Under its terms, the Haham was to reimburse the creditors only 25% of the debts, or a total of 2,205 pesos. Even so, that was a staggering load. Disgusted with the trouble Arias had

[137] It was their practice until not too long ago to dismiss their employees or rabbis for the slightest cause. They did not trouble to ponder whether such a step would be prejudicial to the interests of the community.

[138] In re Idanha, see Emmanuel, *Precious Stones*, pp. 325-27.

[139] MC, MS, 26-29 Elul, 5491. The Senior Chronicle, written by the said parnas or his son, is more discreet on the subject. The Curiel Chronicle, on the other hand, is more explicit and objective.

[140] OAC 870, Sept. 1, 1746, no. 142; OAC 833, Sept. 20, 1756.

[141] Jacob de Petersen, *Kort Vertoog . . .*, p. 45.

[142] MS, 29 Elul, 5499; 4 Nisan, 5502.

caused her father, the Haham's daughter divorced him. Arias died in 1759 while on a business trip to New Orleans.[143]

The parnassim assumed vast powers and even interfered in family and marital affairs, with just cause or otherwise. In 1737 Rachel, the orphan daughter of Abraham de Jeosuah Aboab, wanted to marry Isaac Salas. Her widowed mother applied to the parnassim for the amount customarily bestowed upon an orphan as her marriage portion. The parnassim forbade the wedding, because they did not approve of a young man who had no means of earning a living. Salas left for Surinam.[144]

In the same year Samuel de Casseres used to frequent the home of David Dovale, the cousin of his wife Abigail, much too often. His brother-in-law complained to the parnassim about this, for David had a comely daughter and people were gossiping. As a result, Samuel de Casseres, one of the six richest men in the community,[145] was forbidden to visit the Dovale home. Samuel's wife Abigail died five years later. Within seventy days he married Rachel Dovale!

A certain Ribca Lopez Penha married clandestinely without the permission of parnassim or Haham. She was expelled from Curaçao.[146]

There were rumors that the daughters of Rachel Garcia de Paz were illegitimate. The parnassim asked for their Haham's opinion. He convened the Beth Din and decided in favor of the mother and her daughters.[147]

In December, 1745, Samuel de Moshe Aboab wanted to marry Rachel Dias, who was also known as Paloma Vidal. His father opposed the match because she was a divorcée. Rachel maintained that she was a virgin and had divorced her former husband because of impotency. She tried to defend herself before the Island Council without success. When her fiancé was still determined to marry her, his father petitioned Governor Faesch to disallow the marriage. The governor asked the parnassim for the facts, and supported the petitioner. To prevent a secret marriage, the parnassim invoked an old regulation banning unions not performed before the Haham or his assistant. After battling against odds for eight years, Samuel finally married Leah de Jeosuah Gabay Letob in 1754.[148]

Rigid followers of the *hascamoth*, the parnassim dealt harshly with offenders.

143 Communication of Rabbi Bertram W. Korn.

144 MC, y. 1737.

145 MC, MS, 12 Adar, 5497; Emmanuel, *Precious Stones*, pp. 338-39.

146 MC, Tisry, 5496; MS, 25 Nissan, 5497.

147 MS, 9 Elul, 5504.

148 MS, 19 Kislev, 5506; 7 Tamus, 5507 and 17 Iiar, 5509; MIA, Treasurer's Book for 1754; OAC 862, June 20, 1747, nos. 50-51.

Very often the distribution of honors in the synagogue provoked distressful incidents. Some imagined the parnassim to be partial and refused to carry out the minor honors assigned. Notorious among the recalcitrant were Jacob Israel Monsanto in 1730; Jacob Jeudah Leao (representative of the community) on Yom Kippur, 1734; Jacob de Menaseh Jesurun Henriquez and Moses Penso on Tabernacles, 1734. All were fined from 25 to 30 pesos.

In 1737 Manuel Levy became engaged to marry. It was customary to confer upon a fiancé the honor of carrying the Scroll of the Law the first Saturday after his engagement or marriage — a custom still alive in Salonika. Manuel took the liberty of raising the Torah and did so with unusual vigor. He was rebuked there and then. His future brothers-in-law and relatives evidently raised their voices in protest, for the parnassim addressed themselves to Governor Van Collen. To each offender went a warning to stop vexing the parnassim under penalty of 400 pesos fine.[149] Manuel, the same pillar of the community who had paid 355 pesos for the fourth cornerstone of the synagogue, refused to sit down and discuss the matter further with the parnassim. He was fined fifty pesos and excommunicated. His relatives and relatives-to-be — Abraham and Daniel Belmonte, David Touro, Isaac Athias de Neyra, Isaac and Abraham aLevy Jr. — were fined 25 pesos each. Order and decorum had to be maintained, but at what lengths to achieve it!

ARRIVAL OF HAHAM SAMUEL MENDES DE SOLA

Ever since 1742 the parnassim had been looking for a rabbi to assist Haham Jesurun. They corresponded with Ribbi Aron Ledesma, haham of Surinam since 1737. But this talented, brilliant multilinguist,[150] physician and graduate of Amsterdam's Ets Haim Seminary, was not interested. The parnassim then applied to the mother community at Amsterdam. It recommended Ribbi Samuel Mendes de Sola.[151] Born in Lisbon[152] about 1699, De Sola arrived in Amsterdam as a lad of nine or ten. He studied at the Ets Haim, chiefly under David Israel Athias,[153] and in time formed part of the first class of rabbis versed in the Torah. He was equally proficient in Portuguese, Spanish and French. In 1741 he succeeded the deceased Abraham Mendes Chumaceiro[154]

[149] MC, 10 Sivan, 5497; WICA 597, pp. 473-80.

[150] Archives of the Jewish community of Surinam (Rijksarchief no. 25, 1678-1739).

[151] Emmanuel, *Precious Stones*, pp. 340-44.

[152] According to David Aboab, De Sola was born in Alentejo, Portugal.

[153] Athias died in 1753 while Haham of Amsterdam.

[154] PJCAA, Livro de Eleiçoems, 7 Iiar, 5501, p. 169; the Amsterdam parnassim's letter of July, 1744, to Curaçao.

as preacher in the Amsterdam synagogue where he distinguished himself for his eloquence.

Before engaging De Sola, the parnassim of Curaçao assured their Haham Jesurun that he would continue as *Haham Mor* or *Morenu ve Rabenu* — Chief Rabbi — and that De Sola would be his *senif* or assistant. The contract was very explicit on that score: De Sola would be the "second Haham at the side of the worthy Haham M[orenu] V[e Rabenu] R[ibbi] Raphael Jesurun."

Salient provisions of the contract follow. De Sola was required to attend the school daily — morning and evening — except Friday, Saturday and holidays. After evening services he was to read at a *yeshibah* as accustomed. He was to recite the *dinim* or laws on Monday and Thursday before the removal of the Torah, and to preach on every other Saturday and on all festivals. Every Saturday, after the evening sermon, he was to discuss in question-answer form a religious subject of moral significance. He was to follow the orders of the parnassim of Mikvé Israel "in everything . . . for the peace . . . and to bind himself inseparably with the aforesaid gentlemen . . . and avoid partiality." Although forbidden to engage in business, he was allowed to import certain items [from Holland] for his wife to sell.[155] Before the governor of the colony and/or other authorities, he was to speak in Portuguese, Spanish or French, in the company of the parnassim. He was to receive a salary of 400 pesos annually, free living quarters and a hundred pesos from a *yeshibah*.[156] He was entitled to share in the voluntary offerings, in the Purim bowl and in the flour distribution for *matza*. He was also supposed to receive half of certain donations and fees enjoyed by Haham Jesurun for performing marriages, issuing licenses to ritual slaughterers, and so forth. In addition, he was permitted to give private lessons during his free hours. He was promised 400 florins in Amsterdam for his expenses and a *nedabah* on his arrival. But the fare and baggage fees for himself and the seven people accompanying him were to be paid by Aron Jesurun, representative for the Curaçao community in Amsterdam. This contract was signed in Amsterdam on 27 Sivan, 5504, by De Sola and the Amsterdam parnassim Ishac de Joseph de Meza and Abraham de Ishac Franco Mendes.[157]

De Sola left Amsterdam with his wife Lea Henriquez, his sons David and Ishac, his daughters Rachel and Esther, and two gentile servants — a young

[155] Haham Jesurun engaged in business until 1738. De Sola also imported certain merchandise from time to time.

[156] Haham Jesurun also received 500 pesos yearly. The Rev. Wigboldus Rasvelt received 433:2:4 pesos in 1741 (WICA 588, p. 976) and enjoyed certain privileges. De Sola's salary, with extras, was therefore equal to Haham Jesurun's salary and emoluments.

[157] PJCAA, bundle.

man and a lass called Ana who caused her mistress untold distress.[158] After tossing on heavy seas for seventeen weeks, the 45-year-old rabbi reached Curaçao on December 7, 1744.

The parnassim treated him royally. They showered him with wearing apparel and his wife with jewelry. In his honor they conducted a *nedabah* which yielded between 500 and 1,000 pesos. The installation was a gala affair and cost the community 91:7:4 pesos. The total outlay for the installation and trip came to 806:6:1 pesos.[159] Indeed, it was a far cry from the modest sum spent on Haham Jesurun's arrival in 1717.

De Sola captivated the parnassim with his eloquence. Before long he had them scrap the first and foremost provision of the contract concerning his chief. They conferred upon him the title of *Morenu ve Rabenu* and regarded him as Haham Jesurun's equal.[160] This they did after having assured Jesurun — twenty years De Sola's senior — that he would always be their Chief Rabbi and De Sola his assistant! This power De Sola usurped after promising Jesurun from Amsterdam that he would serve as assistant! More will be said in coming chapters about De Sola's activities.

With De Sola's arrival, the community maintained two *Morenu ve Rabenus* in 1745 and sixteen ecclesiastical employees on a yearly payroll of over 3,000 pesos. It also had numerous societies and various welfare institutions supported by approximately 270 families. For all her local institutions, schools, synagogues and remarkable contributions to the Holy Land and other communities, Congregation Mikvé Israel well merited the tribute paid by David Aboab, Talmudic student visiting Curaçao in 1746 — "Mother City of all the islands in America."

158 According to a letter Moses Penso et al. addressed to the Amsterdam parnassim on May 24, 1748; also according to David Aboab's manuscript "Emeth ve Yaẓib" at Amsterdam's Ets Haim Library. See appendix 19.

159 MIA, Treasurer's Book for 1745.

160 According to David Aboab's "Emeth ve Yaẓib," this caused much dissatisfaction among Haham Jesurun's supporters. See Chapter IX.

CHAPTER IX

BITTER CONFLICTS OF 1744-1750

THE LEAO-PEREIRA INHERITANCE CASE

HAHAM DE SOLA found the Curaçao community in an upheaval. Two respectable families were battling over the validity of the *ketubah* or marriage contract and the mutual will which annulled part of it. In November 1740, Samuel Jeudah Leao married Lea, the daughter of Eliau Pereira, who brought him a dowry of 3,500 pesos. Lea suffered a difficult pregnancy. Shortly before the birth of her stillborn child and her subsequent death, Lea and Samuel executed a mutual will,[1] nullifying the *ketubah* and making the survivor sole heir. Lea was so weak that she could barely sign. According to the *ketubah*, when a woman dies without children her husband must return to her family 50% of the dowry inscribed in the marriage contract. This is an ancient law. Originating in Spain and recognized among rabbis as The Toletula [Toledo] Rule, it was applied in Amsterdam as in all Turkish communities. Lea's father died five weeks before her, leaving plantations and houses. Samuel not only refused to restore half the dowry to his widowed mother-in-law, but as sole survivor of the mutual will boldly claimed his deceased wife's share.[2]

According to the laws of the land, Leao was within his rights in refusing to restore half the dowry. Not so under the established laws of the Jewish community. Before marrying he had sworn to maintain the terms of the *ketubah*. The parnassim were powerless in disciplining Leao and a very ugly lawsuit between the two families rocked the island.

Almost all the members of the community were indignant, and rightly so. This was tantamount to the annulment of the *ketubah*, always regarded as a first mortgage, a preferred claim in favor of the wife and her family. Haham Jesurun was called to give his written opinion and in it he displayed his fine comprehension of the subject.[3] He found Samuel guilty and forced him to

[1] OAC 852, no. 65. Lea died on Feb. 23, 1744 (Emmanuel, *Precious Stones*, C 1793, p. 532).

[2] Lea Pereira's parents had executed a mutual will which declared either survivor the sole heir (OAC 855, no. 135). Therefore, Leao was automatically excluded from sharing in his father-in-law's estate so long as his deceased wife's mother lived.

[3] He cited, among other books, those by the Rabbis Haim Sabethay and Aaron aCohen Perahia of Salonika who treated of similar cases (*Responsa* in Portuguese [PJCAA, bundle]).

turn over the 1,750 pesos to the Widow Pereira. Haham Jesurun sent his opinion to Amsterdam for rabbinical approval, and also wrote of the untold sacrifices and privations endured by parents in raising dowries for their daughters. The parnassim also wrote to their Amsterdam colleagues. The Beth Din of Amsterdam, consisting of Rabbis David Israel Athias, Ishac Abendana de Britto and Abraham de Jahacob de Meza, hesitated to render a definite opinion. (The first two judges were colleagues of Haham Jesurun.)[4] They decided that if there was an antenuptial agreement executed before a notary or if the *ketubah* showed that the bride, and not her father, was the contracting party, then the *ketubah* could be altered. Nevertheless, they directed the litigants to conform to the custom established in Curaçao. The *ketubah* was all-dominant in Curaçao. The Beth Din's decision was ambiguous and could be interpreted either in favor of Leao or Pereira. Rabbis of Salonika who had wrestled with similar cases were careful to inscribe in the *ketubah* the husband's promise not to persuade his wife to relinquish even a part of her *ketubah* in his or another's favor. If a bride wished to renounce her rights, the bridegroom had to take an oath before marriage that he would consider such a waiver null and void, unless made before the Beth Din and with her family's full consent.[5]

The Amsterdam parnassim counselled their colleagues in Curaçao to have the two families settle their differences and stop the case from reaching the civil courts. Meanwhile Haham De Sola arrived. He vainly tried to effect a compromise. To preclude similar cases from cropping up, all married couples in the community — 218 in number — were required to sign a statement upholding the *ketubah* and considering mutual wills invalid, but recognizing a wife's waiver to her *ketubah* rights only when her husband took out a mortgage on property.[6] Twelve persons desisted: the Leaos, Moses Penso and several of their relatives.[7]

[4] Emmanuel, *Precious Stones*, p. 294.

[5] This law was promulgated in Salonika under the grand rabbinate of Hasday aCohen Perahia who died in 1677. It remained in fulll force until the destruction of that famous community by the Nazis. Compare David Pipano, *Abne Haefod* (Sofia, 1912), pp. 77b, 80b.

[6] At first the parnassim had the members sign a declaration promising not to make mutual wills when they were childless. This was outlawed by Fiscal Van Schagen who also was a notary (OAC 860, nos. 61-62).

[7] Because these twelve persons formed the opposition, their names are here listed: Samuel Jeudah Leao, his brother Abraham and their father Jacob; Isaac Lopez Dias and his sons Jacob and Abraham; David Namias de Crasto, Moses Penso and his brothers-in-law Ishac de Jacob Pereira and Aron Henriquez Morao; Ishac de Jacob Henriquez Fereira and Ishac Calvo. In reporting the matter to the Amsterdam parnassim, De Sola wrote rather inelegantly against some of the abstainers. He had no reason to brand Penso "a seditious, malevolent, turbulent man, disrupter of the public welfare," or Leao "a

The Widow Pereira won the case in Curaçao in 1750. Leao appealed it to the States General of Holland. Eventually the litigants settled it between themselves.[8]

DIFFICULTIES WITH HAHAM DE SOLA

It was not unusual for the Curaçoan businessman, constantly faced with imminent ruin by the loss or seizure of a ship at sea, to recall a guaranty given for another. Samuel de Selomoh Levy Maduro had reached that decision. Perhaps he had neglected to make preliminary investigations before giving his pledge and belatedly learned of the debtor's inability to pay. He had the statement justifying his revocation prepared by Isaac Pardo and edited by Pardo's uncle Samuel Idanha de Casseres. Because of some defect in that statement, Maduro had to honor his guaranty. Haham De Sola excommunicated Pardo for indiscretion. Pardo complained to Fiscal Van Schagen who issued a sharp note to the parnassim on June 16, 1745. Thanks to Salomo Nunes Redondo's intervention, the ban was removed but not before Pardo had humbled himself for forgiveness in the synagogue. In protest De Casseres resigned as representative of the Jewish community, as administrator of the Orphans Fund, as member of the Beth Din and as honorary *Hazan de Selihoth* (hazzan of penitential prayers).[9]

Ever since Josiau Pardo's rabbinate, the movements of the *lulab* (palm) on the Feast of Tabernacles were dictated by the Codex Ribbi Joseph Caro. The *lulab* was pointed in this sequence: east, south, west, north, up and down. The Amsterdam community had apparently departed from this procedure when their Haham Aelyon took office. He introduced the Salonika-Holy Land custom laid down by the cabalist Isaac Luria and pointed it south, north, east, up, down and west. Early in his career Haham Jesurun had wished to implement his professor Aelyon's system, but the elders of Curaçao disallowed

pious fraud and real hypocrite" (PJCAA, bundle, letter of July 1, 1746). According to the Senior Chronicle, Penso was then serving as adjunto, parnas and as representative of the [Jewish] Nation. As he was not called to the meeting held to sign for the *ketubah*, Penso resigned in protest from all his duties and paid the statutory fifty pesos' fine. He was prevailed upon to return and so he did (MS, 7 Tamus, 5506).

[8] OAC 825, April 30, 1751; Resolutions of the States General, meetings of June 2, 1751 and July 7, 1752. Meanwhile the Widow Pereira made a will specifically disinheriting her ex-son-in-law (OAC 870, no. 111).

[9] OAC 818, no. 142; MS, 18, 22, 24 Iar, 25 Sivan, 3 Elul, 5505. The "Emeth ve Yaẓib" ms. at Amsterdam's Ets Haim Library relates the story at length, praising Casseres and Pardo and condemning De Sola and Maduro. See appendix 19.

innovations. He therefore followed the movements accustomed by his predecessors Pardo and Lopez. Haham De Sola tried to change all this and met strong opposition. In fact, he was forced to sign a statement that he would not alter these movements during Haham Jesurun's lifetime.[10] The Amsterdam parnassim were barraged with letters on the subject. De Sola meanwhile lost a 22-year-old son who had been studying for the rabbinate.[11] Overcome with grief and bitterness over the hostility he had aroused with relation to his title of assistant rabbi, the *ketubah* question, and the Maduro-Casseres-Pardo affair, he sent a very biting letter to the Curaçao parnassim. Among other things, he wrote that he could not accept their decision because he had to conduct the movements of the *lulab* as he understood them. Bewailing the loss of his son and bemoaning his fate of having "to tend to a flock of wolves instead of sheep," he submitted his resignation[12] which was not accepted. Insignificant as these incidents seem today, in 1745-1746 they loomed high in matter of principle and fanned the cinders of communal unrest that had been smoldering since 1744.

FOUNDATION OF THE NEVE SALOM SYNAGOGUE

The preceding chapter disclosed that in 1732 the Jews on the other side of the canal held services in a dwelling they had transformed into a synagogue and called Neve Salom. In 1734 they moved to another house which Moses Penso had placed at their disposition. It stood on Bree Street, corner of Conscientie Lane.[13] To avoid complications[14] the parnassim refused to provide Scrolls of the Law and did not grant one until persuaded years later by Haham De Sola. Salomo Nunes Redondo, a resident of the district, furnished another scroll. (Apart from Redondo and two others, the 35 families living in that area, known even now as Otrabanda, were of modest means. The high city rentals[15] had forced them to settle here.) In the general strife that later enveloped it, the Neve Salom certainly was anything but a dwelling of peace.

For seven months after the installation of the Holy Scrolls things progressed smoothly. On Yom Kippur, 1745, one of the members, Jermiahu de Samuel L. Maduro, quarreled in the synagogue with Neve Salom's president Abraham Nunes [Redondo]. That night Maduro went to the home of the treasurer

[10] MS, 17 Tebet, 5506.

[11] Emmanuel, *Precious Stones*, pp. 278-79.

[12] PJCAA, bundle; David Aboab's ms., "Emeth ve Yaẓib."

[13] OAC 851, no. 128. See illustrations 38-39.

[14] MS, 20 Menachem and 4 Elul, 5492.

[15] According to the parnassim's letter to their Amsterdam colleagues.

Abraham Aboab Cardozo and struck him. The parnassim of the city community commanded Maduro to apologize to Neve Salom's president, but he refused. When Maduro returned to continue his fight with Cardozo,[16] Salomo N. Redondo (the president's brother) had him jailed. The prisoner was soon freed by Moses Penso and Mordechay Haim Senior, representatives of the Jewish Nation,[17] on their promise to answer for his good conduct. Salomo Redondo and Maduro were excommunicated for taking the law into their hands. Redondo was also fined 25 pesos for the Poor Box.[18]

As a result of this incident, the Neve Salom Synagogue was closed the first days of Tabernacles, 1745. Seventeen families of the district[19] asked the city parnassim for permission to pray in a private home. This was denied on the strong opposition of Moses Penso who wanted the synagogue reopened. Services were held in the synagogue on the final days of the holiday. To all appearances there was peace until Passover, 1746.

DISSENSION OVER THE PRIVILEGE OF BUILDING THE NEVE SALOM SYNAGOGUE

Penso's house was too small for the growing number of worshipers. After Passover, at the request of twenty families of Otrabanda,[20] the city parnassim made an appeal in Synagogue Mikvé Israel for funds to build a synagogue in Otrabanda. The *nedabah* brought in 996:5:3 pesos. With this money the parnassim bought a parcel of land on Bree Street. Penso offered to build on this plot, at his expense, a synagogue 45 feet by 40 feet at a cost of 4,000 pesos if the members would repay him or his heirs ten years later. Not to be outdone, Salomo N. Redondo also offered to erect a modest synagogue, 30 feet by 25 feet, but on a parcel of land 150 feet by 96 feet which he had purchased for 2,200 pesos. He said he would dedicate it "forever and un-

[16] That is Salomo N. Redondo's version to the Amsterdam parnassim.

[17] OAC 857, no. 35, Oct. 17, 1745.

[18] WICA 597, p. 487; MS, 19 Tisry, 5506.

[19] The seventeen petitioners were Abraham Nunes [Redondo], Isaac Calvo, Abraham Aboab Cardozo, Jacob Naar Henriquez, Aron de Moseh Israel [St. Crus], Selomoh Rivero, Manuel Levy, Salomo Nunes Redondo, Manuel Lopez by his son, Moseh Nunes, Semuel de Isaac Calvo, Jacob de Isaac Calvo, Gabriel Lopez, Raphael Molina Monsanto, Moseh Naar Henriquez, Abraham de Selomoh de Semuel Levy Maduro and Isaac Suares (WICA 597, p. 487).

[20] The twenty petitioners were Isaac Calvo, Selomoh Rivero, A. N. Redondo, A. A. Cardozo, M. Levy, I. Suares, M. Lopez, J. J. Calvo, R. Molina Monsanto (all nine had signed the first petition), Semuel and David Salom; Eliau Levy; David Serano, Jacob de Eliau Pereira, Isaque de Selomoh Villa Real, and five Levy Maduros: Semuel, Jacob de Selomoh, Abraham de Selomoh, Moseh de Semuel, and Moseh de Selomoh (PJCAA, bundle, petition of 23 Nissan, 5506).

conditionally to the God of Israel." These two influential men, one wealthy by birth and the other by industry, quarreled over the privilege of building the edifice. Each one had his supporters. Several local families petitioned the city parnassim to accept Penso's offer or to erect a synagogue with communal funds.[21] Penso was given preference possibly because his synagogue was over twice as large as Redondo's. Or perhaps they speculated, and with good reason, that Penso or his heirs would be generous and not insist upon full payment. Seriously ill in 1743, Penso made a will stipulating that his house should serve as a synagogue rent-free for a year after the death of himself and/or his wife.[22] He recovered. Disappointed because his offer was not considered, Redondo then proposed building a synagogue with Penso sharing equally in the expenses.

After mature reflection the city parnassim decided that the synagogue should be built with communal funds. Redondo then asked leave to build one privately. Refused, he threatened to write to the Prince of Orange-Nassau and the Amsterdam parnassim. He actually did write the latter an account of the controversy and accompanied it with important documents which passed through this author's hands. At the same time he requested a statement of all the assistance and contributions received by his family from the Amsterdam community. Though commended for his religious ardor, he was reminded that the decisions of the Curaçao parnassim had to be followed. He also received an account of the aid extended to his mother Debora Nunes, which included the fare to Curaçao paid for her and his maternal grandmother Hana L. Maduro. This amounted to 1,197:4 florins, which he promptly remitted.[23]

The Penso-Redondo dispute must have been quite acrid to warrant mention in the governor's report[24] of June 15, 1746, to the Council of Ten. Redondo was not one to nurse a lasting grudge and soon became reconciled with Penso. The parnassim and Penso requested the governor for a permit to build the synagogue under their exclusive administration and sponsorship. Faesch, who was on very good terms with Redondo, consulted him in order to avoid having a third synagogue go up. Redondo gave his approval and thus the permit was

[21] This petition was signed on 12 Jar [Iyar], 5506, by five Maduros: Samuel, Mosseh de Samuel, Jacob de Selomoh, Irmiau de Samuel and Abraham de Selomoh; also by the Calvos: Ishac, Semuel and Jacob de Ishac; David Serano, Ishac Villa Real, Selomoh Rivero and Aron Machoro (PJCAA, bundle).

[22] OAC 850, no. 23, Jan. 30, 1743.

[23] The Amsterdam parnassim acknowledged receipt of the money in their reply to Redondo of Feb. 19, 1748. See appendix 11, y. 1713.

[24] WICA 315, June 15, 1746.

granted.[25] To give Redondo a certain satisfaction, Neve Salom's parnassim, the hazzanim Mordechay Levy Maduro and David Molina, and various members petitioned the city parnassim to let Redondo supply the synagogue doors at his expense.[26] This was turned down. Again Redondo became involved with the parnassim. After superhuman efforts by Buildings Treasurer Isaac Calvo, the synagogue was eventually completed at a total cost of 4,690:7:3 pesos. It was inaugurated in Elul, 1746.

While Calvo was trying to finish the synagogue at the earliest time, Penso clashed with the parnassim over the estate they were administering of Abraham Henriquez Cotinho's first wife. In signal of protest he resigned as parnas[27] and representative of the Jewish Nation. Meanwhile Haham De Sola used the pulpit as a whipping post for those who disagreed with him or the parnassim. He incited the audience to such a pitch in 1746 "that they wanted to kill each other within the Holy House." The Penso-De Sola-Parnassim conflict worsened with the arrival of a rabbinical student originally from Italy, David de Samuel Aboab.

DAVID ABOAB AND THE TOBATH MARHE SOCIETY

David Aboab's "Emeth ve Yaẓib" — The Irrefutable Truth — a 24-page polemic on the happenings in Curaçao from Haham De Sola's arrival to October, 1746, tells us that David was the "son of saints." He probably was a descendant of Samuel Aboab (1610-1694), Chief Rabbi of Venice who was regarded as a saint of the age. David Aboab had lived in Jamaica for four years. During that time he had granted a religious divorce although unqualified to do so, and thereby lost the friendship of the Jamaican community. Later when he fell ill, the community did not take care of him. Aboab arrived in Curaçao shortly after Haham De Sola. He taught privately and also was engaged to teach, at a monthly salary of six pesos, the upper class which De Sola supervised. The parnassim recognized him as an able instructor.

A little before or shortly after Aboab's arrival, Penso and his group founded the Tobath Marhe Society whose object was to give mutual assistance to its members and to help transients. Like all the other brotherhoods, it required a *ribbi* for sermons and religious lectures. Aboab was engaged. Acceptance of the post meant joining ranks with Penso's faction.

[25] OAC 1528, July 14 and 25, 1746; OAC 139, no. 14.

[26] MIA, loose papers; MS, 7 Elul, 5506.

[27] MS, 16 Menachem, 5506; 4 Hesvan, 5507. Penso was being molested by Moseh, brother of Abraham Henriquez Cotinho. At Penso's request, the governor warned Cotinho to desist on pain of incurring a fine of 200 pesos (OAC 860, no. 79, Aug. 4, 1746).

There is no question that, after the Hahamim Jesurun and De Sola, David Aboab was the most versed in Talmudic science. Although the only person in a position to evaluate De Sola's knowledge in Talmudic matters, it was imprudent of him to pronounce himself against Jesurun and De Sola in matters of religious law. When his mother died, Benjamin Moreno Henriquez wanted to erect a monument over her grave. Her son-in-law felt that this was his duty and privilege. Jesurun and De Sola held for the son-in-law. Consulted, Aboab found for the son.[28] Because of this audacity or because of an incident with Haham Jesurun over the Tobath Marhe Society, Aboab was excommunicated and made to ask for public pardon in the synagogue. "What could a lamb do amidst wolves?" he asks in his polemic. But he was not so docile. As customary in such confessions, Aboab had to take off his shoes, and this he refused to do. De Sola ordered the sexton to remove them in front of everyone. Instead of reading his confession in a sad, contrite voice, Aboab chanted it as though the whole proceeding were a farce. Instead of sitting on a low bench behind the pulpit, he occupied a high one and had to be forced bodily to the lower bench. His face was disfigured that day in the synagogue according to De Sola's six-page report of this affair to the Amsterdam parnassim. When Penso's faction, i.e., the members of the Tobath Marhe Society, left the synagogue, they retaliated by fighting in the streets.

The Hahamim Jesurun and De Sola, the parnassim and councillors petitioned the governor to banish Aboab from Curaçao forever. The governor accordingly gave him eight days to leave, but at Aboab's request extended the time to the next sailing for Holland since Rosh Hashanah Eve fell on the eighth day.[29] Fearful lest Aboab remained in Curaçao, De Sola and the parnassim again wrote to the governor. Aboab finally left after receiving liberal assistance from Penso and his supporters. He took along his "Emeth ve Yaẓib" manuscript for publication in Holland. Jesurun and De Sola were aware of his plans and throttled them by influencing the Amsterdam parnassim against him. They urged their colleagues to have the States General of Holland deny any appeal Aboab might make to return to Curaçao. On reaching Amsterdam Aboab told his friends of his unhappy experiences and laid the blame chiefly on De Sola. The rabbinical student Ribbi Jeosuah de Cordova, who aspired to a post in Curaçao, denounced Aboab to the parnassim. Aboab was forced to sign a statement that his utterances against De Sola were untrue and that he

[28] Compare Emmanuel, *Precious Stones*, p. 119.

[29] OAC 860, nos. 167, 175; OAC 861, no. 70; WICA 316, Faesch's letter of Oct. 27, 1746, to the Council of Ten. See appendix 19 for Aboab's "Emeth ve Yaẓib."

would publish nothing without the parnassim's consent.[30] Disgusted, he left for London where, according to the Curaçao parnassim, he forsook his religion.[31]

Five days after the order for Aboab's ouster had been signed, the governor, on Fiscal Van Schagen's recommendation, ordered a general amnesty among the Jews for Yom Kippur, 1746. But the Jews were compelled to obey the synagogal regulations, the councillors, the parnassim and the preachers.[32] Translated by Abraham Nunes Redondo from Dutch into Portuguese, the proclamation was read in the synagogue. It absolved all those who had been excommunicated. Some of the opposition did not attend the ceremony as they felt there was no need for pardon where no sin had been committed.

DE SOLA AND PARNASSIM *vs.* PENSO AND OTHERS

Aboab was still in Curaçao when Penso removed from the synagogue files the copy of De Sola's biting letter to the parnassim in which he lamented being a "pastor of wolves."[33] Penso's act was a violation of the communal laws. He was hailed before the parnassim whom he refused to consider as judges. Through the Government Secretary he sent the president Mordechay de Crasto a protest, demanding that De Sola give him satisfaction before the Governor and Island Council. It seems that on Redondo's initiative, Quartermaster-Councilman Jan Gerard Pax (next in rank to the governor) tried to make peace between De Sola and Penso in the governor's presence. Peace was effected; it lasted all of ten weeks.

This time De Sola and the parnassim failed to live up to the agreement.[34] Shortly afterwards Jacob Jeudah Leao, Penso and Redondo were put under the ban: Leao for having given Penso a copy of a document unfavorable to the

[30] The Amsterdam parnassim petitioned the States General of Holland to deny a permit for Aboab's return to Curaçao, and this was done (RA, Resolutions of the States General, meeting of May 4, 1747).

[31] If this information is correct, then the parnassim, and De Sola especially, were responsible because of their intolerance and persecution.

[32] OAC 860, no. 190, proclamation of Sept. 12, 1746.

[33] Penso gave Aboab a copy of this letter before his departure. This, as well as a copy of another letter De Sola had written to the elderly Mrs. Henriquez, Aboab reproduced in his "Emeth ve Yaẓib."

[34] OAC 860, no. 63. Penso demanded a statement from Redondo that he, Penso, had lived up to his agreement. The parnassim forbade Redondo's furnishing it. Penso finally obtained proof of his compliance from the governor (OAC 862, no. 17, Jan. 10, 1747; OAC 818, no. 21, July 21, 1747; MS, 27 Hesvan and 15 Sebat, 5507).

parnassim which could have been obtained from the government files;[35] Penso for not having submitted to the parnassim's orders; and Redondo for having advised the directors of Neve Salom to break away from the city parnassim. All three complained to the Governor and Island Council against the misuse of the ban. The governor sentenced them to obey the parnassim. There was nothing left for Penso to do but look to the States General for relief.[36] In the face of Penso's threat, the parnassim absolved all three and ordered each of them to pay a fine of 25 pesos. They complied.[37] But eager to put an end to those abuses, Penso went on with the appeal. This is what he sought: 1) that the parnassim annul all the excommunications; 2) that they have no power to excommunicate in secular matters; 3) that they remove from the archives what they had written against him and refund the 25 pesos' fine. Penso was fighting not only for himself, but also in behalf of seventy supporters.

Before leaving for Holland, Aboab issued a power of attorney to Daniel Belmonte. To him he also gave various manuscripts, including three rabbinical decisions[38] against three parallel decisions made by the Rabbis Jesurun and De Sola. De Sola and the parnassim excommunicated Belmonte for exhibiting those Aboab papers. He complained to the governor and the ban was removed.

The excommunication was wielded so freely that the governor was swamped daily with the protests of new victims. In fact, he wrote to the Council of Ten that the Jews considered it a "gross insult." He asked for information when the ban could be imposed so that the Jews were not given more power than they already possessed.[39] As the fights continued, the governor issued a proclamation on June 9, 1747, ordering tranquility among the inhabitants without singling out the Jews.

From the start of the conflict the parnassim, De Sola, Penso, Leao and Redondo applied to the Amsterdam parnassim for protection. The Curaçao parnassim submitted a 38-page report on January 30, 1747, stating that there were from fifty to sixty irreconcilables led by Isaac Henriquez Juliao, Daniel Belmonte, David Ulloa, Ishac de Jacob Henriquez Morao, Daniel Cohen

[35] It deals with the order issued by the governor of 1712 to president Abraham Henriquez Morao to annul the excommunication imposed on David Senior. Thus Penso could prove that the parnassim had no right to excommunicate.

[36] OAC 863, no. 139, Feb. 10, 1747; OAC 1528, Feb. 14 and 17, 1747; OAC 818, no. 47, March 3, 1747.

[37] MS, 24 Adar, 5507.

[38] They were found in PJCAA. Outside of being in good Hebrew, they are unimportant from the standpoint of the *halakha* or rabbinic law.

[39] WICA 12, p. 26, letter of March 18, 1747; WICA 316, letter of May 1, 1747.

Peixotto, Abraham Belmonte; Jacob Jeudah Leao and his two sons [Abraham and Samuel] as well as his two brothers-in-law Aron Henriquez Morao and Jacob Lopez Dias. Some of these oppositionists, the report revealed with a certain satisfaction, had been beaten up in the synagogue courtyard. The Curaçao parnassim cautioned their colleagues to be extra careful when replying as an insider was informing the opposition of the junta discussions. Did the Curaçao parnassim have any doubts as to the extent of their rights?

To be sure, the Amsterdam parnassim supported their Curaçao colleagues. Nevertheless, they imparted some sound advice to preacher and parnassim alike. De Sola was advised to avoid having words with Haham Jesurun, to use moderation and refrain from employing "such uncouth and unusual terms" (their letter of March 17, 1747). As the community had meanwhile remitted 2,000 pesos for Hebron, the Amsterdam parnassim were quick to praise them for their generosity and charity. However, the Curaçao parnassim were reminded that God requires us "to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly" (Micah 6:8). Rebuked for the way matters were being run, they were advised to be sparing in the use of the ban and not so ready to bar admittance to the synagogue. They were also counselled to use moderation and fatherly love, and not to allow the rabbis attend the meetings.[40] Unfortunately there was no possibility of settling their differences with unyielding councillors like members of the Senior family and Isaac Levy Maduro and his sons.

The announcement on February 28, 1748, of the election of Prince William Charles Henry Friso, Prince of Orange-Nassau, as Stadholder was occasion for much rejoicing in synagogue and home. Community president Benjamin Lopez Henriquez gave a large banquet in his mansion and counted among his notable guests the governor and his wife. Mordechay Alvares Correa, a moderate of the opposition, also held a banquet that night. Captain Simon Versteveren, naval commander of a warship, also gave a dinner at Redondo's residence in honor of the parnassim. Like several other Protestants, he too tried to bring peace between the two warring groups. He managed to have Correa talk to De Sola, but could not make Penso do so. Penso had meanwhile obtained full satisfaction from the States General of Holland.[41] He visited De Sola and generously offered to let bygones be bygones if the parnassim removed from their files all what they had written against him. De Sola would not hear of that and the dispute continued.

[40] Letters of June 12 and July 7, 1747.

[41] Resolutions of the States General, meeting of Sept. 11, 1747.

DE SOLA *vs.* CORREA

The Correa-De Sola hatchet-burying brought about by Captain Versteveren lasted six weeks. In a Passover sermon of 1748 De Sola exhorted the Jews to help president Benjamin Lopez Henriquez and Salomo Nunes Redondo (third representative of the Nation) build the fortress at the entrance to the harbor. Because of the split in the community, Correa and Penso refused to cooperate. De Sola attacked Penso in his sermon. At the end of the service, Correa did not greet De Sola, and De Sola did not spare words against him.[42] The same day a serious incident between De Sola and Jacob Pereira took place in the synagogue. Losing his temper, De Sola had Pereira thrown out.[43]

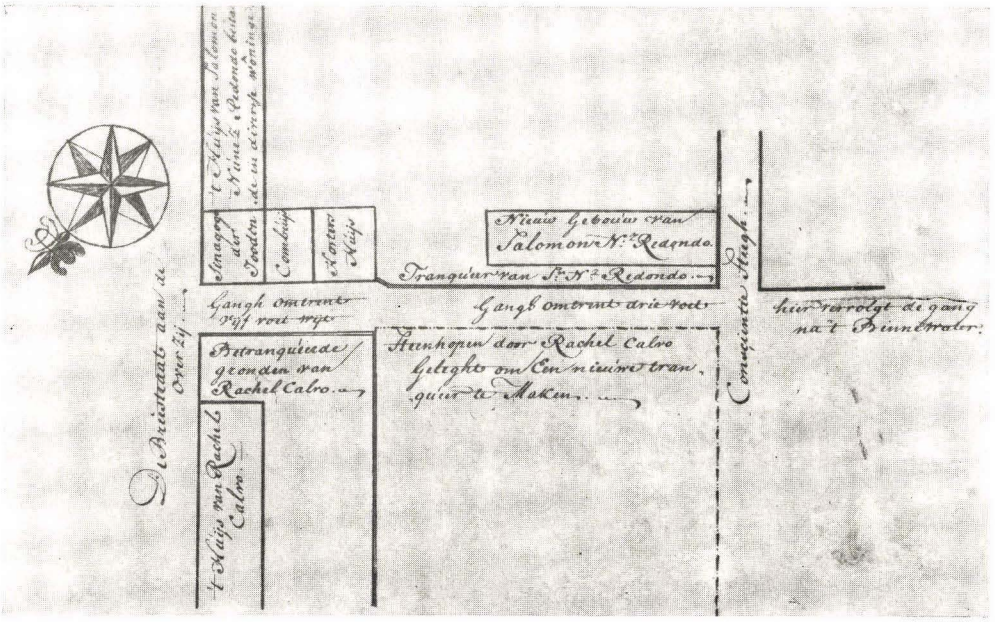
There was a rash of street brawls during the holiday. On April 18, the seventh day of Passover, the treasurer Moseh Henriquez Cotinho, his brothers Jacob and Isaac, and many others marched to the home of Correa's brother-in-law to attack him. Cotinho led the brigade, waving a red cloth as a banner. Their next target was the home of Mordechay Alvares Correa whom they insulted from the street. Cotinho then struck Isaac Athias de Neyra with sticks. So did worthy leaders let themselves be driven to such deeds.[44]

It became so dangerous to venture out of doors that Correa went to the synagogue with a bodyguard of six Dutch sea captains in his employ; Aron Henriquez Morao, with a bodyguard of two sea captains. De Sola flayed Correa and Morao in his sermon for having brought *framengos* (Hollanders) to the synagogue. From that day Correa did not attend services. As a result of these abuses Penso, Correa and 44 others petitioned the governor either to forbid De Sola to preach offensive sermons or to let them open another synagogue. The parnassim immediately dispatched Haham Jesurun to warn Correa that, unless he desisted from these activities, he would be punished in accordance with Jewish Law, i.e., put under the ban. Penso, who was present, entreated the venerable haham, who had suffered so much at De Sola's hands, not to occupy himself with such matters at his advanced age.[45]

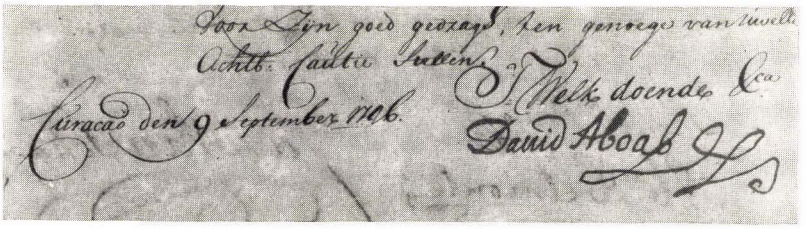
The parnassim had the members sign a petition to the Company not to sanction another synagogue. There were 235 signatures, including those of 16- and 18-year-old youths. In this document the parnassim exaggerated the Jewish population to be "two-thirds of Curaçao's white population and such

[42] OAC 867, no. 74.
[43] *Ibid.*, no. 78, April 22, 1748.
[44] OAC 867, nos. 79, 211. The parnassim's letter of May 21, 1748, to their Amsterdam colleagues.
[45] OAC 867, no. 111; MS, 26 Nissan, 5708.

38. MAP OF CURAÇAO, 1754: T = "THE LARGE JEWISH CHURCH" (MIKVE ISRAEL); *D* = "THE OTHER JEWISH CHURCH" (NEVE SALOM); *B* = THE CORN MILL ("DE VREEDE")

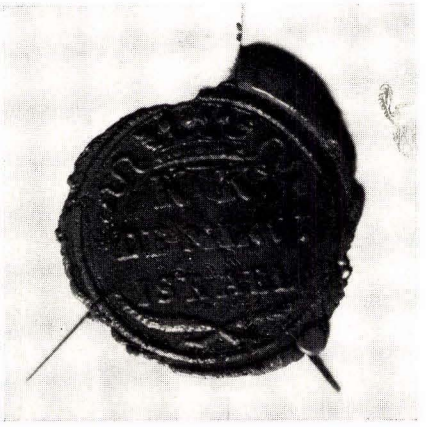


39. NEVE SALOM SYNAGOGUE, GROUNDS AND ENVIRONS, 1743



40. SIGNATURE, DAVID ABOAB, 1746

41. SIGNATURE, RIBBI ISHAC PINHEIRO NOGUEIRA, 1750, PAGE 245



42. SEAL OF K. K. MIKVE ISRAEL, 1752

making up the big merchants."[46] The ritual slaughterers who had refused to sign — Mosseh Aboab and his son-in-law Jacob de Jeudah Cohen Henriquez — had their meat declared *taref*. The pretext: the butchering was done outside the city limits in Steene Pad. The opposition informed the Amsterdam parnassim that the meat slaughtered by Selomoh Levy Maduro, who had signed in favor of De Sola, was considered *casher* although butchered outside of the city limits in Otrabanda.[47]

The parnassim urged their Amsterdam colleagues to submit this petition to the Council of Ten. Governor Faesch, too, wrote to the Council in this regard.[48] As usual, the Amsterdam parnassim supported their fellow parnassim. Jacob de David de Pinto and Manuel Lopes Suasso, two of the principal stockholders in the Company, presented the petition and it was accepted. The Company thereupon ordered Governor Faesch to deny any permit for a third synagogue and to enforce Jewish obedience to the parnassim.[49]

In their report to the Amsterdam parnassim Penso, Leao, Correa, Jacob Belmonte and David de Crasto attributed all the ills in the community to "this white Haham." (A blonde, De Sola naturally was conspicuous among his presumably swarthy, dark-haired flock.) They complained that he was not teaching the boys; that he was "running in the streets in his robe" in marked contrast to the dignified Protestant prelate [Rasvelt]; that he unfairly branded the meat of Mosseh Aboab and Cohen Henriquez *taref*; and that his supporters fought in the synagogue "with knives and boat oars."[50]

After Haham Jesurun's death on September 28, 1748,[51] De Sola felt stronger than ever. Two weeks later there was a scandalous fight in the synagogue. The ringleader of Penso's party was imprisoned on orders of the parnassim, but released the same day on Penso's intervention. The parnassim

[46] ". . . die twee derde deelen der blank Inwoonders op Curacao uytmaaken en zulke groote Cooplieden zijn." On the basis of 70 families who refused to sign and the 200 who did (since there were many 16- and 18-year-olds among the 235 signatures), the Jewish population of 1748 can be placed at 270 families. To this figure should be added the ten families who were dispatched by the Amsterdam community in July, 1748, and who arrived in Curaçao in September. If we allow five members to a family, the maximum Jewish population then was 1,500 souls with the hundred sailors — usually bachelors — at sea. This number represents half of the Island's white population, which must have been between 3,000 and 3,200.

[47] Letter of May 24, 1748, sent to the Amsterdam parnassim by Jacob Belmonte, M. A. Correa, David de Crasto and M. Penso.

[48] WICA 403, p. 171, Dec. 10, 1748.

[49] Letters of Dec. 8 and 12, 1748, to Faesch; WICA 475, p. 45.

[50] ". . . com facas & Remos de Chalupa" (letter of May 24, 1748).

[51] As customary, the Community Chest paid for the funeral expenses and the tombstone, which totaled 103:-:5 pesos.

now wanted the high government authorities in Holland to give them the power to have anyone they considered unacceptable jailed and/or banished from the island. Of course the Amsterdam parnassim could not agree to "such unlimited" power.[52]

The governor tried to put an end to this situation by issuing a proclamation outlawing fighting. It proved ineffective, possibly because he threatened to prosecute the troublemakers at law and let them suffer the consequences according to Jewish Law — "volgens de wet der Joden."[53] He therefore published a stronger one on November 12, 1748, enjoining the Jews to make peace and exhorting the parnassim to grant a general amnesty and foster love and union. Preacher, parnassim and adjuntos were recommended "to do what a free, tolerant religion demands." This proclamation was translated into Portuguese and read from the synagogue pulpit.[54] Governor Faesch could take comfort in the knowledge that Curaçao was not the only colony beset with such problems. In Surinam when the parnassim and haham excommunicated one Isaac Carilho, he appealed to the States General of Holland and won his case in 1749. The parnassim then tried to have him banished and in this too were frustrated.

FIGHTS IN OTRABANDA

Selomoh Ribero had come to blows with Abraham Cardozo and was helped by his supporters. Neve Salom's treasurer Rephael Molina Monsanto thereupon condemned Ribero and nine others to pay a fine of twenty pesos each, which they refused to do. De Sola and the city parnassim then excommunicated them.[55] Ribero et al. protested before the Governor and Island Council that the offense was of a civil and not a religious nature. The Council asked the parnassim for advice. They answered that they were willing to pardon the offenders "if they behaved like Jews," i.e., if they submitted to the hateful, humiliating public confession and paid the fine.[56] Abraham Belmonte, a licensed broker, had spoken to the excommunicate Ribero, and for that was placed under the small ban. Fearful of a like fate, small businessmen shunned Belmonte. Fiscal Van Schagen tried to help him. He wrote De Sola a friendly

[52] Their letter of May 26, 1749.

[53] OAC 180, no. 132, Oct. 29, 1748.

[54] PJCAA, bundle.

[55] They were S. Ribero, Manuel de Campos Perera, Jacob Perera, Daniel Belmonte, Abraham Henriquez Fereira, Elias de Jacob Pereira, Abraham Baruch Louzada, Daniel Cohen Peixotto, Daniel Lopes Dias and Samuel Calvo (OAC 12, Raad, Dec. 10, 1748).

[56] WICA 597, p. 455.

letter, requesting him to grant a general amnesty and to let Belmonte "give satisfaction" behind closed doors. De Sola did not answer. Redondo intervened, but De Sola gave an evasive reply.[57] Holding a strong, personal dislike for Belmonte, De Sola went so far as to swear upon the lives of his wife and children that he would keep persecuting Belmonte short of his becoming a Catholic,[58] or until he confessed publicly in the synagogue. It is small wonder that some victims like David Aboab, if the story is true, embraced Christianity to flee from the persecution of De Sola, the Curaçao and Amsterdam parnassim and of some zealots like Jeosuah Cordova, who hounded him even in London. Ribero and his group, Belmonte and others had no alternative but to appeal to the States General of Holland for relief from these persecutions.

Meanwhile Fiscal Van Schagen and Redondo had a serious dispute. Redondo accused Van Schagen of being at the bottom of all the trouble, in that he advised the opposition and also wrote their requests. Both exchanged insults. Van Schagen demanded satisfaction against Redondo, but the governor and Island Council supported Redondo. Van Schagen was not popular with the leading Protestants since his falling out with the Reverend Rasvelt. He had been accused at the time of mocking certain religious ceremonies at Easter. Van Schagen showed his resentment by refusing to appear before the Council as Fiscal Councillor, and resigned temporarily.[59] The governor would not accept the resignation as he did not want to give Van Schagen the opportunity to go to Holland. Here was a case of political rivalry. Van Schagen aspired to the governorship under the pretext that Faesch was too old. Faesch had written to the Council of Ten that he was only 63 and enjoyed excellent health. Van Schagen finally left for Holland with his two sons. Faesch warned the Council of Ten that Van Schagen was hired by Penso and Correa to have certain [administrative] reforms effected in the synagogue so that they would be the parnassim.[60] He urged that Penso and his group should be forced to obey the parnassim.[61] Although De Sola and the parnassim welcomed his departure, they feared the successful outcome of Van Schagen's negotiations in behalf of Penso and his party. Van Schagen's presence in Curaçao, like David Aboab's, was not the cause of the quarrels as later events proved.

[57] WICA 597, pp. 489-94, Nov. 26, 1748; MS, 30 Tisry, 2-6, 8, 28 and 29 Hesvan, 6-7, 20 and 26 Kislev, 8-9 and 18 Tebet, 20 Nisan, 20-21 and 23-24 Iar, 5508. On this occasion De Sola wrote a study on the *herem*, clarifying the difference between *herem* and *niduy* (isolation). Although placed "in isolation," Belmonte had to make public penitence in the synagogue.

[58] OAC 12, Raad, Dec. 30, 1748.

[59] OAC 10, Raad, Dec. 11, 1748.

[60] WICA 596, April 28, 1749.

[61] *Ibid.*, p. 1413.

Street brawls among the Jew increased so alarmingly that the governor was forced to issue another order banning street-fighting and subjecting offenders to severe punishment.[62]

DISCRIMINATION IN THE BURIALS

Five years had passed since the conflict over the *ketuboth*. New conflicts kept cropping up. De Sola and the parnassim now seized upon the pretext of expiation to discriminate against the deceased excommunicates and their families. This discrimination did not consist of a difference in the prayers or ceremonies, but of disrespect toward the corpse itself.[63] Perhaps it took the form of dragging the coffin in the cemetery or of casting pebbles on the coffin in symbolic stoning of the deceased.

When Ishac Lopes Dias[64] of the opposition died on April 9, 1749, De Sola and the parnassim made certain discriminations which led the two factions[65] to fight in the cemetery. In protest Mordechay Alvares Correa and Jacob Lopes Dias (son of the deceased) resigned as leader and second in command, respectively, of the gravediggers' society.

At the same time 57 persons petitioned the governor and his council: 1) to restrain De Sola from making inflammatory sermons and imposing excommunications; and 2) to grant them a temporary permit to conduct religious services in a private home. They also set forth that they would not recognize adjuntos Mordechay de Crasto and Jacob Levy Maduro as judges. This time the governor and council did not direct the petitioners to the parnassim. They forbade the opening of another synagogue and recommended the petitioners' applying to the civil courts for the other relief sought.[66] The parnassim retaliated by expelling six petitioners from the Hesed ve Emeth. The opposition thereupon founded a society to wash and bury their dead, and also bought a plot of land adjoining the Old Cemetery.[67]

On May 9 and 12 there were street clashes between the two groups. On May 13, thirty-five members of the pro-parnassim party attacked several members of the opposition on Heerenstraat. Jeosuah Naar and his three sons, and Daniel and Abraham Belmonte suffered "hundreds of canings." The

[62] OAC 183, no. 27, March 4, 1749.

[63] Regarding these discriminations, see Emmanuel, *Precious Stones*, p. 96.

[64] *Ibid.*, C 546, p. 506.

[65] MS, 23 Nisan, 5509.

[66] OAC 12, Raad, May 9, 1749; MS, 23 and 16 Iyar, 5509.

[67] Compare Emmanuel, *Precious Stones*, pp. 37-38. See *ibid.*, plan of the cemetery, pp. 492-93, y. 1750.

assailants included Moseh, son of the vice president Benjamin Lopes Henriquez, and very surprisingly Abraham and Moseh, brothers of Mordechay Alvares Correa.[68] The governor sent a sergeant and 24 men to quell the riot. He also issued a new proclamation forbidding the Jews from fighting each other.[69] He admitted in his report to the Council of Ten that all the trouble stemmed from the excommunications, and he sought their advice.[70]

In other circumstances these fights and public scandals would have obliged the haham and parnassim to give in and seek an honorable solution. But unfortunately De Sola continued relentlessly, with parnassim backing, especially of Mordechay de Crasto, Jacob Levy Maduro and the Senior family. He refused to marry one Jacob Gabay Henriquez because the future father-in-law, Isaac Henriquez Juliao, was anti-De Sola. The prospective bridegroom sued De Sola.[71] The parnassim continued their discriminations. They forbade David de Jeosuah Naar, a member of the gravediggers' society, to dig the grave of one Samuel Touro,[72] a non-oppositionist. Several weeks later various oppositionists were not permitted to convoy the funeral barge carrying the deceased maiden Rachel Abenatar although her father was not of their group. After the burial some members of the opposition called at the mourners' home. They were summoned to leave, for the hazzan had orders from the parnassim not to start prayers during their attendance. Scandalous fights took place on all three occasions.

On October 11, 1749, the youth Gabriel aLevy of the opposition died. The parnassim showed the corpse disrespect in the cemetery. Fifteen days later they repeated these discriminations against the deceased child of oppositionist Jahacob Lopes Dias. In both instances there were fights in the cemetery. To avoid similar scandals the opposition took to burying their own dead. They would pass the coffins over the cemetery wall which was not high.[73] At every funeral the governor had to send soldiers to keep the peace.

[68] OAC 820, May 14, 1749.

[69] MS, 25 Yiar, 5509.

[70] WICA 596, letter of July 1, 1749; WICA 12, pp. 26, 192.

[71] OAC 12, Raad, May 19, 1749. The parnassim took this occasion to reinstate and reaffirm their resolution of 24 Tammuz, 5486, prohibiting marriages not performed in the presence or with the approval of the haham. Strangely, they also added that a marriage ceremony under such circumstances was invalid and the woman was considered unmarried (Regulation of 17 Iyar, 5509). The Beth Din covered itself by declaring that all cases were not alike, i.e., that a woman was considered married. See appendix 1, pp. 565, 579.

[72] Emmanuel, *Precious Stones*, C 1707, p. 530.

[73] Governor Faesch's letter of Oct. 28, 1749, to the Council of Ten (WICA 319, Oct. 28, 1749; WICA 596, p. 1261).

Horror of these indignities led many testators specifically to prohibit the parnassim from washing or burying them.[74]

Meanwhile Ribero and his party received satisfaction from the States General of Holland. But in the face of parnassim stubbornness this did not help them much. Weary of the unending abuses, forty members and another twenty who joined ranks[75] filed with the governor a well-worded complaint against the parnassim. They alleged that they were not treated as Jews and were variously insulted, notably:

1) That on the day commemorating the destruction of the Temple, the *samas*, under orders of the parnassim, refused to give the petitioners the candles customarily dispensed in the synagogue to rich and poor alike, as though they were unworthy of participating in the service.

2) The synagogue was barred to them because of their petition of May 11, 1749, to the Council.

3) They felt that the parnassim had no jurisdiction over civil matters.

4) They wanted to know whether they would be allowed to attend synagogue services on the approaching High Holy Days, "on the day the world was created" (Rosh Hashanah).[76]

The parnassim did not reply. The opposition followed this petition with another. It too must have been ignored since the quarrels continued.

Meanwhile the Amsterdam parnassim began to doubt the impartiality of their protégés. They sent several stern letters: "Communal matters should

[74] Will of Sara Gomes, sister of Daniel Gomes of New York and widow of Abraham Campos [Pereira] (OAC 821, Aug. 25, 1749). She died in 1769. Will of Mordechay A. Correa (OAC 824, May 23, 1750).

[75] The petitioners were Jacob Belmonte, Jacob Parera, Jacob Jeudah Leao, Josuah Naar, Mordochay Alvares Correa, Moses Penso, Aron Henriquez Moron, Daniel Belmonte, Abraham Levy, Jacob Lopez Diaz, Abraham Baruch Louzada, David de Isaacq Lopez Diaz, Ishac de Jacob Jeudah Leon, David Cardozo Junior, Isaacq Belmonte, Isaacq Henriquez Juliao, Mosseh Touro, Manuel Levy, Ishac Levy, Daniel Peixotto, Abraham Michael Ruiz Mendez, David Touro, Abraham Belmonte, Elias van Jacob Parera, Gabriel Levy, Abraham de Jeosuah Naar, Samuel Calvo, Abraham de Jacob Henriquez Fereira, Benjamin Athias de Neyra, Benjamin Naar, Abraham Lopez Diaz, Ishac de Eliao Jeudah Leao, Jacob van Jeosuah Naar, Aron Machoro, Aron Cardozo David zoon, Aron van Mosseh Cardozo, Abraham van Jacob Jeudah Leon, Abraham de Eliao Jeudah Leao, Ishac de Jacob Jesurun, David Ulloa, Ishac Pereira, Jacob Alvares Correa, Josiau Naar, Mordechay Naar, Josseph de Campos Pereira, Manuel de Campos; S[ara] R[ibero] signing for her husband Selomoh Ribero; Semuel de Jacob Jeudah Leao, Michael de Eliao Jeudah Leao, Abraham Pinedo, Mosseh de Jeosuah Naar, Isaac Athias de Neyra, Abraham Gomez, Jacob de Isaacq Calvo, Michael de Jacob Jeudah Leon, David Naar, Semuel Aboab, Manuel de Raphael Alvares Correa, Eliao de Crasto, Elias Levy (OAC 821, Aug. 14 (?) or 19 (?), and Sept. 8, 1749). See illus. 44.

[76] *Ibid.*, act of Aug. 14 (?), 1749. D. S. van Zuiden, "Stadhouder Willem IV als Vredestichter in de Joodsche Gemeente op Curacao (1740-1750)," *De Vrijdagavond*, 10th year.

not be administered in such a way . . . all matters should not be allowed to end in litigation . . . [seek] to avoid the intervention of the civil tribunal; in the sermons he [Haham De Sola] should not be permitted to name and designate persons in odious terms." In another letter deploring the occurrences during the burials, they wrote: "and the hearts should soften on such sad occasions."[77] This letter also had no effect. In Passover, 5510 (1750), fights broke out in the Neve Salom synagogue. The city parnassim threatened to impose the small ban and fine the fighters fifteen pesos each.

BURIAL OF MORDECHAY ALVARES CORREA

To weaken the opposition the parnassim called one or another member to confess his faults. The opposition remained steadfast in demanding De Sola's dismissal or his being stopped from preaching provocative sermons. They also insisted on limiting the excommunication to questions of a religious nature. At De Sola's suggestion the parnassim tried to neutralize the opposition by forcing members to sign a statement that De Sola was well-liked and did not deliver irritating sermons.

While Van Schagen was in Holland negotiating a settlement to this strife between brothers, Mordechay Alvares Correa, 65, became gravely ill. Shortly before this, Penso arranged to bring over from Amsterdam Isaac, son of Mosseh Rodriguez da Costa. Mosseh da Costa was Penso's cousin and a man highly esteemed in Amsterdam. (He was related to the famous arms supplier Moses Machado, a.k.a. Antonio Alvares Machado.) Isaac Rodriguez da Costa became enamoured of Correa's only daughter and he joined the opposition. Ignoring haham and parnassim, Penso and others proceeded with the young couple's nuptials. Acting as Isaac's father, Penso gave him away in marriage. Isaac Henriquez Juliao, one of their group, officiated as rabbi. The bridegroom and ten of the leading oppositionists signed the *ketubah* under which Da Costa received 40,000 pesos, the largest dowry[78] ever given by a Jew in 18th century Curaçao.

Correa drew up his will. It ordered his friends not to let his corpse suffer

[77] Letters of Oct. 8, 1749, and Feb. 25, 1750.

[78] WICA 597, pp. 675-76. The *ketubah* was made on 30 Nisan, 5510, nineteen days before Correa died. It was signed by the bridegroom Isaac Haim Rz. da Costa, Jacob Jeudah Leao, Jeosuah Naar, Manuel Levy, Mosseh Touro, Abraham Belmonte, Aron Henriquez Moron, Daniel Peixotto, Jacob Lopez Diaz, Isaac Henriquez Juliao and Samuel de Eliao Jeudah Leao. It was legalized with its Dutch translation on May 6, 1750 (OAC 1551, May 6, 1750). Penso did not sign as he was related to the bridegroom. The translation of this document from Hebrew into Dutch is the best *ketubah* translation encountered by this author in the old records of Curaçao.

the indignities meted out to Lopez Dias and aLevy. It also ordered his friends to bury him in the Beth Hahaim, by the side of his wife, with all ceremonies.[79] As Correa's death was imminent, the parnassim requested the Government Secretary to see that the family called them, the haham and adjuntos to remove the excommunication. The family rejected the proposition. Correa had not frequented the synagogue in two years and during that time the parnassim had made no effort to make amends. Here was a golden opportunity for them to declare a general, unconditional amnesty; to promise new elections of parnassim to include members of the opposition, and to obtain De Sola's promise to control himself in his sermons. This done, they could have then sent two moderates to the family to make peace. So doing they would have been able to extricate themselves from this impasse with honor. But they failed to grasp that straw.

Before Correa died, Aron Henriquez Moron and his friends absolved him of the excommunication. Naturally the parnassim bristled since Moron was unqualified to do what was in the sole province of the haham and Beth Din. Correa breathed his last breath the evening of May 24, 1750. The parnassim sent the chief of the community's bathers with four candles as customary. Following the instructions of the will, the family called the bathers of the opposition. Da Costa asked the parnassim for the keys to the cemetery and these were refused. He approached the governor without success. Penso asked Dominie Rasvelt to intervene since the deceased had bequeathed 500 pesos to the Protestant Poor Chest. Rasvelt's reply, according to the parnassim, was that the communal leaders should be obeyed. Da Costa meanwhile took the precaution of mobilizing his and the deceased's Dutch boat captains. During the night several members of his party went to the cemetery, broke down the wall and removed the gates on the side of their plot adjoining the Beth Hahaim.

The parnassim requested the governor to send soldiers to the cemetery and stop Penso from carrying out their prerogative of burial. Penso hired Captain Van Nes with his armed boat to fight, if necessary, soldiers or others who might try to thwart them. The governor sent a sergeant, a corporal and twenty soldiers to "protect" the cemetery. Penso and his men "pushed through the guards who had orders not to defend themselves, as this would have started a revolution on the island."[80] On the pretext of avoiding disturbances, the parnassim forbade members to go to the burial. Nevertheless,

[79] See Emmanuel, *Precious Stones*, pp. 310-13, for full details of this interesting will. The month should read "May" instead of April.

[80] Faesch's report to the Company (WICA 597, pp. 765a-68).

from "500 to 600 Christians and Jews, whites as well as coloreds and mulattoes" attended, without incident. That was a bitter defeat for De Sola and the parnassim. The hazzan of the opposition solemnly chanted the memorial prayers, prefacing them with honorific verses dedicated to the very pious. On Correa they conferred the titles *Hassid ve-'Anav* — pious and modest.[81] In the minds of the parnassim their excommunication rendered Correa far from pious and his refusal to knuckle to their will hardly made him modest.

In reprisal the parnassim did not hold memorial prayers for Correa in the synagogue although he had paid the stupendous sum of 540 pesos for this service. His widow and son-in-law sent the parnassim a protest, through the Government Secretary, for willful neglect of duty. The governor, who disliked Penso, promised a reward of a hundred pesos[82] to the person telling who had broken down the cemetery wall.[83] No one came forth although everyone knew that Penso and his men were responsible.

While the Correa family was in its first week of mourning, a son of the neutral Benjamin de Casseres died. Several members of the opposition went to offer condolences to the parents. On orders of the parnassim the hazzan refused to begin the service before Penso's group left. The grieving father cried out: "Tell the Mahamad to go to h . . l!"[84] The governor sent the Council of Ten a report on these occurrences and purposely neglected to state that it was the decedent's testamentary wish to be buried by his friends only. Faesch knew of the deep animosity between De Sola and Penso and that the corpse could not be entrusted to De Sola. Bewildered, he again entreated his superiors for enlightenment on the ban and the extent of the parnassim's right to excommunicate. "I am not a Jew," he wrote, "that I can understand their law."[85]

CONDITIONS IN CURAÇAO, 1740-1750

Feeling still ran high among the big men of Curaçao over the Petersen intrigues culminating in Gales' dismissal and Faesch's installation. Only by his unusual tact was Faesch able to maintain peace. Fiscal Van Schagen, who had aspired

[81] See Emmanuel, *Precious Stones*, pp. 84-86, for titles conferred in the memorial prayers.

[82] Penso and Correa had Van Schagen print two letters in Amsterdam, exposing Governor Faesch's unfairness toward them. Faesch defended himself against the accusations and obtained from the parnassim all the necessary documents supporting him against Penso (MS, 9, 13 and 14 Iiar, 5510). It is clear that Faesch refrained from reporting to the WIC anything in Penso's favor.

[83] OAC 182, no. 38, May 25, 1750.

[84] Letter of the Curaçao parnassim to the Amsterdam community; MS, 28 Iyar, 5510.

[85] "Ick ben geen Jood Omme haere Wetten te verstaen" (WICA 597, p. 768).

to the governorship, assumed the right to intrude everywhere. He had a serious incident with Dominie Rasvelt over the nomination of a church elder not to his liking. Four hundred church members signed in favor of their minister and only 28 for Van Schagen, women mostly.[86] About the same time Van Schagen also quarreled with the Catholic pastor Pieter Cloeck over a marriage he felt should not have been performed. A Hollander, Cloeck ably defended himself. The Council refused to banish Cloeck as Van Schagen demanded and also reduced the fine of 150 pesos to fifty. Despite this victory Cloeck was disgusted and left Curaçao. His colleague, Pastor Dominicus Verhoff, replaced him, but illness soon forced Verhoff to step down in favor of Pastor Carel Van Heuman, a native of Nijmegen, Gelderland.[87] Heuman had been serving a little over two years when he died on April 22, 1742.[88] Pastor Salvador de Navarro, who had also been officiating during this period, now assumed full charge. A continuous stream of misunderstandings finally culminated in his dismissal in 1745. The church administrators then engaged Pastor Miguel Martin Roldan. Before long he ran into difficulties with some of the colored and mulatto parishioners who did not like him. They would fight in front of the house serving as the Catholic Church at Conscientie Steegh in Otrabanda across the way from the Neve Salom synagogue. So frequent and violent were these disturbances that the governor threatened to banish the troublemakers from Curaçao and send such as were slaves to the isle of Bonaire to work the salt pits. He compelled the parishioners to obey their pastor until a successor arrived. Here also was an instance where the priest had the full backing of the church wardens.[89] But since he could not maintain order, Roldan left a year later.[90] He was followed by Pastor De Mezeret who also had difficulties in 1748.[91] These disturbances among the Catholics lasted until 1757.

During this period of unrest among the Jews with their haham and the Catholics with their pastors, there was a rash of murders. In 1746 Isaac Pardo's slave killed a slave of Samuel de Casseres, and a slave of the Widow Kool

[86] It is significant that unlike their Jewish sisters most Protestant women could read and write. On the other hand, Jewish men were better versed in their religion than the Protestant men and were able to read the Bible and original holy writings.

[87] He swore allegiance to the States General of Holland, etc., in Curaçao on Sept. 4, 1741 (OAC 811, no. 280; WICA 209, p. 475; OAC 842, Feb. 1, 1742).

[88] OAC 848, no. 112. The inventory of his modest estate included 250 books and 28 paintings.

[89] OAC 178, no. 37, Feb. 28, 1747.

[90] WICA 596, p. 118.

[91] OAC 867, no. 3, April 1, 1748.

slew a slave of Jacob Semah Ferro.[92] In 1749 a white Gentile killed a fellowman, and a slave killed another slave. Both murders took place in Otrabanda.[93] To make matters worse a devastating drought hit Curaçao from 1746 to 1749, wiping out the slave corn supply. Various prayers for rain were held in the synagogue.[94] In 1747 France invaded Holland. As a result the Curaçoans, and the Jews in particular, sustained great losses at sea. The French and English captured a number of their vessels with their valuable cargoes.[95] In July, 1750, there was a frightful slave uprising. Thirty-six rebellious slaves — nine Jewish-owned — were executed.[96]

Drought, slave uprisings, clergy-parishioner difficulties, war between France and Holland and the inevitable boat seizures — all this beset Curaçao. There was an additional worry. Would private interests go on with the construction of a fort at the entrance to the harbor? There was wrangling over this privilege between the two factions in the Jewish community. Benjamin Lopez Henriquez and Salomo Nunes Redondo had offered to build it at their expense and with the contributions of friends. Redondo put eighty men to work on the project and began to load building materials on the three barges the governor had placed at his disposition. Penso was displeased that Redondo had taken the initiative. Nevertheless, he promised to furnish together with "Gay" [Mordechay Alvares] Correa twenty cannon — 18- and 24-pounders — with all the necessary equipment. Knowing "the great bitterness among the Jews," Faesch doubted that Penso would follow through,[97] and he was right. De Sola's subsequent searing sermon made Penso and Correa abandon their part of the bargain.

This wrangling certainly affected business, at least among the Jews. De Sola did grant dispensations of a sort to some who traded with the excommunicates. But it was the licensed brokers of both sides who bore the brunt of these animosities. Synagogue donations decreased since members of the opposition were not always admitted. Peace among the Jews was imperative.

A brief description of the main actors involved in this dispute will throw some light on why peace was so long in coming.

[92] OAC 860, no. 181; OAC 861, no. 13.

[93] WICA 597, p. 584.

[94] MIA, loose papers; MS, 27 Hesvan, 5509.

[95] See pp. 217-18, 220.

[96] The Jewish owners were Isaac Pardo, one slave; Moses Penso, 3; Jacob Henriquez Cotinho, 1; Aron Henriquez Moron, 1; the Widow Ricardo, 1; Aron Molina, 1; Daniel Peixotto, 1.

[97] WICA 316, Governor Faesch's letter of May 25, 1748, to the WIC.

PERSONS INVOLVED

HAHAM JESURUN

Pacific, honest, well-intentioned; burdened with heavy family responsibilities; in later life, timid and ineffectual.

HAHAM DE SOLA

Difficult and hot-tempered, qualities probably intensified by childhood scenes of Inquisition intolerance and tyranny. In 1734 the parnassim of the Ets Haim Seminary suspended him for two months.[98] When he was about to leave for Curaçao, his colleagues modified the special prayer for ocean travellers to read, "and the *Haham* may cease from his raging" in place of "and the *sea* may cease its raging" (Jonah 1 : 15); in place of "may he quickly reach the isle of *his* choice," they substituted "*our* choice"; instead of "that he reach the place of *his* desire," they wrote "*our* desire."[99] They referred to him as the "assistant of Haham Jesurun" and closed with, "that he may enjoy long life at his post."[100] In other words, they did not wish him to return to Amsterdam. The Amsterdam parnassim had described him as "Godfearing." Perhaps he tried too hard to live up to that attribute. He was generous in his synagogue donations.

THE PARNASSIM

5506 (1745-46)	Moses Penso who resigned within the year, Abraham de David Senior and treasurer Semuel de Isaac Levy Maduro.
5507 (1746-47)	Mordechay de Crasto, Jacob de Isaac Levy Maduro and treasurer Ishac Motta.
5508 (1747-48)	Benjamin Lopez Henriquez, David de Isaac Senior and treasurer Mosseh Henriquez Coutinho.
5509 (1748-49)	Mordechay Pereira, Joseph Jesurun Henriquez and treasurer Semuel de David Hoheb.
5510 (1749-50)	David Jesurun, Abraham de Marchena and treasurer Aron Motta.
5511 (1750-51)	Salomo Nunes Redondo, Abraham de Isaac Senior and treasurer Jacob Fidanque.

[98] Termos de Ets Haim, 5488-5570, p. 41. Not four months as exaggerated in the David Aboab manuscript, "Emeth ve Yaẓib."

[99] The italics are ours.

[100] Ms., Ets Haim, no. 30.

REPRESENTATIVES OF THE JEWISH NATION

Like the Amsterdam community the parnassim appointed two of their most distinguished men for life to represent the community before the government. Samuel Idanha de Casseres and Mordechay Senior served since 1739. The former resigned in 1745 and was replaced by Moses Penso. Penso resigned the same year and Jeosuah Henriquez Jr. took his place. In 5508 Salomo Nunes Redondo was appointed as third representative, but resigned in 1750 in favor of Penso.

According to David Aboab, the most intransigent among the parnassim and adjuntos in 1746 was Isaac Levy Maduro. In fact, the governor ordered Isaac and his sons Jacob, Samuel, Irmiau and Abraham, and Penso as well, not to molest each other on pain of a 500 pesos fine.[101] Isaac and his son Jacob were the same brokers who did business with Governor Van Collen and Petersen. Other diehards pointed out by David Aboab included Mordechay Pereira who was so unyielding in the fight with the Leaos over the *ketubah* of his niece; Mordechay Haim Senior and his entire family who were anti-Penso; Jeosuah Henriquez Jr., David Jesurun, Mordechay de Crasto, Benjamin Lopez Henriquez, and Salomo N. Redondo. The last was a likeable man, easily aroused but quick to forget bygones. He fought tooth and nail to obtain, as he did, a leading part in the administration of the community.

LEADERS OF THE OPPOSITION

Moses Penso

Treasurer of the community when the synagogue was inaugurated. Touchy, honest and determined, Penso generally was very liberal in his donations.

Jacob Jeudah Leao

In Curaçao since 1692; with Eliau Pereira served since 1719 as the first representatives of the Jewish Nation; related to the Rabbi Jacob Leon Templo of Amsterdam.

Jacob de Abraham Belmonte

Treasurer of the community when the synagogue of 1703 was inaugurated; related to Jacob de Abraham Belmonte, a.k.a. "Heer van Schoonenberg," ambassador of Great Britain and Holland to Spain.[102]

[101] OAC 864, nos. 158-59.

[102] Jacob was the son of Abraham Belmonte (a.k.a. Miguel Rz. Nunes) and Violanta de Isaac Ergas. He married Rachel de Abraham Aboab Cardozo in Curaçao. His granddaughters, as nearest direct relatives of Rachel Belmonte Schoonenberg, were given preference to share in the 60,000 florins'

Mordechay Alvares Correa

His father Manuel was one of the organizers of the community. Mordechay supported appeals for the Holy Land and contributed forty pesos yearly to the fund for marrying orphan girls. Curaçao's richest Jew, he probably was worth about 500,000 florins on his death.

Manuel de Gabriel aLevy

In 1730 he paid 355 pesos for the honor of laying the fourth cornerstone for the synagogue.

Daniel Cohen Peixotto

A man of modest position, he introduced Freemasonry to Curaçao according to what the parnassim wrote to the Amsterdam community.

All these leaders were mature men whose ages in 1749 ranged from fifty to over seventy. [103]

THE CONGREGATION

Many of the 280 Jewish families then living in Curaçao were of modest means. They depended in one way or another upon the parnassim and thus could not express themselves freely. Others like the Casseres, Pardos, Aboabs and Cohen Henriquezes openly sympathized with the opposition. The Correas, Naars, Pereiras, and even Penso, were divided among themselves — some being pro-Penso, neutral, or pro-parnassim. One gets the impression that if a secret ballot had been taken, the opposition would have garnered 75% of the votes.

THE GOVERNMENT AUTHORITIES AND THEIR ATTITUDE

Faesch supported the parnassim, but with reason avoided the use of force. As a result, the Island Council had divided sympathies. The Company directors avoided pronouncing themselves clearly, at least with regard to the excommunications. Only on the demand of Governor Faesch, and particularly of

fund she left for the marriage of orphan maidens of her family (PJCAA, Copiador de Cartas, 1764-1773, letter of May 13, 1768, to the widow of Isaac Belmonte of Curaçao; Resoluçoems dossres do Mahamad de 5527 a 5533, meeting of 4 Sebat, 5527; Resoluçoens dos Tezoureiros, 1733-1784, meeting of Jan. 3, 1768, pp. 228-29).

[103] WICA 597, p. 456; OAC 821, Sept. 14, 1749. See Emmanuel, *Precious Stones*, pp. 240-43, 292-96, 308-12, 313-14, 322-25, 325-27, 328-31, 334-35, 340-44, and 396-97, respectively, for biographical details on the aLevys, Haham Jesurun, Mordechay de Crasto, Mordechay Alvares Correa, Mordechay Haim Senior, Moses Penso, Samuel Idanha de Casseres, Salomo Nunes Redondo, Jacob Jeudah Leao, Haham De Sola and the Peixottos.

the powerful Amsterdam parnassim, did they prohibit Penso and his cohorts from opening another synagogue in Curaçao. The States General, on the other hand, could not conceive of a government within a government. They granted satisfaction to members of the opposition who had been excommunicated, and yet would never have thought to intervene had it not been for Van Schagen's tenacity.

Fiscal Jan van Schagen

According to the parnassim, and even Faesch, Van Schagen was instrumental in prolonging the fight. He certainly benefited from the unrest. As Chief of Police he had to maintain order and discipline on the island, and he did his best to bring peace to Curaçao although without success. It was on his initiative that the governor published one or another proclamation of amnesty to the Jews. It was he who had written the two letters urging De Sola to yield — letters which do him much credit. It is certain that with his departure for Holland hostilities among the Jews, as among the Catholics, heightened and led to the slave revolt. Van Schagen's conduct in the Neyra, Pereira, Rasvelt and Cloeck cases was reprehensible. He is to be condemned for the calumnies he wrote the Company against the Jews during Governor Van Collen's day. But his efforts toward restoring peace among the Jews were well-intentioned.

PRELIMINARIES TO PEACE

Bad news about Van Schagen preceded him to Amsterdam. The parnassim had written very ill of him to their colleagues as had Governor Faesch to the Council of Ten. Van Schagen had an interview with the parnassim of Amsterdam where he exposed the facts as they really were. He defended Penso and Correa and submitted a plan for peace which was rejected. Not one to become easily discouraged, he went before the States General of Holland and was heard. They took his plan under consideration and referred it to Don Manuel Lopes Suasso and Isaac de Pinto. Suasso and Pinto presented it to the Amsterdam parnassim, who held more than one meeting with Van Schagen and ministers of the republic. The parnassim made some important modifications. Van Schagen had written, "that the Jewish preachers be prohibited from exercising unilateral power." This was changed to, "that the preachers shall not attend meetings of the parnassim and adjuntos; that they shall be consulted only in religious questions, without having a voice as judges; that only in exceptional cases and by order of the parnassim may they make use of the excommunication for infraction of religious laws." They also modified the part relating to naming persons in the sermons.

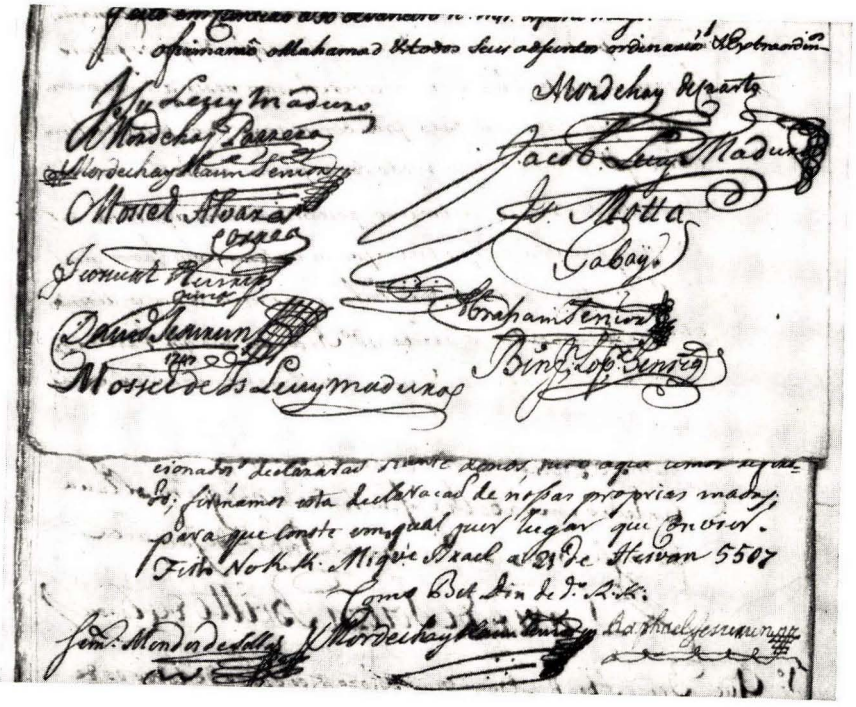
The modified plan was accepted and signed on April 1, 1750, by a commission headed by Jan van Schagen and the Amsterdam community leaders Manuel Lopes Suasso, Isaac Daveiga Henriques and Isaac de Pinto. It was entitled: "Considerations of the Parnassim of the Portuguese Jewish Nation of Amsterdam on the plan to re-establish peace and tranquility in the Jewish Community of Curaçao, and communicated to the said Parnassim." It is a pity that the Amsterdam parnassim did not give Van Schagen the credit he deserved. The plan should have been called more properly: "Considerations . . . on the plan submitted by Jan van Schagen, Fiscal of the Island of Curaçao currently in Amsterdam, and communicated . . ."

There were nine articles to this plan, these being the most important: 1) The Jews are ordered to make peace among themselves. 2) The Parnassim shall not prohibit anyone from entering the synagogue. 3, 4) The Haham shall not impose excommunications without consulting the Parnassim and shall not attend meetings of the Parnassim. 5) All members are ordered to obey the Hascamoth or Regulations which the Parnassim of Amsterdam shall prepare for them. 6) Every member of the opposition shall occupy his former post in the community. 7) The old privileges shall be retained. 8) A prayer of thanksgiving shall be held at the earliest date.

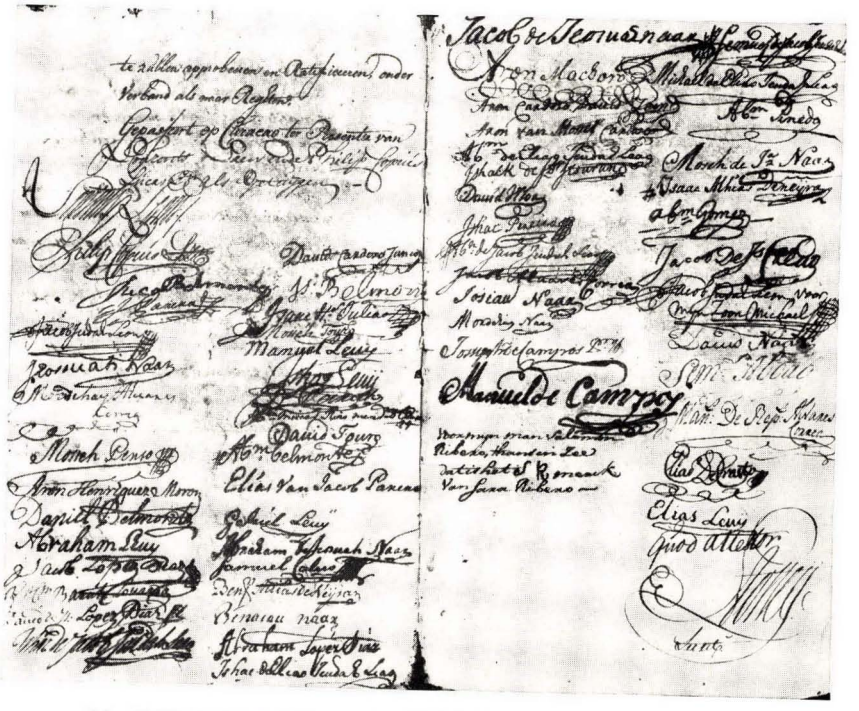
This order was signed by William Charles Henry Friso, Prince of Orange-Nassau, etc., Holland's supreme authority, on April 30, 1750, in the form of a *placaat* or publication. Written in Dutch and in Portuguese, it was entitled: "Publication and Provisional Regulation of His Highness and Worthy Prince of Orange-Nassau, etc., etc., concerning the Portuguese Jewish Nation of Curaçao." Two editions — one in quarto and the other in folio — were printed at The Hague by Jacobus Scheltus, printer in ordinary to His Highness, year 1750. This important introduction opens the publication:

> There having coming to our ears the discrepancies and discords which for some time past have arisen between the Parnassim, the Church Council, and the Haham or Preacher of the Jewish Nation at the Island of Curaçao, on the one side, and some members of the aforementioned Congregation on the other, and from which no other than very prejudicial consequences may result for the commerce and prosperity of the aforesaid Island . . . We . . . decree.[104]

[104] The author saw a copy at the PJCAA. There are two others: one at the David Montezinos Library at the Ets Haim, and another, in very poor condition, of the folio edition in OAC 182, no. 61. David Montezinos published an article on this occasion entitled, "Een feestviering op hoogbevel" in vol. XVI, no. 48, of the *Israelietische Nieuwsbode* of May 17, 1889. Abraham Mendes Chumaceiro published a shorter text in his *Zal het kiesrecht Curaçao tot het kannibalisme voeren?* (Curaçao, 1895), pp. 15-17. In 1749 Prince William, a very good friend of the Pintos, spent a night with his wife at David de Pinto's home in Tulpenburg, and visited the Amsterdam synagogue (Da Silva Rosa, p. 121).

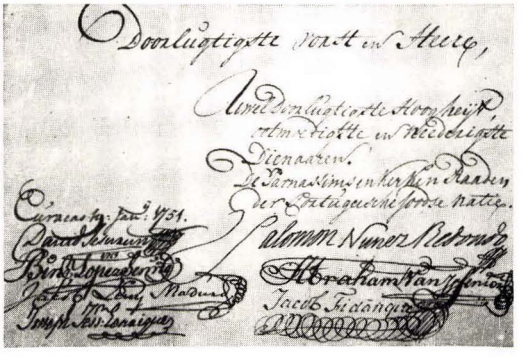


43. ADJUNTOS AND BETH DIN, 1746: HAHAM DE SOLLAS, MORDECHAY HAIM SENIOR, HAHAM RAPHAEL JESURUN



44. THE 59 SIGNATORIES OPPOSING THE PARNASSIM AND HAHAM DE SOLA, PAGE 198

46. GOLD AND SILVER TORAH CROWNS DONATED TO SYNAGOGUE MIKVE ISRAEL BETWEEN 1711 AND 1750



47. SIGNATURES, PARNASSIM AND ADJUNTOS THANKING PEACEMAKER PRINCE WILLIAM, 1751

TRIUNFO DA UNIAÕ

Contra o Perniciôso vício da Discordia, ou

SERMAÕ,

Que em quarta feira 17: de Menahem Anno 5510:
Pregou o H. H.

R. SEMUEL MENDES DE SOLLA,

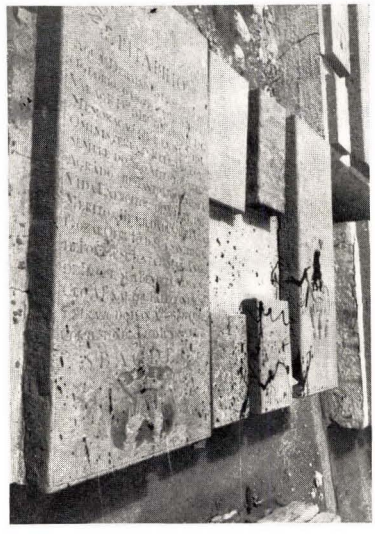
Rab do K. K. MIKVÉ ISRAEL, & K. K.
NEVE SALOM.

Na Ilha de CURAÇAO.

48. TITLE PAGE, HAHAM DE SOLA'S SERMON CELEBRATING PEACE IN THE COMMUNITY

49. ABIGAIL OFFERING GIFTS TO DAVID KING SOLOMON'S JUDGMENT.
DETAIL ON THE TOMBSTONE OF ABIGAIL, WIFE OF
SELOMOH NUNES REDONDO, 1747

50. DETAIL ON THE TOMBSTONE OF RACHEL, WIFE OF ISHAC HAIM SENIOR, 1746, PAGE 93



51. TOMBSTONE OF DAVID JEUDAH COHEN HENRIQUEZ, DAYYAN, 1778, STAINED BY THE REFINERY GASES

52. TOMBSTONE OF REPHAEL JEUDAH COHEN HENRIQUEZ, 1767, STAINED BY THE REFINERY GASES

PUBLICATIE

En proviſioneel

REGLEMEMT,

Van Zyne HOOGHEID,
den Heere Prince van Orange
en Naſſau, &c. &c. &c.

Raakende de Portugeeſche Joodſche Natie te CURACAO.

PUBLICAÇAÓ

E provizional

REGLAMENTO,

De Sua ALTEZA
oſenhor Principe de Orange
e Naſſau, &c. &c. &c.

Conſernente a Naçaó Judaica
Portugueſa *em Curaçaó.*

IN 's GRAVENHAGE,
By JACOBUS SCHELTUS, ordinaris Drukker van ZYNE HOOGHEID.
Anno 1750.

NA HAYA,
Em Caza de JACOB SCHELTUS, Impримidor ordinario de SUA ALTEZA.
Anno 1750.

45. TITLE PAGE, PEACE EDICT OF PRINCE WILLIAM OF ORANGE-NASSAU, 1750

Thus peace was restored by royal decree. Governor Faesch published this order as soon as it reached Curaçao.

PEACE

Curaçoans, and the Jews especially, were overjoyed with the decree of their beloved Prince. Everyone except Isaac Levy Maduro wanted to blot out the bitter past. At a meeting with the parnassim and adjuntos, De Sola convinced Maduro that he had to obey a royal edict. That Friday Penso brought his Holy Scroll of the Law to the synagogue and thereby forever dispelled any suspicion that he might open another synagogue. On Saturday the Ten Commandments were read (Deut. 3:23-7:11). Penso was the first person called to the Torah.[105] With characteristic generosity he offered 200 pesos for the health of the entire community, the haham, the parnassim and adjuntos. Isaac Rodriguez da Costa, called fifth, gallantly offered 300 pesos, also for the health of the haham, parnassim and adjuntos. David Namias de Crasto, another "ex-oppositionist," was called sixth — *samuch*.[106] Leao, esteemed as the most venerable person in the community, was called *maslim*, i.e., *mashlim*.[107] In recognition of his prerogative, the haham was called to read the portion relating to the Ten Commandments. The entire congregation made donations for Penso's health — all except Isaac Levy Maduro and his sons although as adjuntos they were obliged to do so under the regulations. The voluntary offerings amounted to 1,200 pesos.

In spite of this auspicious beginning, Leao's report to the Amsterdam parnassim was pessimistic. He doubted a change of character on De Sola's part possible. He recommended that the new regulations should compel the parnassim to consult the Amsterdam community before imposing excommunications except in such grave offenses like adultery, and so forth. Lesser offenses, he felt, should be punishable by fine. "The Americans" [Curaçoans], he confided, "are very stubborn and would rather be crucified than submit to public pardon in the synagogue."

Isaac Haim Rs. da Costa also wrote the Amsterdam parnassim a gracious letter concerning the peace and the prayers of circumstance offered.

Four days after the Sabbath of the Ten Commandments, a solemn thanks-

[105] After having been consulted, the Cohen Family desisted for once from exercising their right of priority.

[106] *Samuch* here means "about to" close the reading of the Torah. The Ashkenazim designate the sixth person called to the Torah *shishi*.

[107] *Mashlim* stands for the person who closes the reading of the Torah, regularly the seventh. The Sephardim customarily call as *mashlim* the most respected person in the synagogue.

giving service was held in the synagogue and attended by the governor and other island greats. De Sola gave an eloquent sermon in Portuguese later published by Isaac de Pinto as *Triumph of Union over the Pernicious Vice of Discord, or Sermom Delivered on Wednesday, the 17th of Menahem 5510* (August 19, 1750), *by the Omniscient Haham Ribbi Semuel Mendes de Solla, Rabbi of the Holy Congregations Mikve Israel and Neve Salom in Curaçao.*[108] This he dedicated to the Prince of Orange-Nassau, etc., with the plea to consider all the members of his congregations as loyal subjects of the [Netherlands] Republic. In this address De Sola gave thanks to the Prince, Governor Faesch and the Island Council [for their efforts to restore peace]. He also expressed appreciation to the "very eminent, wise and erudite Mr. Wigboldus Rasvelt, distinguished preacher of the National Church of this island," and to the Messrs. Philip Schonenboom and Pieter de Mey Lourensz, "worthy directors of that Church," for attending.

Under Prince William's decree, which really was Van Schagen's brain child, Penso was reinstated as representative of the Jewish Nation, and former opposition "brothers" as members of the Hesed ve Emeth. Nevertheless, there were several hurdles. Penso and his group did not want the elections for parnassim of Rosh Hashanah to be held that year. They insisted upon Manuel Levy's reinstatement as adjunto. They also insisted upon whittling down the number of bathers of the dead from the current twenty-two to the prescribed eighteen.[109] Finally, they sought the restoration of certain honorific functions such as blowing the *shofar*, and so forth, which one or another of their group had formerly enjoyed.

When the parnassim did not readily accede to these demands, Penso and his group began acting in what was termed a"friendly" fashion. No wonder the worried governor lamented to his superiors that it was a pity that the decree had not arrived sooner! Now De Sola employed his good offices to settle the difficulties. He invited Dominie Rasvelt who came with two prom-

[108] *Triumpho Da União Contra o Pernicioso vicio da Discordia ou Sermão Que em quarta feira 17: de Menahem Anno 5510 Pregou o H[aham] R[ibbi] Semuel Mendes de Solla, Rab do K[ahal] K[adosh] Mikve Israel & K[ahal] K[adosh] Neve Salom Na Ilha de Curaçao.* In their meeting of 13 Sivan ,5511 (June 6, 1751), the Amsterdam parnassim licensed Ishac de Pinto to publish this sermon (PJCAA, Resoluçoes doss[res] do Mahamad, 5511-5527, p. 6). Gerred and Johannes de Broen of Amsterdam printed it that year as a 25-page pamphlet in quarto.

[109] The opposition was not fair. It is true that the bylaws of the Hesed ve Emeth provided for not over eighteen members. The additional four represented pro-parnassim replacements for excommunicated opposition members. Penso's group could have easily avoided this unpleasantness by agreeing not to make further replacements, on the death or resignation of a member, until the number went down to eighteen. In re these difficulties, see WICA 12, p. 192.

inent Protestants, Jan Hendricks and D. van Uijtreght, to confer with the Mahamad and adjuntos. This meeting resulted in a compromise agreement drawn up by Dominie Rasvelt. It was signed and accepted on October 13, 1750, by Rasvelt, Hendricks, Van Uijtreght, the parnassim, adjuntos and De Sola.[110] Manuel Levy was reinstated as adjunto. The parnassim managed to have four elderly members of the Hesed ve Emeth resign voluntarily, in this manner reducing membership to the statutory eighteen.[111] An amicable arrangement was made with regard to the honorific synagogue functions, and thus peace was definitely established. Governor Faesch's letter of January 23, 1751, to the Council of Ten, fairly exulted: ". . . the Jewish Nation, after complying with M: Penso's wishes, are very happy. God grant that it be so for a long time."[112] The parnassim also dispatched a letter of thanks to the Prince for his interest and intervention in behalf of the Jewish community of Curaçao. See illustration 47.

While peace was still in the process of jelling, the Protestants and many Jews, at the request of the parnassim, petitioned the Prince and the Dutch West India Company not to appoint Van Schagen governor of Curaçao.[113] Ironically he was the instrument of peace. Without his spadework and tenacity, peace would not have been attained so speedily or taken the decent form it did.

Under the terms of peace Penso and his group obtained almost everything they had wanted: admission to the synagogue, retention of their former posts, limitation of De Sola's power and, to a certain extent, that of the parnassim as well. All this they achieved without undergoing the degrading public penitence and without giving satisfaction to the parnassim and De Sola. The parnassim remained with De Sola in the rabbinate and retained the power to excommunicate, at least in matters of a religious or moral nature. Only the wealthy town Maduros were dissatisfied, but had to respect the Prince's edict. And so peace reigned in Mikvé Israel until 1770.

[110] The signatories were Salomo Nunes Redondo, president of the community; Abraham de Isaac Senior, vice president; Jacob Fidanque, treasurer; the adjuntos, according to seniority, Isaac Levy Maduro, Mordechay Pereira, Moses Penso, Mordechay Haim Senior, Manuel Levy, Jeosuah Henriquez Junior, David Jesurun, Mosseh de Isaac Levy Maduro, Mordechay de Crasto, Abraham Senior, Benjamin Lopez Henriquez, Jacob [de Isaac] Levy Maduro, Joseph Jesurun Henriquez, Abraham de Marchena, Jacob Semah Ferro, Abraham Naar, Abraham da Costa de Andrade, Abraham Jesurun Henriquez, Samuel Idanha de Casseres, Isaque Penso, David de Crasto and Mosseh de Chaves; Dominie Rasvelt, Hendricks, Uijtreght and Haham De Sola (PJCAA, bundle).

[111] See Emmanuel, *Precious Stones*, pp. 63-68, for full details on this brotherhood.

[112] WICA 317, Jan. 23, 1751.

[113] Leao's letter of Aug. 7, 1750, to the Amsterdam parnassim. Van Schagen received his salary as fiscal until Aug. 5, 1750 (WICA 227, p. 318); he died shortly afterward in Holland.

CHAPTER X

ECONOMIC STRUCTURE
1730-1765

WITH A POPULATION ranging between 1,300 and 1,500 souls the Jews constituted the second most important element on the island. They were for the most part businessmen — the leading marine insurance underwriters, shipowners and merchants. With their boats they sustained the island economy at the risk of their lives and fortunes.

MARINE INSURANCE UNDERWRITERS

In August, 1734, forty-five marine insurance brokers — forty Jews and five Gentiles — entered into an agreement[1] not to compete against each other. With government sanction they formulated a schedule of insurance premiums and set a fine of 50 pesos for any deviation from it. These rates were based on the number of the crew as well as destination. A vessel with a crew of 40-45 men bound for Rio Hacha paid 4%; for Maracaibo, 5%; for the coast of Caracas, 6%; Puerto Rico or Santo Domingo, 7%; the Spanish West Indies or Margarita, 8%. A vessel with a crew of 20-25 men going to Rio Hacha or Maracaibo paid from 6% to 7%; to the coast of Caracas, 10% per month; to the Spanish West Indies or Margarita, 12%. A vessel with a crew of 18-20 men destined for Puerto Rico or Santo Domingo paid 10% to 12%, depending on the season of the year; from San Juan to Adicora, 4% per month; for

[1] Approved by Governor J. P. van Collen and his Council on Aug. 8, 1734 (OAC 803, Aug. 8, 1734). The Jewish underwriters were David [de Cras]to, Isaac Levy Maduro, Francisco de Lima, Abraham Jesurun Henriquez, David Senior & Sons, David & Abraham Senior, Mordechay Fundam, Ferro & Neira, Jacob Levy Maduro, Joseph Jesurun Henriquez, Aharon Lopes de Fonseca, Abraham Dias, Benjamin Naar, Isaac de Jacob Henriquez Moron, Francisco Lopez Henriquez, Mordechay & Jacob de Crasto, Jacob Judah Leon, Parera & Penço, Abraham Andrade and the Widow Mordechay Andrade, David Cohen Henriquez, Abraham de Pina, Jacob Curiel, Mosseh and Selomoh Levy Maduro, Semuel de Jacob Jeuda Leao & Comp., Mosseh Alvares Correa, Jacob de F[= Ephraim]. Jesurun Henriques, Jacob de Elias Parera, Mosseh Penso, David de M[osse]h Lopez Henriquez, Elias Parera, Anthonio de Neira & Sons, Jeossuah Henriquez Junior, Mordechay Haim Senior, David Cardozo Junior, Ephraim Jesurun Henriquez, Selomoh Levy Maduro, Benjamin da Costa de Andrade and I. L. Maduro. The five Gentiles were Nicolas Houtschilt & Son, Joh. Georg Rudeloff, Jan de Veer, Pieter Redoch and Nathaniel Ellis Jan zoon (OAC, *ibid.*).

Martinique, 4% — merchandise free of confiscation — and from Martinique to Curaçao only 3%. The rate to or from Curaçao and St. Thomas or St. Eustatius was 3%, but only 4% to and from distant New York; to Jamaica, 3%; from Jamaica to Curaçao, 4%. The risks of travelling to Caribbean ports, or even to New York, obviously were not so great at the time.

The amounts insured were relatively large, e.g., in the eleven-month period between January 3 and November 16, 1741, insurance on sailing vessels and their cargoes totaled 1,773,600 pesos.[2]

With the increasing activity of pirates and privateers and the seizure of Dutch boats in the Caribbean by the English and Spanish, these rates fluctuated according to the risk involved. In 1757 insurance premiums to a Caribbean port varied between 18% and 20%.[3] In 1761 Moses and David Henriquez Juliao paid a 25% premium on the trip from Curaçao to Mexico.[4]

A number of the Jewish underwriters were widows and people of modest means who risked their small savings for a steady income and often ruined themselves. Ishac, the son of Haham De Sola, lost his capital as well as his father's in such ventures. In 1759 the Society of Underwriters was organized to prevent or reduce these disasters. It had capital stock of 200,000 pesos, consisting of 400 shares with a face value of 500 pesos. Three hundred fifty-five shares were subscribed, 123 by Jews, with Isaac Haim Rodriguez da Costa holding the record number of forty shares. There was an executive board of six with two Jewish members: Francisco (a.k.a. Benjamin) Lopez Henriquez and Isaac Haim Rz. da Costa. The stockholders, merchants for the most part, had certain privileges in insuring their vessels.[5] The organization apparently was short-lived because of the systematic seizure and destruction of Curaçoan ships by the English.

PORTS VISITED BY THE JEWS

The bylaws of the underwriters association and the reports sent by the governors of Curaçao to the Company tell us that the Jewish-owned boats or other vessels bearing cargoes of Jewish merchants made frequent calls at La Guaira, Coro, Chicherobiche along the Venezuelan coast, New Spain, Puerto Bello, Cartagena, Maracaibo, Rio Hacha, Santa Marta, Cumaná, Margarita, Adicora, French and Spanish Santo Domingo, Puerto Rico, the

[2] OAC 8 (Raad), July 2, 1742.
[3] OAC 836, no. 217.
[4] OAC 887, no. 312.
[5] OAC 874, nos. 95-96, May 25, 1759.

French and Danish Antilles, Jamaica, Barbados, Trinidad, Havana, Mexico, Mississippi, New Orleans, Newport and Providence, R.I., New York, Charleston, S.C., and so on. Inevitably some Curaçoan traders settled in these islands and colonies of the Danes, English, French and Spanish, and a few of their small settlements lasted for three or four generations.[6] At times a boat captain obtained a permit from the island governor to travel to "All of America," i.e., the Caribbean region and North America. Those having well armed ships made the more distant trips. For instance, the *King David* and *Prins van Orange* of Moses Penso and his brothers-in-law plied between Curaçao and Holland. In 1780 David Morales applied to Holland for a "Turkish passport" so that he could send his ships to Turkey.[7]

COMMERCE AND NAVIGATION

Trade with New York was active since the 17th century. Early in the 18th century three residents of New York did a brisk business with the Dutch islands: Isaac Naftali with St. Eustatius; Nathan Simson and Moses Michall with Curaçao. So often did Michall stay in Curaçao, where he finally died, that in business circles he was considered a Curaçoan.[8] Later on the Gomez brothers, the Riveros (Riberos), Harts, Hays and the Gratz's took over this trade. Ribero, who had left Curaçao for New York in September, 1741,[9] used to export to Curaçao cargoes worth P. 3,081 in flour, bread, butter, fat, "Jewish meat," sausage and candles. Most Jews who traded with the Jews of Curaçao were related to one another so that Curaçao was virtually the commercial and religious center of a large family. With such excellent connections business was bound to thrive in Curaçao or wherever Jewish settlements existed.

Adventurous Curaçoans, who were undaunted by Spain's stringent colonial policy, engaged in the risky contraband traffic with their neighbors along the Spanish Main. Spain prohibited her subjects from exporting cacao, Mexican silver, gold dust, and so forth, to other lands since she wanted a monopoly on the sale of all her colonial products in Europe. But rather than wait months and months for a sailing to Spain, her colonists chanced selling their products to the Dutch and English of the Caribbean area. So, in spite of the ban, the Spanish Creoles conducted a lively "business as usual" with the Curaçoans in

[6] See appendix 16.
[7] OAC 926, no. 590, April 5, 1780.
[8] For more details, see Emmanuel, *Precious Stones*, pp. 260-65.
[9] OAC 847, no. 48.

cacao. As a precaution, however, they would engage in sham battles in Venezuelan waters. The Curaçoan "pirates" would "seize" the cacao from the Venezuelans after paying them in gold doubloons or in finished goods. These so-called sea battles started in 1735[10] and continued until 1766 despite the protests lodged by the Spanish ambassadors to The Hague. One of them lamented in 1741 that cacao from the coast of Caracas, via Curaçao, could be obtained more cheaply in Holland than in Spain.[11]

This type of trading was especially difficult to carry on since Spanish pirates intercepted and seized the Dutch cargoes. No wonder the merchants and underwriters, mostly Jews, urged their governors time and again to send out an armed vessel to capture the pirates.[12] Some Jewish merchants equipped their vessels with eight, and even twelve, cannon.[13] To some extent these self-defense measures helped protect Curaçoan shipping.

Spain tried to wipe out this traffic by forming the "Compañia Real de Guipiscoa," which sent out heavily armed ships to rove the main sea lanes of the Spanish, English, French and Dutch colonies and attack her competitors. This was one reason why England declared war on Spain in October, 1737, shortly before the War of the Austrian Succession. In the early years of the war neutral Holland suffered much from the belligerents, particularly the English. Dutch vessels — even those carrying provisions for the Spanish, French and Dutch colonies — were captured and confiscated. The English sought to weaken the Dutch mercantile fleet under the pretext of blockading the dominions of her enemies. Neither pirates nor privateers, however, deterred the intrepid Curaçoans from trafficking in contraband, which also included weapons and munitions. This last phase of the trade, never a Jewish specialty, attracted the Protestants — Governor Faesch's nephew no less. In 1743, 68 merchants, including 44 Jews, petitioned Fiscal Van Schagen not to permit vessels with munitions to leave for the Spanish Coast.[14] They wanted to avoid the confiscation of their boats and cargoes by the English. In 1740 the English had captured eight Curaçoan vessels whose combined

[10] OAC 804, Nov. 7, 1735.

[11] RA, Resolutions of the States General, meeting of Feb. 28, 1741.

[12] Similar petitions were made in 1734 (OAC 802, January, 1734); in 1735 by 25 Jews and 8 Gentiles (OAC 804, Nov. 14, 1735); in 1737 by 33 Jews and 11 Gentiles (OAC 807, Oct. 1, 1737); in 1752 (OAC 16 [Raad], April 24, 1752), and in 1757.

[13] The *Drie Gebroeders* of the Motta brothers had eight cannon; the *Prins van Orange* of Moses Penso and Co. had twelve (see appendix 3).

[14] WICA 209, p. 727; WICA 590, p. 57. When several Jews signed a statement against Governor Faesch for permitting his nephew's ship to leave the harbor with munitions for La Guaira, the parnassim ruled that no Jew could sign a declaration against the governor (WICA 590, p. 80, Feb., 1743).

cargoes were worth 33,528:3:3 pesos. A year later the island lost over 150,000 pesos in shipping. In 1744 the losses soared to 600,000 florins.[15] Severe shipping losses were also suffered during the Seven Years War (1756-63).

Following is a list of some of the ships[16] and cargoes which the islanders — Jews as well as Gentiles — lost to the English, French and Spanish between 1740 and 1776.

ENGLISH SEIZURES

1740 *Florencia Christina*, with a cargo worth Pesos 6,980:6. *Catharina*, P. 6,508:2:4. *De twee goede Vrienden*, P. 7,309:1:4. *De Royal*, P. 2,864:1:4, of which 2,282:2:4 belonged to Benjamin de Casseres and Josias Pardo. *Bonaventura*, P. 7,765:7:5. *De Christina*, P. 1,049:7:2. *Zeegenigh*, P. 1,050.[17]

1741 *Brederobe*. *Triton* — of Jeosuah Henriquez Jr., worth P. 5,907:4:2; her crew of 32 included the bookkeeper Mosis Naar. Of her 79 insurers, 60 were Jews.[18]

1742 *Esperanza*. *Nooijt Gedaght*. *Geertruijde*[19] — of Mordechay Alvares Correa, worth P. 16,549:7:3. Of the 87 merchants and insurers involved, 36 were Jews.[20] *Drie Gebroeders* — of the brothers Abraham and Aron Motta, valued at P. 14,586:6:4 and armed with eight cannon, was taken with its crew of 40, including the sailor David Motta, to Rhode Island, "notorious plunder nest."[21] *Samuel Akatan* — worth P. 27,206:4:1, armed, with a crew of 27, belonged in equal shares to the Gentiles David Redoch and Juriaan de Pool de Jonge and the Jew Mordechay Levy Maduro who was on board with the sailor Jeremias Levy Maduro.[22] *'t Royal*.

1743 *Curaçaosche Gereghtigheyt* — of gentile ownership, was insured by 27 underwriters of whom 21 were Jews.[23] *Sara* of Abraham Diaz Coutino.[24]

1744 *Suzanna* of Abraham Belmonte and Joseph da Costa Gomez. *Willem*

[15] WICA 588, pp. 495-96; WICA 589, p. 15; RA, Resolutions of the States General, meeting of Jan. 19, 1745.

[16] See appendix 3.

[17] WICA 589, pp. 633-39.

[18] OAC 867, no. 201.

[19] WICA 590, pp. 176v, 189.

[20] OAC 812, no. 222, July 3, 1742.

[21] WICA 590, pp. 742-75v.

[22] WICA 592, pp. 484, 493v, 497v-98, 506.

[23] OAC 851, no. 171.

[24] *Ibid.*, no. 61.

Galei, captured by the Spanish who looted it of 40,000 pesos cash, was later taken by the English and never returned.

1745 *De Maria* of the future Governor Jan Rodier, with her cargo, was worth P. 6,780:6:3. (Antony de Daniel Jesurun Henriquez was one of the sailors.)

1745 *Perll* — Most of its cargo belonged to Francisco Lopez Henriquez.[25]

1746 *'t Fortuijn* of Jeosuah Henriquez Jr.; Manuel de Britto went to Rhode Island to claim her.[26] *Drie Susters. Elizabeth. Catharine* of Salomon Senior. The 25 underwriters (22 Jews) authorized Jacob Rodriguez Rivera of New York to claim the ship from the English authorities.[27]

1747 *Marcus. Miralda* — 23 of her 24 insurers were Jews.[28]

1748 *Jonge Johannes* of Benjamin Lopez Henriquez. Elias Lopez of Rhode Island was authorized to claim her from the English.[29]

1752 *D'Hoop* of Moses and David Henriquez Juliao.[30]

1756 *De Geregtighyd* of Jeosuah Henriquez Jr. and Michael de Leon. Most of her underwriters were Jews.[31] (On a subsequent trip De Leon died at sea.) *Drie Vrienden* of Rafael Gomez, Abraham and Joseph Sasso.[32]

1757 *Catharina* — in which Jeosuah Henriquez Jr. had a part interest. *Jonge Cornelis* of Moseh Henriquez Cotinho. *Anna Maria* — 25 of her 31 underwriters were Jews.[33] *Olijf Tak* of Manuel and Gabriel Pinedo.[34]

1758 *De Flour Mill* of Aron Henriquez Moron; her supercargoes were Gabriel Pinedo and Joseph Rodriguez da Costa.[35] *Jonge Willem. Goede Hoop. Meulwijk*, en route to Amsterdam, was taken to Bermuda. Most of her valuable cargo belonged to Jews.[36] *Attalante*, en route to Amsterdam. *Princesse Gouvernante*, on her return trip to Holland. *Curacaose Visser*, on her return trip to Amsterdam. *Catharina Maria Galey. Sara.*[37]

[25] See below, footnote 79.

[26] OAC 861, no. 65.

[27] OAC 861, no. 191; OAC 866, no. 59; OAC 867, no. 62.

[28] OAC 865, no. 208.

[29] OAC 866, nos. 14, 97. Another source says that the ship belonged to Jeosuah Henriquez Jr. and a Gentile, and the cargo to Lopez Henriquez.

[30] OAC 827, July, 1752.

[31] OAC 1557, no. 17.

[32] OAC 833, Nov. 4, 1756.

[33] OAC 834, no. 330.

[34] OAC 834, May 4, 1757.

[35] OAC 873, no. 80.

[36] OAC 837, Nov. 7, 1758.

[37] OAC 839, May 22, 1759.

Up to 1758 the English captured 37 ships which had left Holland for St. Eustatius and vice versa; also three ships which were going to or from St. Martin. The value of these vessels and cargoes ran into several million florins.[38]

1759 *Klijne Pluton* of Abraham Jacob Jeudah Leon.[39] *Patientie* — taken near the fortress. *De Fuyk* — taken in Curaçao Bay.[40] *Enigheid.*

1760 *Leydsamheyd* — taken to Virginia. *Maria Frederica. Clara. De Havane. Curacaosche Pacquet. Blek Jook* — taken to *New* Providence (see y. 1763, *Pretzeba*). *Ana Catharina* of Abraham Henriquez Moron. *Koningin Abigail* of Aron Henriquez Moron. *Jonge Johannes*, *De Duif* and *La Perla* — all three of Aron Henriquez Moron were taken to South Carolina.[41] *'t Fortuin. Mariana* of David Bueno Vivas.[42]

1761 *De Vriendschap* — Naftali Hart was charged to claim her from the English authorities in Rhode Island.[43] *Adriane* of Jacob Hisquiau Suares and Manuel Lopez Jr.

1762 *De Hoop* of Abraham de Benjamin Naar.[44] *Jonge Manuel & Rachel*, of Jacob de Manuel de Crasto, was taken to Philadelphia. *Sophia* — 24 of her 29 insurers were Jews. (Isaac de Benjamin Moreno Henriquez was her clerk.) *Suxes* [*Succès*] — 22 of her 26 insurers were Jews.[45] *St. Antonie. Koningin Esther* of Daniel Lopez Castro and Manuel Alvares Correa. *Aurora.*[46] *Adriana* — of Aron Henriquez Moron was returned on the payment of P. 7,000 to the English privateer. Governor Rodier's protest of this seizure and his demand for a refund of the ransom was delivered to Governor Henry Moore of Jamaica by Isaac Nunes Netto, captain of the *King David.*[47] *Jonge Elias* of Jeudah Leon and brothers.[48] *La Reyna Abigail* of Aron Henriquez Moron.[49]

1763 *Carlos de Tweede. Mari Bamba* — her captain was David Lopez Raphael. *Pretzeba* — was taken to *New* Providence (see y. 1760, *Blek Jook*).

38 *Lysten van de Hollandsche Schipen . . . welke op hunne Reizen naar af van de West Indien, door de Engelschen . . . genomen* (Amsteldam, 1758).
39 OAC 839, June 14, 1759.
40 OAC 875, no. 340.
41 OAC 877, June 26, 1760.
42 OAC 878, Sept. 23, 1760.
43 OAC 883, Nov. 16, 1761.
44 OAC 886, no. 55.
45 OAC 888, no. 228.
46 OAC 888, nos. 204, 238, 246, 253, 365.
47 OAC 888, no. 303. See appendix 3B for Jewish boat captains.
48 OAC 885, no. 209.
49 OAC 886, no. 234.

For other Curaçoan ships the English captured during the American Revolution, see below, pages 257-58.

FRENCH SEIZURES

1740 *Elizabeth* — in which Abraham Lopez Penha and Abraham Sasportas had a part interest.[50]
1745 *Jalij* [*Galei*?] *Bachilder*.
1746 *La Esperanza* of Abraham Rodriguez Pimentel.[51] *Elizabeth*.
1747 *Maria*. *Buena Ventura*. *Zeeblom* of Jacob Suares and Moses Henriquez Coutino.[52]
1754 *Maria Anna*. *St. Andres*. *Charming Polly*. *Princes van Orange*. *Mariane*. *De Nancy*.[53]
1757 *Masaltob*. *St. Anthonio*.
1772 *Paulina* of Daniel Gomes Casseres & Co.[54]

SPANISH SEIZURES

1734 *Elizabeth*; *Assendelft* — both left Curaçao for Holland.
1735 *America*.
1738 Six ships captured.
1740 *Esperance* — captured on the Holland-Curaçao run.
De Hoop — taken on leaving Curaçao.
1741 *Samuel*, *die God bewaart* of Manuel Levi.[55]
1745 *Maria Galei*, *Maria en Josina Galei*, *Alida*, *Magtilda Theresia*, and *Willem Galei* — all five left Curaçao for Holland. The last one was recaptured by the English and not returned to Holland. *Esther* — in which Francisco Lopez Henriquez & Co. had a part interest.[56]
1746 *Vrouwe Johana* — worth P. 104,400:4; *Post* — worth P. 49,990:7:5. Both left Curaçao for Holland with rich cargoes.[57]
1747 *La Esperanza* — captain and owner, Abraham de Salomoh Levy Maduro.[58] *Crocodilla*. Two other ships sailing from Curaçao to Amster-

[50] OAC 846, Oct. 27, 1740.
[51] OAC 817, no. 119.
[52] OAC 862, no. 175.
[53] RA, Resolutions of the States General, meeting of May 14, 1755.
[54] OAC 942, no. 129.
[55] WICA 588, p. 863.
[56] OAC 857, no. 20.
[57] OAC 14, June 13, 1749.
[58] OAC 864, no. 17.

dam with cargoes valued at P. 154,391:3:5 were taken to Havana; one of their very large underwriters was Aron Henriquez Moron.[59]

1748 *Aurora de Curaçao* of Manuel de Abraham Alvares Correa.
1749 *Elisabeta*, whose captain was Abraham Pinedo.[60]
1750 *La Esperanza* of Ephraim Jesurun, a.k.a. Fermin Henriquez.
1751 *'t Fortuijn* — of Isaac Vaz Faro who disappeared with his boat.[61]
1752 *Pheneij* of Isaac Haim Rodriguez da Costa.
1753 *La Concordia*.
1754 *Drie Vrienden* — from St. Eustatius.
1760 *Olyftak* of Jeosuah Henriquez Jr.[62]
1762 *Drie Patriarke* of Medina & Pina.[63]
1763 *St. Charles*, *De Hoop*, *Maria*.
1764 *Las dos Hermanas*.
1771 *Abigail* of Isaac Robles.[64]
1772 *Goede Hoop*, whose captain was Moses Nunes Redondo.[65]
1776 *Vier Broeders* of David Abraham Sasso.[66]

It is difficult to estimate how much damage these seizures caused the merchants of Curaçao and St. Eustatius. In 1758 St. Eustatius business losses ran into a million florins. Certainly Curaçao's were not less. During the Seven Years War the Dutch lost over 12 million guilders in ships and cargoes sailing to and from Curaçao, St. Eustatius and the other Antilles.[67] Merchants of Holland and Curaçao were constantly petitioning the States General for convoys, and for this purpose were willing to pay an ad valorem duty on the merchandise so transported. Lack of money or the desire to avoid armed conflicts with England kept Holland from furnishing convoys except during the years 1746, 1748, 1753, 1759, 1760, 1766 and 1782. In 1759 fifteen of the 43 ships that arrived in Holland from Curaçao were from St. Eustatius; these had gone directly to Curaçao to set out with the other vessels for Holland. In 1760 the 39 ships that arrived in Holland — 15 from Curaçao

[59] OAC 14, y. 1747.
[60] OAC 821, Oct. 15, 1749 (Jossy M. L. Maduro).
[61] OAC 17, March 23, 1753.
[62] OAC 879, Nov. 4, 1760.
[63] OAC 887, no. 215.
[64] OAC 942, no. 432 (J.M.L. Maduro).
[65] OAC 944, no. 189 (J.M.L. Maduro).
[66] OAC 916, no. 16.
[67] Petrus Joh. Blok, *History of the People of the Netherlands*, part V (New York, 1912), p. 137.

and 24 from St. Eustatius — were convoyed by two heavily armed warships.[68]

Because of their crippling losses at sea many merchants had to sell their houses or plantations to honor their debts or to reinvest the money in cargoes and ships. Real estate values plummeted to such depths that the parnassim decided in January, 1752, not to lend money on mortgaged homes located in Pieter Maai and in Otrabanda.[69] Since many slaves worked on the ships and were captured at sea, the parnassim also resolved not to grant loans from the Community Chest when slaves were offered as security.[70]

JEWS CAPTURED AT SEA AND TAKEN TO SPAIN

The dauntless Curaçoan merchant seaman put to sea knowing that he might lose his ship and cargo to pirates, and even his life and freedom. As a rule Curaçoan Jews did not captain armed vessels or those making exceptionally distant trips. Many of them manned modest cargo ships.[71] Often the ship clerk or bookkeeper was Jewish and sometimes there was a Jewish sailor in the crew. Moses Penso's *Anna Cornelia* had five Jews in her service in 1750: Selomoh Ribero, Salomon Marache, Abraham Pessoa, Abraham Pinedo and Yshac Brabanel (= Abravanel).[72] Usually the merchant or his trusted representative travelled with his ship or cargo.

Since the Spaniards were bent on intercepting contraband and the English on being the sole operators, the Curaçoan navigator was exposed to attack and seizure by both. Marquis St. Gil, Spanish ambassador to the States General of Holland, had this to say about English contraband in one of his memoirs:

> It is indeed well known in Curaçao that the English are lords of that illicit trade which they conduct as though they were the actual owners of the Spanish Indies to the extent of forbidding this very contraband to other nations who do it better, and barring it from the Hollanders from whom they have taken many ships lately under the pretext that they had gone too near the Spanish Main to traffic in contraband.[73]

[68] *Nederlandsche Mercurius* of August, 1759 and July-December, 1760. In 1782 during the war with England eight warships convoyed the Dutch vessels (*ibid.*, 1782, p. 218).

[69] MS, 26 Tebet, 5512. Also rich Protestant plantation owners were unable to meet their payments on time, e.g., Christiaan Kok who owed a large sum of money to the Jewish Community Chest. The parnassim decided to waive the interest on his mortgage so long as he paid the principal (MS, 1 Sivan, 5513 [1753]).

[70] MS, 26 Tebet, 5512.

[71] See appendix 3B.

[72] OAC 14 (Raad), Feb. 3, 1750.

[73] RA, Resolutions of the States General, meeting of July 2, 1743. Spain then was at war with England.

The Society of Navigation of Curaçao, which was formed to combat this situation, proved ineffective for want of unity in the Protestant ranks. The Spaniards were merciless in their efforts to stamp out the traffic in contraband. Usually they freed their captives on the payment of a ransom. Sometimes they found it advantageous to bargain with the merchant *contrabandista* to pay them cash for the release of his boat and cargo. But the Curaçoans were not always so fortunate. When their vessels fell into the clutches of a zealous governor avid for promotion, merchant and crew were hauled off to Spain. Because of their religion the Jews suffered more than other captives. To protect them from the Inquisition, relatives would furnish a statement from the governor attesting that the prisoners were native-born Curaçoans and, as such, Jews at birth.

In 1733 the Spanish seized the Curaçoans Jacob Henriquez Moron, born in 1698; Abraham Henriquez Moron, b. 1706; and Ishac de Medina, b. 1710. All three were put in chains and taken to Cadix. At the same time the Spaniards captured, and later took to Cadix, Jacob Moreno Henriquez (probably captain of his boat), b. 1699, and Abraham Belmonte, b. 1698. They also seized a vessel with twelve Gentiles and the Jew Joseph Henriquez who were transported to Cadix. A year later they took Mosseh de Selomoh Levy Maduro, a youth barely seventeen years of age.

The parnassim of Curaçao requested their colleagues in Amsterdam to have the States General of Holland intercede in behalf of the Jewish prisoners. The parnassim of Bayonne, where some Jews had an interest in the Spanish Navigation Company in the Caribbean, also intervened. The States General invoked the commercial treaty of 1648 between Holland and Spain which stipulated that a subject of either country caught dealing in contraband would lose his holdings but not his freedom. They demanded the immediate release of the prisoners. After many months of anguish, the first six captives were set free. Nothing was ever learned of Joseph Henriquez. Maduro, who had not been taken to Spain, was also freed. The Curaçoan Jews paid huge sums for the ransom of their coreligionists and also their return fare to Curaçao. Ishac de Medina was recaptured by the Spaniards in 1737 and taken to Cartagena.[74]

A little later the English seized Rephael Rodriguez and Selomoh de Aron aLevy while sailing in St. Eustatian waters. The parnassim of Amsterdam, Curaçao and Gibraltar, respectively, interceded for their freedom. Until their liberation, Rodriguez and aLevy had languished in prison five years (1737-1742).[75] The Curaçao parnassim paid 500 pesos for the release of

[74] WICA 586, p. 87.

[75] MS, 16 Adar I, 5502; 19 Hesvan, 5503.

Rodriguez and it is assumed that the Amsterdam parnassim, who paid the expenses of 150 pesos for both captives, also paid the ransom for aLevy, apparently a St. Eustatian. In 1742 the English captured Abraham Robles and Joseph de Campos Pereira whom they carried to Jamaica.[76]

Before Rodriguez returned to Curaçao, the Spanish seized Ishac de Eliau Jeudah Leao, Samuel de Jacob Salom and Moseh, the son of Haham Jesurun. Fortunately they were not shipped to Spain, but freed upon the payment of a very steep ransom by the Curaçoan Jews.[77] Two years later Abraham Pinedo and Jeosuah Touro were seized in Venezuela and released.[78] Shortly afterwards the Spaniards took the *Aurora de Curaçao* with nine Gentiles and three Jews: Manuel de Abraham Alvares Correa[79] (captain or owner of the vessel), Ishac de Abraham Lopez Falcon, and Jeudah, the son of Ribbi Moseh Alva. They were shipped to Cadix. The Catholic and Protestant captives were freed, but the Jews were threatened with deportation to Africa. Here also the respective parnassim of Curaçao, Amsterdam and Bayonne, and the States General of Holland intervened. After a year's captivity, the prisoners were released in August, 1749.

Correa and his companions have left us an interesting letter addressed to the Dutch ambassador at Madrid, which brings to light the following facts. On account of the war between Spain and England and the drought then searing the Spanish Main, there was a dire shortage of foodstuffs in New Spain, Puerto Bello, Cartagena, Maracaibo, La Guaira, Cumaná, Margarita, Santo Domingo, Puerto Rico and Santa Marta. Correa, Falcon and Alva were supplying these localities with their needs, and in corroboration of this they cited the Governors Don Juan de Verra of Santa Marta and Don José Coloma of Puerto Bello. On one of those trips they had taken on board, without charge, the Friar Francisco Gonsales and his secretary — Franciscans who had become lost in the islands — and delivered them to Margarita. For these kindnesses, Correa and his friends concluded that they merited special consideration and should be released like the other prisoners.[80]

Moses Bueno de Mesquita and Eliau, the son of Hazzan Ribbi Mosseh Lopez da Fonseca, were not so fortunate. They were taken to St. Sebastian and jailed

[76] OAC 815, nos. 30 and 87.

[77] MS, 11 Tebet, 5503.

[78] OAC 855, March 22, 1745.

[79] He and Mose Cardoso were seized by the English on the sloop *Perll* in 1745 and carried to Rhode Island (*Records of the Vice-Admiralty Court of Rhode Island 1716-1752* [Washington, 1936], pp. 345, 348, 350).

[80] A copy of this letter is preserved in a bundle of the PJCAA.

under terrible conditions for three years (1751-1754).[81] Unable to endure the torture, Lopez became a convert to Catholicism and thus won his freedom. The parnassim of Amsterdam wrote to their colleagues in Bayonne to rescue Mesquita, and the parnassim of Curaçao remitted 400 pesos for his release. Again the Dutch ambassador in Madrid intervened and Mesquita was freed. As for Lopez, when he succeeded in escaping from Spain, he returned to Judaism. Obviously the sons of hahamim, hazzanim and rubbisim had no means of earning a livelihood other than going to sea.

The navigators generally were relatively young and daring. Daniel Aboab Cardozo was barely twenty when taken in 1752.[82] Abraham de Aron Mattos Gutieres and Michael de Leon, who were captured four years later and taken to Cartagena, were also young. De Leon was a native of Frankfurt am Main. To protect him from the Inquisition the parnassim asked Governor Faesch for a declaration that De Leon was born a Jew. Faesch complied by attesting that De Leon had been a resident and subject of Curaçao for some time past.[83] Jacob de Isaac Diaz was only seventeen when he was seized in 1759.[84]

It was always "open season" to hunt down Jewish seamen. Abraham Pinedo and Manuel Taboada were recaptured and taken to Cadix in 1764. Thanks to the intervention of the Amsterdam parnassim, who applied to the States General of Holland, they were freed a year later. Pinedo returned ill to Curaçao. Shortly afterwards the Spaniards seized six Jews at Puerto Bello and took them to Cadix: Michael da Costa de Andrade, Abraham Namias de Crasto, Jacob de Selomoh Lopez Henriquez, Elias Penso, Rephael de Daniel Belmonte, and Selomoh de David Lopez Henriquez. They were freed after the intercession of the Amsterdam parnassim and the States General and payment by the Curaçoan Jews of 795 pesos.[85] Two years later Selomoh Haim Calvo, captain of *De Jonge Haim*, was captured by a Spanish pirate after he had disposed of a cargo of donkeys and flour at Jamaica. Taken to Cartagena and imprisoned, he was able to escape and return to Curaçao.[86] Daniel Martinez was taken to Cadix and freed in 1770. At the same time that Manuel Rodriguez was seized with his boat along the coast of Caracas in 1770, Aron de David Uziel Cardozo was taken with his vessel on leaving Jamaica, hauled to Havana and in 1773

[81] It cost the Curaçao community 364:19:8 florins to free them (PJCAA, the Amsterdam parnassim's letter of July 19, 1754, to Curaçao).

[82] OAC 16 (Raad), March 2, 1752.

[83] OAC 834, no. 103.

[84] OAC 840, no. 111.

[85] MIA, Book of Accounts for 1766; Resolutions of the States General, meeting of April 22, 1766.

[86] OAC 941, no. 441.

to Cadix.[87] The American revolutionaries stripped Isaac Baruch Guerman of Curaçao of all his possessions during his voyage from Jamaica to London. When he arrived in Amsterdam, his nephew Selomoh Levy Maduro prevailed upon the Amsterdam parnassim to pay the fare to Curaçao.[88] Joseph Curiel, captain and owner of *De Jonge Daniel*, was captured with his ship in 1778, taken to Havana and held there for upwards of two years. In 1780 Abraham Kayzer was taken in his schooner off the coast of Caracas.[89]

Not all Jewish merchants, sailors or navigators were lucky to return to Curaçao alive. Some fell victim to violent tempests[90] or bloodthirsty pirates. Selomoh Flores was slain in his boat by a Spanish pirate in 1736. Yet, despite pirates, privateers and the elements the plucky Curaçoan Jew kept on braving the seas to make a living for himself and his family, and in so doing maintained the island's economy. Such daring and enterprise give the lie to the slanderous, anti-Jewish letters of Governor Van Collen and Fiscal Van Schagen to the Company.

JEWISH AND PROTESTANT HOLDINGS IN THE 18TH CENTURY

Although the Jews accounted for half the white population, their holdings came up to only a third those of the Protestants who owned large plantations and hundreds of slaves. This is clear from the *Familiegeld* tax lists. Collected since the beginning of the 18th century, this tax was originally set up to pay for the Protestant minister's salary. There were three tax scales: 2, 4 and 7 pesos. In the first quarter of the century, the Jews held their own quite well. Their wealth was equal to 40% that of the gentile inhabitants, but staggering losses at sea progressively brought down this ratio.

Since 1675 the governors were supposed to collect a slave tax of a peso per head. Known for his prudence, Governor Faesch wrote to the Company that

87 Resolutions of the States General, meeting of Nov. 4, 1774.

88 PJCAA, Resoluçoems doss^{res} do Mahamad, 5533-5538, meeting of 14 Menahem, 5537, p. 192.

89 Archives consulted on these captives: PJCAA, correspondence exchanged between the Curaçao and Amsterdam parnassim; correspondence between the Amsterdam parnassim and those of Bayonne and Gibraltar; letters of prisoner Manuel Alvares Correa to the parnassim of Amsterdam; correspondence of the Amsterdam parnassim with the Dutch ambassadors in Madrid; Resoluçoems doss^{res} do Mahamad, 5511-5527, meeting of 11 Tamuz, 5524 and 27 Nissan, 5526, pp. 266, 293; Resoluçoems, 5527-5533, meetings of 28 Adar, 5 Iar, 21 Menahem, 5530, pp. 137, 148, 160; Resoluçoems, 5533-5538, meetings of 11 Hesvan, 10 Kislev, 5535, pp. 82, 86; OAC 802, January, March 16, and April 22, 1734; OAC 803, May 17, 1734; OAC 804, Jan. 3, 1735; OAC 820, Jan. 6 and 14, 1749; OAC 847, nos. 50-51; OAC 848, no. 59; MS; MIA, Treasurers Books; *Boletín del Archivo Nacional*, vol. 14 (Caracas, 1933), p. 314.

90 For shipwrecked Curaçoan Jews, see Emmanuel, *Precious Stones*, pp. 266-67.

if he insisted upon the strict enforcement of this tax, the government would be endangered.[91] The slave tax lists show that the Jews owned barely 25% of the slaves while the Protestants owned 75%.

As the synagogue was in Punda, for religious reasons the Jews lived in the city and perforce owned 50% of the houses in Punda. On the other hand, there were very few Jewish homeowners in the Klip; about thirty in Otrabanda, and another ten in Altena. Generally, the Protestants had more houses in the outlying districts. Whereas the Protestants had richer and larger plantations, the Jews had more ships, merchandise and accounts receivable from the neighboring islands. The following table will give an idea of the distribution of the wealth as represented in the *Familiegeld* tax lists for several years between 1711 and 1765.

	1st Class		*2nd Class*		*3rd Class*	
Year	Gentiles	Jews	Gentiles	Jews	Gentiles	Jews
1711-16	13	10*	33	17	51	16
1719	6	3**	42	23	139	67
1740	22	7***	68	30	230	89
1741	28	6+	62	26	223	90
1743	28	6+	52	19	204	105
1744	28	6+	67	23	231	111
1745	21	6+	56	24	295	118
1749	19	6++	45	25	204	111
1750	19	6++	59	23	199	122
1754	19	6	70	22	199	111
1755	26	6	70	29	193	107
1765	45	7+++	72	25	231	131

* The ten rich Jews were Manuel Alvares [Correa], Abraham Henriquez Moron, the Widow Moses Lopez [Henriquez] until 1713; the Widow [David] Carilho, the Widow Mordechay de Crasto, Philip Senior, the Widow Moses Levy Maduro, Jacob Andrade, David Senior and Gabriel Levy (WICA 573, pp. 807-10).

** The Widow Mordechay de Crasto & David de Crasto; Gabriel & David Levy; Henriquez & Francisco Henriquez.

*** Samuel de Casseres, Mordechay Alvares Correa, Jacob Hisquiau de Leon, Moses de Chaves, Elias Parera, Moses Penso and Joseph da Costa Gomez (WICA 588, p. 527).

\+ The same as in 1740, excepting Elias Parera.

++ Mordechay Alvares Correa, Samuel de Casseres, Jacob Hisquiau de Leon, Moses de Chaves, Moses Penso and Jeosuah Henriquez Jr.

+++ And note 91 on p. 228.

Ready cash in Curaçao was chiefly in the hands of the orphan administrations of the island, i.e., the wardens of the Protestant Church and the parnassim. Both lent money on sound first mortgages. To be sure there were private moneylenders who also gave money secured by mortgages. While only two Jews — Mordechay Alvares Correa and Moses Penso — at times had enough available cash, there were numerous moneyed Protestants.

SLAVE HOLDINGS

In 1720 the six top-ranking Jewish slavemasters had a combined total of 165 slaves as against 497 owned by the six largest Protestant slaveholders. These Jews were the Widow Mordechay Henriquez and family, 60 slaves; Gabriel Levy, 39; the Widow Mordechay de Crasto, 26; the Widow Balthazar de Leon, 17; Daniel Aboab Cardozo and Jeosuah Henriquez, 16 each.[92] In 1744 the Protestants owned 1,788 slaves, and the Jews only 310. The six leading Jewish slaveholders then were Jeosuah Henriquez and Francisco Lopez Henriquez with 16 slaves each; Jacob Hisquiau de Leon and Moses Penso, 12 each; David Senior and Joseph da Costa Gomez, 10 each.[93] In 1749 the first five of these big Jewish slaveowners (of 1744) had a combined total of 91 slaves as against 420 owned by the five leading Protestant slaveholders.[94] A very strict slave census taken in 1765 showed that the Jews owned only 860 of a total of 5,534 slaves.[95]

THE FORTIFICATIONS AND THE JEWS

Already in 1635 the States of Holland and West Friesland had decided to grant the Company the stupendous sum of 142,000 florins to fortify Curaçao.[96] The Company tried to maintain the forts and build others with the cooperation

+++ The Widow Moses Penso, Isaac Haim Rodriguez da Costa, Abraham de Marchena, Isaac de Marchena, the Widow Isaac de Marchena, Manuel de Rephael Alvares Correa and Isaac Pardo.

[91] WICA 590, p. 273, letter of May 28, 1743.

[92] The six leading gentile slaveholders were Jan Ellis, 100; the Widow Frank Kinnegem, 90; the Widow Jeremias van Collen, 80; Frederick Eck, 80; the Widow van der Hoeven, 75; Joh. Martin & Co., 72 (WICA 577, pp. 374-76).

[93] The leading Protestant slaveholders were the Widow Willem van Uijtrecht, 120; the Widows Willem Meyer and Jan Ellis, 80 each; the Widow Jan Martin, 72; the Widow Hendrick de Wit, 70, and the Widow Hendrick de Wilde, 60 (OAC 815, no. 59).

[94] They were Samuel and Benjamin de Casseres, 35; Francisco Lopez Henriquez, 18; Jeosuah Henriquez, 16; Jacob Hisquiau de Leon, 12, and Joseph da Costa Gomez, 10, as against the Widow W. van Uijtrecht, 120; Willem Meyer, 100 (he really had more than 300 slaves which he later sold to Moses Penso with two large plantations); the Widow Jan Martin, 80; Nathanel Ellis, 60, and Hermanus Storck, 60.

[95] See appendix 22.

[96] Resolutions of the States of Holland and West Friesland, meeting of June 26, 1635.

of the inhabitants. Fort Beekenburg, which was built at Caracasbaai in 1703, was such a "joint venture," costing over 20,000. The attempts of unpopular Governor Van Collen to fortify the island were not too successful. Governor Faesch appointed six notable men, including the Jews Samuel de Casseres and Mordechay Alvares Correa, to collect funds from the residents for repairs to the fort. Though not spectacular, the results obtained by his commission were better. Up to September, 1748, they raised P. 7,772:-:2, of which P. 2,811, or 36% of the total amount, was contributed by the Jews.[97] Like their Protestant neighbors, the Jews sent their slaves to work at the fortifications, and furnished 126 of the 409 slaves so employed.[98] According to this commission's report, the residents did not give their full support because they wanted the government to start fortifying the outlying districts.[99]

At the same time Benjamin Lopez Henriquez and Salomo Nunes Redondo offered to build a *Waterfort* at the entrance to the harbor. In a sermon Haham De Sola exhorted the members of the community to cooperate in the project. Henriquez and Redondo put eighty men to work and assembled the necessary building materials,[100] but were unable to complete the job. There was strife and discord in the Jewish community (Chapter IX), and wealthy men of the opposition like Moses Penso and Mordechay A. Correa did not care to help their adversaries.

A year earlier, in 1747, Willem Meyer had signed a contract with the Company to demolish part of the walls and two of the forts in order to extend the city, and build other fortifications. In return Meyer was to receive certain lands. As this proved too big an undertaking to tackle singlehandedly, in 1748 he took on Moses Penso as partner. While construction was under way, engineers of the Company modified the plan. Meyer and Penso did not approve of it and asked for another change. During these negotiations Penso died and Meyer was forced to abandon the project.[101] It remained for a 19th

[97] WICA 589, pp. 67-68; WICA 596, pp. 610-14.

[98] OAC 814, no. 161, June 12, 1743; MS, 3 Sivan, 5512.

[99] OAC 812, Dec. 24, 1742. In 1765 the forts around the bays outside of the city were Fuijk, Uijtkijk van Caraquez Baaij, 't fort Bekenburk aan Caraquez Baaij, op de Batterij, Piscaderis, St. Michiel, de Verse Baaij, Bulle Baaij, Puerto Maria, Crabbe Baaij, De Knip, De West Punt, St. Cruijs and Halve Maan (OAC 894, no. 114).

[100] PJCAA, letter of Salomo Nunes Redondo of May 21, 1748, to the Amsterdam parnassim; WICA 316, letter of July 18, 1748, of Governor Faesch to the WIC.

[101] OAC 15, May 13, 1751; WICA 317, letter of Governor Faesch to the WIC, dated Sept. 29, 1753; WICA 475, pp. 16v-19v, 119, 137v; WICA 592, pp. 842v-43v; RA, Verspreide W. I. Stukken 683, containing the engineers' plans; OAC 829, Sept. 3, 1753; J. Kooyman, "De Wallen van Willemstad, Curaçao, omstreeks 1750," *WIG*, vol. 38, 1958, pp. 168-73.

century Jewish company to undertake and carry through the prodigious task of tearing down the walls and enlarging the city (pages 365-66).

Meanwhile English and Spanish corsairs took advantage of the meager fortifications of Curaçao, Aruba and Bonaire, and boldly pursued Dutch vessels up to the very shores of these islands. Neither Governor Rodier[102] (when he replaced Faesch temporarily and later when governor in his own right) nor his successor Jacob van Bosveld (1761-62)[103] could do much to help Curaçoan shipping which stood at the mercy of friends and foes alike. This glaring lack of adequate protection brought about the ruin of numerous Jewish families between 1735 and 1765.

[102] Jan Rodier, who had been in Curaçao since 1738 and ranked second after Governor Faesch, at different times after the latter's death asked the WIC for the governorship. He finally realized this ambition when the Amsterdam parnassim, at the request of the Curaçao parnassim and councillors, sent a delegation to the Council of Ten to recommend him "for being a person very considerate to our [Jewish] Nation on this island" (PJCAA, Resoluçoems doss^{res} do Mahamad, 5511-5527, meeting of 28 Kislev, 5524 [1763], p. 217).

[103] Before he embarked for Curaçao, a delegation of the Amsterdam parnassim visited Bosveld to congratulate him on his appointment and to request him to protect the Jewish Nation of Curaçao (PJCAA, *ibid.*, meetings of 10 Sivan and 4 Tamus, 5520 [1760], p. 124).

CHAPTER XI

JEWISH LIFE
1730-1765

THE CURAÇOAN JEW had a deep interest in the synagogue and in Jewish life. The bitter communal conflicts between 1744 and 1750 emphatically attest to this. His religious life was part and parcel of his daily existence. The planter could not work his slaves on Saturday, the merchant had to pay the *imposta da Naçao*, and the navigator took along with his *taleth* and *tefillin* a barrel of salted *casher* or "Jewish" meat if he did not have a *shoḥet* on board to kill his fowl. The parnassim occupied themselves with every phase of Jewish life as the new and old *hascamoth* demonstrate.

HASCAMOTH

Immediately after Prince William IV sent out the announcement of peace, the Amsterdam parnassim drew up a provisional set of communal regulations consisting of twenty-three articles, had them approved by the prince and dispatched them to Curaçao in 1750. The Curaçao parnassim, on their part, submitted a compendium of *hascamoth* in 1752 to Amsterdam. This included regulations governing the schools, the cemetery, the *Hebra* society, the *hashcaboth* or legacies for memorial prayers, and various powers (some excessive) to the parnassim. Amsterdam rejected these[1] and replaced them with others. Curaçao, in turn, eliminated the provision to tax its members because the members made generous freewill offerings — "even more than they could afford." Curaçao also modified the article fixing the number of members in the Parnassim Council. This body, they believed, should consist of three rather than five members as the Jews on the island were closely related to one another and it was almost impossible to find five affluent individuals who were not kinsmen. This change was proposed especially since article eleven of the old *hascamoth* disqualified two near relatives[2] from sitting together in the Parnassim Council. Various modifications and amend-

[1] The Amsterdam parnassim's letter of Dec. 10, 1752, to Curaçao.

[2] Categories of near relatives: father and son, two brothers, grandfather and grandson, father-in-law and son-in-law; uncle and nephew, cousins of two brothers, two brothers-in-law.

ments by both sides were exchanged over a period of five years[3] before the *hascamoth* were finally accepted. These were the salient provisions:

1. No other synagogue to be founded.
2. No papers to be signed against the Island Government.[4]
3. Authors of anonymous satires [or songs] directed against the Mahamad, the rabbi, or any member to be punished by excommunication.
4. No games of chance allowed to be played.[5]
5. No secret marriages to be performed on pain of divorce.
6. Opening the letters of another forbidden.
7. Entering the synagogue with a club, sword or dagger forbidden.[6]
8. Discussing or making offensive remarks about the national religion forbidden.
9. The Mahamad not to expend Community Chest funds or otherwise intervene to set free a Jew condemned by the Island Tribunal for theft or other crime.
10. No one to prosecute a fellow Jew before reporting the matter to the Mahamad for its consideration.[7]

[3] The regulations of 1753 were signed by the following Curaçao parnassim: Jacob Levy Maduro, president; Selomoh Lopez Henriques, Jacob Belmonte, Isaac Levy Maduro, Jacob Semah Ferro, Abraham Naar D Pina, Jacob Jeudah Leao, Abraham da Costa de Andrade, Mordechay Parrera, Abraham J[esuru]n Henriques, Semuel Idanha d Casseres, Isaque Penso, Mosseh Penso, David de Crasto, Jacob de David Senior, Abraham Belmonte, Manuel Levy, Mosse de Ab[raha]m de Chaves, Selomoh N[une]s Redondo, Mosseh Alvares Correa, Jeossuah Henriques Junior, David Jesurun 1753, Mosseh de Is[aac] Levy Maduro, Mordechay de Crasto, Abraham Senior, Binjamin Lopez Henriquez, Jacob Lopez Diaz, Selomoh de Is[aac] Levy Maduro, Aron Henriquez Moron, David de Is[aac] Senior, Semuel de Jacob Jeudah Leao, Josseph Jesurun Henriques, Abraham de Is[aac] Senior, Abraham de Marchena and David da Costa Andrade, Gabbay [treas.] (PJCAA, bundle; MS, 13 Kislev, 5511, 10 Adar and 6 Nisan, 5512, 30 Adar Rison, 5513, 20 Iiar, 5516).

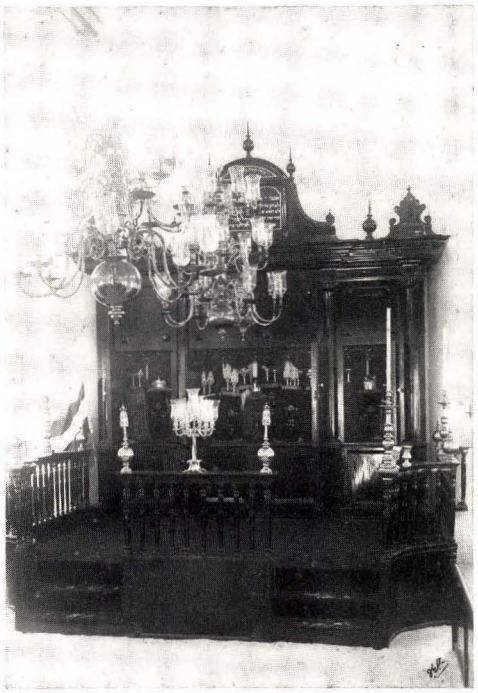
Contemporaneously the Surinam community also made new regulations which were delivered by Pinto and Suasso to Princess Anna for approval. The Amsterdam parnassim paid the cost of translating and making copies of the regulations for both communities. Curaçao remitted her share while Surinam was still unable to pay as late as 1784 (PJCAA, Resoluçoems dos Sres do Mahamad, 5511-5527, meeting of 4 Nissan, 5515, p. 47; Resoluçoems, 5539-5545, meeting of 20 Sivan, 5544, p. 292).

[4] Excommunicated in 1763 for having spoken against the Island Council, Jacob Monsanto was not absolved until he had paid a fine of 25 pesos to the Community Chest (MS, 27 Nissan, 5523 [1763]).

[5] As games of chance were overindulged in by the white and colored population of Curaçao, Governor Faesch outlawed them completely in 1742 (OAC 174, no. 22).

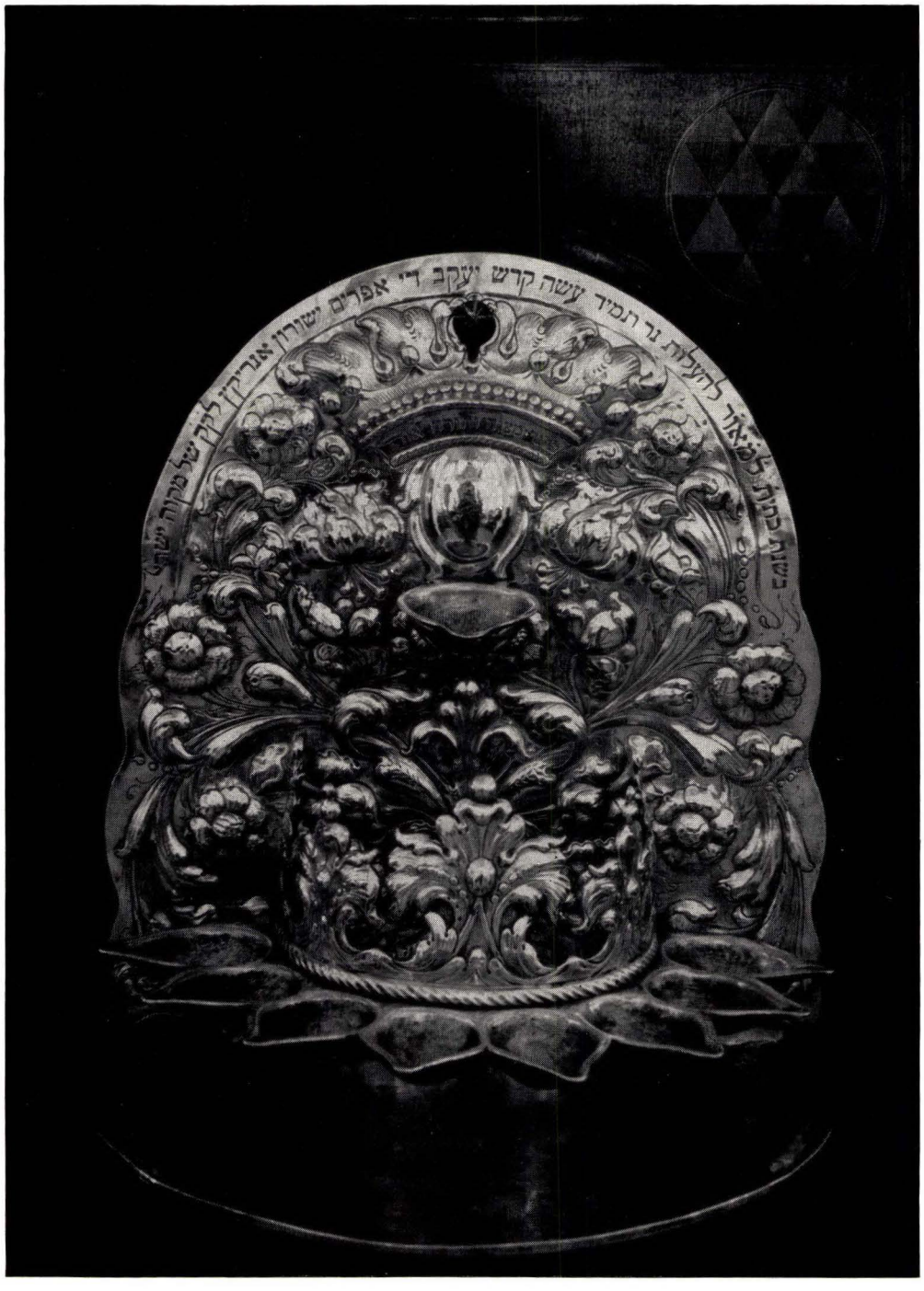
[6] In 1637 the Amsterdam community forbade anyone to enter the synagogue with sword or cane (art. 19 of the regulations). In 1722 such offense was punishable by the *herem*; the regulation was reinstated in 1759 (PJCAA, Registro de Pregoems, 5465-5528, p. 226).

[7] Jacob Pretto Henriquez was fined four pesos by the parnassim of 1768 for having brought David Abinun de Lima before the Court of Justice without their permission (MIA, loose papers).



53. HOLY ARK, SYNAGOGUE MIKVE ISRAEL-EMANUEL

54. BANCA DE PARNASSIM, 1936



55. SILVER ḤANUKKAH LAMP, YEAR 1716, SYNAGOGUE MIKVE ISRAEL-EMANUEL, PAGE 94

11. Punishment incurred for not attending the synagogue: a fine followed by excommunication for refusal to pay it; denial to the wife use of the ritual bath, circumcision to his sons, and burial to him or any near relative.
12. No one to raise his voice or strike anyone in the synagogue on pain of incurring a fifty pesos fine payable to the Community Chest.
13. The haham not to attend meetings of the Mahamad unless specifically called and then only on matters of a strictly religious nature.
14. The haham not to proceed with a marriage, divorce or levirate without the Mahamad's permission.
15. Except in unusual cases, the haham never to impose the ban in matters of a business or secular nature.
16. The Mahamad to function as governor of the community.
17. Signing of papers against the Mahamad or disobeying their resolutions punishable by excommunication.
18. The Mahamad required to elect four parnassim of Talmud Torah for the schools, a *parnas de fabrica* to take charge of all the community buildings and the synagogue, and a *parnas de hebra* to take charge of the cemetery and decedents' matters.
19. The hazzan of the synagogue required to read the *hascamoth* twice annually, before Passover and before Rosh Hashanah.

These regulations were approved by Princess Anna in 1755 and by Government Secretary Laurens Laan of Curaçao on May 25, 1756. To insure enforcement, the Company directors empowered Governor Faesch to use, if necessary, "a strong hand so that the Portuguese Jews on the island of Curaçao follow them faithfully."[8] An analysis of these regulations and the correspondence exchanged between the parnassim of both communities brings into sharp focus the weakening of the haham's powers and some curtailment of the parnassim's. Nevertheless, the parnassim wielded a strong hand in the administration of the community and in disciplining the recalcitrant. With the exception of the provision fixing the number of members in the Parnassim Council (modified in 1763 and again in 1771), these regulations remained effective until 1786.[9]

[8] PJCAA, bundle. This letter to Faesch was signed by the Company's Adriaen Teniminck and Willem Backer. The "Representatives of the Nation" and the Amsterdam parnassim who occupied themselves with these *hascamoth* were Aron de David de Pinto, Isaac de Moses Lopes Suasso, Moses Alvares Bueno, Moses de Chaves, Isaac Daveiga Henriques, Isaac de Joseph de Meza, Salomon Curiel, Salomon Gutierez, Jacob de David de Pinto, Ishac de Castro, and Jacob de Joseph Teixera de Mattos. The Curaçao parnassim were Jacob Lopez Diaz, Abraham Senior and Ishac Haim Rodriguez da Costa.

[9] See appendix 1, pp. 586-607.

SOCIAL AND RELIGIOUS LIFE

In 1748 the arrival of several impoverished families[10] from Amsterdam swelled the Jewish population of Curaçao to 1,500 souls or 280 families. This was the record number of Jews living there at any one time. Most of the Jews lived in Punda — the area now embracing Heerenstraat, Breedestraat, Madurostraat and back to Heerenstraat. The synagogue was the focal point and from it radiated the homes inhabited predominantly by Jews. Because of their noisy manifestations and bubbling spirits, they gave the erroneous impression of being more numerous than the gentile residents.

The social life and religious life of the Jew, as already seen, were inextricably interwoven. On the birth of a child, members of the various brotherhoods feted the father. For a son, two feasts were given: one on the Sabbath preceding the circumcision, and the other on the night before the circumcision.

Bar miẓvah celebrations were popular in Curaçao. They were conducted with great solemnity and for that reason the parnassim decided in 1740 not to allow such services to take place on a major holiday or on Hosha'na Rabbah.[11] The boy prayed a part of the Sabbatical portion of the Torah and sometimes delivered a sermon prepared by a *ribbi*. Among the affluent, the grandfather or uncles presented the bar miẓvah with a slave.

A betrothal was cause for much rejoicing. On the Saturday following the signing of the engagement papers, special honors were conferred upon the fiancé in the synagogue. If he was wealthy, he invariably had the governor and members of the Island Council attend the wedding ceremony and banquet. (The slaves carrying the wedding gifts were properly attired.) The first eight days of marriage were given over to feasting and merrymaking at the groom's home, but at his father-in-law's expense. For that reason a father carefully noted down those expenses in his daughter's *ketubah*. For economic reasons it was not unusual for two or three members of a family to marry at the same time.[12] On the Saturday following the marriage, a procession of as many as 200 people accompanied the bridegroom from his residence to the synagogue for services and back to his home. The bride and her matrons of honor sat in a reserved section of the women's gallery. In place of the

[10] The Amsterdam parnassim wrote to the Curaçao community on July 18, 1748, to aid these unfortunates until they were able to care for themselves.

[11] MS, 11 Nissan, 5500 [1740].

[12] For example, on 30 Sivan, 5542 (June 12, 1782), Jacob Jesurun Henriques married off his daughters Ribca and Esther while Mordechay Yeoshuah Henriquez married off his children Lea and Jacob; on 22 Adar Sheni, 5543 (March 25, 1783) Mordechay Motta married off his daughters Clara, Rachel and Esther (MIA, Ket., vol. VI, nos. 2, 3, 4, 8, 9, 10).

customary seven, ten and sometimes thirteen men were called to the Torah. Friends and relatives made donations to the synagogue in honor of the newlyweds.

The Jewish festivals were also celebrated with much splendor, especially Purim, until Haham Chumaceiro's time, and Simḥath Torah. The Purim feast lasted from eight to ten days. Masked and costumed boys paraded the streets and sang to the strains of an accompanying band as they visited the Jewish homes. At night there were fireworks. Purim was the "carnival" of Curaçoan Jewry. Some families sang Spanish or Portuguese ballads extolling Esther's virtues and Mordechay's triumph over Haman.[13] Sometimes the youths gave skits. The slaves received gifts from their masters.

Shortly before Rosh Hashanah two Bridegrooms of the Law were selected, and this was a signal honor indeed. Theirs was the privilege of accompanying the hazzan to the pulpit on Yom Kippur morning. They made part of the joyful procession of seven circuits conducted in the synagogue with twenty (later ten) Scrolls of the Law. Led by the Haham, each bearer of the Torah was accompanied by another person, generally a parnas or adjunto, carrying a lighted torch. In their honor six more people were called to the Torah; in 1760 this number was augmented to fourteen, and in 1810 to fifteen. These bridegrooms were expected to make goodwill offerings in the synagogue for the officiants and for the poor. Sometimes they donated to the synagogue a silver object engraved with an appropriate inscription. They sat before the altar with their patrons, generally two adjuntos. Their wives, accompanied by their respective matrons of honor, sat in the women's gallery in the section reserved for a bride and her court. Outside in the patio the slaves of some of the congregants waited with their masters' canes or their mistresses' parasols. The ceremonies continued from Simḥath Torah until the following Sabbath, i.e., *Shabbath Bereshith*, when the priestly blessing (*Bircath Cohanim*) was performed in their honor.[14] After the services were over the bridegrooms gave a sumptious feast for the members of the community. This was a costly honor and therefore was sometimes declined.[15]

The Passover festival had a dual significance for Curaçoan Jewry, for then they also celebrated the anniversary of the inauguration of their synagogue. Up to the time of the author's rabbinate it was customary to bake a special *massá* (in Salonika called *massá de vino*). A few days before Passover the par-

[13] For one of these ballads, see I. S. Emmanuel, "El Portuguez en la sinagoga de Curaçao," *Tesoro de los Judios Sefardies*, vol. 1, pp. XXX-XXXI.

[14] MS, 5 Hesvan, 5521 [1760].

[15] No one could be appointed Bridegroom of the Law before reimbursing the Community Chest for any assistance it had extended to him or his family.

nassim sent each member a candle[16] "para escombrar el hames" — to search for any remaining food forbidden during the Passover. As in pre-1917 Salonika, the community used to distribute *ḥaroseth* to all its members. This was a preparation of dried and fresh fruit with spice used to symbolize mud. During the holiday the boys sang *Los Cantares* (Songs of Solomon) in the synagogue, in Hebrew and Ladino.

Throughout the night of Hosha'na Rabbah and the first night of Shabu'oth the members used to gather in the synagogue to read the *Ticun*. The *ribbi* had to attend this service with his pupils who also took part in the reading. On Shabu'oth the pupils also chanted the Book of Ruth in Hebrew and in Ladino.

On the night of Tish'ah be-Ab the members met in the synagogue to pray the Lamentations and the Elegies. Each person received a candle from the sexton since the lights in the synagogue were not lit. Here also, as in the *Ticun* service, the haham made previous assignments of the elegy to be prayed by each of the faithful and thereby eliminated confusion and indecorum.

Some families exercised a virtual monopoly over certain synagogal privileges. Some jealously guarded the privilege of chanting part of the *Seliḥoth* (penitential prayers) and handed it down from father to son, as in the Senior family (1745-1765). Other families like the Andrades clung to the privilege of blowing the *shofar* on Rosh Hashanah. The man performing this honor dressed as an officiant in keeping with Amsterdam custom, and before ascending the pulpit solemnly executed a circuit in the synagogue with *shofar* in hand. Some families traditionally prayed various *haftaroth*: the Jesurun Henriquez family, those of the New Year; the Leao family, that of the Day of Atonement; and still others, the three *haftaroth* preceding Tish'ah be-Ab and that of Tish'ah be-Ab. Three of these *haftaroth* — the *Dibre Yirmeyahu*, the *Ḥazon Yeshayahu* and the *haftarah* of Tish'ah be-Ab — were read in Ladino also. Two of these *haftaroth* remained in the Naar family for over 130 years.[17] So keen was this religious interest that Curaçoan Jews sometimes had the Amsterdam parnassim intervene to compel the Curaçao regents to let a son read a certain *haftarah*. This is precisely what Jacob Jeudah Leao did in 1756.

On moving to another house or on opening a new home, it was customary to hold a *ticun*. (Even as late as 1886 people did not move during the 'Omer.) The haham or hazzan conducted this religious reading and gave his blessing.

[16] The members also received candles on the night of Tish'ah be-Ab and on Ḥanukkah.

[17] From Abraham de Jacob Naar in the beginning of the 18th century (MS, 1 Tamuz, 5513) to Jacob de Jeosuah Naar in 1857 (MIA, Minutas de Parnassim, 1856-1858, meetings of June 10 and July 13 and 16, 1857). Haham Chumaceiro eliminated the Ladino reading of the *haftarah* preceding Tish'ah be-Ab, but retained the Ladino reading of the *haftarah* of Tish'ah be-Ab in accordance with the custom still kept by the Sephardim.

With the assistance of the officiant the owner of the house placed a *mezuzah* on the doorpost of each room and often at the same time a *quemeha* (amulet) in a corner of the bedroom. (This use of amulets was so popular that the Curaçao parnassim ordered them from Amsterdam by the hundred.[18] The amulets of the wealthy were encased in gold or silver boxes.)[19] Once the religious ceremony was over, sweets were distributed.

The various brotherhoods also organized parties on different religious occasions. They would sing the new religious hymns introduced by emissaries from the Holy Land or the new arrivals from Amsterdam. Sometimes they sang liturgical poems to the tune of the old Spanish ballads on the order of those sung in Salonika.[20]

Funerals were generally conducted with such pomp that before dying some people expressed the desire for a modest burial.[21] During the seven days of mourning almost every member of the community fulfilled his duty of visiting the mourners at least once. On the first Saturday of mourning the bereaved were accompanied by numerous persons from the residence to the synagogue and back.

The Curaçoan Jews always retained a special affection for the princes of Orange-Nassau. On the birth, marriage, coronation or death of a prince they held religious services in the synagogue that were attended by the governor and other island notables. The wealthy organized sumptious feasts in their homes and invited the governor and the magistrates. Modest families also gathered to sing songs especially composed for the occasion.

RIBBI JEOSUAH HISQUIAHU DE CORDOVA

Shortly before Haham Jesurun passed on, the parnassim sought a qualified teacher from Amsterdam for the upper class, since Haham De Sola was overburdened with rabbinical functions. Ribbi Jeosuah Hisquiahu de Cordova was the Amsterdam parnassim's choice. Born in Amsterdam in 1720, he

[18] The Amsterdam parnassim shipped 550 *quemihot*, costing 1 3/4 placas each, to the treasurer Eliao de Isaac Jeudah Leao in March, 1788 (MIA, loose papers) and 50 amulets at sixty cents each in 1824 (PJCAA, Copiador de Cartas, 1821-1827, bill of April 29, 1824). The amulet was supposed to protect a woman during child labor.

[19] Gold amulets were recorded in these archives: OAC 851, no. 143, y. 1743; OAC 860, no. 127, y. 1746; OAC 872, no. 139, y. 1754; OAC 897, no. 123, y. 1765; OAC 907, no. 187, y. 1770; OAC 949, no. 239, y. 1774; OAC 983, no. 112, y. 1790; OAC 1069, no. 150, y. 1824; silver amulets are mentioned in OAC 1054, no. 87, y. 1819.

[20] See appendix 18.

[21] See Emmanuel, *Precious Stones*, pp. 78-79.

studied at the Ets Haim Seminary under Ribbi Abraham da Costa Abendana.[22] From 5504 (1744) he preached in the Amsterdam synagogue. As he was still unmarried, this 29-year-old bachelor had to obtain his father Abraham's consent before he could be engaged as *ribbi* for Curaçao. He arrived there in Ḥeshvan, 5509, at the height of the Parnassim-Penso conflict.

Under his employment contract signed in Amsterdam on 12 Menaḥem, 5509,[23] Cordova promised to carry out the following conditions:

1. Daily to instruct the upper class three hours in Prophets with Rashi commentaries.
2. To progress to Gemara as soon as his students were ready for it.
3. To accompany his pupils to the synagogue services and watch over them.
4. To attend the Yeshibah Es Haim ve Ohel Yahacob every evening and discuss Talmudic questions with Haham De Sola, the head of this *yeshibah*.
5. To prepare the students of this *yeshibah* two hours daily; on the death of a member of this *yeshibah*, to offer memorial prayers in the cemetery and to attend the mourners' home on the seventh day of mourning, at the end of the 30-day and 11-month periods, and to deliver a sermon with Haham De Sola's permission; to serve as *samas* of this *yeshibah*, if so he wished, and as such to call members to meetings and to the cemetery, and to open and close the *yeshibah*.

In addition to the annual salary of 130 pesos that was to be paid by the Community Chest, Cordova was entitled to freewill offerings made in the synagogue for the teachers, and on his arrival to a *nedabah* (which amounted to 200 pesos). From the Yeshibah Es Haim ve Ohel Yahacob, he was to receive as *Talmid Haham* 110 pesos yearly and as *samas* another 20 pesos.

Cordova did exceptionally well. Shortly after his arrival he was appointed preacher at an additional salary of fifty pesos a year, and a little later *dayyan* under De Sola. He also served as accountant and secretary of the community, for which he received an extra 200 pesos yearly. As this total annual earnings came to 490 pesos, he found it unnecessary to act as *samas* of the *yeshibah*. Following the example of other teachers, he also dabbled in the export-import business (a notarial document of September, 1750, describes him as a "Jewish businessman"). He was even called upon as an expert to appraise some property. Cordova and Haham Carigal share the distinction of having been the only religious employees of 18th century Curaçao who were able to amass some money in a relatively short time. In spite of his abilities and

[22] On Abendana's death as *dayyan*, Cordova delivered the eulogy on Kislev 23, 5505 [1744].
[23] PJCAA, bundle.

interest in the island, Cordova was obliged to leave because of his antagonists.

Three years after the Prince of Orange had proclaimed the peace edict of 1750, Curaçao was scourged with a sweeping smallpox epidemic, drought, and the loss of many ships at sea. To Haham De Sola these calamities were divine retribution for the annulment of the excommunications by royal decree rather than by ritual precept. He implied that the excommunicates should have entreated their haham and parnassim for total pardon and absolution. In the light of penitence, the haham and parnassim organized a three-day session of prayer and preaching[24] with compulsory fasting for everyone on the first day, voluntary fasting on the second day, and on all three days no frequentation of gambling houses. Cordova preached on the second day and, while he exhorted the members to do penitence, he said nothing about the excommunications and their absolution. Haham De Sola arose in the synagogue and remained standing throughout the sermon in signal of protest. Staunch supporters of the parnassim demanded Cordova's dismissal, but Penso's former party men shielded him. Although the parnassim finally discharged him, Cordova made no effort to fight for his post.[25] However, since a teacher was desperately needed for the upper class, they reconsidered and took him back. Eager to free himself of Haham De Sola and several autocratic parnassim, Cordova entered into correspondence with the Jewish community of Jamaica. They engaged him as their haham in 1755. Before leaving Curaçao, he sold Abraham Belmonte his beautiful house on Kuiperstraat for Ps. 3,500.[26] He eventually married in Jamaica and raised a family. His son Rephael and his grandsons Jeosuah and Jacob later settled in Philadelphia where Rephael served for a while as parnas of Congregation Mikvé Israel.[27] Cordova died in Jamaica on September 23, 1797.

CORDOVA'S WRITINGS

There are two sermons by Cordova known to us, one in print and the other in manuscript. His *Sermam moral que neste K. K. de T. T. pregou . . . Socio na Illustre Academia Rabinica & agora Eleito Pregador de ditto Kahal, Em Sabath Bamidbar 5 de Sivan Anno 5504* (Amsterdam, 1744) is dedicated to Mosseh de Chaves and contains explanatory and documentary notes. In their

[24] MS, 5 Adar Rison, 5513.

[25] Letter of Abraham Belmonte of March 13, 1753, to the Amsterdam parnassim (PJCAA, bundle).

[26] OAC 831, June 15, 1755.

[27] In re his activity in Philadelphia, see Edwin Wolff 2nd & Maxwell Whiteman, *The History of the Jews of Philadelphia* (Philadelphia, 1957), pp. 257, 324, 346, 353, 458, 488.

approbación to this 19-page sermon in quarto, the Hahamim David Israel Athias and Ishac Haim Abendana de Britto praised it for "abounding in much moral and good doctrine." The "Sermon delivered in Curaçao on 11 Adar Rison 5513," in manuscript, is the one he preached on the second day of fasting and supplication earlier mentioned. Here he exposed the moral state of the Jews in the community as observed during his 39 months among them. He deplored the plight of the poor who could not feed their children. Diplomatically comparing the community to a ship about to sink because of Jonah (Cordova himself), he took himself to task for not adequately exhorting the members in his sermons to mend their ways, and for neglecting now and then to devote full time to his students. But he excused his neglect because of the need to augment his inadequate salary. Like Jonah he implored God: "Take me up, and cast me forth into the sea." Like Jonah he urged the members to consult their conscience dispassionately and without hatred, and to turn to penitence.

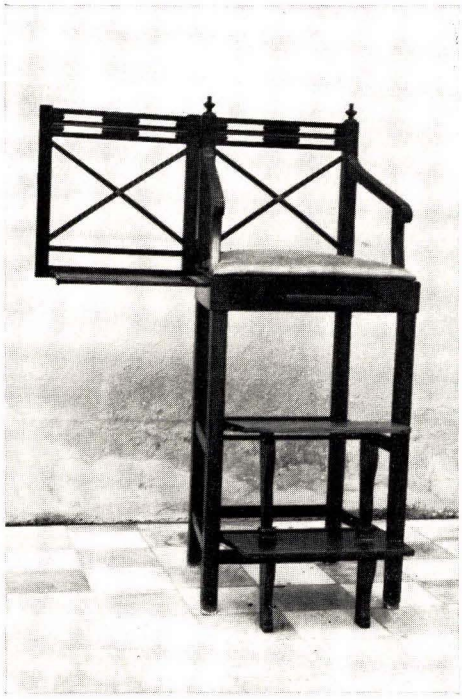
He deplored the decadence and total ruin of business; of injuries inflicted by brothers upon brothers, fathers upon sons, husbands upon wives, and the rank untrustworthiness of friends, brothers, and even of wives toward their husbands in business matters. He lamented that the sinners did not realize they were sinning when they humbled the poor. "There is much charity in this land. All of us offer more than we can afford to the needy, but few of us properly know how to help the decent poor. Unless one is insistent, he will not be placed on the community's welfare list. Unless one openly asks for help, no one would think of [helping] him."

Regretting that the major part of the donations went for teachers' salaries, including his, he recommended a salary increase so that all the donations could be used for the poor.

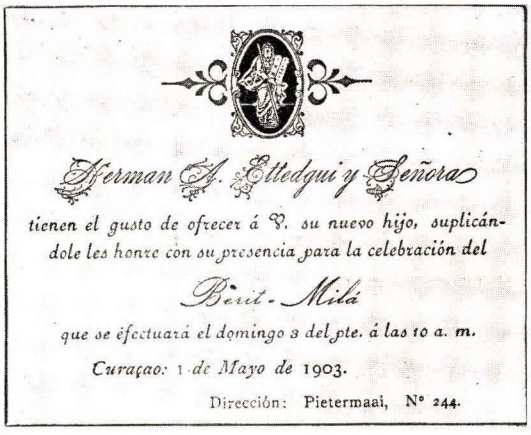
He decried the lack of appreciation for [Jewish] science, letters or intellect. (This was indirect criticism of the parnassim for rendering decisions that normally should have been handed down by the *Beth Din*.)

His exhortation for honesty in business relations is particularly revealing. A businessman himself, he had firsthand knowledge of the situation. He scored the practice of reducing prices by unfair means; of Jewish ships sometimes waging battle against other Curaçoan Jewish-owned ships in the harbor or in the open sea. "In what part of the world do two ships go to port to destroy themselves? Because of our sins God has permitted . . . that they [the Spaniards] come to our harbor and before our very eyes fire upon us and seize our goods." He lamented the disunity among the merchants in the face of enemy attack: "Those who stood to lose [ship or cargo] cried out; those who had nothing [to lose] pretended [to help]; others laughed, no one helped,

56. SILVER LAVER AND BASIN FOR WASHING THE HANDS OF MEMBERS OF THE COHEN FAMILY, BEQUEATHED BY ABIGAIL NUNES [REDONDO], D. 1747



57. OLD CHAIR USED BY THE CURAÇOAN JEWS FOR CIRCUMCISIONS



Aferman A. Ettedgui y Señora

tienen el gusto de ofrecer á V. su nuevo hijo, suplicándole les honre con su presencia para la celebración del

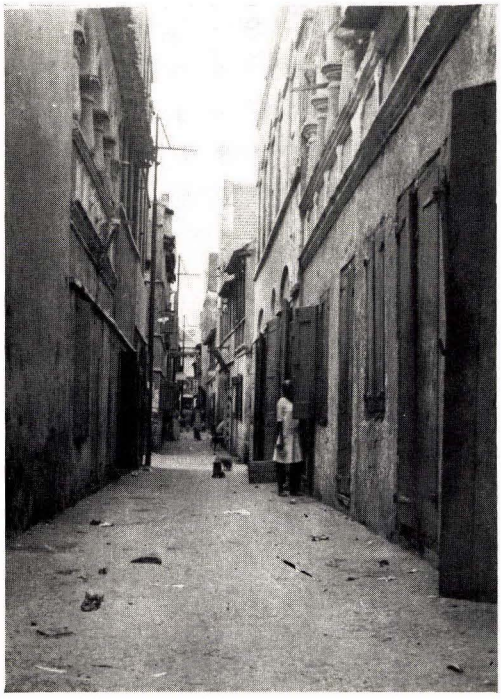
Berit - Milá

que se efectuará el domingo 3 del pte. á las 10 a. m.

Curaçao: 1 de Mayo de 1903.

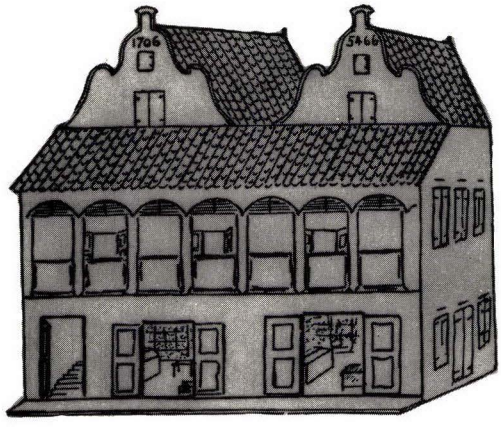
Dirección: Pietermaai, N° 244.

58. INVITATION TO A CIRCUMCISION, 1903

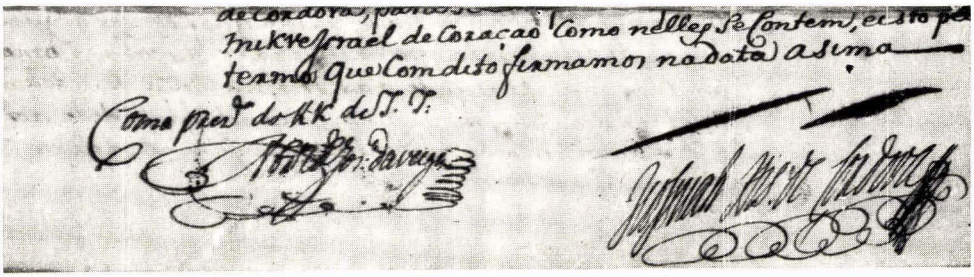


59. HANCHI DE BAÑO (NOW KUIPER-STRAAT), ONCE THE SITE OF THE RITUAL BATH

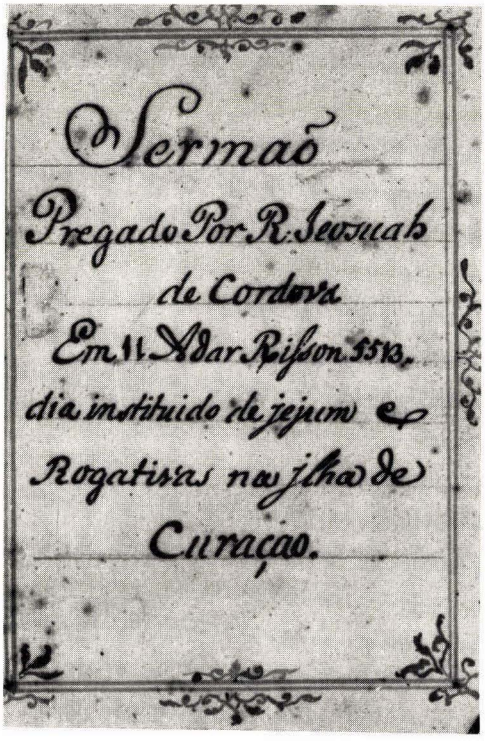
61. JODENKERKSTRAAT, SHOWING SYNAGOGUE ENTRANCE, 1928



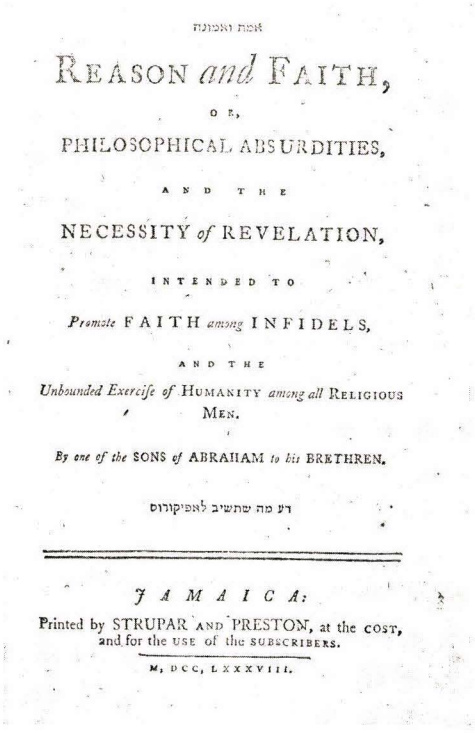
60. SKETCH OF HOUSE AT 29/31 HEERENSTRAAT WITH THE JEWISH YEAR 5466



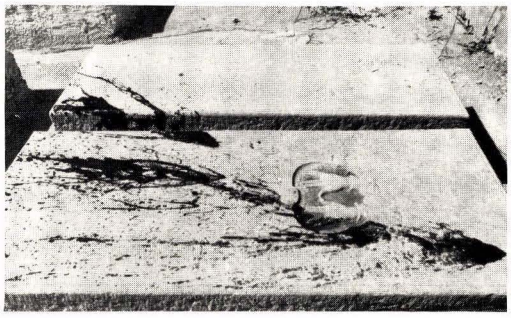
62. SIGNATURE, RIBBI JEOSUAH HISQUIAU DE CORDOVA, 1749



63. TITLE PAGE, SERMON OF RIBBI CORDOVA, 1753, PAGE 240

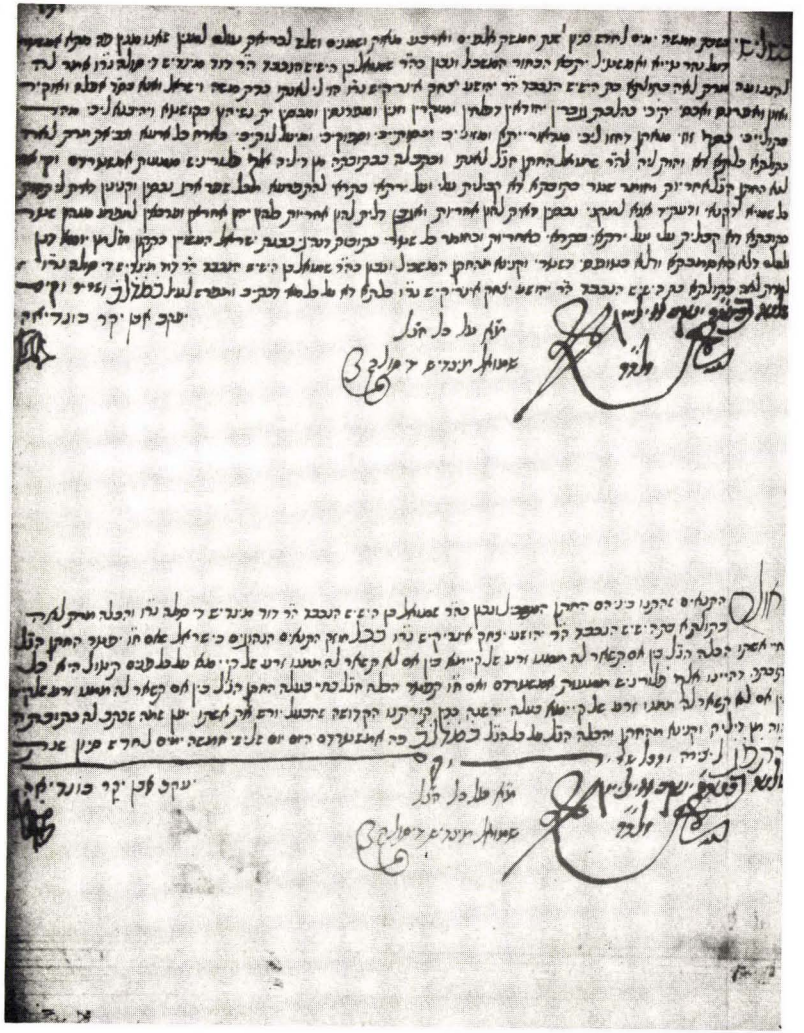


64. TITLE PAGE, RIBBI CORDOVA'S REASON AND FAITH, 1788



65. TOMBSTONE OF BINJAMIN COHEN HENRIQUEZ, 1782, STAINED AND ERODED BY THE REFINERY GASES

66. HAHAM R. H. ISHAC CARIGAL



67. KETUBAH OF HAHAM SAMUEL MENDES DE SOLA, SIGNED ALSO BY AMSTERDAM'S HAHAM AELYON, 1723

and thus the enemy was given free rein to grow stronger — there you have the cause of our total destruction."[28]

Cordova is also known to have authored the five following works — the first two manuscripts apparently are unpublished and lost.

1. "Mikré Kol atemany vehaziel asophe anahamaty." Cordova called this study a "Hebrew Epic poem in imitation of Job." His biographer Isaac Dias Fernandes considered it "the best work by far he ever wrote."[29]
2. "Saphnoth Pangneag," in Hebrew and French, apparently of a philosophical nature, cited by Cordova in *Reason and Faith* (1st ed., p. 134).
3. Sermon relating to the earthquake of 1766 in Jamaica cited by Fernandes, who considered it "the best he preached." Although printed, there is no copy known to exist.
4. אמת ואמונה *Reason and Faith, or Philosophical Absurdities, and the Necessity of Revelation, intended to Promote Faith among Infidels, and the Unbounded Exercise of Humanity among all Religious Men. By one of the Sons of Abraham to his Brethren,* דע מה שתשיב לאפיקורוס *Jamaica, M, DCC, LXXXVIII,* pp. VIII, 140 in 8°.

In his preface Cordova stated that he wrote this book "for the happiness of a youth, fearing that he would be perverted by productions under the honourable titles of Modern Philosophers, who destroy all principles of faith." His work touches briefly on several Greek as well as 17th and 18th century philosophers like Spinoza, Locke, Newton and Leibnitz, but at length about Hume. He devoted much space to defend the Jewish belief against Voltaire's attacks. "*Good and bad*, or good and evil," he says, "are as *great and small*; not being created [by God], but necessary relations of being" (p. 18). "Bad and good was put in the same tree by Moses, to teach philosophers that one could not exist without the other" (p. 22).

Cordova had two aims in writing this book. First, to defend the belief in God, the Revelation, the immortality of the soul, etc., against the atheists and skeptics. Second, to defend the Jewish principles against Voltaire. And in the latter he is more apologetic than philosophical. Nevertheless, he had a liberal point of view. He stated, "We ought . . . to believe that *all men, who*

[28] This manuscript was the property of Jacob Ferrares, the Chief Rabbi of The Hague, who gave it in 1845 to the Ets Haim Library where it can be found under number 2F 16. It was not printed because the Amsterdam parnassim most probably objected to the strong terms Cordova used.

[29] Cordova mentioned this work in *Reason and Faith*, 1st ed., p. 120. Fernandes published his biography of Cordova in *Colombian Magazine or Monthly Miscellany* of Jamaica for October, 1797. According to Rabbi Bertram W. Korn, "The Haham De Cordova of Jamaica," *AJA*, XVIII, 1966, pp. 141-54, though the biography was written anonymously, it was by Fernandes.

with sincerity travel towards God and salvation, will arrive at the same point, though they should take different roads; that God is neither Briton, Franc, Hebrew, Turk or Indian; that he has created all men, and is willing to save them all" (p. 122). It is this statement which moved the Gentiles to accept his book.

Reason and Faith, written in an easy, simple style, was published anonymously. This shows how modest Cordova was. It was printed at the expense of 34 Jewish subscribers, including at least one from Curaçao, Isaac Rodriguez da Costa. The author's surname was first given by Rabbi Isaac Leeser in *The Occident*, vol. 2, 1845, p. 519, and confirmed and completed twenty years later by Cordova's great-grandson. The book was reprinted in Cordova's lifetime in Philadelphia in 1791; after his death, in Richmond in 1804, and at least the two first sections of the book in Kingston in 1865.[30]

This book reveals that Cordova had a knowledge of Latin and an excellent command of Hebrew, French, English (which he learned at an advanced age) and Portuguese, his mother tongue.

5. A sermon translated from the Portuguese into English and printed in March, 1844, by Rephael J. de Cordova in *The First Fruits of the West*, a Jewish monthly.[31]

There is reason to believe that Cordova wrote or published other works that came into the possession of his great-grandson Michael de Jeosuah de Cordova, printer of the *Guide* of Kingston in 1865. This monthly was dedicated to the diffusion of Jewish literature. It is the same magazine that published at least the two first sections of *Reason and Faith* and intended to publish other works by Haham Cordova.[32]

By not knowing how to keep Cordova among them, the parnassim of Curaçao lost one of the West Indies' most erudite rabbis of the second half of the 18th century.

ACTIVITY OF HAHAM DE SOLA

Early in Cordova's career in Curaçao the community witnessed incidents reminiscent of the turmoil in the years prior to Prince William's peace decree. Haham De Sola sought to implement the movements of the *lulab* as practiced

[30] *PAJHS* 26:242. Korn, *ibid.*, pp. 143-44. We consulted the first edition (courtesy Jewish Theological Seminary Library, New York City). The preface of this copy is signed JHDC [Jeosuah Hizquiau De Cordova], most probably by Cordova himself. The Hebrew Union College Library, Cincinnati, has the Richmond edition, and a microfilm of the first.

[31] According to Rabbi Korn, *ibid.*, p. 148.

[32] Rabbi Korn, *ibid.*

in Amsterdam and thereby evoked the protests of various members. The following year he declared that the willow, used for generations past, was invalid and he came to the synagogue without it. As he preferred another species of willow not employed in the synagogue of Curaçao, various twigs were dispatched to Amsterdam for the hahamim's selection. The Rabbis Ishac Haim Abendana de Britto, Abraham de Jacob de Selomoh de Meza and Samuel Acatan advocated the willow then used in Curaçao (1752). De Sola ignored their decision.[33] Deeply offended, the Amsterdam parnassim notified the community that "in the future we shall take no interest in anything concerning your congregation."[34] The parnassim of Curaçao immediately excused themselves for De Sola's stubbornness. In the synagogue they announced that thenceforth only the willow recognized by the Amsterdam rabbis would be acceptable. De Sola was thus forced to bow to the will of his superiors.[35] The Amsterdam parnassim shipped 25 willow branches for planting in Curaçao, but for lack of water these never took root.

De Sola eventually won his long battle over the movements of the *lulab*. On the Feast of Tabernacles of 5515 (1754), shortly after Moses Penso's death, the parnassim officially adopted the movements followed by the Amsterdam community.[36]

After Cordova's departure, De Sola had to take on the functions of his ex-assistant. For this he received an increase of Ps. 230 yearly.[37] A master of the Portuguese language, he was entrusted to edit the letters, resolutions and publications of the parnassim, for which he was paid fifty pesos annually.[38]

De Sola was an excellent speaker and distinguished himself in a moving sermon (not published until 1771) delivered on the death of Prince William IV. On that occasion the parnassim organized a solemn funeral service in the synagogue[39] at which all the members had to be dressed in black.

Like his predecessors, De Sola took care that the shipments of *casher* meat products (smoked sausage, fat, corned beef, pickled sausage and so forth) from New York were made properly. To insure against fraudulent practices, he insisted in his letters to Shearith Israel in 1752 and in 1758 that the meat should be branded in the presence of the hazzan, that the hazzan's

33 Letter of Abraham Belmonte to the Amsterdam parnassim (PJCAA, bundle).

34 Letters of the Amsterdam parnassim of Sept. 20, 1753, and July 19, 1754, to the Curaçao community.

35 MS, 18 Kisleff, 5514.

36 MS, 14 Tisry, 5515.

37 MS, 23 Sivan, 5515.

38 MS, 27 Menachem, 5511.

39 MS, 6 Tebet, 5512.

certificate[40] should accompany all barrels and casks of such meats, fats, etc., and that he should be given the hazzan's list of all shipments with the names of the consignees.[41] De Sola also saw to it that order was established in the placing of seals or stamps on meat slaughtered in Curaçao.[42] He forbade the consumption of cheese from Holland that did not bear a certificate attesting to its *kashruth*.

De Sola put out of limits for the Jews certain streets near the Fort that were not included in the *irub*, i.e., the district approved for walking on the Sabbath and on Yom Kippur.

He also regulated the question of the ritual bath for women. They could not take their bath before nightfall, except on Fridays and on the eve of Jewish holidays, and then could be accompanied by not more than one slave. A bride went to the bath a half hour after nightfall and was privileged to take along her matrons of honor and no more than two slaves.[43] For an hour after dusk the men were not allowed on the street leading to the bath or in the verandas or doorways of their homes facing this street.

Although forbidden to mention people by name in his sermons, De Sola relapsed into the habit. Shortly before the High Holy Days of 1759, he was suspended from preaching. A month later, on the demand of various members, he was permitted to resume his sermons.[44] Either because the hours were too long or teaching proved too strenuous for him, toward the end of his life he neglected to attend the schools. He was liberal for his day, for he did not object to the Jews' contributing funds for the construction of the Lutheran Church of Curaçao in 1757.[45] During a grave illness of six months, Haham De Sola was given the name Rephael. He died on May 6, 1761, at the age of 62, after having served the community for sixteen years with much ardor and devotion.

[40] For that certificate, in English, issued by the Philadelphia community, see Wolff & Whiteman, *ibid.*, p. 48.

[41] *PAJHS* 21:56, 78; 25:43; 27:6-8; David and Tamar de Sola Pool, *An Old Faith in the New World*, p. 414. In 1758 Haham Cordova of Jamaica complained to New York's Shearith Israel about the irregularities in connection with the *casher* meat seals, and sent a copy of that letter to Haham De Sola. See also MS, 13 Tebet, 5508; 3 Ab, 5512; 2 Hesvan, 5513; 27 Nissan, 5518, and 24 Nissan, 5520; MIA, loose papers.

[42] MS, 11 Kislev; 21, 24, 25 Sivan, 5508; 27 Hesvan and 26 Kislev, 5509; 9 Adar, 17 Nissan and 12 Menachem, 5511; 20 Menahem, 5512; 6, 11, 12 Tamus, 5518; 6, 13 Iyar, 5519; OAC 18, April 24, 1754.

[43] MS, 4 Sivan, 5516; 30 Menahem, 5519.

[44] MS, 28 Elul, 5518.

[45] Ordinarily anti-Jewish, the Protestant Pastor Bosch mentions this fact with this comment: "with voluntary contributions . . . even some Jews may be named with honor" (Bosch, *ibid.*, vol. I, p. 234).

HAHAM DE SOLA'S ASSISTANTS

During his rabbinate Haham De Sola was assisted by the following ecclesiastical employees who served as cantors, teachers or ritual slaughterers:

1. Mosseh Lopez da Fonseca — Hazzan from 1736 to his death in 1752; *dayyan* since 1745.[46] A son of Haham Lopez, he served as hazzan of New York's Congregation Shearith Jahacob (later Shearith Israel) before 1720[47] to 1736.
2. Shemuel de Mosseh Levy Maduro — Hazzan and ritual slaughterer; he died in 1752.[48]
3. Rephael [Jesurun] Pinto — Ribbi since 1745. He was a grandson of Haham Jesurun.
4. Mordechay Levy Maduro — Hazzan and teacher since 1746.
5. Abraham Nunes Redondo — Assistant Hazzan of Neve Salom since 1734; he died in 1766.[49]
6. Ishac de Shemuel Levy Maduro — Hazzan of Neve Salom (1746-53).[50]

7-8. Guidon Mendes and Jeosuah Touro — Ribbis since 1749.

9. Jeosuah Hisquiahu de Cordova — Ribbi and preacher as earlier set forth.
10. Eliau de Jacob Lopez da Fonseca — Ribbi, later hazzan, since 1743.
11. Ishac, son of Haham De Sola — Ribbi since 1750. He left Curaçao for Amsterdam after his father's death. Served for a short while as preacher in Bordeaux. Preached in Amsterdam in 1770.[51] A portrait of his was among the effects listed in the inventory of his deceased mother's estate.
12. Ishac Rephael Mendes Machado — Ribbi. A bachelor, he succumbed to the epidemic of 1760.[52]
13. Ishac Pinheiro de Nogueira — Ribbi. A victim of the epidemic of 1762, he left several young children behind.[53]

[46] See Emmanuel, *Precious Stones*, pp. 315-17.

[47] He was already in New York in 1714 (Jacob R. Marcus, "The Oldest Known Synagogue Record Book of Continental North America," *In the Time of Harvest* — Essays in Honor of Abba Hillel Silver on the Occasion of his 70th Birthday (New York, 1963), p. 230.

[48] Emmanuel, *Precious Stones*, p. 318.

[49] *Ibid.*, p. 352.

[50] *Ibid.*, pp. 389-90.

[51] PJCAA, Resoluçoems do . . . Mahamad, 5527-5533, p. 155.

[52] Emmanuel, *ibid.*, p. 336.

[53] *Ibid.*, p. 344.

14-15. Eliau Rephael and David, sons of Abraham Lopez da Fonseca — Ritual slaughterers circa 1735.[54] They were active during Haham Carigal's rabbinate.

16. Selomoh de Semuel Levy Maduro — Ritual slaughterer in Otrabanda since 1748 and perhaps earlier.[55]

17. Jacob de Jeudah Cohen Henriquez — Ritual slaughterer in Pietermaai in 1748.[55]

18. David de Jeudah Cohen Henriquez — Ritual slaughterer in Pietermaai in 1751.

19. Jeudah, son of no. 18 — Ritual slaughterer in Pietermaai since 1758.[56]

HAHAM DE SOLA'S WRITINGS

Haham De Sola has left a number of published sermons, judicial opinions, a compilation of prayers, Spanish transliterations of Ladino works, and some manuscripts.[57] In 1729, with the assistance of Joseph Siprut Gabay and Jeudah Piza, he transliterated into Spanish letters the *Regimiento de la Vida* by Moses Almosnino, Salonikan philosopher.[58] Five years later, in 1734, with the assistance of his colleague Abraham Mendez Chumaceiro, he transliterated into Spanish Almosnino's *Tractado de Sueños*.[59] Like most Ets Haim scholars of note, he also wrote rabbinical *Responsa*.[60] He compiled the *Seder Tefiloth Lesheelath Matar* which his son-in-law Haham J. L. da Fonseca edited in 1773 in Amsterdam.[61] Here are some of De Sola's many sermons that were published

[54] See OAC 864, no. 199, y. 1749, for their activity as ritual slaughterers and their obligation toward their mother.

[55] See above, p. 193, about him and J. C. Henriquez as ritual slaughterers.

[56] The names of most of these ecclesiastical employees appear in the "Memorias Senior" and in loose papers of the MIA. Some of them also served during Haham Jesurun's rabbinate.

[57] The inventory of his deceased widow's estate shows that De Sola left a few manuscripts (OAC 941, no. 394).

[58] In re this edition, see Emmanuel, *Histoire des Israélites de Salonique*, vol. I, p. 181.

[59] As this is a rare book, we reproduce herewith the title page: Transformaciones / de MORPHEO, / ó / Tractado de Sueños / Obra de la màs vasta Erudicion, y de la màs relevante / Doctrina, que tiene salido a la observacion de los / Doctos; la qual tracta de tres differentes / generos de Sueños, sus Causas, sus Difini- / ciones, sus Especies, y sus Origenes / Compuesta por el Muy Reverendo, y / Doctissimo H[aham] H[ashale]m. R[ibbi]. Mosseh Almosnino, / A persuaciones del Señor / Don / Josseph Nassi. / Dada nuevamente a la Imprenta, en charac- / teres españoles por industria de / Semuel Mendes de Sola, / y / Abraham Mendez Chumazero, / En Amsterdam, Año 5494. / Precio, Fl. 1-10-0.

[60] *Peri Ets Haim* (Amsterdam, 1747-1756), no. 42, pp. 119a-20a.

[61] The Purim liturgy, cited by George Alexander Kohut, *PAJHS* 3:117, exactly, "Orden de la Agada [de] Noche de Purim" with Spanish poems, 22 pp., was written in 1788, not by our Haham, but by his grandson Samuel de Isaac Mendes de Sola.

1. Sermam Moral Em acçam de Graças . . . por haver D[eus] trazido em pax a Senhora Sua May, e Hirmaos (Amsterdam, Casa de Mosseh Diaz [5478 = 1718]), 27 pp. This sermon, dedicated to Jacob Telles da Costa, is prefaced by the *approbación* of Haham Aelyon, by an introduction of De Sola's Gemara instructor Ribbi David Israel Athias, and several eulogies composed by his brothers Jacob and Joseph Mendes de Sola[62] in Portuguese, by Abraham Gomes Silveyra and Jacob Gomes da Silva in Spanish, and by Jahacob Aharon Sasportas in Hebrew.
2. Sermam Composto e Pregado Por . . . Em este K. K. de T. T. Em Sabath Emor a 20 de Hyar Aº 5484 Em Amsterdam, Em Caza de Yshac de Cordova a 28 Elul, Anno 5484, pp. 22. Haham Aelyon's *approbación* to this sermon also refers to De Sola's subsequent sermon delivered on Sabbath Balak disclosing his attainments on the "glorious" completion of his studies. De Sola dedicated the sermon to the Amsterdam parnassim Himanuel de Iahacob Curiel, president; Yosseph de Pinto, Yosseph da Veiga, Ishac Franco Mendes, Iahacob de Abraham Nunes Henriques, Mosseh de Pinto and Ishac de Selomoh Abarbanel Souza, Gabay.
3. Sermam . . . pregado em este K.K. de T.T. em Sabath Balak, a 17 de Tamus Aº 5484 (Amsterdam, Em Caza de Yshac de Cordova, 12 de Tisri Aº 5485 [1724]), 20 pp. This was dedicated to the parnassim of the Ets Haim Seminary: Mosseh de Abraham Pereyra, Aaron Bueno de Mesquita, Jahacob Curiel de Prado and Jahacob de Mosseh de Pinedo.
4. Serman Funebre & Moral que ás Exequias do muy docto H.H.R. Aharon Acohen De Lara, Dignissimo Hazan do K.K. de T.T. Prégou o H.H. . . . Prégador do dito Kahal, Em Sabat Emor, 20 de Iiar Anno 5504 (Impresso a Custa do Autor Em Amsterdam, Anno 5504), 24 pp. Dedicated to Cohen de Lara's widow Rachel, it has an introduction by the Rabbis David Israel Athias and Ishac Haim Abendana de Britto who styled De Sola *Hahaham Hane'ela* (the eminent rabbi), as he was known before leaving for Curaçao.[63]
5. Sermon delivered in 1750 on the occasion of the reconciliation between the parnassim of Curaçao and Moses Penso et al. earlier discussed.[64]
6. Oração funebre as postumas Memorias de Sua Serenissima Alteza Principe Guilhermo IV, Principe de Orange & Nassau, Stadhouder Hereditario das Sette Provincias Unidas, etc., etc. Faleceo em 22 Octubro, Ano 1751.

[62] Both poems were published by Remedios (*ibid.*, pp. 133-34) who erroneously associated them with De Sola's sermon of 1724. Cf. Emmanuel, *Precious Stones*, p. 342.

[63] The usual titles conferred on rabbis were Haham Hameromam, Haham Hane'ela, Haham Hashalem, Hadayyan Hameẓuyan, Harab Hamubhac, Morenu Harab or Morenu ve Rabenu.

[64] See above, p. 211.

Pregado no K.K. de Mikvé Israel, na ilha de Curacao, por o insigne H.H.R. . . . Theologo, celebre Pregador & Rab da ditta Congrega. Impresso a custa de seu Filho [Ishac] com a devida Licença dos Senhores do Mahamad, & Aprovaçao do Senhor nosso H.H. [Selomoh Salem] . . . Na officina . . . de Gerhard Johan Janson, em casa de Israel Mondovy, Aº 5531, 16 pp. The introduction by De Sola's son Ishac stated that he dedicated the sermon to the following Amsterdam parnassim in gratitude for all they had done for him (Ishac): Jahacob de Joseph Teixeira de Mattos, president; David de Ishac Franco Mendes, David Espinoza Catella, David de Abraham Hisquiau aLevy, Joseph Suasso de Lima, and Ishac de Selomoh Gutieres, Gabay.[65]

HAHAM ISHAC HENRIQUEZ FARRO

Shortly after De Sola's death the parnassim asked their Amsterdam colleagues for a qualified haham-ribbi. The choice fell on Ishac Jacob Henriquez Farro, a man well versed in the Talmud and counted among the community's writers of rabbinical decisions.[66] Farro, then 46, sailed for Curaçao with his wife and three sons: Jacob, Moses and Abraham. He took along many books, mainly *Responsa*. On July 10, 1762, just fifteen days after his arrival, the community was plunged into mourning. Farro had succumbed to the yellow fever epidemic then ravaging Curaçao (1761-63).[67] With his widow's consent the parnassim sold his books at public auction. These included important works in Spanish and Ladino; the *Responsa*: *Peraḥ Maté Aaron* by Aaron aCohen Perahia of Salonika, *Eliau Misrahi*, and *'Aẓmoth Joseph* by Joseph Aben Ezra; Mishnayoth, Talmud, Midrash, Zohar, Bahyé; Kimhi's *Sefer Hasharashim*, and so forth. The famous *Ferrara Bible* went to Moses Lopez Penha for a mere peso and six reales; the *Regimiento de la Vida* by Almosnino brought only four reales.[68]

[65] The sermon attributed to Haham De Sola by Kohut (*ibid.*, p. 148) and by Remedios (*ibid.*, p. 135) was the work of our haham's grandson Samuel de Isaac de Sola, as also was the manuscript "Livro de Preguntas e Repostas sobre As Parasioth e varias Aphtaroth . . . Apotegmas de Aboth e mais outros Assumptos apropiados para varias Sezoems," found at the Ets Haim Library under no. 20A 6.

[66] A decision of his written in 1746 appears in *Peri Ets Haim* (*Responsa* cited above in note 60), pp. 276a-77a.

[67] See Emmanuel, *Precious Stones*, pp. 345-48, for details.

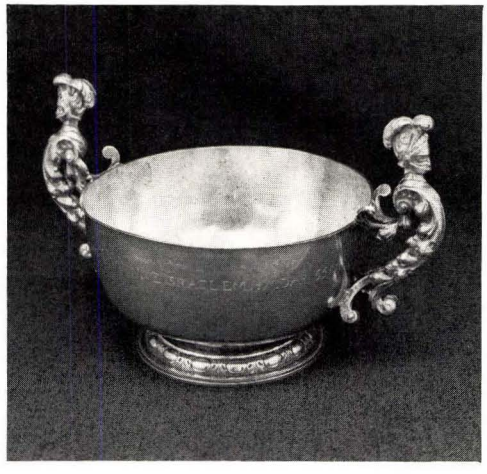
[68] According to a list of the books sold at public auction (MIA, loose papers).

68. THE HOLY ARK WITH THE SCROLLS OF THE LAW, SYNAGOGUE MIKVE ISRAEL-EMANUEL

69. SILVER TORAH CROWN DONATED BY ELIAU NAMIAS DE CRASTO TO MIKVE ISRAEL SYNAGOGUE, 1711

70. SILVER SPICE CONTAINERS FOR SATURDAY EVENING SERVICE

71. SILVER SPICE CONTAINER, 1703, PAGE 94



72. SILVER BOWL FOR PURIM DONATIONS, GIVEN BY SARAH DE SAMUEL DA COSTA GOMEZ, 1801

HAHAM ISHAC CARIGAL

Two months after Haham Farro's tragic death, an emissary from Hebron visited Curaçao with two servants. He was Haham Ishac Carigal,[69] a linguist who spoke Hebrew, Arabic, Syriac, Chaldaic, Spanish (Ladino), and a little English. He won the community completely over by his fine manners, his Jewish cultural baggage, "his ingenious and sensible appearance" and his "modest and reverent conduct." Small wonder that the appeals made for him and his mission were so rewarding! Urgently needing a spiritual leader, they engaged him on a temporary basis as rabbi-teacher at Ps. 750 a year. That was the highest salary ever paid a rabbi in 18th century Curaçao. Carigal took charge of the schools and Talmud instruction. To get the full benefit of his learning the parnassim reinstated the Hascamoth of 1711 and 1716 requiring parents to send their sons up to sixteen years of age to the schools.[70] He also tried to regulate the thorny subject of the slaughter and sale of *casher* meat in Curaçao, and won the hearty approval of the parnassim for his efforts.

Meanwhile young Jacob Lopez da Fonseca had finished his studies at Amsterdam's Ets Haim Seminary. Haham Carigal therefore embarked for Holland on the *Leyd Star* late in May, 1764. The parnassim paid Jan Lindeboom, the captain, Ps. 100 on May 22, 1764, for the fare and baggage expenses "of the professor called Isaac Carigaal and his two servants . . . to Tessel."[71] Carigal managed to leave with a relatively large sum of money earned in Curaçao. After travelling to many lands, he finally became haham of Congregation Nidhe Israel, Barbados. There he died in 1777 at the age of 48 years.[72] When news of his death reached Curaçao, the parnassim of Congregations Mikvé Israel and Neve Salom organized a special funeral service in his memory.[73]

ADMINISTRATION OF THE COMMUNITY

A few months after the reconciliation effected between the parnassim and Moses Penso and his group, it was decided to hold a special appeal in the

[69] The name originates from "Carregal," a hamlet in northern Portugal. Most probably the first Caregal emigrated from Portugal to Salonika where the affluent Moshe Caregal died in 1664 (Emmanuel, *Mazavoth Saloniki*, vol. 1, no. 790).

[70] MIA, loose papers.

[71] Exactly: "Een Hondert (makke) [marke] van agten . . . voor Vragt & Passagie van de Hoogleeraar Genaamt Isaac Carigaal, & zyn twee dienaars . . . tot de zee van Tessel" (MIA, loose papers).

[72] For full details on Carigal in Curaçao, see Emmanuel, "Jewish Education in Curaçao (1692-1802)," *PAJHS* 44:234-36; Emmanuel, *Precious Stones*, pp. 480-83.

[73] MIA, loose papers. It is surprising that Carigal is not on the list of the rabbis of the community for whom memorial prayers are offered at least four times a year.

synagogue for funds "to lengthen from pillar to pillar."[74] This referred to enlarging the Holy Ark in the area between the two pillars as it is found today. The Holy Ark had become overcrowded with the growing number of Scrolls of the Law and mantles donated by the devout. Simultaneously it was resolved to remove these scrolls every week, in rotation, so that all the donors might be honored. The generous Abraham Mendes de Castro on this occassion donated three mahogany beams valued at 49:4 pesos.[75] The new Holy Ark, finished at a cost of Ps. 561:5:3, is the same one currently in use.

During these years the parnassim enacted several new regulations or found it necessary to reaffirm old ones. Prominent among these were the following:

1. The hazzanim could not make innovations in the prayers, but had to follow established custom (1752).
2. The community had the right to reimburse itself from the estate of a decedent who had received assistance from the Community Chest during his lifetime (1752).
3. Girls of questionable behavior would not be married by the haham, but by the hazzan only (1752, renewed in 1756).[76]
4. Members were again enjoined from hiding mail destined for others.
5. Members were again forbidden to write anonymous satires against the parnassim, haham or others on pain of excommunication. This measure was taken immediately after Isaac de Samuel Levy Maduro had written a satire against the adjunto Abraham de David Senior (1754).
6. Members were forbidden to lend the colored folk and mulattoes money over the legal annual interest rate of 12% (1754, 1759).
7. Excommunicates who had ignored the ban and died without obtaining absolution were to be buried apart in a separate enclosure of the cemetery (1760).

From before 1694 it was customary to marry a daughter at the bedside of a dying mother.[77] This custom prevailed among the Sephardim of the Orient since ancient times and was kept alive until two generations ago. Beginning with the 18th century the Island Council issued a marriage license only after

[74] MS, 6 Adar, 5511 (1751).

[75] MIA, loose papers.

[76] See below, pp. 269-70, and appendix 1, pp. 611-12.

[77] Letter of David Levy Mendes, or Dovale, of March 15, 1695, to his brother Manuel Levy Duarte (famous Amsterdam jeweler), relating that his daughter had married in 1694 in the presence of his dying wife who died two days after the wedding ceremony (PJCAA, bundle).

the preliminary intention to marry had been filed with the Government Secretariat on three different dates. The Jews nevertheless went through the religious ceremony without adhering to this procedure. Like his predecessors, Governor Faesch issued a license on the promise of the bride and groom to register their marriage later. In 1755 he withdrew this privilege. He refused to allow Hazzan Abraham Lopez da Fonseca's two daughters to marry religiously before their dying widowed mother although the girls and their fiancés had already complied with two of the three necessary registrations. Faesch's attitude is indeed amazing. This custom had obtained among the Jews from the earliest days of their arrival, and until 1821 the Protestant minister had the faculty to solemnize a marriage prior to registering it with the Secretariat.[78] The parnassim therefore had good cause to complain to their Amsterdam colleagues and persuade them to have the Company directors permit marriage licenses to be granted in exceptional cases. Evidently the matter was not so simple, for it still remained unsolved in 1757.[79] The parnassim's insistence on this dispensation is quite understandable — a mother could die at peace if she knew that her daughter was settled. Governor Rodier and subsequent incumbents were more lenient.

There were not enough copies of the Pentateuch in Hebrew and Ladino for the pupils; so the parnassim arranged to have the Five Books of Moses printed in Amsterdam.[80] Whether or not they actually accomplished this is not clear. But a Curaçoan did publish, practically at his entire expense, a splendid two-column Bible in Hebrew and Spanish, in folio, with annotations of "Or Torah."[81] The generous patron was the same Abraham Mendes de Castro[82] who left money for two houses to be bought by the holy cities of Hebron and Jerusalem. Through his representative Abraham de Mosseh de Chaves of Amsterdam he remitted the 2,400 florins agreed upon to the printers Joseph, Jacob and Abraham de Salomon Proops.[83] Castro died before the work was completed. The printers meanwhile demanded more funds and Chaves was obliged to accept only a few Bibles in return for the large sum

[78] The privilege to ministers was abrogated by Governor Cantz'laar in 1821 (RA, Koloniën 3750, July 7, 1821).

[79] PJCAA, letters exchanged between the Curaçao and Amsterdam parnassim on Dec. 31, 1755, and Feb. 23, 1756; the Amsterdam parnassim's petition of Jan. 28, 1757, to the WIC.

[80] PJCAA, Resoluçoems, 5511-5527, meeting of 29 Nissan, 5521, p. 147.

[81] Amsterdam, 5522 (1762), pp. 332, 350.

[82] See "Personalia" below, pp. 1095-99, for full details on Mendes de Castro.

[83] OAC 837, July 20, 1758. Profits on the sale of the Bibles were to be divided equally in favor of the holy cities of Jerusalem and Hebron (OAC 879, Dec. 4, 1760).

they had received. There is an introduction by the printers, in Spanish, also containing various versicles customarily sung before and after a reading of the Bible, with Spanish transliteration of this type:

> Esrénu besem A[donay]. osé Samáim vaares . . . Tora siva lanu Moseh, moraça Keilat Jahacob. Semah Israel A. heloenu A. Ehad, and so on.

This introduction concludes with a 30-verse eulogy dedicated to the printers by Abraham Yehisquiya Bassan. He did not see it necessary to remember the worthy Mendes de Castro who had financed the work (illus. 299).

CHAPTER XII

HAHAM JACOB DA FONSECA'S RABBINATE 1764-1815

JACOB LOPEZ DA FONSECA completed his studies in the spring of 1764. A year before, this worthy grandson of Haham Lopez had delivered a sermon in the Amsterdam synagogue, lamenting the death of his revered teacher-father-in-law Haham De Sola and warmly thanking the Curaçao parnassim for their assistance[1] to him. Toward the end of 1763 he suffered another blow — the death of his wife Rachel. So it was with heavy heart and misgivings that he embarked for home on *De Jonge Aron*. He arrived in Curaçao on July 15, 1764, and was received with much affection by the parnassim. They engaged him as their rabbi under advantageous terms.

As their spiritual leader he was to have all the prerogatives enjoyed by a haham of Curaçao. The annual salary of Ps. 400 was to be supplemented by another Ps. 200 from the Yeshibah Es Haim ve Ohel Yahacob. Besides various perquisites and free lodging in the house formerly occupied by Haham De Sola, he was to be accorded a *nedabah* on the day of his installation. In return, he was to desist from all business activity, obey the parnassim and never petition the government against them.[2] He was required to teach seven hours daily — five hours in the *medrasim* and two hours in the *yeshibah* above mentioned. He was also expected to preach every fifteen days and on the following Sabbaths and festivals: the Sabbath occurring between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, the last day of the Feast of Tabernacles, the Sabbath following the Feast of Tabernacles, the Sabbath of Ḥanukkah, the Sabbaths when the Ten Commandments are read, also on the first days of Shabu'oth and Passover, and on the Sabbaths preceding Purim and the Fast of Ab.

Four months after his installation he married Sara de Samuel Fernandez who had come with her mother from Amsterdam. She brought him a dowry of 3,000 pesos.[3]

Da Fonseca started on a career that was to last fifty-one years — until his death. His long rabbinate witnessed a chain of incidents or disputes between

[1] For details on this sermon, see Emmanuel, *Precious Stones*, p. 412.
[2] MIA, loose papers.
[3] OAC 958, no. 119.

private individuals, between families, between members, the parnassim and adjuntos, and even between the parnassim and their haham (Chapter XIII). There were trying years of economic depression and there were years of abundance especially during the early years of the American War for Independence. There were years of suffering under the English occupation and French interference. The good or bad economic situation and the quarrels naturally had their repercussions on the administration of the community.

ADMINISTRATION OF THE COMMUNITY

The *hascamoth* of 1755 fixed the number of parnassim at three. The arrival of several newcomers in 1762 and the desire of various families to take part in the administration of the community raised the question of increasing the number to five. It was proposed to elect three parnassim before Rosh Hashanah and two before Passover, these regents to be assisted by two adjuntos, in rotation. This change was approved by the Company directors in 1763. Seven years later the Company was requested to restore a Mahamad of three because "as a result of the decadence of business . . . the major part of the affluent people became impoverished and those that could take part were related." Again the Company obliged (1771).[4]

The economic situation between 1768 and 1776 was desperate. Money was scarce[5] and real estate values kept falling. In 1769 no one was willing to serve as treasurer of the community and shoulder the huge responsibilities of the office. Finally they wished it on Haham Da Fonseca (1769-1775), who also assumed the duties of bookkeeper. Frequent droughts (1760-1764 and 1767-1771) reduced many affluent families to want.[6] Steadily diminishing incomes caused the Community Chest to suffer a large deficit. In an effort to balance the budget, expenses were drastically reduced and *Terra Santa* contributions cut in half. Expenses nevertheless remained high. A report on this economic crisis submitted by the community's twelve richest men to the Amsterdam parnassim reveals these expenditures for the years 5524-5529 (1763-1769): Ps. 15,890:2:1, Ps. 15,288:-:3, Ps. 13,436:5:4, Ps. 14,248:-:3, Ps. 15,140:5:3 and Ps. 11,815:7:2. The only fixed income of the community was the interest on the capital fund — 6% on Ps. 56,000 or Ps. 3,360 a year. Voluntary offerings had always been the backbone of

[4] WICA 475, p. 231; WICA 476, p. 52.

[5] Governor Rodier's letter of April 29, 1775, to the WIC directors.

[6] The severe drought and dire poverty on the island moved Governor Rodier to order a day of prayer and penitence "so that God might pardon the many sins" (OAC 196, no. 55, Nov. 25, 1767).

their receipts, and before the business slump accounted for some 10,000-12,000 pesos annually. In 1769 these donations came to only Ps. 6,000 and half of them remained unpaid.

To make up the deficit the parnassim proposed a *sheḥita* or ritual slaughtering tax with this rate scale: for butchering cows, 4 reales; bulls, 2 reales; sheep or goats, 1 real; lambs, 1/2 real; large fowl like turkeys or geese, 1 placa; chickens, 1/2 placa; pigeons, 1/4 placa. Overoptimistic, they expected to collect Ps. 1,500 a year from this source. The difference of some Ps. 4,000 they hoped to obtain from the *finta* or communal tax, which was to be based on what the voluntary offerings generally yielded. For example, if the donations exceeded Ps. 3,000 a year, the tax would be less, and more if under that figure. Isaac Haim Rodriguez da Costa suggested this plan. It was accepted by 153 people, but vehemently opposed by the richest members — Isaac Pereira, Aron Ailyon, David Cardoze, Dr. Joseph Capriles, Isaac Pardo, David Lopez Laguna, Samuel de Joseph da Costa Gomez, Jacob de Joseph Jesurun Henriquez, Gabriel Pinedo, Rephael Alvares Correa, Selomoh Vaz Farro and Jacob da Costa Gomez. Others who refused to sign were Samuel de Gabriel da Costa Gomez, Jacob de Mordechay Andrade, Jacob Aboab Osorio, Aron Motta, Semuel Hoheb, Ishac Athias de Neyra, Semuel da Costa Andrade, Benjamin Cohen Henriquez, Abraham aLevy, Abraham Lopez Diaz, David Castello, Josiau Dovale, David and Jacob Cohen Henriquez, Joseph Jochem Alexander, Isaac Andrade, Mordechay de Selomoh Levy Maduro and Isaac Abenatar; also, Elias Rodriguez Miranda and Jacob Gomes Casseres although they had accepted the plan orally. Sixty families, according to the opposition, were against this tax.

Twelve of the leading opponents addressed themselves to the Governor and Council to protest the resolution as illegal and arbitrary. They complained that there were abuses in the distribution of the expenses and that the budget had to be adjusted. One went so far as to say that he would willingly give Ps. 1,000 voluntarily, but not a cent through taxation.

Fearing that the government or the Company might introduce an income tax, Curaçao's white non-Jewish population staunchly supported the opposition group. The governor called the parnassim, the haham and five members of the opposition in order to pacify them, but without result. About this time the directors of the Company seriously considered boosting the real estate tax from 1% to 2% and raising the slave tax. Governor Rodier wisely dissuaded his superiors from taking this step "because of the deplorable situation and poverty of the island."[7]

[7] Letter of Jan. 2, 1775, to the Company (WICA 211, p. 361).

As the parnassim were determined to impose the communal tax, the government took the matter in hand. Jan Lixraaven (quartermaster and as such second in command after the governor) and Gerard Specht (captain of the Citizens Militia) convoked a meeting of the haham, the parnassim, the elders and twelve members of the opposition. This time the parties were appeased. The following Saturday a special synagogue appeal for funds to cover the deficit yielded the gratifying sum of Ps. 800 in favor of the Community Chest although Ps. 600 had been raised that day for Hebron. Isaac Haim Rodriguez da Costa[8] was the largest donor. The *Hebrat Kanahim* (association of the zealous) was formed at this time under the direction of the Mahamad for the purpose of obtaining funds to make up the deficit for the ensuing six to eight years.[9] So they rejected the *finta* which had been in use in Amsterdam since 1622, only to introduce it in 1810 during the English occupation. It is still operative.

This bitter dispute over taxes lasted from the end of 1768 to March, 1770. The parnassim wanted the Amsterdam community to have the Company stop the governor from contravening their resolutions. They also wanted the States General or the Company to let them banish any member who disobeyed them or created a disturbance in the synagogue. Of course the Amsterdam parnassim could not agree to such excessive power. They believed that the existing fine of 25 pesos for such offenses was adequate punishment. Therefore, they advised the Curaçao parnassim "to use their powers judiciously and in nowise exceed those defined in the hascamoth."[10]

THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION AND THE JEWS OF CURAÇAO

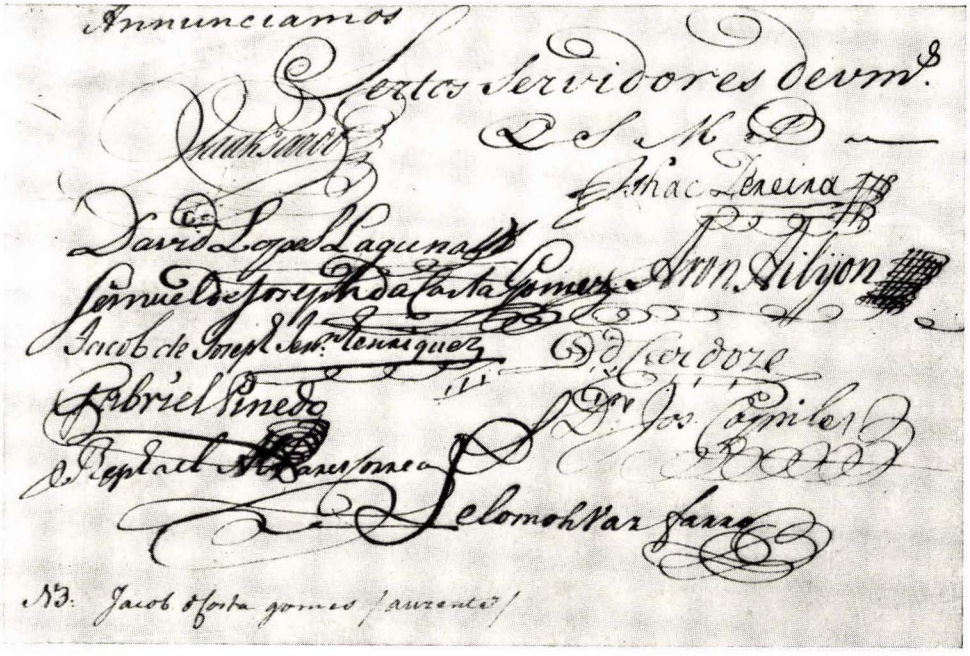
The business depression in Curaçao continued until 1776. Only after the onset of the American Revolutionary War (1775-1783) was there a change for the better. Curaçao, like St. Eustatius, became a supply center for the American armies and later for the Spanish colonies. Although neutral, Holland's sympathies were with the American revolutionaries. Between 1776 and 1777 the Curaçao government prohibited her merchants from selling munitions to the English colonies[11] although she tolerated the exportation

[8] According to a 13-page letter written to the Amsterdam parnassim in March, 1770, by the twelve leading opponents earlier named in the text (PJCAA, bundle).

[9] Isaac Haim R. da Costa's letter of March 23, 1770, to the Amsterdam parnassim (PJCAA, bundle).

[10] PJCAA, Resoluçoems do Mahamad, 5527-5533, meeting of 14 Iiar, 5529, p. 107, 24 Sivan, 5530, p. 152; the Amsterdam parnassim's letter of July 13, 1770, to the Curaçao community.

[11] OAC 205, no. 19.


Annunciamos
Sertos Servidores de vm.s
Q. S. M. D.
Ishac Pereira
David Lopes Laguna
Aron Filijon
Jacob de Joseph Sen.r Henriquez
Fabriel Pinedo
Dr. Jos. Cogniles
Selomoh Vaz Farro
NB: Jacob d'Costa gomes (ausente)

73. SIGNATURES OF THE NOTABLES OPPOSING THE FINTA, 1769, PAGE 255

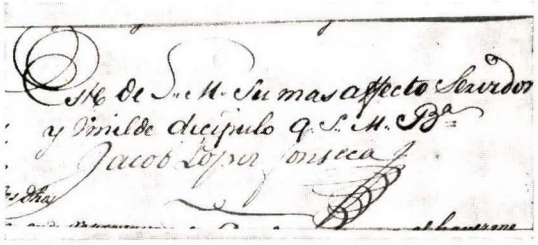
74. TOMBSTONE OF ISAAC HAIM RODRIGUES DA COSTA, 1784, ERASED BY THE REFINERY GASES, PAGE 261

SERMAÕ MORAL
E
PANEGIRICO,
Que no K. K. Mikve Israël, prégou
o H. H. R. JAHACOB LOPES da FONSECA
Na celebre festividade dos Noivos de Ley, que solemnizáraõ os senhores,
O Sr. DAVID MORALES, Hatan Bereschit
O Sr. MORDECHAY MOTTA, Hatan Thorà
EM CURAÇAO
Sabat Bereschit. 29 Tisry, Ao. 5540.

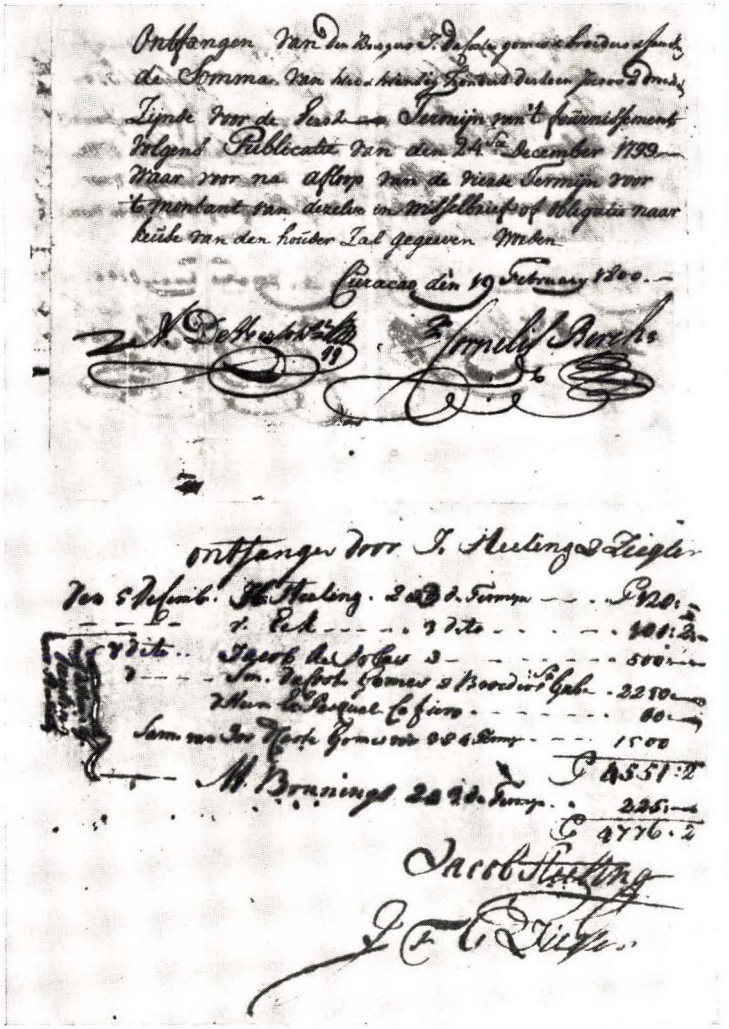
Impresso a despeza do senhor Hatan Bereschit, & commissaõ do senhor
BINJAMIN GARCIA.
Com a devida Licença dos Senhores do Mahamad, & approvaçaõ
do senhor H. H.
Emendado, & corregido dos Errores typographicos, por
R. ISHAC DE ELIAU ACOHEN BELINFANTE

EM AMSTERDAM,
Na Officina typographica da Vª. de JAHACOB PROPS
& seus Orphaõs, em companhia. Ao. 1780.

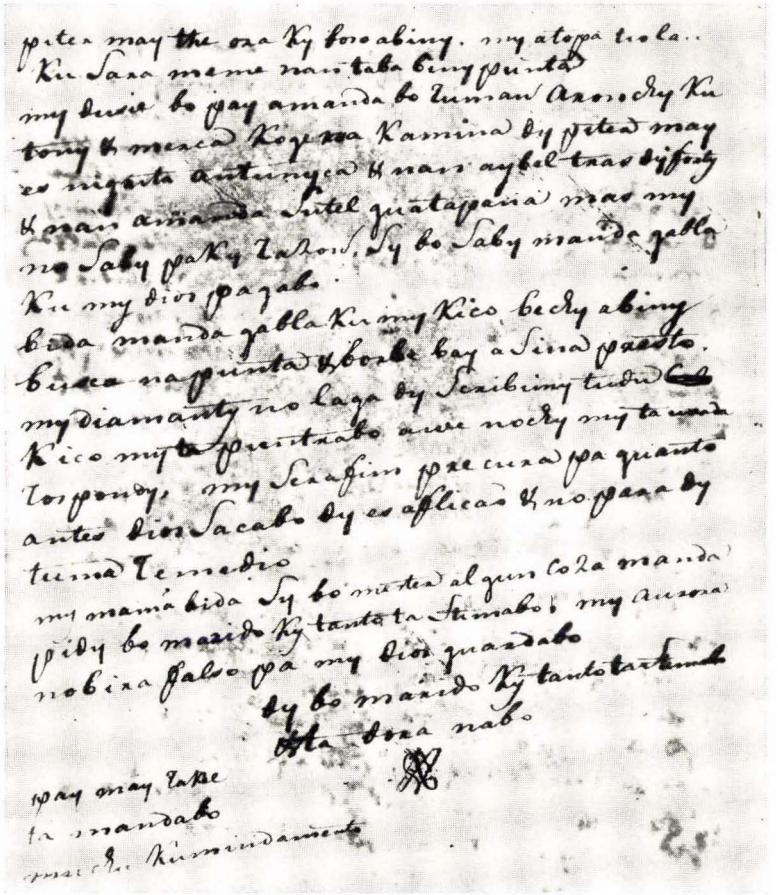
75. TITLE PAGE, HAHAM DA FONSECA'S SERMON OF 1779


Este de S. M. Su mas affecto Servidor
y Vmilde dicipulo Q. S. M. Bª
Jacob Lopez Fonseca

76. SIGNATURE, HAHAM JACOB LOPEZ FONSECA



77. THE SAMUEL DA COSTA GOMES & BROS. LOAN TO THE CURAÇAO GOVERNMENT, 1800



78. LETTER OF A CURAÇOAN JEW IN PAPIAMENTO, 1776

of arms to St. Eustatius. Well-laden cargo ships, also containing arms, left Curaçao generally for St. Eustatius and particularly for Jacmel and Jeremie in French Santo Domingo.

The Jews ventured in this risky business. In November, 1776, David Morales shipped a large quantity of arms on the *St. Joseph.*[12] Gabriel Pinedo & Sons, owners of *De Jonge Jacob*, sent merchandise worth Ps. 14,719:4:4 to an undisclosed destination, with Gabriel's son Jacob on board as supercargo.[13] In 1779 Abraham Nunes Redondo, captain of *De Goede Hoop* and in partnership with his brother Jacob,[14] transported goods valued at Ps. 6,028:3:4. In February, 1779, Elias Rodriguez Miranda (partner of Michael Gratz[15] of Philadelphia in 1765) dispatched goods worth Ps. 15,149:1 on the *Rachel*, which was captained by his partner Samuel de Isaac Levy Maduro.[16] Salomon and Jacob de Castro, owners of the schooner *Vrouw Elizabeth* manned by Captain Jacob de Castro, had a cargo worth Ps. 3,785 destined for all free American ports.[17] In May, 1779, Benjamin and Moses Cohen Henriquez dispatched goods worth Ps. 11,455:1 to the French colonies.[18] David Morales sent out cargoes valued at Ps. 11,441:3 and Ps. 11,430:2:1, respectively, on his vessels *Savana* and *Borbon* bound for French Santo Domingo.[19] The *Savana* had Nunes Gomes as captain and Morales' father-in-law Rephael Molina Monsanto as supercargo. The *Borbon* had as supercargo David de Jacob Senior. Morales shipped to an undisclosed port[20] goods worth Ps. 14,740:5:2 on the *Koningin Ester* which was owned and captained by Abraham Calvo. In 1779 Abraham and Jeosuah Cohen Peixotto, owners of the *Jonge Gabriel*, of which Jeosuah was captain, sent merchandise worth Ps. 7,911 to the French colonies. Dovale & Pardo shipped a cargo worth Ps. 11,638:4:2 in their schooner *De Twee Gebroeders*. Daniel Lopez Penha shipped a cargo estimated at Ps. 7,900 in his schooner *De Perfect.*[21]

The English sea prowlers intercepted and confiscated many ships with their precious cargoes. They captured and took to Jamaica vessels owned

[12] OAC 916, no. 336.

[13] OAC 921, no. 11, y. 1778-79.

[14] OAC 921, no. 80.

[15] *Merchants in Philadelphia, 1754-1798*, edited by William Vincent Byarrs (Jefferson City, 1916), pp. 77-78.

[16] OAC 921, no. 83.

[17] *Ibid.*, nos. 141-45, y. 1779.

[18] *Ibid.*, no. 205.

[19] *Ibid.*, nos. 210, 213.

[20] OAC 923, no. 744.

[21] *Ibid.*, nos. 763-64, 766, 804-5, 807. See appendix 3, A and B, about these shipowners and captains.

by the firms Visser and Cohen Henriquez, and Visser & Joseph Obediente Jr.[22] Thirty-three merchants, including sixteen Jews, petitioned the government to try to recover the ships.[23] Toward the close of 1778 the English seized a boat with Aron Ricardo on board. They took him to Jamaica, put him in irons and tortured him to admit that the vessel was going to North America, which he refused to do.[24] In 1779 the English took the *Koning van Pruysen* as it left Cap Frances and hauled it to Honduras. (Nine of her marine insurers were Jews.[25]) In 1780 the English captured three vessels: the *Vrouw Elizabeth* captained by Jacob de Castro and taken to New York;[26] the *Koningin Esther* with David Morales' valuable cargo;[27] and Aron Pinedo's *Jonge Jacob*.[28]

Between 1779 and 1780 the insurance premium was 16% on "merchandise free of confiscation" shipped from Curaçao to French Santo Domingo.[29] The increasing seizures by the English and the eagerness of the islanders to share in the lucrative war supply trade brought about a shortage of ships. As the demand sent prices skyrocketing in Curaçao, many buyers had to go elsewhere for their vessels. David Morales, for one, authorized his father-in-law Rephael Molina Monsanto to buy, while in Cap Frances, a ship "from the French Crown or from other Powers"[30] (presumably friendly to the American cause).

Warships "of the Congress in North America" used to take on provisions in St. Eustatius and sometimes Curaçao. Governor Rodier wrote to the Council of Ten on March 20, 1778, that a day earlier two American cruisers with a prize of 360 slaves on board had arrived at nine o'clock and put into port at unfortified San Juan Bay, an hour's run from Porto Maria Bay. Unlike the governor of St. Eustatius who in 1776 was the first to salute the American flag flying atop the brig *Andrew Doria*,[31] he ordered the American cruisers to depart. They withdrew six hours later[32] after several merchants had raced to

[22] OAC 922, no. 497.
[23] OAC 208, no. 68.
[24] OAC 205, no. 35.
[25] OAC 927, no. 671.
[26] OAC 925, nos. 166, 265.
[27] OAC 926, nos. 604, 648.
[28] OAC 930, no. 1510.
[29] OAC 930, no. 1649.
[30] OAC 922, no. 546, June 15, 1779.
[31] *WIG*, 1921, p. 37. This historic event is commemorated by a bronze plaque presented to the island by President F. D. Roosevelt in 1939 and also by a 20-cent stamp issued by the Netherlands Antilles in 1961.
[32] The original text reads as follows: "Twee Kruijs Scheepen van 't Congres in Noord America en een Prijs d'eene Krijser is op gisteren binnen gekomen, omtrent negen uuren en te ses uuren weeder uijtgewaaren en d'andere Krijser met de prijs Sijnde een slaaf Schip hebbende aan boord de 360 slaven Sijn aan de beneeden Baaijen [in Curaçao] gegaan" (WICA 211, pp. 711-12).

San Juan Bay or to San Juan to buy slaves,[33] probably in exchange for provisions and ammunition.

The seizure of St. Eustatius by the English brought an end to this brief era of prosperity. It spelled the ruin of the Jews of St. Eustatius[34] and the stagnation of business in Curaçao where boats remained anchored in the harbor. One plucky Jew, Aron Calvo, boldly put to sea twice and twice was captured. The first time he had the good fortune to retrieve his ship.[35]

Several Curaçoan merchants profited by the American War for Independence and were able to save some of their gains. These fortunate ones were David Cardoze, David Morales who owned a large mercantile fleet,[36] and the firms Imanuel da Costa Gomez & Bros., Gabriel Pinedo & Sons, and Dovale & Pardo. Practically all the rest saw their profits dwindle to nothing in the war between England and Holland, the French Revolution and the wars of the Batavian Republic.

RELIGIOUS AND SOCIAL LIFE DURING DA FONSECA'S RABBINATE

Curaçao attained her maximum prosperity in the early years of the American Revolutionary War. In the words of an eyewitness, she was "a small paradise of terrestrial abundance." Since trade was in Jewish hands, it was the Jews who had profited most in this period. They used their wealth to build the once beautiful homes in Pietermaai and Scharloo. They gave more liberally to *Terra Santa* — in fact, to Tiberias alone they sent Ps. 1,600 in 1781. Fathers and brothers bestowed on their children and sisters dowries running sometimes as high as nine, ten and fourteen thousand pesos[37] — colossal figures in an age when a married couple could live comfortably on 300 pesos a year![38]

[33] The merchants Gerard Striddels and Francis Claasen had apparently purchased a quantity of slaves that had been sorted out on the San Juan plantation. The Jews David Cardozo and Isaac Pardo & Sons were also involved in the matter. Subsequent interrogatories elicited evasive replies as to the number bought, evidently because the slave traffic was prohibited. A deponent stated that the slaves were shipped out on May 22, 1778 (OAC 919, nos. 159, 160, 169, March 27 and April 3, 1778).

[34] See below, Chapter XXVI, for full details.

[35] OAC 958, no. 67. More particulars on shipping losses suffered by Curaçoans at the hands of the English between 1781 and 1783 are revealed in the declarations of Captain Samuel de Salomon Levy Maduro, David Sterling and Abraham de Mordechay Senior made before Governor Rodier in June, 1783 (OAC 958, nos. 65-66).

[36] See appendix 3A for a listing of David Morales' ships from 1763 to 1790.

[37] MIA, Ket., vol. VI, nos. 1, 19 and 40. Isaac Haim Rodriguez da Costa gave dowries of Ps. 14,000 each to his three daughters: Esther in 1778; Abigail and Leah in 1784 (OAC 132, no. 84).

[38] According to the *ketubah* of Hana (daughter of Shelomo de Jahacob de Shelomo Levy Maduro) when she married Refael de Eliau Namias de Crasto, Maduro promised to feed and lodge his daughter

During these years of plenty the financial condition of the community had straightened out. The needy were aided as usual, the indigent sick were gratuitously cared for, and poor young girls or orphans were dowered by benevolent societies[39] or close relatives.[40]

Contributions to the synagogue were more generous. Of the twenty Scrolls of the Law offered to the synagogue during its existence, at least eleven were donated in Da Fonseca's time. These eleven scrolls were the gifts of Jacob de Abraham de Andrade, Isaac Haim Rodriguez da Costa, Jacob Namias de Crasto, Samuel de Joseph da Costa Gomez, Benjamin Lopez Henriquez, Abraham and Ribca Jeudah Leao, Isaac de Jacob Leao, Abraham de Marchena, Moseh de Marchena, David de Mordechay Senior, and Jacob de Sola.[41]

Other objects offered in this period to the synagogue by devout members included:

Precious cloths of gold thread on orange ground (costing Ps. 186) to cover the Holy Ark, the pulpit, as well as the benches of the haham and of the Mahamad, donated by Abraham and Isaac de Marchena at the solemn services held in the synagogue when Prince William V ascended the throne on September 30, 1766.

A silver chandelier from Benjamin Cohen Henriquez.

A silver cup for Purim donations from each of these donors: David Mordechay de Crasto, Haim Gabriel da Costa Gomez and Sara de Samuel da Costa Gomez (illus. 72, 221).

Four silver lamps for the *banca* (bench) of the parnassim from Ishac de Abraham Marchena and Ishac de Ishac de Marchena.

Two silver balls to decorate the pulpit from Ishac de Marchena.

Three silver knobs for the doors to the Holy Ark and two Sepher Torah mantles from Abraham de Jacob Lopez Penha and his wife Rachel de David da Silva.

Two bronze lamps at the entrance to the Holy Ark from Jacob de Mosseh Naar and David de Jacob Suares.

and son-in-law for six years at an estimated 300 pesos yearly (MIA, Ket., vol. VI, no. 32, y. 1786). Under the *ketubah* of Lea de Aharon Mendes de Sola when she married Samuel de Josiau de Casseres in 1786, De Sola obligated himself to feed and lodge his daughter and son-in-law for four years at an estimated 300 pesos a year (*ibid.*, no. 35).

39 Such as the Curaçao "Dotar" fund and the Pene Shabath ve Shahare Sedek (MIA, Ket., vol. VI, no. 41).

40 MIA, Ket., vol. VI, no. 16, y. 1783.

41 According to MIA, Hashcaboth Registers, vols. I and II, and manuscript of the late David Lopez Penha. Besides these donors of Scrolls of the Law, we know of David de Mordechay de Crasto, Jacob [de Benjamin] Fidanque, David de Mordechay Senior, Aaron da Costa Gomez and Benjamin de Casseres.

A gilded crown for a Sepher Torah from Isaac Haim Rodriguez da Costa.
The annual cost of the Yom Kippur candles until the year 1840 paid by Isaac Haim Rodriguez da Costa (the community's most liberal Jew of his generation) and his son Mordechay. See illustration 74.
A pair of silver *rimmonim* (bells) and a silver crown for the Sepher Torah from D[avid]. L[opez]. L[aguna].
A pair of silver *rimmonim* for the Sepher Torah from each of the following donors: Samuel de Joseph da Costa Gomes, Jacob Hisquiau Arid, Samuel Hoheb and David Jesurun (illus. 81, 218, 219).
A silver pointer and four beautiful chairs for the Bridegrooms of the Law and patrons, from Jacob de Sola.
A valuable house on Joode Straat[42] bequeathed by Ishac da Costa Gomez.

Although divorces were inevitable, family life in the second half of the 18th century was excellent. Fathers were careful to marry off their children as young as possible. Young married couples felt it their sacred duty to perpetuate the family name. One might say that a sort of competition existed among the couples married on a certain date as to which of them would bring forth the most offspring. The average family had nine or ten children.[43] It was not

[42] Curaçao Government Archives [= CGA], Rooibrieven, vol. I, 1812; OAC 1034, no. 108.

[43] Girod-Chantrans, *Reisen eines Schweizers in . . . America . . . Curacao in 1782* (Leipzig, 1786), cited by B. de Gaay Fortman, *WIG*, 1935-36, p. 362. This tradition of rearing large families was kept up to the end of the 19th century when we meet among the Curaçoan Jews families of ten, twelve and even eighteen children. We cite a few of them: Gabriel aLevy and Ribca Touro had eleven children in 1718 (*Precious Stones*, p. 243); Jeosuah de Jahacob Naar and Sarah Lopez Henriquez had 14 in 1736 (WICA 243, no. 127, p. 170); Benjamin Motta and Esther Berucha Henriquez, 13 in 1748 (OAC 867, no. 8); Abraham Sasso and Judith Israel Campanal, 16 in 1755; Salomoh Mosseh Cohen Henriquez and Sarah de Casseres, who married in 1791, had ten; Abraham de Marchena and Esther de Sola, m. 1795, had eleven; Selomoh Cohen Peixotto and Rachel Suares, m. 1809, had ten; Mosseh D. Lopez Penha and Clara Cohen Henriquez, m. 1811, had twelve; David D. Gomes Casseres and Ribca Pereira Brandao, m. 1821, had ten; Abraham Haim Senior and Abigail Cohen Henriquez, m. 1822, had eleven; Jacob J. de Sola and Lea Cohen Henriquez, m. 1826, had eleven; Abraham Ishac Capriles and Rachel Ricardo, m. 1831, had twelve; Manuel (a.k.a. Manchi Felipa) de Mordechay Alvares Correa and Rebecca D. Jesurun Sasportas, m. 1835, had sixteen; Isaac Abinun de Lima Jr. and Sarah Cohen Henriquez, m. about 1836, had eleven; David Delvalle Henriquez and Abigail Penso, m. 1839, had a record-breaking eighteen; Gabriel Is. Cardoze and Batsebah de Castro, m. 1847, had twelve; Isaac M. de Marchena and Clara Rachel Lopez Penha, m. 1865, had ten; Elias de Marchena and Julia Alvares Correa, m. about 1870, had ten; Julio Isaac Valencia and Amelia Rachel Lopez Penha, m. 1875, had twelve; Julius J. Lopez Penha and Esther de Jacob Naar, m. 1879, had ten; Moses Henriquez Juliao, m. 1796, had nine children by his first wife Rachel de Aron Mendes de Sola, and two more by his second wife Judith de Aron Mendes de Sola (his widowed sister-in-law) who brought him seven children of her own when they married in 1814. (These

rare to see women grandmothers at thirty-five. Haham Da Fonseca had occasion to bless the marriages of three generations.[44]

Relations with the government were unusually good. Governor Rodier (1762-81) esteemed the Jews although he did not always side with the parnassim, e.g., on their proposed communal tax and on their discrimination in two Jewish marriages. He often entrusted Jews with diplomatic missions to the Spanish and English colonies to claim ships that had been seized and confiscated. In 1776 he sent Joseph Curiel, captain of *De Jonge Daniel*, with letters and credentials to Cumaná.[45] When Curaçao hungered for corn as a result of the severe drought of 1777-79, Rodier dispatched Samuel de Mosseh Levy Maduro, captain of the *Esperanza*, to Rio Hacha with credentials to buy it.[46] After St. Eustatius had fallen to the English in 1781, he appointed ship captain Jacob Mendes Henriques to go to the islands of Bonaire, Roques, Aves and Blanquilla in quest of one or more Dutch warships and deliver very confidential letters to their captains. If the warships could not be found, Henriquez was to hand over the letters to the general at Martinique and bring back an immediate reply.[47] A month later Rodier dispatched Captain Salomon Levy Maduro to Bonaire to fetch the English prisoners to Curaçao.[48] In 1796 Governor Johannes de Veer Abz. charged Raphael Jesurun Sasportas, captain of the schooner *Gracia*, to go to Coro and bring back Dutch sailors who had deserted and several runaway slaves belonging to C. L. van Uytrecht.[49]

As always, the Jews interested themselves in the welfare of Curaçao's poor and in the defense of the island. David Morales organized a collection among his coreligionists in 1779 for the *Lazarus en dolhuis* (hospital for lepers and the insane). The Jews, like the other residents, also contributed for fortifications when war was declared between Holland and England in 1781.

The lean years that followed 1781 devoured the five years of plenty and there was no Joseph to remedy the situation.

numbers were culled from various wills, from the CGA relating to the administration and liquidation of inheritance matters, and from the second chronicle of the Lopez Penha Family manuscript owned by the late Julius L. Penha.) See illus. 241.

[44] Samuel de Isaac de Samuel Levy Maduro in 1765, his son Salomon in 1794, his grandsons Samuel and Elias in 1813; David Cardoze in 1765, his son Moise in 1786, his grandsons David in 1809 and Isaac in 1814; Raphael de Imanuel Alvares Correa in 1766, his son Manuel Haim in 1790, his grandson Benjamin in 1815.

[45] OAC 205, no. 91.

[46] OAC 208, no. 221, y. 1780.

[47] OAC 210, no. 105, May 25, 1781.

[48] OAC 210, no. 132.

[49] OAC 223, no. 72; communication of the late Jossy M. L. Maduro.

HAHAM DA FONSECA'S ASSISTANTS

The community had a prodigious number of cantors, teachers and ritual slaughterers during Da Fonseca's rabbinate. A chronological list of these ecclesiastical employees follows.

Ishac Haim Monis — Ribbi, who died a bachelor in 1770.[50]
Selomoh de Eliahu Jeudah Leao — Ribbi (1763-72) unjustly dismissed by the parnassim.[51]
Iacob de David Suares — Hazzan of Neve Salom synagogue (d. 1775).[52]
Eliahu Haim Pereira — Hazzan in 1777. One of the very few ecclesiastical servants who, as hazzan, dared give Governor Rodier a sworn statement in favor of Ishac Haim Rodriguez da Costa[53] and against the powerful parnas Abraham de Marchena.
David de Ieudah Cohen Henriquez — Ribbi, deceased at the age of 76 years in 1778;[54] ritual slaughterer since 1751.
David de Jacob de David Suares — Hazzan who replaced his father at Neve Salom synagogue.[55] He died relatively young in 1779 (C 223), shortly after his wife.
Eliau de Jacob Lopez Fonseca — Ribbi since 1743, first as assistant teacher and later as teacher-hazzan. A son-in-law of Haham De Sola, he died in 1781.[56]
David de Molina — Ribbi; hazzan since 1741 (d. 1781).[57]
Benjamin Semah Valencia — Ribbi and assistant hazzan in 1781.
Abraham Jesurun Sasportas — Ribbi since 1760; son of Haham Jesurun.
David Lopez Fonseca — Ribbi since 1763.
David Halas — Ritual slaughterer since 1764.
Jeosuah Touro — Ribbi since 1749 and ritual slaughterer since 1760 (d. 1789).[58]
Mordechay Naar — Ribbi since 1782.[59]
Mordechay Calvo — Ribbi since 1782.
Jacob de Selomoh Levy Maduro — Ritual slaughterer since 1784.

[50] See Emmanuel, *Precious Stones*, p. 361.
[51] See pp. 269-70 for the account.
[52] See Emmanuel, *Precious Stones*, p. 368.
[53] OAC 956, no. 96, March 2 and 17, 1778.
[54] See Emmanuel, *Precious Stones*, pp. 369-71.
[55] According to the epitaph of his wife Deborah (Emmanuel, *ibid.*, p. 500, C 270).
[56] *Ibid.*, pp. 374-75.
[57] *Ibid.*, pp. 375-76.
[58] *Ibid.*, p. 394.
[59] *Ibid.*, p. 377.

Matatia de Moses Cohen — Teacher of Dutch and French in 1786 (b. 1727 in Holland).[60]
Moses de Daniel Benveniste — Hazzan. More will be said about him later.
Samuel Idanha de Casseres — Teacher since 1788 (d. 1818).
Selomoh de Abraham Levy Maduro — Ritual slaughterer since 1789.
David Rodrigues — Teacher since 1788. More will be said about him later.
Abraham de Ishac Haim Senior — Ribbi active in 1790.[61]
Jacob de Abraham Sasso — Hazzan since 1791.
Mordechay Motta — Ribbi (d. 1799).[62]
Samuel Haim, son of Haham Da Fonseca — Teacher who replaced Rodrigues in 1802.
David de Jacob Lopez Fonseca — Assistant hazzan since 1762 (d. 1805).[63]
Abraham Belmonte — Teacher since 1806.
David Namias de Crasto — Assistant hazzan since 1810.
Selomoh Cohen Peixotto — Teacher in 1811.[64]
Jeosuah de Jacob Naar — Honorary hazzan (d. 1812).[65]

Moses Callo possibly served as an assistant cantor. In 1765-66 prominent members of the community recommended him to Shearith Israel, New York City, for the post of cantor to replace Joseph Jesurun Pinto.[66]

In addition to the regular hazzan there was the *Hazan de Selihoth*. He recited the penitential prayers from the first day of Elul to Yom Kippur Eve and offered his services voluntarily. Those so officiating under Haham Da Fonseca were Daniel Lopez Penha, Mosseh Levy Maduro Peixotto (later hazzan of New York) and Abraham Haim Fidanque.[67]

The circumciser also was an important figure in the community and rendered his services gratuitously. Circumcisers in Da Fonseca's time included Ishac Henriquez Fereira,[68] Ishac de Jacob Curiel, Ishac Haim Rodriguez da Costa, Jahacob de Selomoh Levy Maduro, Jahacob de Ishac Levy Maduro, Ishac his

[60] OAC 973, nos. 18, 145.

[61] According to MIA, Ket., VI, no. 47.

[62] According to the Lopez Penha Family manuscript, p. 5.

[63] Emmanuel, *Precious Stones*, pp. 401-2.

[64] According to a manuscript by Solomon Cohen Peixotto and family at the AJA, he was born in 1785 and took up *sheḥita*. From 1816 to 1818 he was in St. Thomas, possibly as ritual slaughterer. He left for Charleston where he served as "Reverend." He had ten children.

[65] Emmanuel, *Precious Stones*, pp. 405-6.

[66] *PAJHS* 32:161; 27:23, 26.

[67] MS, List of Cantors and Teachers of Curaçao who served between 1674 and 1815. This list has been completed by the author with data culled from other archives and manuscripts.

[68] OAC 742, May 25, 1786, referring to a circumcision performed in 1763.

son,[69] and Abraham de Mordechay Senior. One of the most colorful Jewish personages of Curaçao, Senior took an active part in the dispute between the Mahamad and many members of the community over the Piza affair. He died in 1820 at the age of 85 years and eight months in the same bed where he was born. He had been married 61 years and left behind a large family.[70]

There were still other circumcisers[71] who served the community: the brothers Josiau and Saul Idanha de Casseres; David de Jacob Jesurun who circumcised the child of Sara Pardo-Vaz Farro[72] on October 9, 1780; Jacob de David Jesurun who died in 1804,[73] and certainly others unknown to us. Most Jewish surgeons and physicians circumcised the children without charge. In token of appreciation the parnassim of 1827 conferred on these worthy men the title *hamohel hamubhac* (the competent circumciser).[74]

At first glance this is an exceptionally long list, but it must be realized that Da Fonseca'a rabbinate spanned a period of almost two generations and that a few of his assistants had already been serving in the Jesurun and De Sola rabbinates.

HAHAM DA FONSECA AS TEACHER AND MASTER

Haham Da Fonseca took an active interest in the administration of the community. Yet, his distinction was as rabbi and master for almost two generations rather than as administrator or social worker. With all his duties he still managed to edit the prayer for rain, *Seder Tefiloth Lesheelath Matar* (composed by his grandfather Haham Lopez and amplified by his father-in-law Haham De Sola), which he published in Amsterdam in 1773. He also printed two of his sermons: one in 1764 before his departure from Amsterdam, and the other in 1780 on the occasion of the festivities of the Bridegrooms of the Law David Morales and Mordechay Motta.[75] The rest of his sermons were

[69] OAC 941, no. 389, showing that father and son were circumcisers.

[70] *CC*, Jan. 22, 1820.

[71] According to *Berith Ishac*, a ritual on circumcision edited by Selomoh Levy Maduro (Amsterdam, 1767), p. 17b; Lopez Penha Family manuscript, p. 8; MIA, Hashcaboth Registers; Minutas de Parnassim, meeting of Aug. 5, 1827.

Circumcisers we know to have served during the Pardo, Lopez, Jesurun and De Sola rabbinates include Salomo L. Maduro, Ishac de Abraham Touro and his son Ioseph; Mordechay Henriquez, Ishac Levy Maduro, Jacob Curiel and Samuel Idanha de Casseres.

[72] For details about this case, see below, pp. 271-75.

[73] OAC 1014, no. 57. From time to time a circumciser bequeathed his instruments to a son who carried on this honorific service.

[74] MIA, Minutas de Parnassim, meeting of Aug. 5, 1827.

[75] For details on these sermons, see Emmanuel, *Precious Stones*, pp. 412-13.

jealously kept by the parnassim who regarded them as property of the community and therefore refused to turn them over to his sons.[76]

To satisfy the great demand for Talmud study, Haham Da Fonseca also conducted a class for the members. In 1789 the community was billed for seven copies of the Talmudic tractate *Kiddushin*[77] shipped by the mother community. This is especially interesting since several new brotherhoods sprung up during his tenure with the main object of studying the Torah. These were the Pene Shabath ve Shahare Sedek, Or Torah, Limud Torah, Maskil el Dal and 'Oneg Shabath, all of which also took charge of a specific charity. (The celebrated Habodat Akodes,[78] society of pallbearers, was also founded in this period.)

Haham Da Fonseca served his community faithfully for over a half century in spite of the numerous conflicts with the parnassim.

[76] MIA, Minutas del Mahamad, meeting of April 4, 1816.
[77] MIA, loose papers.
[78] In 1783. For details, see Emmanuel, *Precious Stones*, pp. 68-72.

CHAPTER XIII

CHAOS AND CONFLICT
1764-1815

EXCEPT FOR a short happy period, Haham Da Fonseca's rabbinate knew much strife and turmoil. This, we repeat, was engendered by the economic depression, French interference, the English occupation, and by disputes of a personal or communal nature. The quarrels and disputes among the Jews, as among the Protestants, generally grew out of easily bruised feelings or malicious or idle gossip often started by the slaves. The injured party left no stone unturned to defend himself even at the cost of much distress. The old archives of Curaçao are replete with such cases. Some victims, impatient with the slow process of the law, meted out justice in their own fashion.

Samuel de Salomon Levy Maduro, a sailor hardened to risk and danger, had had words with Abraham de Marchena, a wealthy Jew. Shortly afterwards a Negro dashed into Maduro's home, slashed his face and fled. It was rumored that the attacker had been sent by Marchena. Sometime later, as Marchena left a parnassim meeting at the synagogue and reached the street, Maduro struck him with a cudgel. Thereafter Marchena's son, Ishac, would not venture forth without a personal bodyguard. Meanwhile Abraham told friends that his *tefillin* arm (the left) had saved his life. The matter was of course taken to the Island Council.[1]

THE SENIOR-LOPEZ CASE

Isaac Haim de Jacob Senior, captain of the *St. François*, accused his wife Ribca de Eliau Lopez of infidelity and demanded a divorce. Haham Da Fonseca, Ishac Haim Rodriguez da Costa and Mordechay Levy Maduro sat as judges and, after proper investigations, acquitted Ribca and found Senior guilty. They put him under the small ban. Senior was supposed to go unshaven for thirty days, fast three days — on Monday, Thursday and again on Monday — and on the last day ascend the pulpit and publicly ask pardon of God and his wife. (He was forbidden to have relations with her since he had suspected her of being unfaithful.) At that time Ribca's purity was to be proclaimed from the pulpit.

[1] OAC 948, nos. 73, 76-89, 108, 127-29, 131-32, Feb. 16 and March 7, 1774.

Senior refused to comply. His brother David, then community treasurer, took his side and provoked a quarrel between Haham Da Fonseca (who had defended the honor of his cousin's daughter) and the parnassim. These worthies not only upheld Senior but refused to fine him "because as the son of [an honored] family, punishing him would besmirch the family name." They did not pause to think that by not punishing him they were casting dishonor upon Senior's wife, also of a respected family. (She was the granddaughter of Haham De Sola and great-great-granddaughter of Haham Lopez.)

Encouraged by the parnassim's attitude, Senior branded the wives of Haham Da Fonseca and Isaac Haim Rodriguez da Costa as unchaste. Da Fonseca and Rodriguez da Costa sued Senior in the Island Council[2] for defamation of character. Senior finally bowed down and asked for pardon before a small group of people, and the defamation of character suit was dropped. The Mahamad complained to their Amsterdam colleagues against their haham whom they had since relieved of charge of the community ledgers. Haham Salem took Da Fonseca to task, but Da Fonseca ably and respectfully explained his case.[3] Here was a haham who could not be intimidated. He had the confidence of a native son who could count on community support. In October, 1774, the Island Council found Senior guilty, granted his wife a legal separation, ordered him to pay her alimony and guarantee payment of her *ketubah*.[4] Senior died in 1782, leaving a very small estate.[5]

There were other separations or divorces in the community. For example, Gabriel de Manuel Levy from Sara de Isaac Belmonte in 1770, Moses Henriquez from Deborah Israel St. Cruz in 1772, Abraham de Selomoh Levy Maduro from Rachel de Abraham Levy Maduro in 1773, Josiau de Casseres from Abigail de Casseres, Moses Naar Henriquez from Ribca de David Levy, David Tavares from Sypora de Leon, and so on.

COMPLICATED MARRIAGES

Finding eligible suitors for the Jewish or Protestant girls had always posed a serious problem in Curaçao. The situation became more aggravated when the girl's parents would consider a young man only of good family background

[2] OAC 947, nos. 250-51, Oct. 11, 1773.

[3] PJCAA, the Amsterdam parnassim's letters of Feb. 25, March 4 and July 7, 1774, to the Curaçao community; the Amsterdam parnassim's reply of July 7, 1774, to Isaac Senior; Haham Da Fonseca's letter of Feb. 20, 1775, to Haham Salem with the decisions of Curaçao's Beth Din; Resoluçoems dos S^{res} do Mahmad, 5533-5538, meeting of 13 Tamus, 5534, pp. 71-72.

[4] OAC 912, nos. 231-33; OAC 949, no. 22; OAC 950, nos. 430, 438.

[5] OAC 958, no. 153.

and of serious mien. There were young men to be sure, but many were sailors (a deterrent to marriage) and some young blades fancied the slave girls. Thus Curaçao's nubile girls exceeded by far the number of eligible young men. Not infrequently a young fellow, who had fallen in love with a maiden and promised marriage, in a moment of weakness succumbed to the overpowering hold of the tropics. Generally his people strongly disapproved of the alliance and the girl remained disgraced. That was the unhappy lot of Angelita Machoro and Jacob Mendes in 1756. The case was brought to court and appealed to the States General of Holland.

An effort was finally made to curb these abuses and protect the girls' honor. The Mahamad, their haham, the adjuntos and elders of the community unanimously resolved that a young couple that had premarital relations would be forsaken by the Mahamad; if they ultimately married, they could not expect the haham to perform the religious ceremony or even sign the *ketubah*, and they would be deprived of all synagogue honors. Further, if the girl's father was an employee of the community, he would be dismissed; if he was receiving aid from the community, his monthly allotment would be cut off unless the girl had been forced. This regulation was enacted in 1752, reafirmed in 1756 and made more rigid on 20 Elul, 5528 (1768).[6]

The regulation laid all the blame upon the girl, for it provided no punishment for the youth or his father. Four years later, in 1772, Debora, daughter of Ribbi Selomoh Jeudah Leao,[7] claimed that she had been seduced by David de Mordechay de Crasto. At first David admitted this and said he wanted to marry her. He sent people to talk the matter over with his father. Parnas Ishac de Marchena learned about this; twenty-five days later David denied everything. His father engaged an attorney and the Island Council acquitted the youth.[8] In spite of the outcome, Debora's father was dismissed from his teaching post. The haham and parnassim should have used all their authority — if Debora had been abused — to force the youth, the son of wealthy people, to marry this girl of modest means, and not further embitter her wretched father!

Shortly afterwards Jeosuah Cohen Peixotto was accused of taking advantage of Esther, daughter of Selomoh Levy Maduro. Peixotto was willing to marry her. The parnassim agreed to marry them only under certain discriminations imposed by the regulation. A boat captain, Peixotto had decided to marry

[6] See appendix 1, pp. 611-12.

[7] In 1763 the Amsterdam parnassim paid the 300 florins' fare to Curaçao for Ribbi Leao and his family. See appendix 11, y. 1763.

[8] OAC 944, nos. 137, 141, April 2-29, 1772.

in Jamaica, but on second thought lodged a complaint with the Governor and Council against the parnassim. As a result Governor Rodier ordered the haham and parnassim to perform the marriage with all honors due.[9] This was not a new experience for the governor. A similar case had come before him in 1756 during his membership in the Island Council. There the parnassim had maintained that Semuel de Selomoh Levy Maduro had abused Sarah Israel Keyzer. Maduro agreed to marry Sarah, but the parnassim insisted on carrying out the discriminations specified in the regulation of 1752. Maduro protested before Governor Faesch, who obliged the parnassim and Haham De Sola to perform the marriage without any discrimination,[10] as was done.

The parnassim were alarmed at their diminishing power over Da Fonseca (e.g., the Senior-Lopez case) and deeply shaken by the Governor and Council's open defiance of the resolutions in the Peixotto-Maduro case. They turned to their Amsterdam colleagues for Company action. They wanted their haham to be forced to obey them and the Governor and Council prohibited from contravening the community regulations bearing on what the parnassim deemed religious matters. The Amsterdam parnassim did not concur. They considered, and rightly so, the decision to dismiss Ribbi Leao was "all the more extraordinary because of its injustice," for in acquitting young De Crasto the Island Council had proved the accusation groundless.[11] That in the Peixotto-Maduro case, since both parties were willing to marry each other, there was no need to deny them the ceremony. That the *hascamoth* of 1755-56 did not empower the Jews of Curaçao to enact new ones without prior Company consent. That a prudent, discreet approach to problems was necessary in order to avoid the formation of factions. That if the haham was indeed insubordinate, then all the adjuntos and elders of the community should be convoked to decide whether or not to dismiss him.[12]

The Curaçao parnassim's only reaction was to press for a Company modification of the marriage ceremony regulations to include discriminations against those couples who had behaved indecently. Again the Amsterdam parnassim withheld their consent. This is indeed surprising. Under an old regulation reaffirmed in 1772, the Amsterdam community refused to accord full synagogue honors in such marriages, recorded them in a special register (even of "proper" couples later discovered to have had premarital relations),

[9] OAC 138, no. 8, an Island Council decision of Dec. 14, 1773, bearing on this case.

[10] MS, 7 Tamus, 5512, 20 Nissan, 5 and 20 Iiar, 5516.

[11] This argument does not seem justified. The parnassim and haham of Curaçao knew better than the Governor and Council whether or not the youth had taken advantage of the girl.

[12] PJCAA, Copiador de Cartas, 1733-1784, the Amsterdam parnassim's letter of July 7, 1774, to Curaçao.

and on the birth of a child deprived the father of all pertinent synagogue honors.[13] Perhaps the Amsterdam parnassim realized that life in the tropics was vastly different from that in cold Amsterdam and therefore called for more leniency. Perhaps they also knew how numerous those cases were among Curaçao's non-Jewish population. Nevertheless, we believe that the Curaçao parnassim should have been allowed to discriminate in the marriage ceremony of couples admitting to premarital relations. That was their only means of stopping such abuses which continued until 1816. The young unwed mothers generally depended upon the Community Chest for assistance. In 1816, under the initiative of community president Moise Cardoze, the parnassim had the right to limit such assistance to the women truly requiring it.[14]

THE ANDRADE CASE

Before tensions had eased off in the Da Fonseca-Senior affair, another matter erupted to bedevil the Jewish community for twenty years. That was the Andrade case. One Selomoh de Moses Vaz Farro, a prosperous businessman married to his sister's daughter Sarah de Isaac P., fell gravely ill. He was childless. Twice before Haham Da Fonseca had proceeded to grant the couple a conditional divorce, valid only upon death, to free Sarah from the leviratical laws. Meanwhile Sarah was expecting a child. On the basis of certain declarations, the haham and parnassim accused Abraham de David da Costa Andrade Jr. of fathering it. Abraham and his father were men of importance in the community and the former had served as treasurer in 5532 (1771-72). Also childless, Abraham was married to Gracia de Jeudah Leao. The physicians Joseph Capriles and Isaac Cardozo (Farro's doctor) declared that Farro was not in a condition to be a father. A Catholic surgeon, Manuel de Estrade, differed and in proof cited the case of the sister of Spain's King Ferdinand VI. Hours before her husband's death, the princess had relations with him, in the presence of witnesses, and became pregnant.

The parnassim excommunicated Andrade and Sarah. They also fined him fifty pesos and denied him admittance to the synagogue. Sarah was fined 200 pesos, required to fast six times and forbidden contact with her husband. How odd of them to treat her like the arch criminal if crime there really was! Both defendants protested the judgment and recurred to the Governor and Council. One of Andrade's witnesses, Isaac da Silva Curiel, testified, and gave

[13] PJCAA, Compendio de Escamot do K. K. do T. T., 5488-5574, meeting of 5 Hesvan, 5533, pp. 271, 300.

[14] MIA, Minutas del Mahamad, meeting of April 10, 1816.

proof, that defamatory notices of this type had always circulated in Curaçao. Farro came to his wife's defense and branded her detractors as "rogues and thieves." Before dying, Farro swore to Haham Da Fonseca in the presence of Moses Naar and Abraham Senior that he was the father of Sarah's unborn child. The parnassim nevertheless let the excommunication stand. Community president David Morales tried to have Sarah banished from Curaçao, but this the governor refused to do. The inharmonious relations existing between Sarah and her father and between him and his wife Abigail Vaz Farro[15] worsened matters and encouraged rumors and evil gossip.

At the same time several anonymous notes compromising Andrade cropped out. These were written "in the language of the negroes" (Papiamento). In spite of the ban, he went to the synagogue and was bodily ejected and beaten by Aron, Sarah's brother. At Andrade's request, the governor thereafter furnished soldiers to protect him. He complained to the governor about the ban and explained its horrors: On his death his body would not be bathed in his home — a great dishonor;[16] if his elderly, sick father died, he would be buried in the *chiquero* (sty), a plot set apart for libertines and renegades; a son born to him and his wife would go uncircumcised, and for that reason he and his wife remained strangers to each other.

Farro died on December 7, 1775.[17] Andrade retained Petrus Bernardus van Starckenborgh, future governor of Curaçao, to defend him. On July 3, 1776, the Governor and Council acquitted Andrade and Sarah and ordered the parnassim to remove the excommunications, annul the fines and have Sarah's son circumcised without discriminations, i.e., without the omission of certain words pronounced for sons of fathers leading moral, ethical lives.[18]

Fiscal Hubertus Coerman,[19] chief of police since 1763, did not concur with the decision and took the case to the States General of Holland. The parnassim ignored the verdict and let themselves be dragged into the appeal.

Andrade left for Holland with one Moseh Marache to defend himself. Da Fonseca and the parnassim apprised the Amsterdam community of the excommunication for adultery and urged against allowing Andrade to congregate with them. Amsterdam's Beth Din, without pronouncing itself as to the

[15] OAC 916, no. 201. Isaac P. was one of the six richest Jews on the island in 1765.

[16] See Emmanuel, *Precious Stones*, pp. 95-96, for details about these discriminations exercised at death.

[17] *Ibid.*, p. 532, C 1764.

[18] See Selomoh Levy Maduro, *Berith Ishac*, p. 14b, for these discriminations.

[19] Fiscal Coerman had various disputes with the Governor, the Council, and various citizens. Dismissed in 1779, he was replaced by Petrus B. van Starckenborgh who served until 1782 (RA, Verspreide Westindische Stukken, no. 462; OAC 482, no. 67; OAC 208, no. 144).

legitimacy of Sarah's child, announced Andrade's status from the pulpit, but took no action against his friend. The States General found for Sarah and Andrade on January 13, 1778. Coerman demanded a reversal. Again Andrade won his case. On July 31, 1780, the Curaçao parnassim were ordered to circumcise the child like all legitimate sons and to eliminate from the files all papers referring to Sarah and Andrade. They were also ordered to pay Andrade costs and damages of 60,493:2 florins. The Amsterdam parnassim, who had meanwhile removed the excommunication, were astounded by their colleagues' stubborn noncompliance. The Curaçao community's only concession was to let David de Jacob Jesurun circumcise the child without discriminations. This was done on Ḥeshvan 11, 5541 (1780), and the child was named after its deceased father Selomoh Vaz Farro.[20]

About this time one Abraham Rodriguez Brandam of Amsterdam was accused by the parnassim of that city of abusing Ribca, the daughter of Moses Uliel. Excommunicated, he took his case to the States General, which ruled that the Amsterdam parnassim had to remove the *ḥerem* and pay the costs, as was subsequently done.[21]

Andrade's father demanded payment of the judgment of 60,493:2 florins. This gave rise to a serious dispute between the parnassim and adjuntos. Outside of Mordechay Motta, David Morales and a few others, none of the parnassim would assume responsibility for the payment. Motta and Morales had a summons issued to the parnassim and adjuntos of 1775-76. The object was to present a solid front and furnish the necessary guarantees to appeal from the judgment. This summons, drawn up by the government secretary in Dutch with its Spanish translation, was served upon Benjamin Rephael Henriquez, ex-president; Jacob de David Jesurun, ex-vice president, and Jeosuah de Jacob Naar, ex-treasurer. A summons was also served upon former adjuntos Isaac Henriquez Fereira, Manuel de Rephael Alvares Correa and his son Rephael; Joseph Jesurun Henriquez, Abraham de Isaac Haim Senior, Abraham de Marchena, Gabriel Pinedo, Mordechay Henriquez and his son Josuah Rephael; Isaac Haim Rodriguez da Costa, Isaac de Jacob Levy Maduro, Isaac de Isaac de Marchena, Abraham de David Jesurun, Samuel de Gabriel da Costa Gomez, Samuel de Joseph da Costa Gomez, Manuel de Moses Alvares Correa, Jacob de Mordechay Pereira; Rahel de Moses de Castro, widow of Benjamin Cohen Henriquez; Moses de David Cohen Henriquez, David de Jacob Jesurun, and Jacob de Joseph Jesurun Henriquez.

Only five of the twenty-four summoned joined forces with the parnassim:

[20] Manuscript notes of Solomon Cohen Peixotto, p. 47, at the AJA.

[21] WICA 223, June 24, 1773; GAA, Not. Abraham van Been, May 27, 1773.

Benjamin Rephael Henriquez, Jacob de David Jesurun, Isaac Henriquez Fereira, Isaac de Jacob Levy Maduro and Abraham de David Jesurun. The rest — even Isaac Haim Rodriguez da Costa who had officiated as *dayyan* — washed their hands of the entire matter. The widow of Benjamin Cohen Henriquez answered that whatever her husband had left was barely sufficient to cover her *ketubah* and the care and maintenance of her minor children.

The parnassim retained an attorney at The Hague on an annual retainer of 800 florins, and disbursed an additional Ps. 797:4 to make a copy of the Curaçao documents on the case. They urged their Amsterdam colleagues to lend all the necessary support. They were assured of it, but cautioned against free use of the ban.

The attorney in Holland tried to exhaust Andrade. He took the case to the high court of Brabant without obtaining satisfaction.

The adjuntos in Curaçao were divided. No one wanted to become treasurer. David Dovale resigned in the middle of his term in 1783. With much difficulty he was replaced by Isaac Henriquez Fereira who accepted only on the guarantee that he would not be held responsible for paying the Andrade judgment.

As the parnassim doggedly continued with the case, Moses de David de Jeudah Cohen Henriquez, vice president in 1789, sent them a complaint through the government secretary, protesting the costs. He also tendered his resignation. Two years later it was necessary to engage another attorney in Holland. Nine members of the Great Council refused to sign the authorization: Dr. Joseph Capriles, Gabriel Pinedo, David Jesurun Jr., Samuel de Gabriel da Costa Gomez, Samuel de Joseph da Costa Gomez, Abraham de Mordechay Senior, Jacob de Joseph Jesurun Henriquez, Jacob de Solas, and Moses de David Jeudah Cohen Henriquez.[22] Their Amsterdam representative Daniel da Costa Gomez de la Penha advised them on July 27, 1792, to arrive at a settlement with Andrade since a prolongation of the case meant higher counsel fees. On March 23, 1793, the parnassim had a court order issued to various members of the Body of Elders for refusing to sign the authorization. The Andrade matter was still pending on December 16, 1794. Probably at the last moment an understanding was reached with Andrade who meanwhile settled in Jamaica. Sarah, who married Moseh Semagh de Valencia, a man of modest means, left for St. Thomas in 1806 at the community's expense.

It is indeed lamentable that for want of mature thought on the part of some parnassim this case was allowed to drag in the courts for twenty years, drain

[22] These men had been subpoenaed at the insistence of the parnassim Jeosuah de Jacob Naar and (Abraham) [Jacob] de David Jesurun, and seven adjuntos.

the community of more than 25,000 florins in attorneys' fees and costs, and diminish the already dwindling prestige and authority of the parnassim.[23]

MODIFICATION OF THE REGULATIONS

Disregard for the parnassim's orders kept growing and those most qualified to accept office often declined. The parnassim of 1783 felt stronger curbs was the solution and therefore sought a modification of the *hascamoth*. The Company, in turn, referred the petition to the governor. He denied it as a majority of the adjuntos did not approve of the changes. It was not until 1786 that all the adjuntos agreed to the following modifications and amendments: Anyone refusing to become parnas, treasurer or bridegroom of the Law would be fined 100 pesos payable to the Community Chest, and 200 pesos if he refused after being elected for the second time. Anyone absenting himself from the general meeting of adjuntos or from the Small Council was subject to a fine of ten pesos and four pesos, respectively. Any synagogue employee refusing to carry out the parnassim's orders would be discharged. All members had to obey the parnassim within and without the synagogue. For insubordination, a member would be fined 100 pesos and brought to justice. These modifications and amendments, made on January 24, 1786, were signed by the parnassim, the elders and adjuntos, numbering in all twenty-three.[24]

CONFLICT OVER HAZZAN BENVENISTE

The death of their leading cantors in 1781 — Eliau Lopez and David de Molina — and a year later of Ribbi Mordechay Naar[25] who probably filled in

[23] Archives consulted: WICA 223, dealing entirely with the Andrade case; OAC 918, nos. 206, 208-10, 216; OAC 920, nos. 315-16, 471; OAC 921, nos. 150-51, 164, 226; OAC 923, nos. 838-39; OAC 931, no. 277; OAC 954, nos. 4, 36-41, 44-48, 202; OAC 958, nos. 130, 179-80, 214, 261; OAC 959, no. 315; OAC 965, nos. 33, 124; OAC 981, nos. 85-87; RA, Verspreide W. I. Stukken, nos. 279, 462; PJCAA, Copiador de Cartas, 1773-1784, the Amsterdam parnassim's letters of March 20 and Nov. 12, 1777, to the community; *ibid.*, Resoluçoems 5533-5538, meetings of 7 Adar Seny, 26 Elul, 5537, 26 Tebet, 14 Iyar, 10 Tamus, 5538, pp. 171, 199, 229-30, 254, 268; MIA, Andrade case file and loose papers; MC and MS, Parnassim, y. 5543, 5549.

[24] The signers were Mordechay Motta, David Morales, David Jesurun, Joseph Jesurun Henriquez, Abraham de Isaac Senior, Abraham de Isaac Marchena, David da Costa Andrade, Michael de Eliao Jeudah Leao, Abraham Curiel, Gabriel Pinedo, Ishac de Jacob Jeudah Leao, Manuel de Mosseh Alvares Correa, Ishac de I. de Marchena, Abraham de David Jesurun, David Jesurun Jr., Ishac de Jacob Levy Maduro, Mosseh de David Cohen Henriquez, Jacob de David Jesurun, Semuel de Gabriel da Costa Gomez, Semuel de Joseph da Costa Gomez, Jacob de Mordechay Pereira, Jacob de Joseph Jesurun Henriquez, Ishac de Abraham Henriquez Fereira, treasurer (OAC 66, no. 20). See appendix 1, pp. 586-607.

[25] See Emmanuel, *Precious Stones*, pp. 374-78.

as cantor, forced the community to get a replacement. They asked their Amsterdam representative David Jesurun to enlist the aid of the mother community. After giving the usual tests, the Amsterdam parnassim selected Moses de Daniel Benveniste, former hazzan of the Hamburg community. He was 35 years old, married for four years and the father of at least two children. He was engaged at an annual salary of 450 pesos besides free lodging and other perquisites. Before his departure, friends dedicated two poems in Hebrew in his honor, one of which was printed later that year.[26] He arrived in Curaçao during the Feast of Tabernacles of 5545.

In addition to his cantorial duties, Benveniste took time to found with Daniel Lopez Penha the brotherhood or *yeshibah Limud Torah*[27] whose object was to teach the Torah. Haham Da Fonseca was appointed as its professor at 100 pesos a year. Benveniste was thus carrying out his duties well. But in Curaçao life never ran smoothly for rabbis or hazzanim from other shores. Barely six months after his arrival, those favoring another hazzan began grumbling against Benveniste. They finally gave vent to their displeasure by creating a shocking disturbance in the synagogue on April 13, 1785.[28] The parnassim defended Benveniste. They complained to Governor Johannes de Veer and the Council against the troublemakers who must have been numerous although the parnassim figured them to represent but an eighth of the membership. Ostensibly this dispute was quite acrimonious for it lasted throughout 1785. During that period no marriages were officially performed by the community except two: 1) the marriage of Samuel, son of Haham Da Fonseca, to Gracia Pinedo; and 2) of Lea, daughter of Ribbi Ishac Pinheiro de Nogueira, to David de Crasto. Both couples naturally belonged to the official part of the community.[29] The Governor and Council backed the parnassim. They issued a proclamation, which was read in the synagogue, that disturbers of the peace would be severely punished, and that the privileges granted by the States General of Holland and the Company would be revoked.[30] Embittered by the opposition, Benveniste died shortly afterward in 1787, three weeks before his wife. Two of their four orphans succumbed six months later.[31]

[26] PJCAA, Resoluçoems dos Sres do Mahamad, 5545-5551, p. 29.

[27] It was still in existence in 1840.

[28] Moses Cohen Henriquez, representative of the High Commission for Israelitic Affairs in Holland, wrote to the High Commission on Sept. 6, 1844, that the turmoil during Hazzan Benveniste's tenure arose out of sympathy for another cantor (RA, Israelitische Eeredienst, no. 448).

[29] MIA, Ket., VI, nos. 27-28.

[30] OAC 64, no. 63, April 14, 1785.

[31] See Emmanuel, *Precious Stones*, pp. 392-93, for more details.

Neither the governor's warning nor Benveniste's death erased the tensions. Communal unrest continued almost until Da Fonseca's last days.

CHAOS IN CURAÇAO

By 1785 the population had grown to about 8,500 inhabitants. Of this number, 3,000-3,200 were white and represented 579 families. The Jews, according to a statement of David Morales and Mordechay Motta made before the governor in 1785, accounted for 1,200 souls, more or less.[32] There were 850 houses — 300 in the city inhabited mostly by the Jews, 300 in Otrabanda and 250 in what today comprises Pietermaai, Vianen, Altena and Scharloo.[33]

Curaçao was in a state of anarchy. For want of a strong executive power, the fiscal could not stamp out the frequent disorders. In 1773 soldiers under Captain Horst of the Militia attacked various citizens. Three Jews were wounded on this occasion: Jeosuah Guidon Mendes, Mosseh Marache and Isaac de Jacob de Leon.[34] Four years later David Vaz Farro was killed "in a horrible manner" by unknown assailants.[35] On September 15, 1778, the 36-cannon warship *Alphen*[36] exploded in the harbor and brought death and destruction to many islanders. Only by a miracle did Dr. Joseph Capriles, physician of the garrison, save his life.

The Protestants had their troubles in 1774 and particularly in 1787 with Dominie Isaac Anthony Sporon.[37] The Catholic pastors were also harried.[38] Very often the white population came to blows with one another or with the colored folk.[39] Quarrels among the Jews were also common during this era, as for example the distasteful Da Fonseca-Senior case already discussed. Isaac Haim Rodriguez da Costa had a grievous incident with the Marchenas over an honorific prayer he was supposed to deliver as *dayyan* but from which he desisted out of respect for Haham Da Fonseca. Disgusted with the Marchenas'

[32] OAC 65, no. 228, Sept. 1, 1785.

[33] Hamelberg, *Documenten*, p. 181, y. 1774.

[34] OAC 912, nos. 237-67; OAC 947, nos. 275-96.

[35] OAC 206, no. 24, April 16, 1777.

[36] Only 25 of its crew of 231 were ashore at the time of the explosion. Many vessels in the harbor were damaged and a few sank; several homes in Scharloo and Otrabanda were wrecked. Damages amounted to 100,000 piasters (*Nederlandsche Mercurius*, December, 1778).

[37] OAC 913, nos. 21, 49; OAC 977, no. 163.

[38] Pastors in difficulty with the government in this era were Antonio Navarro, Theodorus Brauwers, his chaplain Jacob Schenck, Juan Antonio Acquinell, Bernardo Litine and Theodorus ten Oever (OAC 64, nos. 77-78, 84).

[39] See OAC 65, no. 196, for a list of incidents between the white and colored population in 1785.

behavior — one of them was president of the community — Da Costa resigned from all his communal offices.[40]

Emulating their white gentile neighbors, the Jews took matters into their own hands. Words had passed between Samuel Levy Maduro and Raphael Monsanto. Samuel's 17-year-old son, Mosseh Levy Maduro Peixotto (founder of the Peixotto family of New York), settled scores by clubbing and bloodying Monsanto.[41] Attacked by a Gentile named Lesire, 21-year-old Isaac Salas defended himself with stones. Fiscal Teylingen, who was not fond of the Jews, jailed Salas instead of the culprit Lesire, a minor court officer (y. 1785). Fortunately for Salas, the lieutenant under whom he did guard duty obtained his release. Years later Salas became a government employee and served the community for a long time as Parnas de Hebra. There were ugly litigations among Jews of respectable families also, and the Mahamad was unable to enforce discipline. As matters worsened, the parnassim appealed to the Company for greater authority in the administration of the community.[42] This request apparently went unheeded.

JEWISH-CHRISTIAN ACTION AGAINST ATTORNEY HESSEN

In 1784 Fiscal Teylingen, Governor De Veer and the Island Council introduced some changes in court procedure at the request of attorney Willem Hessen. Time consuming and very costly for the citizenry but lucrative for the attorney, this innovation angered the entire white population. Seventy-nine residents, including sixteen Jews,[43] protested before the Governor and Council and demanded the revocation or modification of the law. Despite the governor's assurances to keep costs down and prevent delays in the court calendar, Jews and Christians openly expressed their dissatisfaction with the government (August 9, 1785). Governor De Veer knew that the *hascamoth* forbade the Jews from criticizing the government. He therefore called the parnassim and ordered them to warn the Jews against engaging in any sort of "revolt, sedition or mutiny." From the pulpit the parnassim admonished the members to obey the Governor and Council and in nowise to voice approval or disapproval, directly or indirectly, as to the "operations of the very noble gentlemen, the

[40] For details, see Emmanuel, *Precious Stones*, p. 387.

[41] OAC 958, nos. 58, 157, April 29, 1783.

[42] WICA 20, p. 121.

[43] Jacob de Gabriel Pinedo and Brothers, Abraham Alexander Wijs, M[ordechay]. Pardo, M[ordechay]. Motta, then parnas; Aron Ailyon, David Cardoze, Abraham de Isaac de Marchena, Elias Rodriguez Miranda, Elias Penso, I. Calvo, Mosis de Benjamin Jesurun, David Abinun de Lima Jr., De Lima & Son, and Benjamin Suares (OAC 65, no. 222).

Governor and Councillors, that they are not given cause to correct or punish us." They also warned the membership that the community would help no one arrested by the government authorities in such instances. Because several members of the Neve Salom synagogue in Otrabanda continued to cavil, the parnassim repeated this warning on the eve of Rosh Hashanah, 5546 (1785).[44] After that announcement the parnassim Morales and Motta assured the governor that the Jews were law-abiding and peace-loving; that out of some 1,200 Jews in the community, only a few were unruly and three of them had already been punished.[45]

Nothing was done to modify the law. Twelve prominent men therefore petitioned the governor to disbar Hessen who, they said, was a thief enriching himself at the people's expense.[46] The Jewish petitioners were Mordechay Motta, "Ishac de Ishac de Marchena by order of Jacob de Gabriel Pinedo," Aron Ailyon, and Mosseh Cohen Henriquez Jr. Their reaction was justified in the face of the business slump that was beginning to make itself felt after the American colonists concluded peace with England. Hessen was finally prohibited from practicing law.[47]

Meanwhile the Jews of Neve Salom synagogue had several incidents with the city parnassim in 1785. Four years later the city parnassim had another conflict on their hands with certain members over the Andrade case. Overwhelmed by the continual strife, the parnassim finally turned to their Amsterdam colleagues for counsel. They were advised, as always, to consider "peace and union the main object" of their endeavors. One gets the impression that disagreement over titles conferred on some members accounted for some of this discord. Curaçao's query over titles to be accorded parnassim elicited this response: "Since our settlement in this land [Holland], we have never given thought to such refinements."[48]

Mounting discontent of the islanders with the government and those in power made the Company send two commissioners on September 3, 1789, to investigate the situation in Curaçao. Shortly afterwards these officials instructed the parnassim to warn the members not to interfere in government matters.[49] Sixteen months later, on December 31, 1791, the Dutch West

[44] MIA, loose papers.

[45] OAC 65, no. 228.

[46] OAC 65, no. 222.

[47] Hessen practiced law with Fiscal Teylingen until a misunderstanding dissolved their partnership. Aron Machoro was in their employ (OAC 974, no. 327).

[48] The Amsterdam parnassim's answer of Nov. 25, 1791, to the Curaçao parnassim's letter of July 1, 1791, which the author did not find in the records (PJCAA, Copiador de Cartas, 1784-1799).

[49] According to Teenstra, vol. II, pp. 73-75; B. de Gaay Fortman, "Curaçao tegen het einde der W.I. Compagnie," *WIG*, 1919, p. 448.

India Company was liquidated. Curaçao and all the colonies formerly under Company jurisdiction officially became part of the Netherlands Government.

HAHAM *vs.* PARNASSIM

Quarrels among members of the community broke out sporadically. In 1793 Mordechay de Salomon Levy Maduro had an incident with the parnassim — the nature of which is unknown — and refused to submit to their ruling. At the request of the parnassim, the Governor and Island Council forced Maduro to follow the communal laws. If Maduro was the *dayyan* of the same name in 1774, then he was an elderly, venerable man. He petitioned the Governor and Council for permission to have his case reviewed by the Great Council of the Synagogue despite the parnassim's unwillingness. Instead, in the interest of "maintaining order and tranquility,"[50] the governor granted him three days in which to comply with the parnassim's decision.

There was great dissatisfaction on the part of various members and Haham Da Fonseca with the parnassim. They would not trouble to invite the parnassim to attend their marriages, possibly because the parnassim, as a disciplinary measure, may have forbidden the haham to effect marriages. Surprisingly, Da Fonseca would proceed with the ceremony contrary to the regulation requiring both haham and members to obtain the parnassim's prior consent. The parnassim therefore complained to the Governor and Council about this insubordination. Among other things they lamented: "The petitioners, to their deep surprise and sorrow, have recently learned that various members of their nation, because of personal differences they or their families entertain against the petitioners or their families, do not care to extend to petitioners the usual courtesy of calling them to attend their marriage ceremony and sign the ketubah." They also deplored the fact that several members who were about to marry expected to conduct the ceremony without them. Calling or not calling the parnassim to sign a *ketubah* certainly did not involve a matter of courtesy. It meant recognizing or not recognizing the authority of the parnassim to act in their official capacity. This petition was signed on January 8, 179(5)[6], by Salomon de Castro, president; Mordechay Alvares Correa, vice president, and Samuel de David Hoheb, treasurer. The Council backed the parnassim and decided "to forbid the Haham of this nation to solemnize [marriages] and sign the Ketubahs alone."[51]

[50] OAC 135, no. 140, Dec. 10, 1793.
[51] OAC 138, no. 8, July 8-12, 1796.

NEVE SALOM IN CONFLICT WITH THE CITY PARNASSIM

From 1785 the fifteen to twenty Jewish families in Otrabanda had been restless and dissatisfied with the city parnassim. For the slightest cause, the latter threatened to remove the Scrolls of the Law from the Neve Salom synagogue. This uneasiness prevailed until 1791 when the parnassim of Mikvé Israel passed new regulations governing Neve Salom. These regulations provided for the appointment of two administrators and two bridegrooms of the Law by the city parnassim. Each administrator was to preside for six months and give orders to the hazzan who alone, and no other, could officiate as cantor. Any member who raised his voice to complain about someone in the synagogue or in the synagogue courtyard would be fined five pesos. Any member who struck his fellowman inside the synagogue would be fined ten pesos and excommunicated. No member, except an elderly person, could enter the synagogue with a cane. Whoever disobeyed the administrator would be punished by the Mikvé Israel parnassim.[52]

In times past these regulations would have been absolutely acceptable. But they were not acceptable in 1796 with the ideas of liberty and equality propagated by the French Revolution. These ideas had incited even Curaçao's slaves to revolt a year earlier. So it was quite natural for the Jews of Otrabanda to want to free themselves of dictation by the city parnassim. They petitioned Governor Lauffer and the Council for permission to elect their own parnassim and adjuntos. Their petition listed a series of complaints filed against the city parnassim that the author did not find in the records. The governor allowed them to choose their parnassim subject to Mikvé Israel's approval. But the petitioners saw no need to have their officers passed upon by those gentlemen. They insisted upon more independence without seeking to form a separate community.

The city parnassim then submitted a long report to the Council on the history of Neve Salom. They pointed out that under the terms of its foundation,[53] members of Neve Salom were entirely dependent upon the city parnassim. They also pointed out that the independence of Neve Salom would work to the detriment of the Poor Box; that although there were no needy Jews in Otrabanda, Neve Salom's contributions were required for the city poor. After a year of litigation, the governor finally decided that the Neve Salom had to remain as before, i.e., under the administration of the city parnassim. The latter probably had to make certain concessions and adapt

[52] MIA, loose papers.

[53] See Chapters VIII and IX above for full details.

themselves to the spirit of the times. This matter must have been particularly upsetting to make the city parnassim report it to Amsterdam[54] during the height of the difficulties of communication between Curaçao and Holland.

In the new elections in Otrabanda, the following became parnassim: Moses Frois de Andrade (a.k.a. Moses Frois), president; Aron Machoro, David and Jacob Senior, Moses Mendes Monsanto, Isaac Garcia de Paz; Joseph Pereira Brandao who resigned under city parnassim pressure; and Abraham Henriques Juliao, treasurer. Monsanto and Machoro acted as Neve Salom's representatives before the courts.[55]

The Neve Salom continued functioning until about 1817.[56] By then very few Jews lived in Otrabanda. Since there was no *minyan*, the city parnassim had to conduct the memorial prayer services for Neve Salom at the Mikvé Israel although the *legados* of former Otrabanda Jews were modest.[57] It was finally sold in 1864 for 4,655 florins after it had served the community at 295 Breedestraat for more than three-quarters of a century.[58]

[54] The author saw in the PJCAA a copy of the Otrabanda Jews' petition to the governor, but no correspondence on the subject.

[55] OAC 139, nos. 14, 101, 109; OAC 997, no. 28; OAC 998, nos. 135, 145, 224, 228, acts of Jan. 13, 1797-Dec. 30, 1797.

[56] The Otrabanda synagogue is mentioned in Governor Kikkert's report of 1816 to the Colonial Minister on churches and synagogues (RA, Koloniën na 1813, no. 3740). Already in 1818 services were discontinued for lack of a quorum, or *minyan*.

[57] MIA, Minutas de Parnassim, 1819-1824, meeting of May 10, 1820.

[58] *CC*, Nov. 19, 1864.

CHAPTER XIV

FRENCH OPPRESSION AND ENGLISH RULE 1797-1816

TROUBLES WITH THE FRENCH

In 1795 the armies of the French Revolution conquered Holland. With French support Holland's anti-monarchists, the self-styled "patriots," forced William V of Orange to abdicate and founded the Batavian Republic. Under The Hague Treaty concluded between the Batavian and French Republics the Dutch were obliged to help the French everywhere. Curaçao, too, had its contingent of "patriots" — among them, a few Jews. On August 15, 1796, they rose up against the House of Orange sympathizers and were subdued. Nicolaas van Starckenborgh, in the Company's service at Curaçao since 1758 and Commander-in-Chief of the Militia since 1792, was dismissed for siding with the "patriots."[1] One of the few Jewish collaborationists was killed in his home by a soldier.[2] In a general way, the Curaçoan Jews suffered much in this period, especially those living in French Santo Domingo during the revolution of 1795-96. Entire families were ruined.[3]

This clash between the two groups gave the French the excuse to enter Curaçao and interfere in the management of the island "in order to help the patriots." Here they stationed a government agent. They forced the merchants, Jews mainly,[4] to supply their ships and tendered doubtful exchange in payment. They prohibited the importation of goods manufactured in England while permitting it to enter French Santo Domingo.[5]

The loyalty of the Mahamad and nearly the entire congregation to the

[1] RA, W. I. Raad Amerikanische Koloniën 178, pp. 363-64.

[2] RA, Koloniën, W. I. Comité 139, meeting of Aug. 4, 1795.

[3] Wealthy Jews of French Santo Domingo suffered greatly during the French Revolution. One Gaspar David Henriquez was stripped of his plantation valued at Ps. 150,000, his 240 slaves, a house which yielded an annual rental of Ps. 1,000, and accounts receivable of Ps. 130,000 due him from the "best" residents of Jacmel and St. Louis. His misfortune extended to St. Thomas where people owed him 100,000 *patintjes* or Ps. 190,000, and to Curaçao where he lost Ps. 40,000. He finally had to hire himself out on a ship to earn his living (OAC 140, no. 102; CGA, KV, 1821?)

[4] OAC 140, no. 81.

[5] OAC 139, no. 55.

House of Orange[6] infuriated the French. Victor Huguez, representing the French executive power at Guadeloupe, gave vent to this hatred for the Jews in a letter he wrote to J. B. Pierce [Pierre?] Cadet, maritime agent for France in Curaçao: "We shall then see if those who conquered Europe and merit universal trust shall be insulted by that vile Jewish rabble, rejected by all peoples and everywhere despised." The letter circulated in Curaçao. The parnassim David Cohen Henriquez, Jacob de Castro and Salomon Cohen Henriquez sent a copy of it to Governor Lauffer on August 8, 1798, with their protests and reminder that in 1796 the Jews, like the other residents, had contributed funds to cover the cost of the French frigate then stationed in Curaçao. They demanded an investigation to learn the origin of the letter and a statement disproving the accusations against the Jews.[7] The same day the Governor and Council issued a statement to the parnassim attesting that there was no cause to reproach the Portuguese Jewish Nation since the reorganization of August, 1796; also, that the Jews, like the rest of the citizenry, had conducted themselves well and had contributed to the duties and services necessary to protect the island. This was signed by C. P. Römer, Government Secretary.[8]

ISAAC JESURUN SASPORTAS, REVOLUTIONARY

Urbain de Vaux, agent of the executive power of French Santo Domingo in Curaçao in 1799, tried to foment a revolution so that Curaçao might pass into French control. In this he was supported by a Jewish merchant of French Santo Domingo, Isaac Jesurun Sasportas, most probably a descendant of Haham Jesurun. The Mahamad, who could not forget the accusations levelled by the French against the Jewish community, viewed with grief that, besides Sasportas, there were several other coreligionists who were French partisans. There was Moses Frois d'Andrade, better known as Moses Frois, who stirred unrest in the community by his speeches, perhaps in connection with the

[6] François Noel, first French ambassador to the Batavian Republic, wrote on May 22, 1796, to Charles Delacroix, French foreign minister, that the "Portuguese rabbis are sold to the House of Orange" (H. T. Colenbrander, *Rijks Geschiedkundige Publicatien . . . van 1795 tot 1840*, vol. II [The Hague, 1906], p. 50, note 46).

[7] MIA, loose papers; OAC 140, no. 81.

[8] MIA, loose papers. There seems to be in the Old Archives of Curaçao a letter addressed to the parnassim by the Island Council, stating among other things: ". . . there has not been received any reasonable and demonstrable complaint of which they [the Jews] are particularly guilty to merit the offenses received from the French Nation" (Hamelberg, "Een Veel bewogen tijdperk," *Eerste Jaarlijkse verslag v. het Geschiedkundig Genootschap* [Amsterdam, 1897], pp. 49-50).

synagogue in Otrabanda of which he was parnas. He was arrested.[9] Elias Brandon was another of De Vaux's staunch collaborators. One Jacob Athias was considered insidious and shortly afterwards banished from the island.

Sasportas lodged at the home of Joseph Obediente, a lieutenant in the Sixth Company of the Curaçao National Guard. In a written statement, Obediente and Abraham Rodriguez Pimentel exposed de Vaux's plot to kill Governor Lauffer and Obediente, and Sasportas' unwillingness to go along with it. Sasportas' deposition disclosed that Captain Albert "Keyker" [Kikkert, later governor of Curaçao] and "Scotborec" [Schotborgh] had voiced their dissatisfaction with the existing government and felt that the time was ripe for a change. Sasportas further deposed that this plot to overthrow the government included plans for ransoming the Jews at exorbitant sums in order to raise 100,000 *gourdes* or the equivalent of 500,000 francs. He signed his deposition as "Commissioner for the Directoire, Sasportas."[10]

De Vaux and Sasportas were expelled from Curaçao. Sasportas, before setting out for Curaçao, apparently had orders from Roume (agent for the French Republic in Santo Domingo) to go on to Jamaica and incite the people to revolt.[11] The English were not so humane as Governor Lauffer. They executed Sasportas who died shouting: "Long live Liberty, long live the Republic!"[12]

JEWISH CONTRIBUTION TOWARD THE EXPENSES OF GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATION, DEFENSE AND FORTIFICATIONS

There was no communication at the time between Curaçao and Holland. For several years before the coming of the French, the economic condition of the government was so critical that the Company found it necessary to pour thousands of florins into Curaçao year after year to cover the deficits of administration. From 1784 to 1788 the Curaçao government had receipts of 381,860.14 florins as against expenditures of 744,206.2 florins. The difference, as usual, was covered by the Company.[13] In an effort to remedy matters, Governor Lauffer and his Council imposed a 4% tax[14] on all real estate valued at 1,000 pesos and above and asked the residents for a compulsory loan. The Jews, like the others, paid the tax and advanced money. The largest loan of

9 Nicolaas van Meeteren, *Noodlotsdagen* (Curaçao, 1944), p. 72.
10 RA, Koloniën, West Indische Comité 136, Sept. 10, 1799.
11 RA, West Indische Raad Amerik. Koloniën 178.
12 M. D. Teenstra, *ibid.*, pp. 83-85.
13 RA, Verspreide W. I. Stukken 972, pp. 42-43.
14 Meeting of the Island Council held on May 4, 1797.

10,000 pesos[15] came from Imanuel da Costa Gomez & Bros.,[16] a leading firm of Curaçao dating from before 1759.[17] Other wealthy Jews responded generously: Samuel de Joseph da Costa Gomez, 2,500 pesos; the Widow David Cardoze and son, 2,400; David Haim Dovale, 2,000; Jacob de Sola, 2,000; Dr. Joseph Capriles and son, 1,200; Moses Frois, the "patriot," 800, and so forth. The parnassim lent money from the Community Chest.[18] The Jews contributed Ps. 28,497:1:3 of the total taxation of Ps. 106,438:5:1.[19] Only a short while before the Jews had joined the other inhabitants in giving funds for repairs to the forts.

In 1796 Curaçao formed the National Guard to defend the island. Jews enrolled and some attained the rank of sergeant and lieutenant.[20]

After their failure to take possession of Curaçao through revolution, the French sent a fleet of five warships from Guadeloupe to occupy the island by force. They intimidated the population and the Jews in particular, who they believed had more money. The panic among the Jews was so great that some of them dispatched their wives to Venezuela.[21] Encouraged by this chaotic state, the French sent Governor Lauffer a manifesto calling for immediate surrender. Lauffer[22] convoked a grand council of thirty-five persons on August

[15] Koloniën W. I. Comité 139, June 15, 1797.

[16] The firm was made up of Gabriel de Imanuel da Costa Gomez' six sons: Imanuel, David, Isaac, Samuel in Curaçao, and Joseph and Daniel da Costa Gomez de la Peña in Amsterdam. After the death of David and Imanuel, the firm continued under Samuel and Isaac. When Samuel died in 1799, it was appraised at Ps. 265,736:2:5. The firm came to an end with the death in 1811 both of Isaac (the last brother in Curaçao) and Samuel's widow Sarah de Ishac Pereira. Isaac's estate was estimated at Ps. 76,762:2 and the Widow Sarah's at Ps. 143,027:2:1. The Da Costa Gomez contributions to the Community Chest were in keeping with their fortune. From 1800 to 1810 Isaac da Costa Gomez gave Ps. 3,589:6:3. He bequeathed a house to the community and left several legacies for charitable purposes (OAC 1034, no. 108).

[17] OAC 874, no. 160.

[18] RA, W. I. Raad Amerik. Koloniën 178, no. 29.

[19] RA, Koloniën W. I. Comité 139. These wealthy Gentiles counted among the very large contributors: Pierre Brion, Ps. 3,356; Johanna Lesiere, 2,000; Felim Cruger, 2,000; the Widow Dominie Wigboldus Rasvelt, 2,000; the National Orphans Fund, Ps. 15,920:-:4; P. F. Didenhoven, 8,000. As the government required still more funds, Didenhoven gave further sums totaling 40,000 pesos.

[20] Haim Abinun de Lima, 1st Lieutenant; Joseph Obediente Jr. and Jacob Abenatar Jr., lieutenants; Isaac Abinun de Lima and Isaac Pardo, sergeants of the Sixth Company; Abraham Salom Delvalle and Rephael Alvarez Correa, "officers."

[21] N. van Meeteren, pp. 88-89.

[22] Johan Rudolph Lauffer was Curaçao's second foreign governor. Like Governor Isaac Faesch (1740-58), he was Swiss. Born in 1752 in Zofingen, Switzerland, he was the only governor directly elected by the inhabitants of Curaçao, and indeed the most popular. When his election was officially confirmed in February, 1799, he was the object of much manifestation by the citizenry. Four young girls, representing the four churches and synagogues of the island, presented him with an illuminated

10, 1800, to decide this trying question. These councillors included the Jews Haim Abinun de Lima, Abraham Salom Delvalle and Rephael Alvares Correa, "former officers of the National Guard."[23] They unanimously decided not to give up the island to the French who had meanwhile removed from the port, later to return. The French then plundered several plantations, including those of Rephael and Manuel Alvares Correa,[24] and took away the cattle.

On September 11, 1800, according to a note preserved in the Mikvé Israel archives, the French attacked Curaçao and the islanders locked in "battle." That day the Widow Rachel de Jacob Andrade died. Since it was impossible to give her burial in the cemetery at Blein Heim, she was temporarily buried in Pieter Maai. Once calm was restored, her remains were taken to the Beth Hahaim on December 3, 1800.[25] There may have been other civilians who died then of whom there is no record. This item has come down to us only because the deceased was buried at community expense and the costs incurred by the Parnas de Hebra were noted on a simple piece of paper.

CURAÇAO UNDER ENGLISH DOMINATION 1800-1803 AND 1807-1816

While Governor Lauffer was struggling to prevent Curaçao's falling to the French, the English seized the island during September-October, 1800, on the pretext of helping the Curaçoans. Dutch historians in general have little

crown. The lass Hana Abinun de Lima represented the Jewish community (Van Meeteren, pp. 53-54). "During the period that he was governor, he lost more than 65,000.00 florins out of his private funds" for government expenditures (H. A. van de Valle, *Reseña Histórica de Curazao* [Curazao, 1881], p. 86). In 1800 Lauffer made a gift to the Jewish community of a piece of land to enlarge the cemetery (Emmanuel, *Precious Stones*, p. 38). During the disputes between the city parnassim and the parnassim of Neve Salom synagogue, Lauffer did not always side with the former. During the bitter fight between the parnassim and the separatists over Hazzan Piza (Chap. XV), Lauffer, no longer in office, helped the separatists by selling them a piece of his land for a graveyard near the Beth Hahaim. He died testate in Curaçao on December 24, 1833, and was buried without ceremonies like a forgotten citizen (OAC 1014, no. 20; Teenstra, vol. II, p. 83).

[23] Hamelberg, "Een Veel bewogen tijdperk," *Eerste Jaarlijke verslag*, p. 76.

[24] N. van Meeteren, p. 105.

[25] The original text reads as follows: "16 Kisleff 5561 [December 3, 1800] Ossres do Mahamad Deve a Pia Hebra Guimilut Hassadim Por Gastos feito[s] para a difunta Rachel de Jacob Andrade que foy Enterada em Deposito em Pieter may Em 21 Elul do Aº pasado [September 11, 1800] por havermos Estado em batalia com os fransezes y levarla agora a Enterrar em Bet haim . . ." This was signed by Jacob de Eliao Jesurun Henriquez, the parnas in charge of funerals and the cemetery (MIA, loose papers; Emmanuel, *Precious Stones*, p. 59). Hamelberg also tells us in his manuscript notes about the French attack on September 11 and about Lauffer's convocation of the officers of the National Guard, among them Jacob Abenatar Jr., Raphael Alvares Correa and Haim Abinun de Lima.

favorable to say for the English during this occupation. Shortly after their invasion, the English requisitioned the merchandise of the big merchants, especially of the Jews D. H. Dovale, Pinedo, Valencia, Gomes Casseres, Jacob de Sola, and others.[26] This was not the first time that the English were guilty of extortion. When they occupied St. Eustatius in 1781, they appropriated the goods of the Jews, then numbering some 250 souls. Of the two million English pounds in cash seized at that time, probably half belonged to the Jews.[27]

The situation among the Curaçoan Jews was so desperate that the adjuntos beseeched their president Abraham Haim Fidanque and treasurer David Haim Cohen Henriquez to continue in office another year despite the ruling demanding regular elections.

After an occupation of upwards of two years, the English returned Curaçao to the Dutch on January 11, 1803, under the terms of the peace of Amiens. It was a short peace for Curaçao. The English besieged and blockaded the island with special rigor from October, 1804, to July, 1805.[28] They demanded surrender and terrorized the population by burning down houses and plantations and carrying away cattle and slaves. Twenty-eight islanders — planters, merchants and notable citizens — then entreated Governor Changuion to capitulate. It is significant that although the Jewish element represented a third of the more comfortable white population, only five Jews signed this petition as against the twenty-three Protestant and Catholic notables like Cambiaso, Chapman, Schotborgh, Foulke, Ellis, Specht, Van der Meulen, Preacher Muller of the Lutheran community, and others.[29]

The English started to disembark. The garrison which was supposed to have 600 men had only 200 and not enough guns. The National Guard, composed of the citizenry, was in better shape.[30] With only 160 men Pierre Louis Brion,[31] commander of the Second Company of the National Guard, routed the English just as they landed at Caracas Bay. Some of his men were Jews: Daniel Cardozo[32] of Amsterdam who lost his life in the battle, and Mordechay de Jeosuah Henriquez who was slightly wounded.[33]

[26] N. van Meeteren, p. 105.

[27] Hamelberg Collection, 120 B 3; see Chap. XXVI and appendix 24A.

[28] Pierre Jean Changuion, *Memorie aan zijne Koninklijke Hoogheid . . .* [Amsterdam, 1807?], p. 2.

[29] The five Jews were Isaac Cardozo, Mordechay Ricardo, Isaac Capriles, Raphael Pinedo and David [Lopez] Raphael (communication of the late W. M. Hoyer).

[30] P. J. Changuion, *ibid.*, p. 3.

[31] He later became famous in the liberation of Venezuela.

[32] H. J. Koenen, *Geschiedenis der Joden in Nederland* (Utrecht, 1843), p. 308.

[33] RA, Koloniën na 1813, 3631, no. 295.

Again the government asked the inhabitants for another loan. The Jews also responded — the Da Costa Gomez firm with 2,000 pesos.

Eighteen months later, on January 1, 1807, the English took Curaçao by surprise and remained there until March 4, 1816. The colony, and the Jews in particular, suffered a great deal under this occupation. Their boats and rich cargoes anchored in the harbor were sequestered.[34] The greatest amount of disposable money was sent from the island to Jamaica.[35] "The English employees and officers," a chronicler later wrote, "have found the means to suck up to the very last drop of blood from the unfortunate colony. The wealth of the islanders flows into the royal coffers only to pass later into the pockets of the employees."[36] They also confiscated some 3,994:4:6 English pounds from the "Privateering Chest" founded by the colonists in Governor Du Fay's time. The colonists protested against this outrage whereupon the English made restitution. Their greed was unparalleled. While sympathizing with the insurgents commanded by Bolivar, Governor John Hodgson stripped Bolivar of everything he owned when he returned in 1812 after the debacle at Puerto Cabello — 12,000 pesos in cash and jewelry worth 5,000 pesos.

One can well imagine the great difficulties that the parnassim and Haham Da Fonseca had to surmount in order to manage the community during those hectic years. Individual members almost continually refused to accept the charges offered them or renounced their former commitments. Because these refusals complicated the orderly course of communal administration, the parnassim were sometimes forced to complain to the Island Council, e.g., in 1804 when the adjuntos Abraham de Mordechay Senior and Jahacob de Joseph Jesurun Henriquez resigned.[37]

In spite of the hardships, the English occupation was not so unfavorable for the administration of the synagogue and for certain Jews. In 1807 Abraham Salom Delvalle was appointed secretary of a government committee formed to tax enemy (French) properties.[38] Shortly afterwards Mordechay Ricardo was appointed inspector of public roads and later as government interpreter-translator. In May, 1810, during Governor John Thomas Layard's incumbency, the *finta* was introduced. (Before then the Dutch rulers were not in favor of it.)[39] A month later the community was accorded the privilege of founding the Orphans Chamber of the Hebrew Society or "Cámara de Orfaos D

[34] CGA, KV, 1821 (?).
[35] Bosch, vol. I, pp. 365-67.
[36] H. A. van de Valle, *ibid.*, p. 100.
[37] OAC 1013, no. 17.
[38] OAC 1031, no. 174.
[39] See above, pp. 255-56.

Congregaçao Israelitica." It was a sort of bank which will be discussed later.

Again the communal regulations were modified with more power redounding to the parnassim. Under these modifications six members of the "Consistory," then composed of 22 members, were to be added to the three parnassim or Mahamad who were to form a council of nine called "Congress." Those six members were to serve for seven years. The Mahamad now was to consist of seven persons: three in actual control and four assistants. The penalty of excommunication was removed, and the transgressors now were to be considered as "disturbers of the Public peace & [to be] traduced before the Judge of the Colony." In certain cases a fine replaced the ban. As the members continued to refuse the burdens of office, the fines were increased.

Other regulations defined the manner of dress for the officers: "The church wardens, as the members of the Mahamad, shall all be dressed in black, in the synagogue as well as in the assemblies and in all occasions where they shall have to appear in their [official] capacity." These modifications were made in 1809 and approved by the Government Secretary on January 10, 1810, and May 21, 1811. They were signed in 1810 by the president Mordechay Haim Senior, the two other members of the Mahamad and by twenty-one members of the Consistory.[40] In a general way, the English governors backed the parnassim.

PARNASSIM MISUSE OF POWER

Moise Cardoze was elected president in the Jewish New Year of 5570 (1809). He was re-elected in 5571 and again in 5572. The three Senior brothers — Mordechay, Isaac and Jacob (sons of Abraham de Mordechay) — questioned the legality of the last election, but the Consistory nevertheless upheld it. The matter was protested before the governor who also considered the election illegal. The parnassim intervened and influenced the governor to change his mind. Mordechay and Jacob Senior complained about this in the synagogue on Rosh Hashanah and were subsequently punished for the disturbance. Jacob then addressed himself to the governor who advised the parnassim to treat the offenders "with lenity." The parnassim defended themselves. Among their supporting documents are two pompous discourses praising Cardoze and condemning the Seniors. These were written and done at a meeting of parnassim by David Haim Dovale (who had business relations with Cardoze) and Abraham Salom Delvalle (former brother-in-law and business partner of Cardoze).

[40] Ministerie van Koloniën no. 3740, 2nd-half 1816. See appendix 1, pp. 581-609.

The Senior brothers agreed to pay the fine of 100 pesos each, but Jacob refused to appear before the parnassim and apologize. When the parnassim threatened to take the matter to the governor, Jacob wrote two really humbling letters of apology but still would not appear. Finally the parnassim appealed to Governor Hodgson. Senior showed that under the communal regulations he was obliged to pay the fine only. He was right, but the governor sided with the parnassim. This engendered bitter feelings between the Dovale and Senior families. A son of David Dovale tried to attack Jacob Senior, but was stopped.[41] David Haim Cohen Henriquez, father-in-law of Jacob Senior and a member of the Consistory, wrote to the Mahamad that Cardoze did not put on *tefillin* — a hint that Cardoze was unworthy of being president. Backed by the governor as they were, the parnassim condemned Senior. In mark of disgrace, they did not call him to the Torah for a full year.[42] In so doing they abused their power and humiliated a brother whose sin was to protest an illegal election. (They continued this practice of denigrating those who did not agree with them for many years thereafter.) After the Senior incident the parnassim asked the governor for leave to modify the regulation so that, in addition to imposing a fine on a disobedient member, they could also punish him as they saw fit.

CAMARA DE ORFAOS

From the earliest days of the community the parnassim administered the funds of orphan children, widows and those who for one reason or another had to leave the island and entrusted their possessions to them. The Island Council's permit was required in each instance. Often, until it was granted, abuses and damages resulted to an estate. For this reason the parnassim Moise Cardoze, Abraham Pinedo and Abraham de Jacob Jesurun petitioned Governor Layard on June 5, 1810, to let them, like the National Orphans Fund, take immediate charge of an estate. The governor assented and thus the "Cámara de Orfaos D Congregaçao Israelitica" (Orphans Chamber, or Orphans Fund, of the Hebrew Society) was formed in June, 1810.

The parnassim formulated a set of bylaws consisting of twenty articles for the operation of this organization. The governor was to appoint two directors to take charge of its administration while the parnassim were to add three

[41] OAC 1036, Jan. 28, 1812.

[42] There is a bulky file of all these documents in OAC 483, nos. 25 and 61, consisting of minutes of the parnassim, the Delvalle-Dovale pompous discourses, synagogue proclamations, Jacob Senior's eight letters (some abjectly apologetic), the replies of the parnassim, etc. Senior finally gave full satisfaction in a plenary session of the Synagogue Council (MIA, loose papers; MS, Tisry, 5572).

more to form a council of five. The Community Chest was to be responsible for any loss of principal and interest. Mortgages were not to be extended on slaves but on real property and then only up to two-thirds the value. They were to charge 6% interest on sums up to 1,000 pesos and 5% on 1,000 pesos and above. The orphans would always receive earnings of 4½% on their funds, the difference going to the Community Chest.[43]

In 1856 these bylaws were modified as follows: The council of five shall be under the control of the Great Council of the community. The directors shall offer their services without compensation. The tax customarily charged for the administration of these funds shall pass in favor of the Community Chest. The Cámara shall present accounts to the Great Council of the community which, in turn, shall submit them to the government. On the death of an intestate Jew survived by minor children or in the case of heirs absent from the island, the Cámara Council shall accompany a notary to seal the effects and goods of a deceased. If a Jew dies testate, the Cámara Council shall read the will before a notary to learn whether the Cámara is designated as executor of the estate. The widow or widower wishing to remarry shall first give a guarantee to the Cámara for the paternal or maternal assets belonging to the minor children. The Cámara Council shall determine the value of the property on which a mortgage is given. The Cámara Council is authorized to charge 7% interest on sums up to 1,333 florins or 1,000 pesos, and 6% on sums larger than 1,000 pesos.

An increase in Aruba's Jewish population prompted the Cámara to open a branch there in 1818 with government approval. Benjamin de Mordechay Henriquez and Benjamin Suares were appointed as directors responsible to the Cámara at Curaçao.

The directors of the Cámara were true financiers, well up on real estate values. Surely this business acumen accounted for the popularity of the "Banco Israelita" (i.e., the Cámara) among the non-Jewish depositors as well.[44] The Cámara was finally liquidated on June 30, 1876,[45] six years after the dissolution of the National Orphans Fund.[46] All mortgages and interest open to June 30, 1876, in favor of the Cámara de Orfaos of the Mikvé Israel com-

[43] This regulation was signed on Aug. 16, 1810, by David H. Dovale, Moise Cardoze, Abraham Pinedo and Abraham de Jacob Jesurun, and approved by Government Secretary Wilhelm Prince on Oct. 23, 1810 (Ministerie van Koloniën 3742, no. 8279, Nov. 21, 1810).

[44] For example, one Casper Schoonenwolff deposited 10,000 florins in the Cámara in 1845 (CEOE, no. 91).

[45] *Reglament voor de N.P.I.G. Mikvé Israel* (Curaçao, 1875), art. 29.

[46] According to the decree of April 23, 1861, liquidation was begun on July 1, 1870, and entirely completed in 1876.

munity automatically passed into the name and favor of Congregation Mikvé Israel without the necessity of signing further papers,[47] while all mortgages and interest in favor of the National Orphans Fund passed directly to the Mortgage Bank.

The Cámara de Orfaos was one of the institutions that did honor to Curaçoan Jewry and deserved the praises of various governors and even of Governor Cantz'laar in 1822.[48]

Directors of the Cámara appointed by the government (1810-1876) were David Haim Dovale, Moise Cardoze, David de David Haim Dovale, Jacob de Jeosuah Naar, Eliau Curiel, Haim Josiau Cohen Henriquez, Salomo de Eliau Levy Maduro, Isaac Rodrigues Miranda Jr., Benjamin Pereira Brandao, Benjamin de Sola, Manuel Alvares Correa Jr., Samuel da Costa Gomez Jr., and Benjamin de Casseres Jr.

The table on the following page speaks for the financial activity of the Cámara especially between 1891 and 1875.

סדר תפלות

לשאלת מטר

עם חזרת העמידה · עם ארבע ועשרים ברכות · והתקשות · ליום החענית שנוהגין על הצבור בשכיל המטר :

סדרו הרב הגדול המפורסם כמהר"ר שמואל מינדיס סולא זצוק"ל · חכ"ד ומ"ץ דק"ק מקוה ישראל נתי קוראסאו :

עם לחזה תוספת שהוסיף מחדש החכם השלם כמהור"ר יעקב לופיס פונסיקא יצ"ו · חכ"ד ומ"ץ דק"ק סאל :

ועתה ברשות ובהסכמת מעלת פרנסי ומנהיגי הק"ק הנז'

ה"ה אברהם די דוד ישורון
יצחק די יצחק די מארנינא
ואברהם די דוד דא קושטא אנדראדי · גבאי

ניתן לבית הדפוס

בשנת יהי לבי תמים בתקיך לפ"ק :

נדפס פה אמשטרדם יע"א

על יד המדפיס גירארד יוהאן יאנסון
ובבית הכחור ישראל מונדוי

בשנת זו התפלה לפ"ק :

78A. TITLE-PAGE, PRAYER-BOOK FOR RAIN IN CURAÇAO, AMSTERDAM, 1773, PAGE 265.

47 *Publicatieblad*, May 8, 1877, no. 8; *Reglament voor de N.P.I.G. Mikvé Israel*, art. 100.

48 In his report to the Colonial Minister for the year 1821 (RA, Ministerie van Koloniën 3751, no. 48).

Year	Capital of the Cámara	Deposits of the Mikvé Israel	Deposits of Private Individuals	Totals
1821	Ps. 41,790:7:3	Ps. 67,724.00	—	Ps. 109,514:7:3
1829	Fls. [37,494.03]	Fls. 16,561.12[a]	—	Fls. 54,055.15
1832	46,322:3:3	—	—	46,322:3:3[b]
1835	35,742.62			
1836	34,327	14,370.44	—	48,697.44
1850				40,505.86
1851	26,232.10	—	Fls. 17,588.58	43,820.68
1852	26,940.19	—	20,847.36	47,787.55
1853				48,724.98
1854	64,700.53	—	—	64,700.53
1855	29,560.56	—	30,112.24	59,672.80
1856	90,221.84	—	—	90,221.84
1857	33,938.72	30,972.98	70,885.61	135,797.31
1858	33,483.60	33,938.72	71,256.59	138,678.91
1859	—	35,278.91	136,438.95	171,717.86
1860	—	37,427.21	87,408.55	124,835.76
1861	—	39,034.16	77,560.29	116,594,45[c]
1862	—	39,034.16	77,560.29	116,594.45[c]
1863	—	44,560.29	83,389.40	127,949.69
1864	—	45,820.81	85,644.20	131,465.01
1865	—	52,501.77	78,443.65	130,945.42
1866	—	48,004.47	68,643.19[d]	116,647.66
1867	—	45,141.28	69,240.42	114,381.70
1868	—	43.622.63	55,036.04	98,658.67
1869	—	45,959.95	54,308.96	100,268.91
1870	—	53,479.75	45,689.31	99,169.06
1871	—	56,443.44	43,463.59	99,907.03
1872	—	58,908.64	29,534.76	88,443.40
1873	—	61,213.49	25,804.50	87,017.99
1874	—	64,112.09	21,018.40	85,130.49
1875	—	67,994.68	16,827.41	84,822.09[b]

[a] From January, 1827, the accounts are given in florins unless otherwise specified.
[b] According to the *Koloniaal Verslag*, 1832-1875.
[c] So are they registered.
[d] Because of the schism of 1864 members of the Reform community withdrew their deposits.

A hundred years ago these moneys represented a sizable capital and attest to the confidence that the Jewish and Christian depositors had in the Cámara.

JEWISH PARTICIPATION IN THE SIMON BOLIVAR MOVEMENT

The American War of Independence and the French Revolution encouraged several European colonies in the Americas to fight for independence. Venezuela was one of them.

Curaçao then was under the domination of the English who secretly favored the Venezuelan rebels. The latter needed arms and munitions; these they got from Trinidad and Curaçao. The Curaçoans followed events from the mainland with great interest. Several helped in actual combat! Manuel Piar fought as a lieutenant under the orders of General Miranda. He was the same Piar who later became famous through his conquest of Guiana. Pierre Louis Brion, born in 1782, became Bolivar's right-hand man. In fact, he went so far as to place at Bolivar's disposition[49] some 100,000 pesos, which represented his entire fortune and the legacy his father had left him.[50]

Governor Albert Kikkert, who wrested Curaçao from English control in 1816, was not eager to start complications between Holland and Spain and therefore could not extend the cooperation Bolivar's letters sought. Bolivar's letter of July 9, 1816, delivered by special emissary Pierre Brion, offered conditions favorable to Curaçoan trade for thirty years if Curaçao would be the first to recognize Venezuelan independence. Fear of involving Holland in war with Spain made Kikkert set aside considerations of trade advantages. Regretfully he replied that he could not permit any armed vessels "under the banner Your Excellency commands"[51] to enter Curaçoan ports. And in a last effort to be the good neighbor, he queried Holland for her sentiments toward the "Independents," as the Venezuelan rebels were called. He reported that the insurgents had been beaten, that Brion had captured a Spanish warship, and that Curaçoan trade was suffering by the war.[52] The following incident indicates that Holland desired no entanglement with Spain and therefore would not let Curaçao cooperate with Bolivar.

The revolutionaries had damaged a Curaçoan vessel in the port of Margarita. In reprisal the Curaçoan government requisitioned the insurgents' warship *La Sosegada* and held her captain and men until the damages were paid for. The captain agreed to leave the warship in Curaçao if he and his men were allowed to go. At this juncture Brion, captain of the warship *La Soledad*,

[49] Henry de Sola, *Biografia del Almirante Brion* (Caracas, 1921), p. 9.

[50] Brion's father was a wealthy businessman and the first Catholic member of the Island Council in 1797 (OAC 1099, no. 4). When he died on March 12, 1799, he left his children a considerable fortune consisting of real estate and numerous mortgages in his favor (inventory of his estate, OAC 1012, no. 9).

[51] RA, Koloniën na 1813 no. 3740, July 14, 1816; OAC 234, nos. 167, 168, 173, 175, at pp. 52, 54.

[52] RA, Koloniën 4750, Oct. 5, 1816.

intervened and promised to satisfy the damages. He probably raised his voice. Suffice to say that he was arrested. The government finally sold *La Sosegada* for 3,350 pesos.[53] Many Curaçoans — Christians and Jews alike — surely disapproved of this severity, for Bolivar was popular in Curaçao.

Already during the English occupation the Jews, like the Catholics Piar and Brion, had shown sympathy for the revolutionary cause. When Bolivar had to seek shelter in Curaçao between September and October, 1812, after his debacle at Puerto Cabello, he found refuge in the home of the Jew [Abraham?] De Meza in Otrabanda.[54] He had another staunch supporter in the distinguished Curaçoan Jew whose name comes up frequently in the government and Jewish community records of the period — Mordechay Ricardo. A digression is in order for a brief biographical sketch of this man.

MORDECHAY RICARDO

The Dutch historian-poet Isaac da Costa (son of Mordechay Ricardo's sister Rebecca) tells us that toward the end of the 18th century the Spanish government proposed restoring to the Ricardo family their rank of ancestral nobility and their possessions in Spain if they consented to return to Spain as Catholics. The proposition was declined.[55] The Ricardos, as a few others of Marrano origin, were known as *Israel Ricardo*. They settled in Amsterdam about the middle of the 17th century. The oldest Amsterdam ancestor of the Ricardos of Curaçao was David Israel Ricardo who had married a woman called Strela [Estrella][56] in that city before 1698. Their son Joseph was born in Amsterdam where at the age of 22 he married Hanna, "daughter of our Father Abraham" — in other words, a Marrana[57] — on February 5, 1721. Joseph's son David Israel Jr. was born in Amsterdam where, in 1762, at the age of 36, he married Batsebah, a 19-year-old native of Amsterdam, the daughter of the "learned and intelligent" Mordechay Semah Aboab, deceased.[58] David, to our knowledge, had three daughters[59] and two sons: Hana and Rachel married in

[53] OAC 235, nos. 451, 485, 625, Sept. 14 and 27, Nov. 17, 1819; OAC 236, no. 231, May 3, 1820.

[54] *El Universal*, Caracas, March 20, 1927, and Aug. 18, 1928; *Actualidades*, Caracas, 5th yr., no. 15, cited by Father A. Euwens, *WIG*, 1922, p. 300.

[55] Isaac Da Costa, *Israel en de Volken* (Utrecht, 1876), p. 480.

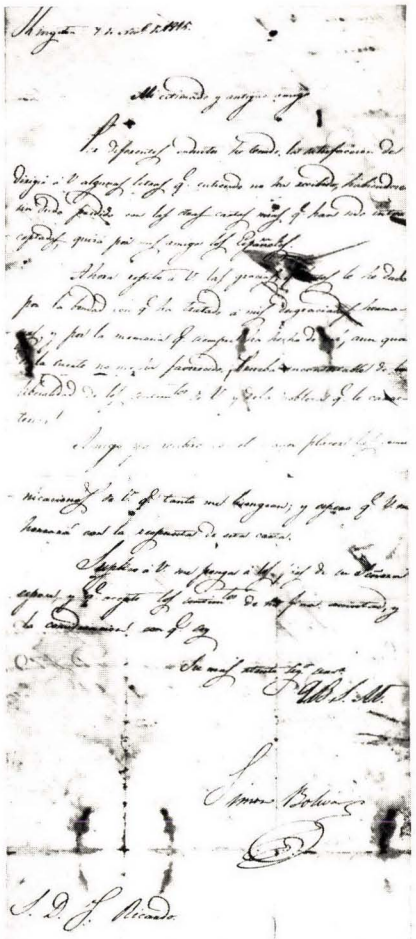
[56] GAA, DTB 712/154v.

[57] PJCAA, Ket. IX, no. 127. The *ketubah* was signed by Haham Aelyon. The Marriage Register of the City of Amsterdam, however, records her as Hanna Abas, 16, born at The Hague, and that she was accompanied by her mother Sara Abas (GAA, DTB 712/154v).

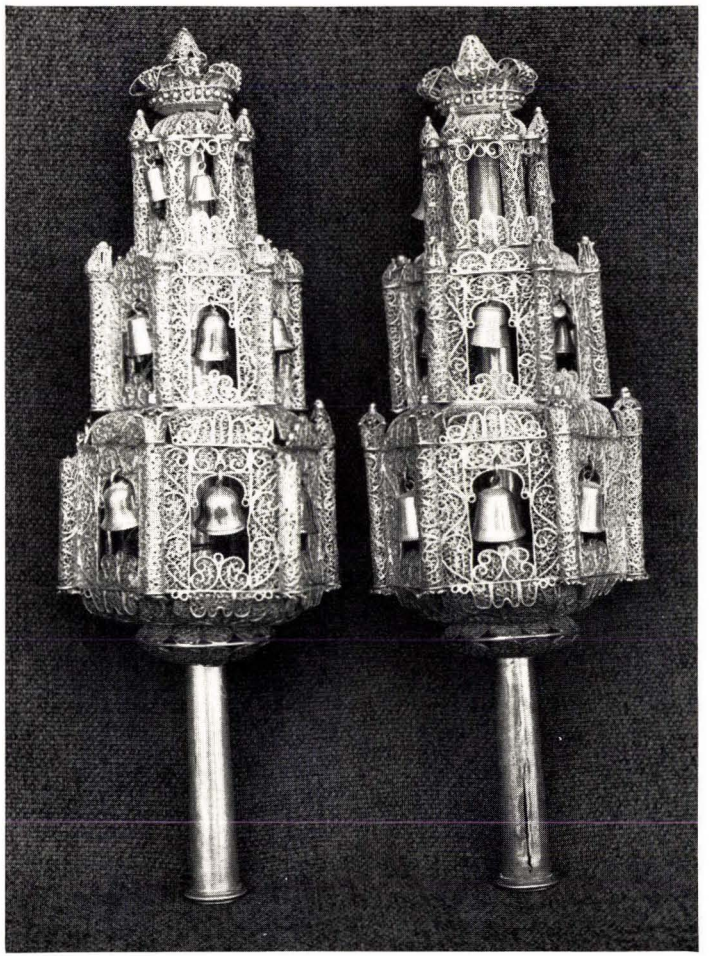
[58] PJCAA, Ket. XV, no. 15; DTB 739/54v.

[59] The Sarah de David Ricardo who married Jeudah de Isaac de Sola in Curaçao in 1794 (MIA, Ket. VI, no. 68) does not seem to be our David's daughter. There is no entry of her birth in the Birth Register of the City of Amsterdam where all five of David's children are recorded.

79. MORDECHAY RICARDO, 1771-1842



80. LETTER, SIMON BOLIVAR TO MORDECHAY RICARDO, 1815



81. SILVER RIMMONIM DONATED TO SYNAGOGUE MIKVE ISRAEL, CURAÇAO

Amsterdam to Saul de Isaac Pardo of Curaçao, Hana in 1783 and on her death, Rachel in 1787;[60] Rebecca[61] married to Daniel Haim, son of Isaac Abraham da Costa and Hana Abendana, in 1797; Joseph who, at age 31, married Ribca, the 31-year-old daughter of Aron Haim Israel Sagache in 1799;[62] and our Mordechay Ricardo, born on January 2, 1771.[63] It is not known exactly when Mordechay came to Curaçao. His father David, who served as administrator of the Portuguese Jewish Cemetery of Amsterdam in 1766, died relatively young, before 1784. Mordechay married Ester, daughter of the so-called patriot Moses Frois d'Andrade, on March 24, 1802, in Curaçao. She brought him a dowry of 5,000 pesos cash, slaves, jewelry, furniture, and so forth, or a total of 9,000 pesos.[64] There were five children of this union: three sons — David, Moses Frois and Joseph; and two daughters — Batsebah (Betsy) and Rachel.[65]

Ricardo studied law, probably in Holland. Although he did not have a degree, he nevertheless practiced law in Curaçao. A courageous attorney, he defended a group of merchants in 1824 against the all-powerful Cantz'laar. In 1808 the English government of occupation appointed him "Inspector of His Majesty's Public Roads in this Island;" in 1812, as interpreter-translator. Under the Dutch re-occupation government, he also was a lieutenant in the National Guard. He distinguished himself in the Jewish community in one

[60] Both were fatherless on their marriage (PJCAA, Ket. XVII, nos. 31, 95; DTB 754/44, 756/228v). Saul was a pupil of Ribbi Moshe Piza of the Ets Haim Seminary and for this reason Haham Salem entitled him in the *ketubah* as "Hamaskil ve Navon." On the occasion of these two marriages Moshe Piza composed two poems in Hebrew ("Shirath Moshe," poems 158, 159, ms., Ets Haim 2 G 32).

[61] PJCAA, Ket. XVIII, no 86; DTB 641/269. Rebecca was the mother of the Dutch historian-poet Isaac da Costa.

[62] PJCAA, Ket. XVIII, no. 109; DTB 644/199. Joseph died in 1825 while secretary of the City of Groenlo, Holland (*CC*, March 26, 1825).

[63] His kinship to David and Batsebah is given in the Birth Register of the Portuguese Jewish Community of Amsterdam and also by Ricardo himself. In 1822 he sent an authorization to Isaac da Costa (the poet) to collect his share of the estate of Benjamin Senior, deceased in Amsterdam (OAC 1063, no. 146, March 19, 1822). His activity as government employee in Curaçao from 1808 until 1837 is recorded in RA, Koloniën na 1813, no. 12/157, letter A, no. 942/181, Dec. 4, 1837.

[64] MIA, Ket. VI, no. 128.

[65] Batsebah and Rachel married the brothers Joseph and Abraham, grandsons of Dr. Joseph Capriles, in 1825 and 1831, respectively (MIA, Ket. VIII, nos. 28, 50). Rachel, b. 1815, died in Curaçao in 1875, leaving eleven sons and a daughter. Batsebah died in Puerto Cabello in 1866. David, b. 1811, died in 1826 (C 358). Moses Frois, b. 1812, was 1st Lieutenant in the National Guard, Parnas de Hebra for various years, honorific circumciser and a member of the Cuerpo de Lavadores Hesed ve Emeth. He married Henrietta Tavarez who bore him a daughter and four sons, of whom David, a dentist, married Miriam, daughter of Dr. Salomo de Jongh, in 1817. David died in Caracas in 1941, leaving behind nine children, among them Dr. Salomo de Jongh Ricardo, and Louis, administrator of Congregation Mikvé Israel, Curaçao. (illus. 79, 86, 149, 253).

way or another — as Bridegroom of the Law in 1810, as attorney for the parnassim during the Hazzan Piza conflict, as a member of the Cuerpo de Lavadores Hesed ve Emeth during the same period, as secretary of the community and five times as president (1821-1829). A government pensioner, he died on April 9, 1842, while auditor of the National Guard (and thus automatically captain) and secretary of the Chamber of Commerce.[66]

He is the very same Ricardo who aided Bolivar's sisters, as the following letter addressed to him in 1815 by the liberator of the South American peoples corroborates:

Kingston, November 7, 1815

My Esteemed and Old Friend:

Through different channels I have had the satisfaction of addressing several letters to you which, I understand, you have not received, such having, doubtless, been lost with my other letters which have, perhaps, been intercepted by my Spanish friends.

At present, I repeat the thanks that I have given previously for the kindness with which you have treated my unfortunate sisters, and for the memory that you have still (made) [kept] of me even when fate did not favor me [until now]. Incontrovertible proof of the generosity of your sentiments and the nobility that characterizes you.

Friend, I shall receive with great pleasure your communications that flatter me so much, and I hope that you will honor me with an answer to this letter.

I beg of you give my regards to Madam your wife and that she accept the sentiments of a pure friendship and the consideration with which I am

Your most devoted, certain servant
who kisses your hands
Simon Bolivar

Sir J. Ricardo[67]

The historian John de Pool tells us of Ricardo: "He was the first foreign protector that 'El Libertador' and the cause of Independence had."[68] And elsewhere he states: "In Curaçao the cause of liberty met its veritable first protector in the austere and noble figure of the Doctor[69] Mr. Mordechay Ricardo, today unknown and forgotten, who by taking Bolivar and his companions under his protection obligated through this deed the country later liberated by his protégé to a great debt of eternal gratitude."[70]

Curaçoan Jewish enthusiasm for the Bolivar movement spurred at least two

[66] *CC*, April 16, 1842.

[67] V. Lucena, *Cartas del Libertador*, vol. I (Caracas, 1929), pp. 217-18. See illus. 80.

[68] De Pool, *ibid.*, frontispiece. [69] The title is excessive. [70] *Ibid.*, p. 45.

of their number to enlist in Bolivar's army: Benjamin Henriquez and Isaac de Sola. Benjamin [de Isaac?] Henriquez, born in Curaçao in 1784, served as captain of the cavalry in Bolivar's army. He returned to Curaçao in 1816, apparently to make revolutionary speeches. Governor Kikkert, who wished to avoid difficulties with Spain, had him arrested. From prison Henriquez petitioned the Island Council to free him because he was a Dutch subject, because he was ill and had harmed no one. After due deliberation the Council decided to release him and allow him sufficient time to leave the island since Fiscal H. R. Hayunga considered his presence in Curaçao dangerous.[71]

Juan (alias Isaac) de Sola, the son of Benjamin de Isaac de Sola and Esther de Jacob Marache,[72] was born in Curaçao in 1786. He was probably twenty-five years old when he made the acquaintance of Bolivar at the home of his mother's relative, Mordechay Ricardo.

From an account of a member of his family Juan de Sola, while on the editorial staff of the *Correo de Orinoco* in Angostura (Ciudad Bolivar), Venezuela, attracted the support of the patriots by his articles. He joined their army in the revolt from Spain. Soon afterwards his bravery and ability won for him promotion to lieutenant-colonel of the Army of Colombia, formed then of Venezuela, New Grenada and Ecuador. He took part in the battle of Carabobo on June 24, 1821, which assured Colombian independence. When General Paez's troops attacked Puerto Cabello on November 7 and 8, 1823, De Sola commanded the cavalry and chased the Spanish into the sea. On this occasion he received a saber wound in the face as a result of which he bore a permanent scar. In 1830 he attained his full colonelcy. In spite of his extraordinary services to Greater Colombia and his rank of colonel in the Venezuelan army, De Sola always retained his Dutch citizenship. Only in 1835 did he apply for Venezuelan citizenship.[73] In 1843 he retired temporarily from the army and devoted himself to his papers: *El Gaceta de Carabobo* and *El Patriota* in Valencia, of which he was editor-owner. After Paez's downfall in 1848 and General

[71] RA, Koloniën na 1813 no. 3612, meeting of Nov. 2, 1816, and request no. 62; OAC 234, no. 249, p. 74 and no. 251, p. 75.

[72] His affiliation is given by his mother Esther as follows: "On November 3, 1826, Esther Marache, widow of Benjamin de Sola, declares before the Government Secretary that before her son Juan de Sola departed from Curaçao in 1814, she had made him a gift of a slave. That the slave having fled, she empowers her son Juan, a merchant at San Juan de Puerto Rico, to recover it" (OAC 1077, no. 74). Esther Marache died in Curaçao two years later. The inventory of her estate, as given by her sister-in-law Rachel de Sola (widow of Moses Frois d'Andrade), sets forth that the five slaves belonged to her son Isaac de Sola then abroad (OAC 1081, no. 83, April 3, 1828).

[73] "Regarding naturalization papers [given] to Colonel Juan de Sola, Caracas, the 3rd of February of 1835" (*Boletin del Archivo general de la Nacion*, vol. 35 [Caracas, 1948], nos. 140-41, p. 199). Also included are the letters of Salomon and Samuel Levy Maduro applying for citizenship, dated January 9, 1835.

Tadeo Monagas' accession to power, De Sola retired to private life for a few years. On March 5, 1858, he took command of the second division of the revolutionary army which overthrew General Monagas' government. In recognition for the outstanding services rendered on this occasion, the new government elevated him to the rank of general. He died in 1862.[74]

Some Jewish merchants sold the revolutionaries provisions, and probably arms, on credit. Jeosuah Naar of the firm of Naar & Delgado of Kingston, Jamaica, claimed from the estate of Admiral Louis Brion a certain unspecified sum owed to the firm. For its collection Naar sent his power of attorney from New York in July, 1826, to Moses de Eliao Penso, Curaçao.[75]

So it is evident that the Jews of Curaçao contributed positively to assure the independence of Venezuela and Colombia — countries with whom they have maintained friendly commercial relations to the profit of the interested governments.

Political refugees from Venezuela were always well received by the Jews of Curaçao. This is attested, among others, by a diary of a Venezuelan colonel in 1830:

> October 20, 1830 — At two o'clock (in the afternoon) I attended a Hebrew marriage to which I was invited. I saw the ceremony that was somewhat amusing. A brilliant dinner was served and among the numerous toasts that were given, I gave one for "El Libertador" which was received with a thousand applauses from the assemblage.[76]

[74] *Jewish Encyclopedia*, vol. XI, under "General Juan de Sola," p. 433; B. de Gaay Fortman, with a footnote by the late Jossy M. L. Maduro, *WIG*, 1932, p. 352. In addition to these Bolivarians of Curaçao who joined ranks with the revolutionaries there was a certain David Haim de Mosseh Lopez Penha, b. 1823 in Curaçao, who served as colonel in the army for the liberation of Colombia (communication of the late Jossy M. L. Maduro).

[75] OAC 1077, no. 52. Brion, who made his will on Sept. 25, 1821, at the home of William Smith, referred to himself in it as "Admiral in the service of the Republic of Colombia." He died a day later and was buried in the Rosentak plantation belonging to his brother-in-law Joseph Foulke. The inventory of his estate lists neither slaves nor real property (OAC 1130, nos. 48, 52). When his brother Theodorus Brion died in 1836, he was buried, at the request of his widow Aletta van Eck, in the "Rosentak Garden where his brother Louis Brion is interred" (RA, Curaçao en Onderh. Eilanden 161, Feb. 11, 1836). Several interesting episodes in Admiral Brion's life with relation to Colombia [and Venezuela] are recounted in CEOE 770, no. 28. There also is material on Bolivar and Brion in the letters of the American Consul at Curaçao (Sept. 19 — Dec., 1820) to the Secretary of State, Washington.

[76] Personal diary of Colonel Miguel Sagarzazu published in the *Boletin de la Academia Nacional de la Historia*, vol. XIV, April-June (Caracas, 1931), no. 54, p. 246. Two marriages took place on Oct. 20, 1830: Mordechay de Mordechay Alvares Correa's to Rachel, daughter of Mordechay de Raphael Alvares Correa; and Moshe de Efraim Curiel's to Rachel de Mordechay Fidanque (MIA, Ket. VIII, nos. 47-48). It is difficult to pinpoint the wedding the colonel attended.

This testimonial also proves the admiration that Bolivar enjoyed among the Jews of Curaçao.

EMIGRATION

The misfortunes that buffeted Curaçao from 1790-1816 forced a number of Jews to quit the island temporarily. The revolutions of Santo Domingo (Haiti) and Venezuela on the one hand, the English blockade on the other, and later the War of 1812 between England and America (which ended in February, 1815) paralyzed the island's commerce. From 1795 to 1802 no ships traveling from Europe dropped anchor in the ports of Curaçao.[77] The extortions of the French and later of the English were very costly for the already impoverished merchants. The distrust for the golden johannes[78] — a Portuguese gold coin which had been falsified or altered since 1793 — rendered the economic life of the island still more difficult. The heavy taxes and sailing restrictions imposed by the English weighed down still further the impoverished population. The English Navigation Act prohibited merchants of Curaçao from importing merchandise other than flour or corn from North America and St. Thomas. All other commodities had to come from England and her colonies. For this reason everything was so expensive. Disease and the raging elements also added to the misery. The yellow fever epidemic of 1803 "without precedent on this island," of 1807 and 1812, and the hurricane of October 18, 1807, which caused some injury especially to several Jews in

[77] G. J. Simons, *Beschrijving van het eiland Curaçao* (Oosterwolde, 1868), p. 54.

[78] The official weight of a johannes was 22 carats and it was worth 11 pesos and 2 reales. In 1793 the Americans introduced the lighter gold johannes weighing from 18 to 20 carats. These were worth seven pesos although they could be purchased elsewhere for five or six. To distinguish it from the others, the island government put a stamp on it. This did not help. False johannes with false stamps began to circulate. The government thereupon decreed that all johannes had to bear five stamps accompanied by a certificate signed by two members of the Council. Neither did this help. Now there were false johannes with genuine certificates. In 1808 the English government eliminated the certificates. In 1815 of a total of 30,759 johannes, there were 4,475 of inferior quality. Two stamps were ordered to be placed on them. Nevertheless, more bad than good johannes were in circulation. The "bad" johannes contained only 35% to 36% gold. To remedy this situation Governor Starckenborgh appointed a committee of four men in 1819, among them Haim Abinun de Lima, to collect and melt down all altered johannes and buy sound johannes, doubloons and other moneys for circulation. In order to cover the losses sustained in these transactions, the Island Council levied a 1/2% tax on real estate. The johannes question finally came to an end on Dec. 31, 1824, when a balance of 22,691:3 pesos was deposited in favor of the Colonial Chest in Curaçao (OAC 241, no. 932; OAC 296, Sept.-Nov., 1823; Koloniën 3629, Jan. 19, 1821). A history of the johannes from 1791 onwards appears in Koloniën 3747, Dec. 31, 1819, and March 12, 1820; CGA, KV, 1821 (?).

Pietermaai,[79] drove many Jews and Christians to seek possibilities of life in other lands. They went to Jamaica, St. Thomas, Puerto Cabello, Caracas, Cartagena and later to Spanish Santo Domingo, and elsewhere.[80] The Curaçoan colonies established in St. Thomas and Puerto Cabello in the first quarter of the 19th century became so large that the street or suburb inhabited by the settlers was called "Curaçao Street" or "Little Curaçao."[81]

That numerous Jews departed from Curaçao is also corroborated by the scanty government statistics extant. In 1785 there were 1,200 Jews in Curaçao as against 1,500 in 1750. When the Dutch took over the island in 1816, there were only 1,021 Jews made up of 312 men, 410 women, 136 boys and 163 girls.[82] The fact that there were four women to three men proves that the men left Curaçao to seek their livelihood. The steady decrease in the Jewish population made it necessary for the two pallbearers societies — the Anse Hesed and the Habodat Akodes — to merge in 1815. In 1820 there were 866 Jews in Curaçao and 22 in Aruba[83] to which they had been trickling since 1754. In 1821 the number dwindled to 805; Aruba still had 22 Jews.[84] In 1826 the Jewish population jumped to 937, consisting of 387 women, 263 men, 128 boys and 159 girls.[85] This emigration obliged the parnassim of 1818 to close down the Neve Salom synagogue for lack of Jews in that neighborhood.[86]

In spite of all the hardships the Jews cooperated closely with the island government. They participated in the voluntary loans of 1797, 1798, 1805, 1816[87] and of 1820. In 1816 out of a total of 12,000 pesos lent by the residents, the Jews advanced 4,500 pesos, of which 2,250 came from Abraham de

[79] *CC*, Oct. 26, 1867. Prayers of thanksgiving for deliverance from this hurricane were offered in the churches and synagogue as late as Oct. 18, 1845, and the first Wednesday of Nov., 1845.

[80] For example, Isaac and Abraham Mendes Monsanto, Samuel Lyon, Gabriel de Aaron Pinedo and the firm of J. & O[badia]. M[endes]. da Costa advertised in the *Curaçao Gazette* of December, 1814, that they were leaving Curaçao. Isaac Pardo Jr. announced the liquidation of his business because he was leaving for St. Thomas (*ibid.*, Nov. 1, 1815).

[81] When the English occupied Curaçao in 1801, many wealthy Jews and Christians left for St. Thomas (W. I. Amerik. Raad van Koloniën 179, no. 15). See appendix 16. In 1789 Curaçao's total population was 18,881; in 1821, only 14,082 (CGA, KV, 1821?).

[82] Koloniën na 1813 no. 3740, 2nd-half 1816.

[83] *Ibid.*, 3747, y. 1820.

[84] *Ibid.*, 3750, y. 1821; see Chapter XXVI.

[85] Moise Cardoze's letter of March 1, 1826, to the High Commission for Israelitic Affairs in Holland (RA, Israelit. Eeredienst, no. 448).

[86] See above, p. 282.

[87] It is noteworthy that among the Jews who advanced money to the government was the noted Freemason David Haim Dovale. He would have lent more, he said, if given the same right as the other citizens to hold public office (illus. 100).

Jacob Jesurun.[88] In 1820 the Jews lent 1,650 pesos of the 3,500 pesos advanced to the government.[89] When the island was in a precarious state in 1800, Governor Lauffer appointed Joseph Obediente Jr.,[90] the official translator, to go to Caracas and get aid, especially arms, from the Spanish governor. Unfortunately, nothing could save Curaçao from the greediness of the foreign armies.

Haham Da Fonseca grievously witnessed these events. He loved his congregation and was beloved by it. On his Golden Jubilee of service to the community, he was the object of great manifestations of homage by the parnassim and members. Daniel Lopez Penha composed for the occasion *pizmonim* or religious poems[91] which were presented to the haham. The ceremony took place in 1814 on the Saturday when the Sabbatical portion *Balak* is read. Haham Da Fonseca was feted like a Bridegroom of the Law, and a special *nedabah* was held in his behalf. He in turn distinguished himself with a special sermon.[92]

Despite his advanced age, Da Fonseca continued to serve the community until his last days. He blessed the marriage of Benjamin de Imanuel Alvares Correa and Sarah de Rephael Pinedo on the 12th of Adar, 5575,[93] eighteen days before his death. He died on the evening of the 30th of Adar I, 5575 (March 11, 1815), at the age of 78 years, six months and eighteen days.[94] The parnassim made known their deep loss to the Jewish communities of the Americas and Europe. They also took it upon themselves to pay the medical bills of his last illness and funeral expenses which also included the cost of a tombstone. This was such an impressive funeral that they made it a point to note all the details in their records. Moise Cardoze, the most prominent Jew of his day, delivered a eulogy before and after the interment.[95] With Da Fonseca's passing, the community lost its most beloved and most dignified haham.

[88] OAC 234, no. 56, July 15, 1816.

[89] OAC 236, nos. 558, 562.

[90] This same Obediente, a nephew of Aron Lopez of Newport, R. I., rendered another important service to the government a little later (N. van Meeteren, pp. 86, 155).

[91] Penha studied at the Ets Haim Seminary of Amsterdam under Ribbi Menashe Delgado; in Curaçao, under Haham Carigal (Emmanuel, *Precious Stones*, pp. 425-26).

[92] MIA, Minutas de Parnassim and loose papers; MS, toward the end.

[93] MIA, Ket. VII, no. 30. The *ketubah* which follows is dated 9 Nisan, 5575 (April 19, 1815) so that Haham Da Fonseca served the community until his last days.

[94] According to the *Curaçao Gazette* of March 17, 1815, Da Fonseca died on Saturday, March 11. According to MS, he died at 9:30 o'clock in the evening, which corresponds to the 30th of Adar I — the same date given by the author of his epitaph — and not the 29th of Adar I as recorded in the Hashcaboth Register, vol. I, month of Adar I.

[95] See Emmanuel, *Precious Stones*, pp. 411-14, for his epitaph and more details about him and his family.

CHAPTER XV

COMMUNAL STRIFE OVER HAZZAN PIZA
1816-1822

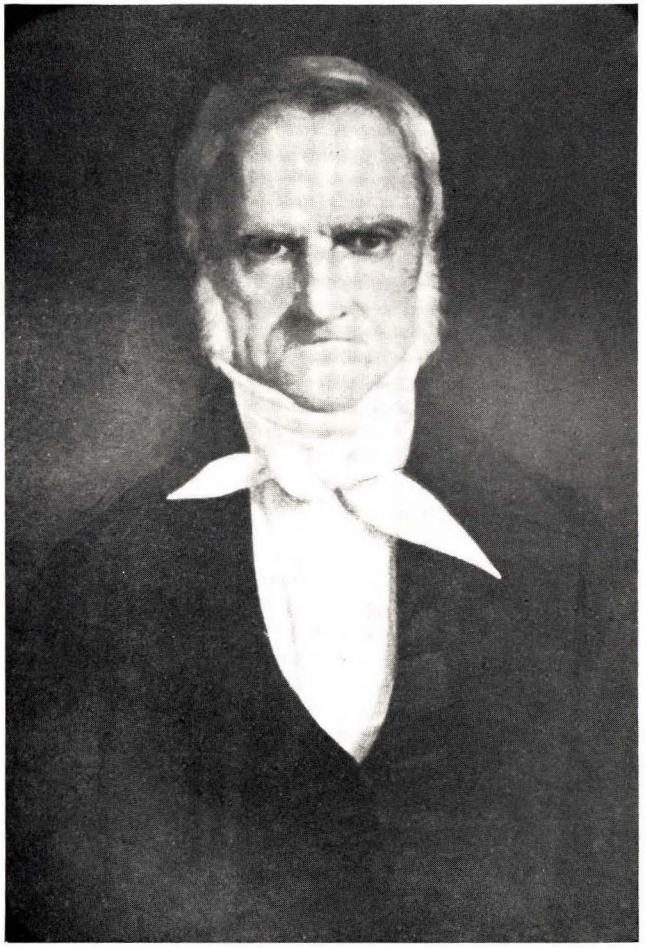
THAT THE COMMUNITY was able to remain united in spite of the various upheavals from 1764 to 1815 was due largely to the efforts of Haham Da Fonseca. His death brought about many problems in religious and administrative matters.

Three weeks after he passed on, the Mahamad engaged Jacob Haim de Abraham Curiel, a 60-year-old merchant, to serve as *Moré Din* or *Beth Din in solidum* — judge and lawgiver. He was given ample faculty to interpret the Law for the members of the community in the absence of a rabbi. This post carried the official title of "assessor," an annual salary of 500 pesos and other privileges. When necessary, he was to choose two assistants to form a religious tribunal. Under the agreement entered into on March 31, 1815, Curiel was to enjoy all the honorific prerogatives then accorded to a haham of Curaçao.[1] In this capacity he was expected to sign the *ketuboth*. Curiel obviously had some knowledge of the Talmud or of the Rashi commentaries since he was required to attend the Yeshibah Es Haim ve Ohel Yahacob daily. One gets the impression that his rabbinical attainments were limited and that he probably did not know how to write a *ketubah* in correct Hebrew. This supposition is based on the fact that all the marriage documents in this period are written in Portuguese and are initialed B.D.S., standing for Curiel's official title of *Beth Din Sedek* — a just tribunal.[2] Curiel and his assistants usually made use of Menasseh ben Israel's *Thesouro Dos Dinim* written in Portuguese.

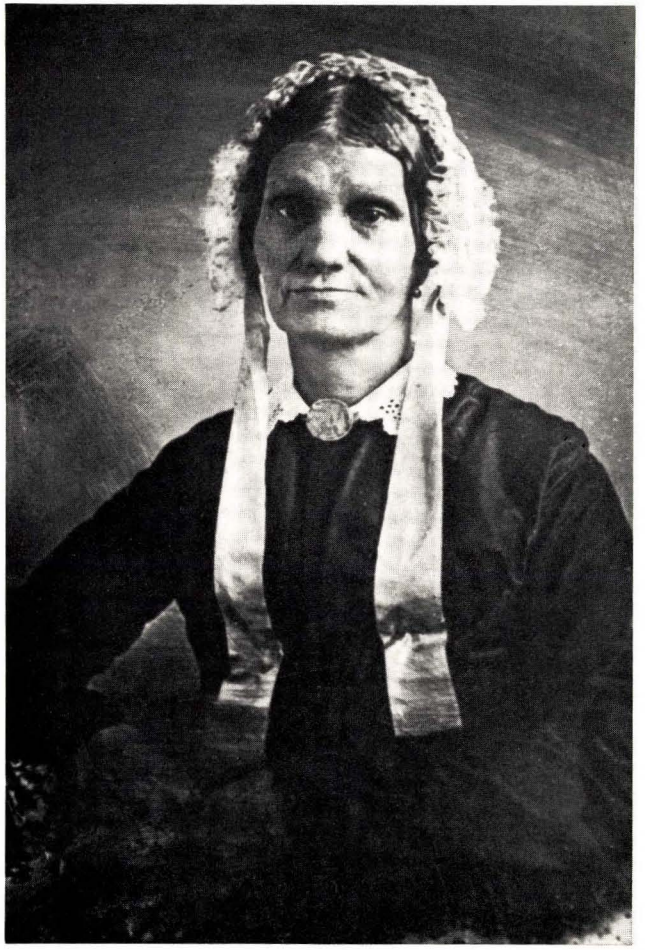
The Mahamad had foreseen this difficulty in 1813. At that time they asked the Amsterdam community to find them a good cantor who could eventually substitute as provisional rabbi. Amsterdam recommended Jeosuah Piza.

[1] "He shall be called to the Torah on Saturdays and holidays when the Song of Moses (Exodus 15:1-19) and the Ten Commandments are read; on fast days for the reading of Exodus 34:6-7 and the two Haftaroth of Tishnabeab; during the ten days between the first of Tishri to Kipur to chant the versicles, 'The Lord is God' and 'The Lord is King;' to say the Nehila prayer on Kipur," and so forth (MIA, Minutas de Parnassim, meeting of March 31, 1815).

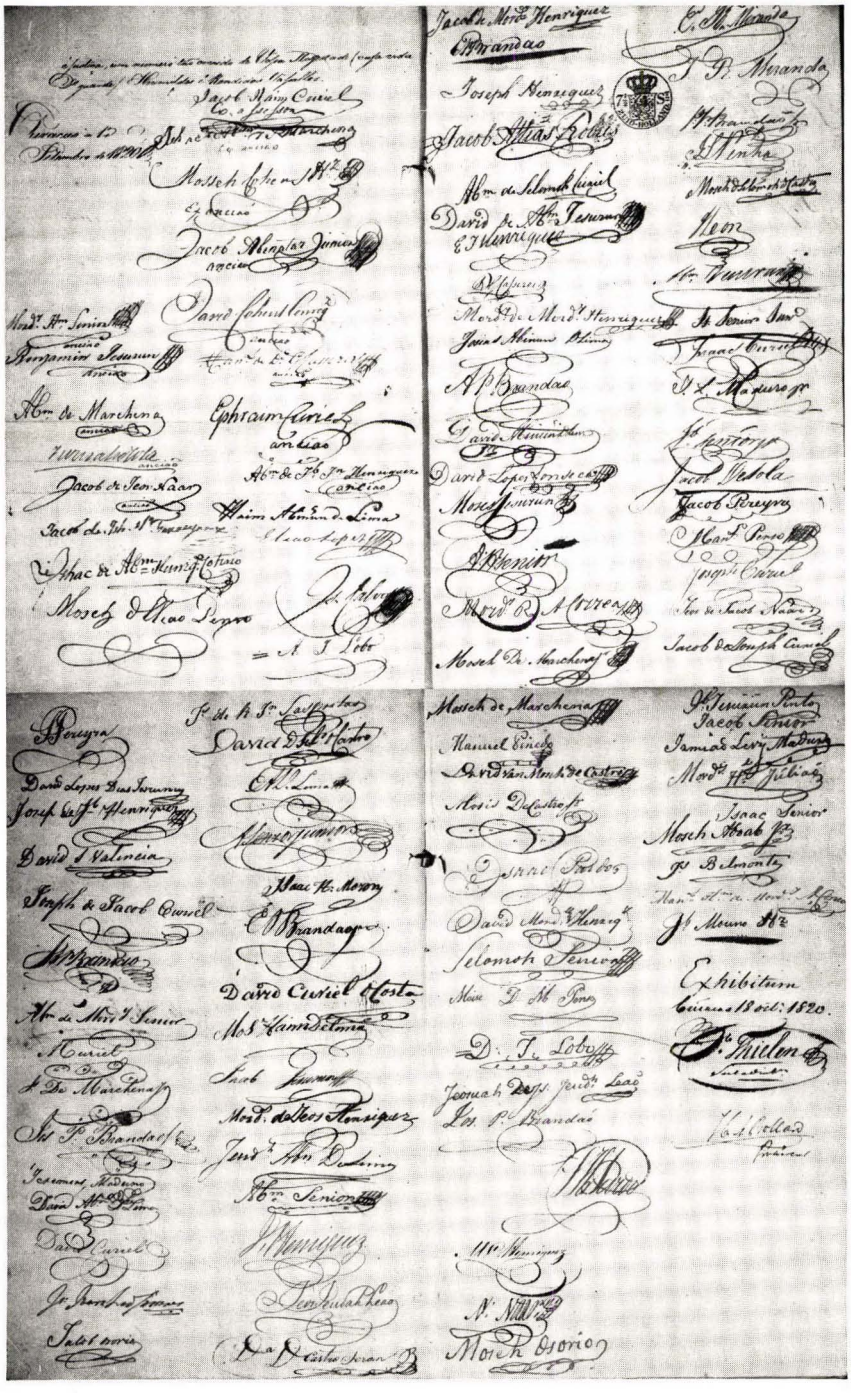
[2] MIA, Ket. VII, no. 24.



82. HAZZAN JEOSUAH M. PIZA, 1772-1850



83. HANNAH SASSO, WIFE OF HAZZAN PIZA, 1800-1880



84. THE 108 SEPARATISTS PETITIONING KING WILLIAM, 1820, PAGES 319-21

JEOSUAH PIZA

The Amsterdam parnassim felt that he was adequately fitted for the post by preparation and family background. Descended from a scholarly line, Jeosuah Piza[3] was born in Amsterdam on August 23, 1772, and educated at the Ets Haim Seminary (from which he enjoyed a small monthly stipend). His father Moshe was an instructor of Gemara at the Ets Haim, the author of a collection of liturgical and occasional poetry[4] and other works, translator of Rashi's commentary on the Pentateuch in Portuguese (in manuscript), and *dayyan* of the Amsterdam community at the time of his death in 1808. Piza's grandfather Jeudah (whose father Haim of Constantinople already was in Amsterdam in 1702) was a well known author;[5] he had served temporarily as Haham of Amsterdam on Haham Salem's death in 1781. Piza's eldest brother Jeudah was librarian of the Ets Haim.

Piza and his wife Benvenida Zacutto, their two children, and his wife's sister Esther sailed on the *Amsterdam* at a cost of 1,202.5 florins to the community. They arrived in May, 1815.[6] Benvenida died several months later, perhaps on the birth of their son Judah. On December 13, 1815, he married his sister-in-law Esther[7] only to lose her and his newborn infant the following year. As community regulations required a cantor to be married, Piza took as his third bride a girl 27 years his junior on September 15, 1816.[8] She was Hana, the 17-year-old daughter of Jacob de Abraham Sasso, first cantor of the synagogue. Piza thus shared the fate of several predecessors who were left to mourn the early disappearance of loved ones.

[3] Piza and not *De* Piza. His father and grandfather are known in Jewish literature as *Piza*. So in fact did Cantor Piza sign his own two marriage contracts and so is he named in the Hashcaboth Register for the months of Tebet and Sivan. In Curaçao he was sometimes called *De* Piza and at other times *Piza*. His son Jacob is named *De* Piza in the Meriam Naar-Ezra will (CGA, Not. act, y. 1847, no. 75).

[4] *Shir Emunim* and *Shir Neeman* in collaboration with Daniel Abraham de Meza and Joseph de Jahacob Bassan (Amsterdam, 1793); other works include "Shirath Moshe" in manuscript and *Hamzaha Ḥadasha* on the letters *shin* and *sin* (Shklov, 1804).

[5] We know of his following works: *Zibhé Yeudah*, *Leyes de Shehitá y Bedicá* (Ritual slaughter), in Portuguese (Amsterdam, 1768); *Calendario facil . . . em hebraico e portuguez* (Amsterdam, 1768); *Ezrath ha-Sofer* (Amsterdam, 1769), an edition of the Pentateuch celebrated in his time with an introduction on God's names in the Torah, which introduction was reprinted in Vienna in 1804. He also published a book of sermons (Amsterdam, 1755) and translated into Portuguese prayers for the entire year, in eight volumes, which remain in manuscript.

[6] *Curaçao Gazette*, May 26, 1815.

[7] Daughter of Isaac Zacutto (MIA, Ket. VII, no. 32).

[8] *Ibid.*, no. 39; Vida Lindo-Guiterman, "Joshua Piza and his Descendants," a manuscript written in 1951, of which there is a photostatic copy at the American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati. See app. 17, "Piza," for further genealogical data.

COMPLAINTS AGAINST PIZA

Piza introduced certain innovations which pleased some and displeased others. In January, 1816, only eight months after his installation, he was reprimanded for disobeying the regulations. Nevertheless, when reporting this to their Amsterdam colleagues, the parnassim were careful not to sound reproachful for having been saddled with a man of such an independent nature. The Amsterdam parnassim wrote Piza on July 15, 1816, to adapt himself to the ways of the community and to refrain from making innovations when reading the Torah.

Piza probably abandoned one innovation only to start another. In Curaçao, as in Salonika and in almost all Sephardic communities of the Orient, it is customary to say the blessing of the wine as "Boré Peri Haguefen" — who createst the fruit of the vine. The mother community at Amsterdam pronounced it *Hagafen*. Both versions are correct. Piza introduced *Hagafen* and raised a storm of protest from the conservative element.[9] Besides, there were some who maintained that he was hoarse and deaf and should be ousted.

He was in fact honorably suspended from service on December 24, 1818. He was to continue receiving his salary for a year, freewill offerings, perquisites, free lodging and the privilege of sitting in his accustomed place in the synagogue in his ecclesiastical robes. If he decided to leave, they were willing to pay his fare. He was to enjoy all these benefits "under the express proviso that he could not be reinstated unless the Community intervened in his behalf." The following day his father-in-law Cantor Sasso entreated the parnassim to restore Piza to his post and vouched for his son-in-law's behavior.

The opposition maintained that the president Moise Cardoze had asked Governor Kikkert to protect Piza. Most likely Piza also had approached the governor, for the latter sent the parnassim a letter recommending Piza. In order to legalize Piza's reinstatement, the parnassim put the matter to the membership for a vote. There were 136 votes against Piza. Sixteen diplomatically asked for *Din Torah* or an opinion by the assessor or another rabbi as to Piza's eligibility. When consulted, Curiel said that Jewish Law would not permit the re-election of a hazzan who was hoarse, deaf and so unpopular as Piza was with the majority of the congregation.

[9] The Protestant Teenstra, who visited Curaçao in 1828 and in 1833, speaks about Piza's innovations in these terms: "On the southeast side of this cemetery is a smaller one, provided with walls and a door, separated, likewise belonging to the Portuguese Jews, but of those who had separated themselves from the other Jews for religious questions on some points. I say some points. The cantor did not pronounce a certain comma too well" (Teenstra, vol. I, p. 91).

Governor Kikkert again intervened. In his second letter of February 27, 1816, he reproved the opposition for not following his advice. The hazzan, he pointed out, was never elected by the members, but only by the Mahamad. He also pointed out that there was no reason to reproach Piza either from a moral or procedural point of view, and that partisan politics was at the root of the trouble.

Piza's detractors would not let themselves be swayed by Kikkert's letter. Eighty-eight members, including many elders of the Great Council of the community, addressed a letter of warning to the parnassim on March 12, 1819, that if Piza were reinstated, they would resign and found another community. Among these protests is an eleven-page letter superbly written by the elder Jeosuah de Sola, explaining why Piza should not be re-elected.

The parnassim held to their point of view. Various members of the Body of Elders therefore urged Governor Kikkert to prevent the re-election, but he found no reason to intervene. Thus Piza was restored to office on April 4, 1819. Because the parnassim had disregarded and even belittled his decision, Curiel placed them under the small ban.

COLLECTIVE RESIGNATION

On April 5 Curiel was forced to resign from his lucrative post as assessor. In protest he bowed out of the community and took with him 99 followers, thirteen of whom were among the twenty-three elders forming the Great Council of the community. They published the following statement in the *Curaçaosche Courant*, to explain the entire question:

> We, the undersigned, individuals of the Israelite Community in this island,
>
> Considering that the proceedings of the Regents of the Congregation Mikvé Israel, and of their body of Congress, in the just question respecting the deposition of the ex-chanter, the ungrateful and ignorant Jeos. De Piza are injurious to the regard necessarily due to so numerous a portion of the Community, by representing them to the public as a set of disturbers — by bereaving their domestic peace and exciting and disseminating dissension among their families — and, in a word by protecting and collocating upon the prayerbench a man by the interpretations of our sacred code, unfit to officiate any longer as chanter, thereby interrupting the harmony formerly existing among us, notwithstanding the very said body on the 28th December last [1818], for the tranquility of the congregation determinately deposed said Piza, under the express proviso that he could not again be re-elected, unless the community should intervene in his behalf.

Considering that the said Regents[10] having required the votes of the Community, collected 136, enjoining an acquiescence to the prescriptions of the law against Piza; and that our ex-assessor, the Reverend Mr. Jb. Haim Curiel, who was in this consequence convoked before them, demonstrated several points from our sacred religion whereby the aforesaid Jeos. De Piza was declared unable and unmeet to serve our community and to transmit our invocations on high.

Considering that our humble petitions, and lately that of the 12th inst. signed by a collective number of 88 Members, exclusive of three separate ones, have ever been looked upon with contumely and that the Regents by their unbecoming proceedings against the community, dealing towards it as towards an insignificant herd, and assuming a degree of power (considering the importance of our number) by no regulations extant conferred upon them, have wholly forfeited our trust.

Considering that we cannot longer avail ourselves of our religious statutes, since the prescriptions of our sacred code, duly interpreted by the acting Rabby, have been trampled upon; and that Jeos. de Piza, in opposition to the divine law is re-elected as Chanter of the Synagogue Mikvé Israel, which hallow site cannot in future by the pious, nor by those who have given their suffrage in behalf of religion, be held as a sanctuary, as long as the being who contrary to the interpretations of the law, officiates therein, must be viewed as an abomination.

Considering in short, that our sacred code formalities and customs are not subject to BULLS, in virtue whereof these transgressions might be modified or extinguished, as above our law there lives no power on earth, and that as soon as a community does not obey the divine law, and its minister be not entitled to a superiority, no statutes can any longer exist, to bind that community to the Regents and their few followers, it being an irrefragable truth that wherever the first band, namely the divine law is dissolved, all other civil regulations naturally lose their strength.

Considering all the above reasons, we the undersigned impelled by the love of our religion, by the justice of our cause, and by our wish and desire to ensure peace and harmony profess, that neither ourselves, our children or consorts, in obedience to the prohibition of the law, shall henceforth frequent or attend the Synagogue Mikvé Israel, nor consider ourselves members thereof, until the Regents and their body of Congress recede from their error, by discharging the so-called J. de Piza from office, and reconciling themselves with us while in case of obstinancy on their part, we remain at liberty to erect another Synagogue, requiring for its establishment the necessary permission and faculty from

[10] According to MS, the regents in the new year 5579 (1818/19) were Moise Cardoze, president; Selomoh Cohen Henriquez, parnas, and Isaac de David Senior, treasurer. See appendix 12, y. 5579.

Gouvernment; and this being our undaunted sentiment and resolution, we transmit this to the Regents for their ulterior intelligence.

Signed Ab[raha]m. de Mord[echa]y. Senior[11]
Is[aac]. de Ab[raha]m. de Marchena[12]
D[avid]. Abinun de Lima[13]
Curaçao, 5th April, 1819. and 97 other signatures

Abraham Mordechay Senior and his 99 partisans resigned. They held their religious services in different homes of their number.

Faced with this organized opposition, the Mahamad took the matter to the fiscal before the separatists petitioned for leave to found another synagogue. To defend their interests the parnassim engaged Mordechay Ricardo as their attorney at an annual retainer of 150 pesos. Piza was insulted on the street and stoned by unknown assailants. The dispute was going to be fought relentlessly by both factions.

THE SEPARATISTS ORGANIZE

The separatists wanted no part of Hazzan Piza or any service dispensed by the parnassim. In August, 1819, they bought from ex-Governor Lauffer a burial ground of some 500 square meters in area adjoining the Beth Hahaim at the southeastern part.[14] This they provided with a wall and gate at a cost of a thousand pesos.[15]

They had their bathers of the dead — thirteen of the eighteen members of the Hesed ve Emeth were separatists.[16] They also had their women bathers

[11] He was then 84 years old. A grandson of the well-known David Senior, this "oldest member of the Hebrew Community . . . a highly respectable and deservedly reverenced character" (*CC*, January 22, 1820), died on Jan. 16, 1820, and was buried in the separatist cemetery. Cf. Emmanuel, *Precious Stones*, pp. 421-22.

[12] President of the community in Pesaḥ, 1789, a founder of the Habodat Akodes brotherhood in 1783, and donor of divers valuable objects to the synagogue, he died on April 5, 1821, and was buried in the separatist cemetery (C 64).

[13] One of the oldest members of the community. His cousin David Abinun de Lima Jr., also of the separatist party, died in Jacmel in 1826.

[14] Letter of Josias Dovale to the Amsterdam parnassim, Sept. 20, 1820.

[15] See Emmanuel, *Precious Stones*, p. 38, for details. This cemetery constitutes, more or less, division I of the plan of the cemetery (*ibid.*, pp. 492-3).

[16] Isaac de Abraham de Marchena, president; Abraham Mordechay Senior, Mordechay Haim Senior, Abraham de Isaac de Marchena, Jacob Suares, Moses de Eliao Penso, Ephraim Curiel, Jacob de Jeosuah Naar, David Hᵘ Lopes da Fonseca, Selomoh Senior, Eliau Rodriguez Miranda, Abraham de Jacob Jesurun Henriquez, Isaac Senior Jr. Those loyal to the parnassim were Mosseh de Casseres, Rephael Namias de Crasto, Semuel de David Hoheb, Benjamin Curiel, David Hisquiau Lopes Henriques (MIA, Hesed ve Emeth Archives).

of the dead, enshrouders, pallbearers and grave-diggers. The first to occupy their new graveyard was Rachel, wife of Jeudah Cohen Henriquez (C 35) and mother of David Cohen Henriquez, sworn government translator-interpreter.

They celebrated their marriages without the assistance of the parnassim. They circumcised their sons with all the requisite ceremonies; Isaac Senior and Jacob de Jeosuah Naar officiated as two of their circumcisers. They had their own ritual slaughterer and even a stable where they butchered the animals — a privilege accorded by the governor only to the Jewish community. Their sexton was Moses de Marchena. They organized religious services for the Jewish New Year of 1820. In the city these services were conducted in the homes of Isaac de Abraham de Marchena, Daniel de David Gomes Casseres, Isaac Idanha de Casseres, and of the Widow Abraham de Mordechay Senior and sons; in Pietermaai, at the home of Isaac Sebastiaan Coutinho. Lacking Scrolls of the Law, they could not pray from the Torah.

Ironically, four separatists had a total of four Scrolls of the Law deposited in the synagogue: Abraham and Isaac de Marchena, two, and David de Abraham Jesurun and Abraham Senior, one each. They demanded the scrolls and were refused. To frustrate any attempt to obtain a scroll through government intervention, attorney Ricardo first sought a pronouncement in favor of the parnassim and then moved to have the Island Council declare itself incompetent to handle the matter. The separatists therefore had to pray from the Bible.

From August 9, 1819, to July 10, 1820, they buried twenty of their fold in the separatist cemetery. During these years of discord they celebrated six marriages against two by the Mikvé Israel. All they needed to put their community on a legal footing was the abrogation of Article I of the *Hascamoth*. That was the regulation forbidding the meeting of ten adult men (*minyan*) to conduct religious services without the prior consent of the Mahamad. Nine elders whose sympathies lay with the separatists[17] addressed such a petition to the governor. The fiscal thereupon turned to the Mahamad for advice. Naturally they vehemently opposed any modification of the statute which, they explained, had been enacted after the conflict of 1746-50 expressly to prevent the formation of a new congregation.[18]

[17] They were Jacob Abenatar Jr., Mordechay Haim Senior, Daniel de David Gomes Casseres, Benjamin Jesurun, Abraham de Marchena, Ephraim Curiel, Abraham de Jacob Jesurun Henriquez, Jeosuah de Sola and Jacob de Jeosuah Naar. Five of them repose in the separatist cemetery: Senior, G. Casseres, Jesurun, Jesurun Henriquez and De Sola (our Catalogue of the Cemetery, nos. C 129, C 89, C 144, C 173 and C 84, respectively).

[18] See above, Chapter IX.

PARNASSIM REACTION

Among those who voted against Piza's re-election or, better said, against parnassim authoritarianism, were five community employees: Isaac Idanha de Casseres, ritual slaughterer; Moses Jesurun Lindo and Jacob Rodrigues Pimentel, teachers; Abraham H. Leon and Mosseh Idanha de Casseres. There also were a few others who were dependent on the Community Chest. The parnassim were as merciless toward these rebels as were their predecessors in the conflict of 1746-1750; the 26-page letter addressed to them by the nine elders makes this clear.

Jacob Haim Curiel resigned when he excommunicated the parnassim. Isaac Idanha de Casseres was dismissed as ritual slaughterer and meat stamper. Moses Jesurun Lindo was discharged from his teaching post. Eliau de Samuel Jeudah Leao, David Curiel and Abraham Jeudah Leao were taken off the *haspaca* or relief rolls. By court order, the parnassim had the last named individual, a tenant in one of the community houses for the poor, evicted and his clothing thrown out in the street. A kindly Christian woman gave him shelter. Eliau Rodrigues Miranda "of known piety" was summoned to court 1) for having informed the parnassim in a courteous letter[19] that religious law requires the dismissal of a hazzan disliked by the majority of the faithful; 2) for having concurred with Assessor Curiel's decision and for having considered the parnassim excommunicated; 3) for having said the blessing of the moon with a quorum of ten adult men. Miranda refused to go to a meeting of the parnassim attended by the fiscal, because he could not assemble with excommunicated persons. He was then dismissed as Parnas de Hebra and as head of the 'Oneg Shabath society. The nine elders strongly deplored the fact that Miranda,[20] a cousin of president Moise Cardoze, had been forced to go to court instead of Cardoze's home in order to explain himself. One Eliau de Michael Jeudah Leao, surely under parnassim influence, wrote a letter of regret to the Mahamad for having signed a document that he was leaving the community, and asked for a retraction of his signature.

The parnassim went to great lengths to enforce their rigid discipline. On Saturday, July 8, 1820, they had a police officer enter the synagogue. Indignant over this intrusion twenty-nine women — widows, elderly spinsters and various members who had remained neutral until then — resigned from the community.

[19] MIA, loose papers.

[20] Miranda, d. 1821, was interred in the separatist cemetery. His widow petitioned Governor Cantz'laar to have the estate administered by the National Orphans Fund instead of by the parnassim. He denied her plea as he felt that all Jews should patronize the Jewish Orphans Fund.

Assessor Curiel was replaced by 75-year-old Daniel Lopez Penha and David Namias de Crasto to form a *Beth Din*. Penha was indisputably Curaçao's then most learned man in rabbinical lore. He had studied at the Ets Haim Seminary and under Haham Carigal.[21] Namias' knowledge on the other hand was limited; he could not even sign his name in Hebrew. Penha accepted the post without pay. Under Article 9 of the employment agreement neither *dayyan*, alone or in concert, could render a rabbinical decision concerning the parnassim unless they had the latter's consent. The judges were thus muzzled from pronouncing themselves whenever the parnassim might be at fault.

While they did everything within their power to strengthen their grip on the community, the parnassim also enlisted government aid to frustrate every separatist move. When Rachel de Jeudah Cohen Henriquez died, they sent over their women bathers of the dead, the *Nasim Sadcaniyoth*.[22] Cohen Henriquez would not let them enter and, as earlier stated, had his mother buried in the separatist cemetery. The parnassim protested to Fiscal Hayunga who summoned Cohen Henriquez. Undaunted, he declared that he did not recognize the authority of the parnassim and were his uncle Moses Cohen Henriquez to die, he would not let the parnassim's bathers take charge.

The fiscals in office between 1819 and 1821 were loath to apply the law. They felt that while the separatists should be prevented from opening a new synagogue according to the *hascamoth*, they should not be stopped from conducting memorial prayers for their dead with ten adult men. They saw nothing wrong, in the absence of a restraining law, for one to bury his dead wherever he desired. They considered this a matter of conscience, and everything pointed in favor of the separatists. The troubled parnassim wrote to their Amsterdam colleagues that the government was hesitating to take decisive measures. Finally on May 16, 1820, the Island Council handed down its decision that, in keeping with the *hascamoth*, the Jews were prohibited from building another synagogue and from holding religious services. The separatists nevertheless conducted religious services in the homes of Abraham Naar,[23] Abraham de Mordechay Senior, Joseph Henriquez and Isaac de Marchena.

The separatist number grew daily. On May 26, 1820, Moses Cohen Henriquez, Manuel Penso, Abraham Senior, J. Leon and Jacob de Sola

[21] Emmanuel, *PAJHS* 44:225.

[22] They were Rachel Cohen Henriquez, widow of Moses Cohen Henriquez; Rachel de Sola, widow of Moses Frois d'Andrade; Ester Silva Leyba and Lea Lopez Rephael.

[23] See Emmanuel, *Precious Stones*, pp. 423-24, for his epitaph and biography. He was buried in the separatist cemetery (C 121).

approached the process server of the Island Council to confirm their resignation from the community since April 5, 1819, and their "rescue from the restrictions of its Constitution, under the denomination of Escama."

The resignation of so many members, including many of affluence, was particularly harmful to the Poor Fund and for the financial administration of the community, which had receipts of Ps. 13,086:-:1 and disbursements of Ps. 11,791:2:4 in 1815.[24] Lacking ready funds to meet running expenses, the Mahamad had to borrow moneys at 12% interest. Despite the schism, the community disbursed 4,882 pesos in 1821 to the needy.

Like their predecessors of the 1746-1750 conflict, the Mahamad turned to the mother community and Chief Rabbi Daniel Cohen D'Azevedo for guidance. The Amsterdam parnassim immediately applied to the High Commission for Israelitic Affairs to prevent the separatists from forming another community. The Jewish communities in the colonies were not then represented in the High Commission. The Commission therefore replied that it was not competent to intervene in the affairs of Jewish communities within the kingdom (i.e., the colonies). Haham D'Azevedo advised moderation and making peace, but did not pronounce himself clearly with relation to Hazzan Piza. Meanwhile Governor P. B. van Starckenborgh issued the following proclamation which tended to strengthen the parnassim's position:

> First: That whereas only one Jewish Congregation can subsist in this colony. No other inhabitants can nor will be considered as Jews, than such as are subject to the 'Escamoths' or church regulations of that community; and that those who have separated, or may hereafter separate themselves from said community shall not be allowed to enjoy the privileges granted to Jews, but will stand on an equal footing with the other inhabitants, not belonging to the Jewish Congregation, and be considered as such.
>
> Secondly: That the exercise of the Jewish religion shall not be allowed to be performed in any other manner whatsoever, than agreeably to the limitation and prescriptions of the aforesaid church regulations. And the Parnassim and Treasurer of the Jewish society in this island, will be notified in writing to give us a statement or list of the names of those who have already separated themselves, or may yet separate themselves to serve as an information and guidance in

[24] These were the main receipts in pesos: 6% interest on the capital fund of 52,807 or 3,168:3:3; voluntary donations, 5,428:2; ritual slaughter fees, 947:6:5; fines, 826:2:1; rental of community houses, 840; *finta*, 125:3; from the Cámara D'Orfaos, 429:2:5; bequests, 424:6:2; miscellaneous, 995:5:3. The main disbursements were for salaries of the rabbi, 1,200; of the hazzanim, 1,353; of the teachers, doctor and divers employes, 1,275; assistance to the poor, 5,941:-:5: miscellaneous, 2,022:1:5.

future cases, and for the purpose of making the Councillor Fiscal acquainted with the same, in order to be better enabled, in the present circumstances of times, to be watchful for the maintenance of a good police.

Done at Curaçao the 6th of June 1820
(Signed) Van Starckenborgh[25]

This did not intimidate the separatists, now numbering seventy. Two days later they appeared before the Island Council to confirm their resignation. Three months later their number (not counting their wives and children) swelled to 112. They definitely represented the majority of the Jewish population of 805 souls.

Despite the ordinance of June 6, they continued burying their dead in their cemetery with all the religious ceremonies. They held religious services in the homes of the mourners Abraham Jesurun, Manuel Penso and Samuel Pereira. They celebrated their circumcisions with all the rites, e.g., the circumcision of Isaac, son of Jacob Moreno Henriquez, performed by Isaac Senior on July 27, 1820, in the presence of fifty friends. This caused Interim Governor I. J. Elsevier[26] officially to remind the separatists that the ordinance of June 6, 1820, was in force.

Meanwhile the New York Evening Post published a notice that seventy Curaçoan Jews had abandoned their faith. The separatists protested through the *Curaçaosche Courant*, confirming their attachment to Judaism. Its editor, the Scotsman William Lee, promised to furnish his readers with all details on the division in the Jewish community.

Community president Moise Cardoze forsesaw the possibility of an attack by the dissidents. To frustrate their plans, he warned the *Curaçaosche Courant's* Lee to be "particularly cautious in what you are about to state lest . . . you might draw upon yourself certain responsibilities and prosecution at law, the instituting of which would in such case on our side become unavoidable."

Lee went ahead and published a letter of Haim Abinun de Lima,[27] who presented the separatist viewpoint. One of the most influential Jews of the period, De Lima attacked Piza and the parnassim in these terms:

[25] *CC*, June 10, 1820.

[26] The conflict began under Governor A. Kikkert, who died in Curaçao on Dec. 18, 1819; continued under his successor, P. B. van Starckenborgh, ex-fiscal, who died on July 20, 1820; under Interim Governor Fiscal I. J. Elsevier, and culminated during the tenure of P. R. Cantz'laar who arrived from Holland on Nov. 12, 1820.

[27] Son of David, born in Curaçao on Dec. 16, 1765. One of the first officers of the National Guard; member of the Great Council which decided against turning Curaçao over to France in 1800; member of the Council of Schools since 1815; a member of the commission appointed to fix a new customs duty in 1816; a member of the commission appointed to replace the johannes, the altered gold coins, in 1818; delegate to the government.

> . . . intoxicated with their gold, [they] indulged in the presumption that their bare initiation into the Regency would be a beacon for submission . . . That in the 19th century, the Regents of a religious community strive to act the part of Inquisitors, merely to support an ignorant chanter . . . these gentlemen . . . Regents . . . have incurred the penalty of excommunication. Nay, they have conducted their flock before the tribunal of justice . . . That the disaffected party, thus outraged, have separated themselves from the community though they still do, and will ever retain the name and rights of Israelites, subject to all the rites and formalities of their religion.

De Lima also declared that the separatists represented the qualitative and quantitative majority of the community while "on the part of their adversaries, abstracting the very few respectable ones, there remain but the wretched, who feed on the chest of the poor, the menial officers of the Synagogue whose free will is not their own."[28]

The governor, surely at Cardoze's prodding, then ordered Lee to submit all future texts to the fiscal before publication. Lee[29] vainly protested against this measure on the ground that he had a letter from Governor Kikkert allowing similar publications.

GOVERNOR CANTZ'LAAR SUPPORTS THE PARNASSIM

Meanwhile Curaçao's new governor, P. R. Cantz'laar, arrived on November 12, 1820. A historian described him as arbitrary, tyrannical and despotic.[30] Certainly he was a man of strong character who knew how to impose his will. Cardoze was able to win him over. Cantz'laar stoutly defended the parnassim viewpoint, that every Jew must submit to the *hascamoth*.

Curaçoan law allowed burials in the plantations or outside of the city limits. The community regulations made no restrictions in this respect. The separatists could therefore bury their dead without molestation. Cantz'laar changed all this. He passed an ordinance forbidding the burial of one's dead anywhere except in the cemeteries belonging to the different religious communities. He made it mandatory to obtain a special governor's permit for each burial. He also required the communities to furnish a report on their cemeteries, and the gravediggers to deliver weekly lists of their interments. This ordinance was specifically aimed at the separatists.

[28] *CC*, Sept. 16, 1820.

[29] Lee died in 1823. His last will and testament and the inventory of his estate are recorded in OAC 1067, nos. 175 and 183, respectively.

[30] H. A. van der Valle, *ibid.*, pp. 102-3.

The separatists thereupon petitioned the governor to give their cemetery his official recognition. They set forth that they had owned their burial ground since August, 1819; that it was enclosed with a solid wall and provided with a house for funeral services, and that up to July 10, 1820, they had buried twenty of their flock there. They also alleged that the separatists, comprising 125 families, deplored having had to abandon "their Sacred Temple, that precious monument of their ancestors." They closed with a plea for his official stamp of approval. There were 81 signatures and a notation that, except for their absence from Curaçao, several other separatists also would have signed.

Cantz'laar, probably after consulting with the parnassim, officially denied the separatists the right to use their cemetery. It is strange that, while allowing the burial of adults in the separatist cemetery in the absence of religious ceremonies, he did not always permit it for the children. The mother of three-year-old Salomon de Isaac Levy Maduro requested Cantz'laar for leave to bury the child in the new cemetery near its forebears "as it was a religious precept of the Jews not to separate their dead." If this was not possible, then she wished to bury her son in the Zuiker Tuintje plantation. Cantz'laar approved her second choice on December 1, 1821. The four-year-old Isaac de David Semah Valencia, who succumbed on December 10, 1821, was buried in the Koningsplein[31] plantation. Samuel Pereira[32] had buried a son in a plot of land outside the city in 1821. Later when he lost a little girl, he petitioned the governor for leave to bury her beside her little brother's grave. This was authorized in October, 1821. But Pereira, wishing the child to rest near her ancestors, had her buried in the separatist cemetery. The parnassim reported this to the governor whereupon the fiscal brought suit against Pereira for deception. Another instance of grief made deeper still by headstrong regents! Small wonder for the separatist bitterness toward the parnassim.

[31] In 1881 Guzman Blanco, President of Venezuela, had the remains of Admiral Louis Brion transported to the Pantheon of Caracas. Brion's grave was considered authentic on the simple testimony of an old Negro. Morris Cardoze, a descendant of Moise Cardoze, born in 1855, was sure "that these remains were of a Jew who, having been excommunicated by the Synagogue, was not buried in the Beth Haim but outside in the land from which the remains [that] were sent to Caracas had been exhumed" (J. de Pool, *Del Curaçao que se va*, p. 315). The Curaçoan De Pool recalls that, while a child, he had seen a grave in the fields bearing the name of "Eliau (Exchiau) [Hizquiau] Tauro, a Portuguese Jew, who knows if not one of the first arrivals in Curaçao who died in dissidence with the Israelite Community." He muses over the irony of fate that an excommunication from the synagogue had made it possible for the remains of a rebellious sinner to enjoy the glory of reposing in the National Pantheon of Caracas at the feet of Bolivar (*ibid.*, p. 316).

[32] In 1824 Pereira braved Governor Cantz'laar by organizing a protest in connection with the rate of exchange fixed by the governor (*WIG*, 1927, p. 47).

SEPARATIST BITTERNESS EXPRESSED IN THE WILLS

A number of separatist wills executed between 1819 and 1821 reflect this bitterness.

Jeremias de Jacob Levy Maduro specified in his will of October 26, 1819, that he should not be interred in the "Beth a Haim," but outside of the community cemetery and only by the separatists. The same wish was expressed by Jeremias [de Isaac] Levy Maduro in his will of November 8, 1819.

Jeudith de Isaac Belmonte, widow of Manuel de Moses Alvares Correa, stated in her will of October 27, 1819, that she did not want to be laved by the Mahamad's women bathers or buried in the "Beth a Haim" if she died during the conflict between the Mahamad and the "majority of the Jewish Nation."

Jacob de Isaac Henriquez Fereira, son-in-law of Isaac Haim Rodriguez da Costa, manifested the same desire in his will of November 17, 1819. He added that if his wife or children tried to oppose his wishes, then his brothers-in-law, the testamentary executors Mordechay Haim Rodriguez da Costa and Abraham Jesurun, should exert all their power to carry out his will.

Abraham de Marchena explicitly set forth in his will of December, 1820, that he did not want to be bathed or borne by the Mikvé Israel's bathers and pallbearers or buried in the "Beth a Haim."[33]

Joseph, son of Isaac Haim Rodriguez da Costa, expressed the desire in his will of March 5, 1821, to be interred "in the new, separated Jewish Beth Haim."

Mordechay Raphael Alvares Correa's will of July 25, 1821, is reminiscent of the last will and testament executed in 1750 by his granduncle of the same name.[34] This will was drawn up a few days after the Cantz'laar ordinance officially barred the separatists from using their cemetery and conducting services with ten men. Correa insisted upon being buried not in the "old Jewish Bethaim cemetery," but in the new one purchased from Mr. Lauffer. If the government forbade this, then he was to be interred in his Kaas Koraal plantation. Were this too disallowed, then his corpse was to be cast into the sea "to be preyed upon by the fishes rather than be [interred] in a cemetery under the management of the community whose principles do not coincide with mine." He forbade the Mikvé Israelites to lave his corpse; this was to be done by his friends only. If the government interfered, then he was to go unbathed. His body was to be carried by his good friends; if the government

[33] The cemetery is designated more often as "Beth a Haim" than "Beth-Haim" as it is called now.

[34] Emmanuel, *Precious Stones*, pp. 309-10. See above, pp. 199-200.

opposed this, then by his slaves. His brother Manuel Haim Alvares Correa was not to be admitted in the house of death or to accompany the body. (Manuel had cooperated with the parnassim and had signed one or another document against the separatists.)

Such was the depth of the animosities that cleaved the families! In the Fereira case wife and children, and in the Correa case a brother, sided with the parnassim. Most of the Jewish families were related to one another; so this dispute sowed discord in many homes. The bitterness against the parnassim and the government was carried down to the grave. The nadir was reached when Sara de Abraham Belmonte's remains were exhumed from the Beth Hahaim for reburial in the separatist cemetery. This lady (C 126) — a cousin of the Jeudith Belmonte earlier mentioned and wife of Nagson Henriquez Moron — had died on May 7, 1801.

CANTZ'LAAR COERCES THE SEPARATISTS

Cantz'laar's firmness was not conducive to promoting peace. The separatists continued burying their dead separately without the assistance of the parnassim. They celebrated their marriages independently of the community, as the records of the Curaçao government attest, e.g., Abraham de Mordechay Senior to Lea de David Senior[35] on August 8, 1819; Mordechay Cohen Henriquez to Leah de Jeosuah de Sola on December 8, 1819; Joseph de Jacob Haim Curiel to Deborah de Salomoh Levy Maduro on December 19, 1819; Abraham de David Senior to Rachel de Jacob Calvo[36] on June 25, 1820; Jacob de Isaac Haim Pereira, widower of Esther de Jacob Osorio, to Sarah de Isaac Sebastiaan Henriquez Cotino on September 3, 1820; and David de Daniel Gomes Casseres, widower of Rachel de Jacob Jesurun, to Ribca de Joseph Pereira Brandao on September 19, 1821.[37]

In the face of such defiance Cantz'laar ordered the separatists to submit a list of their followers within thirty days. He also demanded a declaration that they had separated themselves not only from the community, but from the Mosaic religion as well. The bewildered separatists asked for another thirty days. Meanwhile Cantz'laar issued a proclamation that all Jews, separated or not, had to contribute to the Poor Fund. Only those giving up the Jewish religion would be exempted. A little later he required all Jews to sign the *ketubah* — of course with parnassim assistance — before making their antenuptial agreements.

35 His *ketubah* was registered in the community after the reconciliation. See appendix 27.

36 The religious marriage took place on June 7, 1822 (MIA, Ket. VII, no. 5).

37 CGA, Marriage Register, 1819-1821.

Under such monumental pressure 82 separatists signed a declaration that they had no alternative but to renounce their faith since they could not submit to the parnassim yoke. Surely the governor must have been enlightened by the parnassim that, religiously speaking, a Jew can in a moment of danger give a declaration of this type and annul it by a counter-declaration, the *Moda'ah*. The separatists in reality remained Jews. For this reason Cantz'laar rejected the declaration. He demanded the renunciation of faith as a voluntary act and not one motivated by "a superior order." The separatists modified it as demanded. At the foot of the declaration, however, they affixed the profession of faith every Jew makes in a trying hour: "We recognize the existence of one God." This was the equivalent of "Hear, O Israel, the Lord is our God, the Lord is One."

THE SEPARATISTS APPLY TO THE KING FOR RELIEF

The governor of Curaçao then was responsible to the Colonial Minister who in turn was responsible to the King. On September 1, 1820, the separatists petitioned King William I of Holland for relief. The petition had to be sent through the governor. The Curaçao authorities did not dispatch it as they awaited Governor Cantz'laar's arrival. It is our opinion that Cantz'laar held the petition in Curaçao for almost a year. This document, bearing 108 signatures led by those of Jacob Haim Curiel and ten of the twenty-three elders, reached the King's chancellery only on January 15, 1822, after peace between the parties had been concluded. The petitioners exposed the history of the conflict. Piza was described as an "idiot, of evil mien, hoarse of voice and incapable of performing his duties." Blame for the rift was placed on Moise Cardoze who "out of personal hatred . . . persisted . . . in protecting the 'ignorant' cantor." They alleged that they had demanded the dismissal of the "phantom" cantor and the enactment of a new communal constitution "in keeping with the enlightened age in which we live." It is our opinion that when Cantz'laar could no longer hold the petition back, he began working earnestly to effect a reconciliation. This peacemaking probably consisted in advising Cardoze to be more moderate if he expected Cantz'laar's future support. After all, the conflict was prejudicial to the commonweal.

SEPARATISTS WHO SIGNED THE PETITION TO THE KING

Jacob Haim Curiel	ex-Assessor	Abraham Haim Senior
Mordechay Haim Senior	Elder	Mordechay Rephael Alvares Correa
Benjamin Jesurun	„	Jeosuah de Jacob Naar

Abraham de Marchena	Elder
Jeosuah de Sola	„
Jacob de Jeos: Naar	„
Ishac de Abraham de Marchena	ex-Elder
Moses Cohen Henriquez	„ „
Jacob Abenatar Jr.	Elder
David Cohen Henriquez	„
Daniel de David Gomes Casseres	„
Ephraim Curiel	„
Abraham de Jacob Jesurun Henriquez	„
Haim Abinun de Lima	
Eliao Lopez	
Ishac de Abraham Henriquez Cotiño	
Isaac Calvo	
Jacob de Mordechay Henriquez	
Elias Rodriguez Miranda	
Isaac Rodriguez Miranda	
Jacob Pereira Brandao Jr.	
J[acob?]. Lopez Penha	
Moseh de Selomoh de Castro	
Jacob de Ishac Henriquez Fereira	
Moseh de Eliao Penso	
A[braham]. J[esurun]. Lobo	
E[lias]. P[ereira]. Brandao	
Joseph Henriquez	
Jacob Athias Robles	
Abraham de Selomoh Curiel	
David de Abraham Jesurun	
E[lias]. J[esurun]. Henriquez	
D[avid]. Gomes Casseres	
Mordechay de Mordechay Henriquez	
Josias Abinun de Lima	
A[braham]. P[ereira]. Brandao	
David Abinun de Lima Jr.	
David Lopes Fonseca	
Moses Jesurun	
I[saac]. Henriquez	
David Curiel	
Isaac Idanha de Casseres	
David D Castro Sr.	
Manuel Pinedo	
David van Mosseh de Castro	
Isaac Pardo	
Selomoh Senior	
Jacob de Joseph Curiel	
Isaac de R. Jesurun Sasportas	
David Lopes Dias Jesurun	
Joseph de Jacob Henriquez	
David S[emah]. Valencia	
Joseph de Jacob Curiel	
Isaac P[ereira]. Brandao	
Abraham de Mordechay Senior	
A. Curiel	
Isaac de Marchena Jr.	
Joseph P[ereira]. Brandao Jr.	
Jeremias Maduro	
David Abinun de Lima [Sr.]	
J. Leon	
Abraham Jesurun	
Isaac Senior Jr.	
Isaac Curiel	
I. L. Maduro Jr.	
Jacob Senior Jr.	
Jacob de Sola	
Jacob Pereyra	
Manuel Penso	
Joseph Curiel	
Moseh de Marchena Jr.	
S[amuel]. Pereyra	
David de Selomoh de Castro	
E[lias]. A[binun]. de Lima	
A. Senior Jr.	
Isaac H[enriquez]. Moron	
E[lias]. P[ereira]. Brandao Jr.	
David Curiel da Costa	
Moseh Haim de Lima	
Jacob Jesurun	
Mordechay de Jeosuah Henriquez	
Jeudah Abinun de Lima	
Abraham Senior	
Jacob Moreno Henriquez	
Jeosuah Jeudah Leao	
Jacob Osorio	
Mosseh de Marchena	
Jacob Jesurun Pinto	
Moses de Castro Jr.	
David Mordechay Henriquez	
Moise de M. Penso	

D[aniel]. J[esurun]. Lobo
Jos. P[ereira]. Brandao
M[osseh]. C[ohen]. Henriquez
Moseh Osorio
Jeremiao Levy Maduro
Isaac Senior
Isaac Belmonte
Jeosuah de Is: Jeudah Leao
S[aul]. H[aim]. Pardo
A[braham]. Naar
Jacob Senior
Mordechay Henriquez Juliao
Moseh Aboab Jr.
Manuel Haim de Mordechay Alvares Correa[38]

Other separatists included Jacob de David Lopez da Fonseca, Jacob Suares, Eliao Penso, David de Jacob Senior; Jeosuah, Samuel and Mordechay de Selomoh Levy Maduro. Many others who voted against Piza either did not continue fighting to the finish or were away from the island when the petition was signed.

The families who remained loyal to the parnassim were Cardoze, Dovale, Hoheb, Mendes Monsanto, Namias de Crasto, Roiz Mendes, Salas, Sasso, Lopez Rephael, Capriles, Keyzer, Cohen Peixotto, Mendes da Costa, de Nogueira, D'Oliveira, Delvalle, Ricardo, Frois d'Andrade, Casseres, Lopez Henriquez and Da Costa Gomez. Several of these families could not act of their own free will. The unfortunate poor and the officiants like sexton S. L. Maduro and ritual slaughterer Jacob L. Maduro had to side with the parnassim.

Some members of the following families belonged to both sides: Cohen Henriquez, Lopez Penha, Pinedo, Alvares Correa, Henriquez Juliao, Leao, Fidanque, Henriquez, and the Maduros.

Peace had to be restored to the divided community whose families were also divided among themselves.

EVALUATIONS

Let us analyze the entire matter before continuing with our story.

PIZA — Surely he had introduced certain innovations in good faith. His voice probably was not so sonorous. It is inconceivable that he was so deaf as to be unfit for his office. The august parnassim of Amsterdam would not have chosen one so afflicted. Nor is it possible that he was "ignorant." Piza had studied at the Ets Haim Seminary for several years. He was born and reared at the feet of rabbis and writers. Finally, he must have had a certain training to qualify for the post.

[38] Names as given in the Royal Archives at The Hague, Staatssecretarie, no. 100.

CURIEL — Years afterwards Moses Cohen Henriquez confided to the High Commission for Israelitic Affairs in Holland that the communal disputes generally resulted from animosity between the cantors who formed the factions. He cited several instances, including the conflict over Piza. The inference is that Curiel, a rabbinic assessor before Piza's arrival, disliked Piza because he could evaluate Curiel's rabbinical shortcomings. Here was a parallel situation recalling Haham De Sola's dislike for the able instructor David Aboab in 1746. The conflict therefore was not over a question of religion in the strict sense, but rather over a clash of personalities.

THE SEPARATISTS — To a certain degree the separatists were in the right. But one asks, basically, was it not a matter of personal rivalry between Haim Abinun de Lima and Moise Cardoze, the most influential Jews before the government who dragged the families behind them? So much is said of the *Din Torah* in the community records of the period. Jewish Law recognizes that one so unpopular with the majority as Piza was, could be given an honorable, profitable discharge if there was no definite period of engagement. But having accepted him from 1815 to 1819, they could not remove him later for so-called deafness or hoarseness.

THE PARNASSIM — These were the incumbents from the years 5578 to 5582 (1817-1822):

5578 (1817-18)	Moise Cardoze, president; Selomoh Cohen Henriquez and Abraham de Jacob Jesurun.
5579 (1818-19)	Moise Cardoze, president; Selomoh Cohen Henriquez and Moseh de Eliao Penso.
5580 (1819-20)	Josiau Dovale, Moses Henriquez Juliao and Selomoh Cohen Henriquez.
5581 (1820-21)	Moise Cardoze, president from Pesaḥ, 1820, to Pesaḥ, 1821; Josiau Dovale and Samuel de Casseres.
5582 (1821-22)	Mordechay Ricardo, president from Rosh Hashanah, 5582, at the height of the conflict; Aron Pinedo, 2nd parnas from Pesaḥ, 1821; David Namias, assistant hazzan, who acted as treasurer on the refusal of others to accept the post because of the lack of funds.[39]

[39] See appendix 12, y. 5578-5582.

The management of the community was almost entirely in the hands of Cardoze, Dovale and Selomoh Cohen Henriquez. Cardoze was a parnas[40] who tolerated no criticism, as the acrid Jacob Senior case of 1811 demonstrated. However good his intentions were, he should not have allowed matters to reach the extremes they did. Sanctions should not have been taken against the officiants or unfortunates who voted against Piza. The grieving Pereira should not have been denounced to the government authorities for burying his second child near its forebears in the separatist cemetery. The burials in the plantations were bitter enough for the bereaved families and many parnassim adherents. After all, the opposition wanted Piza's honorable discharge, a new constitution and eventually new elections for parnassim. In fighting these demands Cardoze and the parnassim who cooperated with him erred. They regarded discipline more important than peace.

THE GOVERNMENT AUTHORITIES — Governor Cantz'laar's three predecessors supported the parnassim without intervening in the dispute. The fiscals under those governors did not act firmly against the separatists who comprised the respected merchants of the island. Cantz'laar had difficulty in convincing the Island Council that they had to act vigorously. Nevertheless, he abused his authority. He did not have to go to the lengths he did in forcing the separatists to abandon their faith, although done for form's sake. Civilization had passed that stage of coercion. Steam vessels were trafficking in American waters, the Spanish colonies were gaining their independence, everything was in a state of evolution. It was not feasible to cling to regulations promulgated in 1750 by a group of aristocrats as were the Amsterdam parnassim of that era. Cantz'laar should have employed his extensive power — the greatest wielded by any previous governor — to bring the two warring factions together, which he finally did after much distress and unpleasantness. We believe that Cantz'laar most probably appointed the two high-ranking personages of the island to negotiate with the separatists only after he had dispatched the petition of September 1, 1820, to the King. Perhaps he admonished Cardoze to make concessions to the separatists. The Curaçao government records for 1821, during the height of the conflict, show that there were only 805 Jewish residents in Curaçao against 1,021 in 1816. It is conceivable that many Jews of both sides were so agitated by the communal

[40] In Papiamento, the language of the Creoles of Curaçao, the expression "Bo ta Parnas" — you are a Parnas — is applied to a stubborn, unbending person.

upheaval and Cantz'laar's despotism, that they left Curaçao to return when a certain peace was restored. It is true that there was no repetition of the 1746-1750 street brawls and synagogue disturbances. But the rancor between certain families smoldered for many years after the peace.

ECONOMIC STATUS OF THE JEWS DURING THE CONFLICT

Haim Abinun de Lima's open letter of September 16, 1820, to the *Curaçaosche Courant* accused the parnassim of being "intoxicated with their gold." He implied that the rich wanted to dominate the rest. Of course De Lima was referring particularly to Cardoze. Since 1818 De Lima had been the only Jew on the commission appointed to appraise and tax real estate for the purpose of redeeming the altered gold johannes. In such a position who better than he knew the financial worth of each Jew? The real estate and mortgage holdings of the islanders for the tax year October 1, 1818, to October 1, 1819,[41] were assessed at a total of 3,047,400 pesos. Of this, approximately 980,130 pesos represented the assessment on the Jewish holdings.[42]

The biggest real estate holders among the Jews were on the parnassim's side, Moise Cardoze probably rating as the richest in that type of wealth. The Jews with high tax assessments were Moise Cardoze, 31,275 pesos; the firm of A[braham]. H[aim]. Senior (separatist), Moise Cardoze, Abraham Salom Delvalle (pro-parnassim) & Co., 61,975; the firm of A. H. Senior, A. A. Beutner (Gentile), Cardoze, Delvalle & Co., 85,050; the firm of Cabagrijn (Gentile), Cardoze & Co., 6,407:4; Capriles (pro-parnassim), Cardoze & Co., 6,000. Thus Cardoze led with some 80,000 pesos. Then followed the Widow Gabriel de David da Costa Gomez (neutral), 77,370 pesos — the Da Costa Gomezes also figuring for another 23,001 pesos; Moses Henriquez Juliao (a parnas), 60,953; Abraham de Jacob Jesurun (neutral), 55,725; David Haim Dovale (first director of the parnassim's Jewish Orphans Fund), 49,755:4; and the Jewish Orphans Fund, 28,395:3 pesos.

Among the separatists the Senior family was the most highly taxed on properties assessed at 47,800 pesos. Although Jeosuah de Sola had six valuable but heavily mortgaged houses and two plantations, these were appraised, without the slaves, at only 17,000 pesos. Daniel de David Gomes Casseres

[41] OAC 554, y. 1820. The author took pains to compile the real estate and mortgage holdings of the Jews from October 1, 1818, to October 1, 1819, as found in the old archives of Curaçao at The Hague.

[42] Francisco Cohen, R. P. Rodriguez, and the Widow Joseph Piñero, appearing in this list, were not Jews. The Jewish interest in Jewish-Gentile partnerships is calculated in equal parts.

was taxed on 21,255 pesos; Eliao Lopez on 16,800, more or less; Haim Abinun de Lima, on 12,500; De Lima & Sons, on 6,000; the Marchenas on 9,922; the Curiels on 12,700, and the Maduros on only 2,250 pesos.[43] Since many families belonged to both parties, it is hard to determine exactly how much each side possessed. Probably 60% to 65% of the taxes collected from the Jews came from the pro-parnassim faction. Various separatists had big business dealings with St. Thomas, Santo Domingo and the Spanish Main and owned many slaves and merchandise. It is therefore reasonable to believe that as a unit they were richer than the parnassim party. Those obliged to side with the parnassim included many indigent people and the synagogue officiants who were of modest means. That is one reason why the Community Chest suffered greatly during this period. The other was the droughts between 1819 and 1825, which kept the planters from making regular interest payments on the community-held mortgages. The parnassim finally realized that if the community was to exist, they would have to make concessions to achieve peace.

RECONCILIATION

Willem August van Spengler, Port Authority Superintendent, and Rudolph Hayunga, Secretary of the Island Council, communicated with the leaders of the opposition to bring about a reconciliation, probably on Cantz'laar's orders. Because of the formidable pressure the governor exerted upon them, the separatists accepted the Spengler-Hayunga mediation in principle. They demanded Piza's dismissal and the enactment of new communal regulations. The Mahamad — then composed of Mordechay Ricardo as president, Moise Cardoze and Aron Pinedo — delegated Casper Lodewyk van Utrecht, member of the Island Council, and Willem Prince, Government Secretary, to represent them at the arbitration table. The separatists appointed three of their number as delegates — Daniel de David Gomes Casseres, Haim Abinun de Lima and Jeosuah de Sola.

The four government arbitrators finally reached a settlement on December 5, 1821, whereunder

1. The Mahamad was to turn over to the separatists all the documents and correspondence exchanged with the parnassim and rabbis of Amsterdam

[43] The most highly taxed Gentiles were the National Orphans Fund on 472,155:-:4 pesos; H. W. de Quartel on 195,081; Daniel Specht on 71,346; Smith & Son James for Joseph Foulke on 62,762:7:2; the Widow de Rochemont on 56,372:5:2; George Curiel on 55,531; J. van der Meulen on 54,658:7 pesos (OAC 554, nos. 299, 574/75, 100, 651, 224, 102 and 526/557).

concerning the Piza question on condition that those papers would not be copied or shown to anyone.
2. The Jewish population was not to be told of the terms of Piza's dismissal.
3. To calm many Jews it would be said that the government arbitrators had decided to send Piza away.
4. Ex-officiants Curiel, Idanha de Casseres and others as well as those separatists who had held honorific posts in the community, were to resume their posts and functions.
5. A commission of twelve persons — six from each side — was to frame new regulations.
6. Neither party was to be considered victor or vanquished.

Piza was promised his salary for three years or the sum of 1,500 pesos. He tendered his resignation. He was convinced, he wrote, that his removal as cantor would bring about peace. The parnassim accepted his resignation. They delivered the money to him and assigned him a seat in the synagogue just like any other member.

Peace between the parties was proclaimed from the pulpit the following day. Simultaneously it was announced that a prayer of thanksgiving would be held on the first night of Ḥanukkah, 5582 (December 18, 1821). In order to avoid further discussion, it was agreed with the mediators to burn all the documents in the case. Piza remained in Curaçao for a time. The parnassim helped him again before he left in 1824 to fill the post of hazzan of the St. Thomas community where he officiated until 1835.[44] He died there in 1850.[45]

After the reconciliation the Mahamad, by synagogue announcement of the 8th of Adar, 5582 (March 1, 1822), recognized the separatist marriages performed according to Jewish Law "during the time of the controversy which had divided the congregation in two."[46] They hastened to thank Cantz'laar for the "decisive" measures he had taken to uphold the laws. They also requested him to dismiss the Pereira case since they had been responsible for its institution. The governor on his part congratulated the commission,

[44] Piza also had difficulties with the St. Thomas community; in 1844 they engaged his son Moses as reader.

[45] The English part of his epitaph reads as follows: Ṗarent beloved and stranger's friend / Ịn him were found the life's last end / Żealous in Faith his path he trod / Ȧnd lived devoted in his God / Jeosuah M. Piza / A native of Amsterdam / born / in 1772 died / 7th June 1850 / A tribute of filial affection (Jul. Margolinsky, *299 Epitaphs from the Jewish cemetery in St. Thomas, W. I., 1837-1916, compiled from Records in the Archives of the Jewish Community in Copenhagen* [Copenhagen, 1957], in stencil, no. 70).

[46] MIA, Ket. VII, 2nd series, no. 4. See appendix 27.

the parnassim and the entire community. He urged them to "expel all feelings of hatred and discord." How well he knew that the peace was in form only! In fact, three of the separatists — Isaac Calvo, David Cohen Henriques and Abraham Jesurun Lobo[47] — told the process server for the Island Council that they would remain separated. Moses de Daniel Lopez Penha, a contemporary, also revealed in his family chronicle that the peace was in form only.[48] Jacob de Jeosuah Naar was not in accord with the settlement and with difficulty was reintegrated into the community. Mordechay Haim Senior and Daniel de David Gomes Gasseres did not wish to form part of the Congress to which they had formerly belonged. Not until March, 1824, after repeated coaxing on the part of Mordechay Ricardo and others, did the thirteen bathers of the dead who had separated from the Hesed ve Emeth return to their brotherhood.

The separatists had received satisfaction — Piza's resignation and the enactment of new regulations. They resented the idea of having been forced to accept this arrangement by superior order. They would have probably preferred the resignation of the parnassim and the election of a new Mahamad. The parnassim were not elegant enough to resign and hold new elections for a council where both sides would be represented with dignity. Cardoze, to be sure, was not elected parnas again. However, he had the distinction of being appointed in 1827 as first corresponding member of the High Commission for Israelitic Affairs in Holland. So peace was re-established. It could have been attained in 1819 if the parnassim had been more farsighted and less dictatorial.

THE SMALL NEW CEMETERY

When peace was made, the separatists delivered to the parnassim various utensils employed for bathing the dead, the black crepe cloth and other funeral equipment. They also transferred the small cemetery to the community. The parnassim informed Cantz'laar that it would henceforth form part of the Beth Hahaim. However, there was the question of whether or not to tear down the wall separating the smaller cemetery from the larger. The Mahamad took the case to the *Beth Din*, presided by Daniel Lopez Penha. He excused himself in his letter of Shebat 24, 5582, "on his inability, through circumstances, to appoint a third [member]." The second member was David Namias de

[47] Abraham Jesurun Lobo, b. 1761, died on May 12, 1832 (C 2236; CGA, Death Register, y. 1832). His daughter Abigail married Josiau, son of Haim Abinun de Lima (MIA, Ket. VII, no. 14).

[48] Lopez Penha Family Chronicle, ms. p. 5.

Crasto. Penha decided for the maintenance of the wall. His justification for it was "that an oath made between several people or with the consent of others cannot be absolved unless all parties are in agreement, or at least that the majority want it absolved."[49] This implies that the separatists had taken an oath concerning the existence of their cemetery, that the reconciliation was only partial and that a number of the dissidents, who according to the Penha decision made up a good half, were always in disagreement with the parnassim. This is further proof that the conflict was not due to Cantor Piza exclusively, but rather to a spirit of antagonism that prevailed among the *guevirim*. Demolition of the wall was permitted thirty-eight years later by Haham Chumaceiro when most of the generation of 1819 had passed on.[50]

The Mikvé Israel community still conserves a memory of that historic period in the cemetery of the separatists which forms the greater part of Division I of the author's Catalogue of the Cemetery.[51] It is mute witness to the great interest of that generation in its community, its faith and its synagogue.[52]

[49] According to the records of the "Beth Din of Lopez Penha," ms. in the author's possession. Penha's answer was correct. Analagous cases cropped up in the Sephardic communities of the Orient. Rabbis had great difficulty in absolving an oath taken by a collectivity (see Emmanuel, *Histoire de l'Industrie des Tissus des Israélites de Salonique*, pp. 60-61).

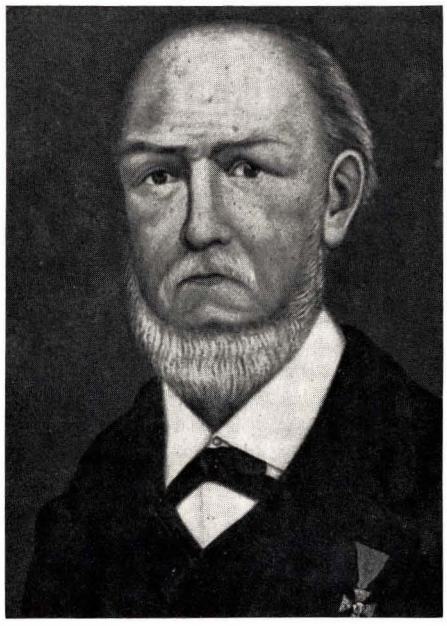
[50] See below, p. 357.

[51] Emmanuel, *Precious Stones*, pp. 496-548, especially pp. 495-99.

[52] ARCHIVES CONSULTED: 1) *Mikvé Israel* — Minutas del Mahamad, 1818-1821, incomplete; loose papers; Hesed ve Emeth records; Ketuboth, vol. VII, nos. 4, 5; 2) *Portuguese Jewish Community of Amsterdam* — Ets Haim, Termo B2, 5488-5570; Minutas de Parnassim [in Dutch], meetings of Oct. 25, Nov. 15 and 29, 1820, Jan. 29, Feb. 28, May 16, July 18, Sept. 20 and Oct. 31, 1821; 70A, letters from the Curaçao parnassim to Amsterdam, July-Sept., 1820; Copiador de Cartas, 1816-1821, letters of July 15, 1816, one to the Curaçao parnassim and the other to Cantor Piza; Copiador de Cartas, 1821-1827, letters of Feb. 15, 1820, and June 4, 1821, to the High Commission for Israelitic Affairs in Holland; July 15, 1821, to the Curaçao parnassim; 3) *Curaçao Government Archives* — Marriage Register, 1819-1822; 4) *Old Archives of Curaçao at The Hague* — OAC 235, nos. 236, 269; OAC 236, nos. 152, 269, 336, 462, 688, 694b; OAC 237, June 8, 1821; OAC 239, nos. 34 and 355 of the Governor's Journal; OAC 238, nos. 691, 702; OAC 292, nos. 16, 45; OAC 294, nos. 16, 84, 115, 169, 188 and 193; OAC 594, no. 10; OAC 625, Feb. 1, 1821; OAC 1056, nos. 47, 49, 67, 76; OAC 1057, no. 9; OAC 1129, no. 26; OAC 1130, nos. 15, 41; OAC 1631, no. 702; 5) *Koloniën na 1813*, no. 3623, April, 1819; no. 3624, Sept., 1819; no. 3627, July, 1820; no. 3629, January-March, 1821; no. 3630, April-June, 1821; no. 3631, July, 1821; no. 3632, Dec., 1821; no. 3751, y. 1822; 6) *Royal Archives at The Hague* — Staatssecretarie, no. 100; 7) *Daniel Lopez Penha manuscript* in the author's possession; 8) Emmanuel, "Epitaphs of the Separatist Cemetery," ms. of 165 tombal inscriptions copied from the small cemetery.

PRINTED MATTER — *Curaçaosche Courant* from April, 1819, to January, 1822; B. de Gaay Fortman, "Curaçao en onderhoorige Eilanden, 1816-1828," *WIG*, 1927-1928, pp. 510-15; *Archives Israélites de Paris*, 1847, pp. 493-94.

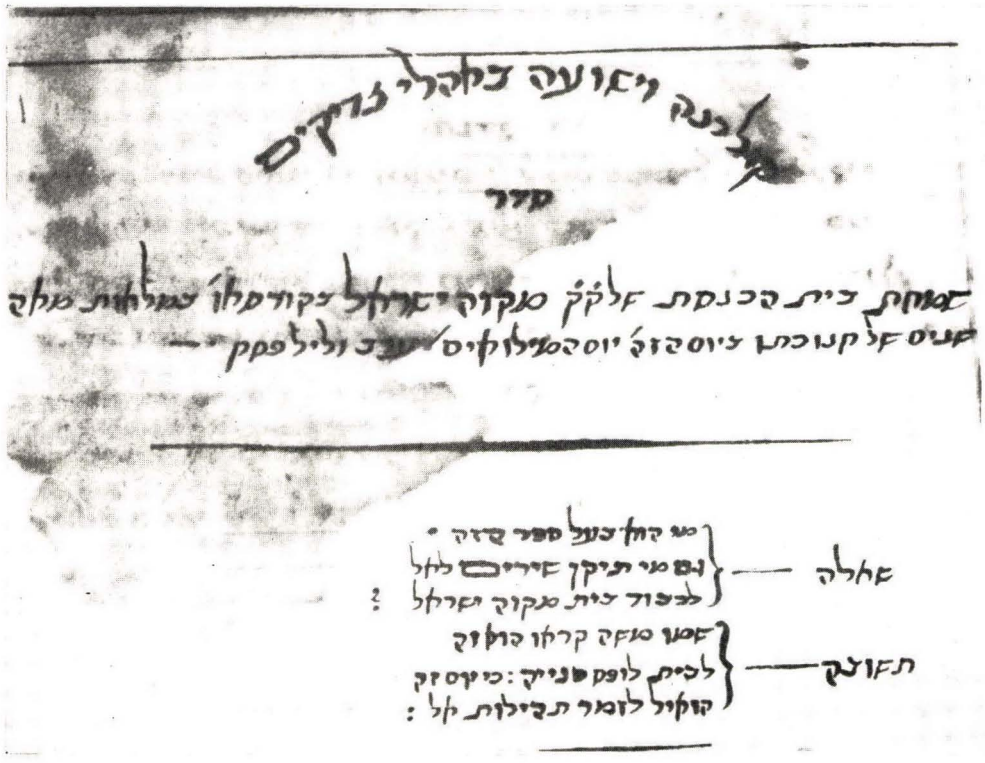
85. MOSES DE SALOMON COHEN HENRIQUEZ, 1795-1866, PAGE 377



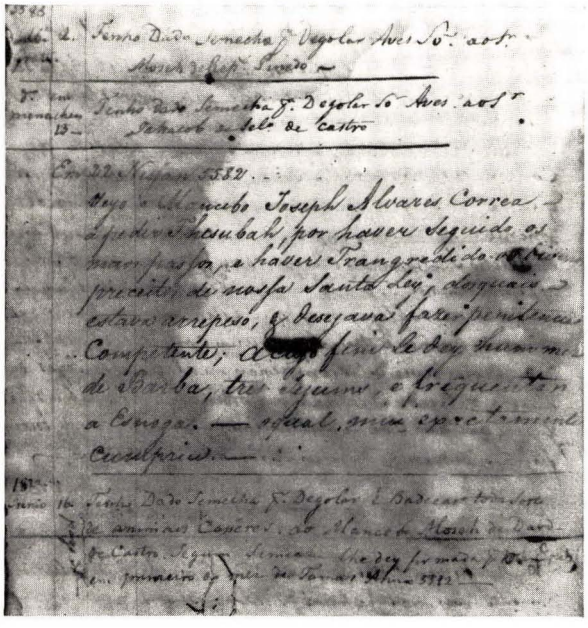
86. MOSES FROIS RICARDO, 1812-1880, CIRCUMCISER AND NOTED FREEMASON

87. SALOMON BENJAMIN DELVALLE, AND HIS WIFE RACHEL DE JEOSUAH PIZA, 1870

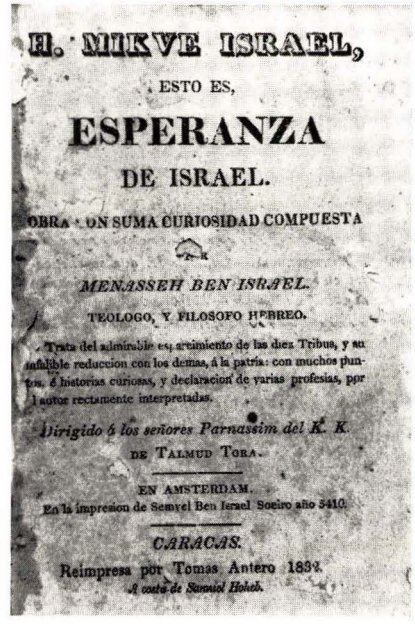
88. JACOB DE CASTRO DE BENJAMIN DELVALLE, 1840-1920, MERCHANT



89. INTRODUCTION, POEMS BY MOSES LOPEZ PENHA FOR THE CENTENARY OF THE SYNAGOGUE, 1832



90. PENITENCE METED OUT TO JOSEPH ALVARES CORREA, 1822, PAGES 332-33



91. OLDEST BOOK ON JUDAISM PUBLISHED IN CARACAS, VEN., BY SAMUEL HOHEB OF CURAÇAO, 1832

CHAPTER XVI

THE ASSESSORS
1816-1855

EVEN BEFORE THE ONSET of the Cantor Piza affair the Mahamad had been searching for a haham. When they could not find a competent candidate interested in going to Curaçao, they followed the Amsterdam community's suggestion to communicate with Haham Rephael Meldola of London. He was having trouble with his congregation and probably would be inclined to accept. But correspondence with him in 1816 proved fruitless. The Mahamad then raised the annual salary to 1,200 pesos plus extras. Still no one applied. The community had no alternative but to choose someone from their most qualified members to lead them. This rabbi substitute they called "assessor." Jacob Haim Curiel, as already observed, was their first assessor, and he was succeeded by Daniel Lopez Penha.

DANIEL LOPEZ PENHA

Born in Amsterdam in 1744 to Jacob Lopez Penha, Daniel studied at the Ets Haim Seminary. He arrived in Curaçao in 1760 where he did business as merchant and broker, and from 1801 to 1807 served as government translator-interpreter.[1] According to his son Moses, he also "dabbled quite a bit in poetry and published several works." There is no record of those writings, but it is known that he composed several liturgical poems on the occasion of Haham Da Fonseca's fifty years of service to the community. When Assessor Curiel resigned during the Piza dispute, Penha replaced him as chief judge without pay.[2]

Penha was no stranger to communal and synagogal affairs. He was a founder of the Or Torah Society which came into being before 1781,[3] and also co-founder with Hazzan Moses Benveniste of the Yeshibah Limud Torah. He left it sometime after Benveniste's death because of certain intrigues maneuvered by David Cohen Henriquez. According to his son, Penha contributed much to

[1] These biographical notes have been drawn from the archives of the Beth Din written in part by Daniel L. Penha, and from the Lopez Penha Family Chronicle, in manuscript, authored by his son Moses in 1826.

[2] Curiel evidently refused to resume his post after the reconciliation.

[3] See appendix 18D.

"the meditation of the Law." He had served as Hazzan of Seliḥoth from 1779 to 1811 when he resigned "because of the intrigues that the councillors supported." In 1783 he founded and headed the Santa Irmandade Habodat Akodes. From 1806 to 1812 he served as administrator of the community buildings.

It was only on the insistence of the Mahamad and their chief supporters that Penha consented to head the Beth Din during the Piza affair. He clashed with the former separatists over the great difficulties they were creating. Soon after their differences had been settled, they resolved to divest Penha of the power to solemnize marriages and to transfer it to his assistant David Namias de Crasto although the latter could not write the *ketuboth* in Hebrew.[4] It was customary for the head of the Beth Din or the *morenu harab* to conduct the Ne'ilah service. On Yom Kippur, 1822, the ex-separatists insisted on having Namias offer this prayer. In protest Penha withdrew from the Beth Din in October, 1822. His place was automatically filled by his assistant Namias.

DAVID DE ISAAC NAMIAS DE CRASTO

Namias[5] was born in Curaçao in 1771 and married Abigail, the daughter of Haham Da Fonseca, in 1812. As early as 1793 he was charged with certain duties in the synagogue. After Penha's resignation he officiated as assessor and head of the Beth Din until his death in 1843.[6]

As head of the Beth Din, Namias unfortunately could not measure up to his predecessor who was indisputably more fitted for the post. The document Penha drew up on the legalization of marriages contracted during the Piza dispute (appendix 27) is worthy of a disciple of Delgado and Carigal. His opinion on the demolition of the separatist cemetery wall follows religious precept. The several *ketuboth* in his beautiful Hebrew penmanship are correctly written. Aside from his theological attainments, he possessed qualities truly worthy of a Beth Din head. He always sacrificed himself in behalf of peace, yet retained his independence of character. The parnassim took recognition of his devoted services on his death in 1826 by including Penha among the rabbis of the community for honorable mention: "For the services rendered to this Holy House."[7] Namias, on the other hand, operated on the principle

[4] Daniel Lopez Penha wrote to the Mahamad on Sivan 15, 5582 (June 4, 1822) that his colleague Namias did not know how to write in Hebrew: "Y em virtude da impericia de meu Companheiro em a escritura do Idioma Hebrea, de escrever as Quetuboth em Hebreo" (Lopez Penha Archives in the author's possession).

[5] See appendix 17, Namias.

[6] For more details see Emmanuel, *Precious Stones*, pp. 447-48.

[7] MIA, Hashcaboth Register, vol. I, month of Shebat. See Emmanuel, *ibid.*, pp. 85-86, regarding Hazzan Santcroos' opposition and refusal to recognize these titles.

of satisfying the directors even if that demanded the modification or abolition of a law so important as the levirate or *ḥalizah*.

CONVERSION OF JOSEPH ALVARES CORREA TO CATHOLICISM

One of Curaçao's most honorable families then was, and still is in our day, that of Alvares Correa. The founder of the Curaçao branch was a certain Imanuel Alvares Correa.[8] Born in Leghorn in 1650, he married Sara Abendana in Amsterdam and after her death, Esther Febus in 1691. He had eleven children from these marriages. His son Rephael married Jeudith Roiz Monsanto and had six daughters and a son Imanuel. In 1742 Imanuel married Hana de Jacob Semah Ferro who bore him, among others, a son Rephael. The latter married Lea de Benjamin Lopez Henriquez and in 1766, a year after Lea's death, Rachel, the daughter of Joseph Jesurun Henriquez. Six children are known of this Rephael: Hana,[9] Lea,[10] Esther,[11] Manuel Haim (1770-1854),[12] the convert Joseph born in 1778, and Mordechay.[13]

[8] Contemporaneously there lived in Amsterdam in June, 1675, a certain "Imanuel Alvares Correa, married," and an "Imanuel Alvares, bachelor" (Remedios, pp. 203, 208). Poet Barrios mentions, among the great Talmudists of Amsterdam about 1684, a certain Jacob Alvares who was a member of the academy "Arbol de las Vidas" (Ets Haim). He describes Alvares as "lucero en el Alva de la ciencia, luz del colegio del Talmud" (Kayserling, *ibid.*, p. 12). Was he related to Imanuel Alvares Correa, also known as Imanuel Alvares? One Jacob Alvares Correa, learned in the Torah, died in Curaçao in 1714 (Emmanuel, *Precious Stones*, pp. 221-22).

[9] She married her father's brother Mordechay in 1783 (MIA, Ket. VI, no. 11).

[10] She married Moshe de Moshe de Moshe Penso in 1796 (MIA, *ibid.*, no. 88).

[11] She married her brother-in-law Imanuel, son of Moshe de Moshe Penso, in 1803 (MIA, *ibid.*, no. 133). Esther and her sisters Hana and Lea each brought their respective husbands a dowry of 5,000 pesos.

[12] He married Sara de Benjamin Cohen Henriquez.

[13] See appendix 17, Alvares Correa. After the death of his first wife Clara de Jacob Gabriel Pinedo in 1828, he married Clara de Moses Hz. Juliao in 1840. We thus have the following genealogical sequence:

Imanuel = 1. Sara Abendana
2. Esther Febus
↓
Rephael = Jeudith Roiz Monsanto
↓
Imanuel = Hana Semah Ferro
↓
Rephael = 1. Lea Lopez Henriquez
2. Rachel Jesurun Henriquez
↓

Manuel H. = Sara C. Henriquez | Joseph (the convert) | Mordechay = 1. Clara Pinedo
2. Clara Hz. Juliao

Before discussing Joseph's conversion, a few words about his family are in order. His father Rephael was president of the community in 1794, an officer in the National Guard and a representative to Governor Lauffer's Grand Council of 1800 which decided against surrendering Curaçao to the French. Joseph's brother Manuel Haim was a district leader, first lieutenant in the Territorial Army, treasurer of the community in 1809-10, and one of Curaçao's leading Freemasons in his time.[14]

Like other boys his age our convert Joseph attended Haham Da Fonseca's school and the synagogue to which he was devoted. When he made his will in 1808, he left, among other bequests, 260 pesos to the synagogue for perpetual memorial services for his soul.[15] The Piza affair affected Joseph very deeply. He was greatly distressed by the wide breach between his brothers: Manuel Haim, ardent champion of the parnassim, and Mordechay, the embittered separatist.[16] Witnessing these grievous scenes, he must have asked himself whether it was truly required to pray in a set manner. He was disgusted by the attitude of both sides and especially by the plantation burials. In time he acquired an unjustified disdain for the Jewish religion. A haham like Da Fonseca would have told him that any modification in the rite could be a case of dangerous precedent. Also, he might have been able to convince Joseph of the great truths of the Jewish religion and, in support of his arguments, recommend several books in Spanish then available in Curaçao.

Joseph began to doubt the verities of his faith. He forgot that if he was born in Curaçao it was only because an ancestor of his had escaped from the land of the Inquisition to seek refuge in a liberal country like Holland where Judaism could be openly professed. Nevertheless, the Jewish spark within him still flickered. He manifested a certain remorse and on Nisan 22, 5582 (April 13, 1822), appeared at the home of Beth Din head Daniel Lopez Penha to do penitence. In keeping with the custom of the period, Joseph was told that he would have to let his beard grow for a month, fast three times and frequent the synagogue, all of which was done "very exactly."[17]

[14] *CC*, Jan. 3, 1851.

[15] OAC 1024, no. 59, April 7 and 8, 1808. Other bequests included 1,500 pesos to his widowed sister Hana, 200 pesos to his colored nursemaid, 50 pesos each to Moses Osorio, Abraham Haim Jeudah Leon and Moses de Mordechay Levy Maduro, and a gold watch to his nephew Mordechay de Mordechay Alvares Correa. After ordering his executors to purchase three blue tombstones — one each for his parents and himself — he left the remainder of his estate to his brothers Manuel Haim and Mordechay and his sisters Hana, Ester de Manuel Penso and Lea, widow of Moses Penso.

[16] See pp. 317-18 above.

[17] "Em 22 Nissan 5582. Veyo o Mancebo Joseph Alvares Correa a pedir Tesubah, por haver seguido os maos passos, e haver Transgredido os dinim preceitos de nossa Santa Ley, dos quais estava

Outside of not shaving, Joseph's expiation was not difficult to carry out. His atonement, however, proved ineffective. Two years later Joseph decided to embrace Catholicism. For this purpose he turned to the Catholic friar and pastor ad interim since Nov. 6, 1823, Joachim de la Olleria, a Spanish Capuchin who had fled from Colombia.

The Alvares Correa family had the fiscal intervene to prevent the baptism. This official wrote to the Spanish pastor on May 28, 1824, to wait until the "pastor named by the King" arrived, and sent a stronger letter when De la Olleria insisted on proceeding. At the same time the fiscal urged the administrators of the Church to hold off the baptism pending the arrival of His Majesty's nominee, Pastor (later Monsignor) Martinus Joannes Niewindt. He came on August 27, 1824.

The fiscal rightly believed that a Catholic priest reared in Holland, in close proximity to the Protestants and Portuguese Jews of Amsterdam, might have a different conception of the affair. He thought that this Dutch priest might recommend the candidate to a parish outside of Curaçao. Such an idea was something that could not even be contemplated by a Spanish Catholic priest whose memory of the Inquisition was still fresh.

At this point it becomes necessary to stress the fundamental difference between Judaism and Catholicism on proselytism. Judaism hesitates, almost refuses, to practice proselytism; Catholicism has spread its doctrines through fire and sword. Curaçao was ideally suited for proselytism. Nevertheless, the Jewish community declined to consider it even in the case of white candidates. It is true that an exception was made in the case of three Catholic pastors — two toward the end of the 17th century and the third in the early 18th century. But these men were converts by conviction and at least two of them were Marranos.[18] The rabbi of that era attributed no glory to himself for those conversions.

Despite the fiscal's warnings, De la Olleria baptized Joseph Alvares Correa behind closed doors at the Santa Anna Church on May 31st at six o'clock in the evening. The pastor's conduct "was incompatible with good order." Governor Cantz'laar suspended him and asked to have him tried before the Island Council.

Spanish priests of that era exerted a great influence on the colored population. Dominie Bosch, who knew Pastor de la Olleria personally, informs us that

arrepeso, & desejava fazer penitencia Competente, a cujo fin le dey um mez de Barba, tres Jejunes, e frequentar a Esnoga — o qual mui exactamente cumprio" (Beth Din, Lopez Penha Archives in the author's possession; illus. 90).

[18] See pp. 118-19 above.

Catholic priests taught the slaves to disobey the orders of their Protestant masters. The situation was so serious, says Bosch, that the governor had to remove a pastor from the island in order to avoid a Negro uprising.[19] Half an hour after De la Olleria had received his dismissal, a thousand people surrounded the church, and a military detachment had to intervene. Bullets were fired into the air, a man was killed and a woman seriously wounded. The pastor who had to "save" the soul of a lost Jew at the earliest moment was thus responsible for the death of a good Catholic who left behind a 16-year-old widow. After this tragedy De la Olleria wrote to the governor "that it was his duty as a Catholic and reader in religion to be obedient to the orders of the legal power." It necessitated, we repeat, the death of a good Catholic for the priest to submit, "as a Catholic," to the orders of the government authorities. On the governor's demand he left Curaçao for Puerto Rico with another priest and his famous neophyte.[20]

That this conversion caused such a furor is proof that it was the first one of a native Jew to take place in Curaçao.[21] This is to Congregation Mikvé Israel's credit, for in that period hundreds of German Jews had recourse to baptism. To quote Heinrich Heine, "The baptismal certificate was the entry ticket to European culture."[22] The Curaçoan Jews did not need this "entry ticket," for it was they and the Dutch Protestants who had introduced culture to Curaçao.

This conversion evidently did not provoke a crisis among the parnassim. But it was so disagreeable to them that, outside of the Penha reference to Correa's penitence, they left no trace of it in their records.

[19] Bosch, vol. III, p. 195.

[20] For the documentation of this sad affair we consulted the following archives and works: Old Archives of Curaçao, Koloniën na 1813, nos. 3757, 3758; OAC 241, Governor's Journal, y. 1824; Father G.J.M. Dahlhaus, *Monseigneur M. J. Niewindt, een levensschets* (Baesrode, 1924), pp. 49-54, 452-53, and B. de Gaay Fortman, "Gouverneur Cantz'laar en de bloedige gebeurtenis van 1 Juni 1824," *WIG*, 1926-27, pp. 341-56. Father Dahlhaus is not objective when dealing with questions involving Catholics and Protestants, or Catholics and Jews. He defended the Catholic viewpoint and, in this case, Pastor de la Olleria. Fortman defended Governor Cantz'laar against the Catholic accusation that he had caused the riot by closing the church. We are inclined to side with Fortman. The Catholic clergyman who wrote *Gouden Jubileum der Dominikaner Missie op Curaçao W. I. 1870-1920* (Nijmegen, 1920), p. 8, brings to light that the members of the Catholic community and the church administrators blamed each other for these difficulties. Therefore, Pastor de la Olleria was the person chiefly responsible for the death of an innocent Catholic. The Old Archives of Curaçao make it specifically clear that the church was closed by the church wardens as a preventive measure and not by government order.

[21] The conversion preceding Correa's was that of Philipe Henriquez (a.k.a. Jacob Senior), done in Havana in 1718, probably shortly before his last moments.

[22] Heinrich Heine, *Sämtliche Werke*, vol. VIII (Hamburg, 1876), p. 185.

THE JEWS OBTAIN EQUAL RIGHTS 1816-1844

While the Jews in Holland were accorded the same rights as the Christians in 1796, their coreligionists in Curaçao had to wait until 1825. Under Royal Edict No. 149 of April 2, 1825, the Curaçoan Jews had to renounce all the rights and privileges previously granted to them by the Dutch West India Company and by the Dutch government. They were supposed to

1. Adopt the synagogal organization of the Jews of Holland.
2. Make new communal regulations based on those of the mother community but adapted to local conditions.
3. Be under the vigilance of the High Commission for Israelitic Affairs in Holland, established in 1817.
4. Have a corresponding member on that Commission.

On the governor's demand the parnassim Jacob de Jeosuah Naar and Eliao Lopez furnished a list of the privileges to be surrendered. They insisted, and rightly so, that some of these could not be nullified, especially the privilege of 1659 given to Isaac da Costa relating to the free exercise of their faith "and other privileges also"; the dispensation of not appearing in court on Saturdays and Jewish holy days, of not doing guard duty on Saturday, and of opening the community schools on Sunday; the privilege of collecting an annual tax from the members to cover synagogal and other communal expenses, of having a special barn for butchering *casher* meat, of running a Jewish Orphans Fund, and of considering the *ketubah* as an antenuptial contract which excluded a community interest between husband and wife.

After consulting with the fiscal, the governor allowed the Jews to retain a number of these privileges: the *ketubah*, *casher* meat, the *finta* and the Jewish Orphans Fund. Jews were not always exempted from Saturday guard duty. In 1828 Moise Cardoze, as corresponding member to the High Commission, requested this exemption.

With the acquisition of equal rights the Jews were no longer required to take the discriminatory oath in court. Now, with covered head, they simply swore: "This is true so help me God" without adding "or may He punish me."[23] By government order the community called itself since 1826 "Principal Dutch Portuguese Jewish Synagogue."

In September, 1826, Moise Cardoze of Piza fame was appointed the first corresponding member to the High Commission for Israelitic Affairs in

[23] See appendix 10.

Holland. As such he ranked higher than the president in the communal hierarchy, was the most powerful Jew in the community, and held a place of honor in the synagogue.[24] It was his duty (1) to present reports on all communal affairs to the High Commission, to the government of Holland, and to the governor; (2) to use all his influence in conciliating the parties in any dispute, and (3) to attend all meetings of the parnassim and the Great Council of the community. Three years later, probably at Cardoze's behest, the Jews of Curaçao were required by royal decree (December 29, 1829) to submit all their rabbinic decisions for revision by a board of three rabbis.

The community had three corresponding members between 1826 and 1870 when the Commission for Jewish Affairs in Holland was dissolved. They were Moise Cardoze (1826-1834), Moses Cohen Henriquez (1834-1865), and Salomo E. Levy Maduro (1865-1870).[25]

On the demand of the Colonial Ministry, the notables Moise Cardoze and Josias Dovale drew up new bylaws with the assistance of the parnassim Jacob J. Naar and Eliao Lopez. This should have been done after the reconciliation of 1822. Under Article 22 of the new bylaws, all members 25 years and above, excepting community employees and those who had gone into bankruptcy, were eligible for parnassim "as long as they were competent for the charge." Subdivision I of Art. 59 and Art. 60 drastically reduced the Chief Rabbi's authority. Prohibited from interfering in the private matters of members, even those of a religious nature, he had to follow the orders of the parnassim and not occupy himself with the administration of the synagogue. The price of graves was fixed to this scale: 2 florins for children under four years; 3 florins for ages four to eight; 4 florins for ages eight to thirteen; 8 florins for single people thirteen and above; 16 florins for marrieds. To prevent the opening of new synagogues, Art. 118 required all religious ceremonies to be conducted in the synagogue, excepting prayers held in the house of mourning and in the home of a newborn son on the night before the circumcision. Article 124 made it obligatory to record the minutes of a meeting in Dutch and Portuguese, as was done until 1844, and thereafter in an hispaniolized Portuguese, and later in Spanish as is currently done. These bylaws, consisting of 131 articles, were drawn up between October 12 and December 5, 1825.[26] New bylaws were made in 1833. These prohibited any change whatsoever in

[24] According to the late Jossy M. L. Maduro, this place was in front of the bench occupied by the parnassim.

[25] Dispositions of Colonial and Judicial Ministers of March 31 and April 10, 1865, no. 17, let. B/20.

[26] Koloniën 3766, no. 33, 7k, 71, 172. These communal regulations appear in Koloniën 3766, no. 205. See appendix 1, p. 613.

the ritual which had to be the same followed by the Portuguese Jewish Community of Amsterdam[27] (illus. 216).

Although considered on the same plane of equality, the Jews did not hold important government positions or form part of the Island Council or the Court of Justice. They were, however, promoted to high posts in the militia, e.g., Josias and David Dovale as captains in 1821; David Abinun de Lima, 1st lieutenant; Moise Jesurun, Philipe Lyon and Mordechay Ricardo, 2nd lieutenants. District Chief Manuel Haim Alvares Correa was appointed 1st lieutenant in the Territorial Army. Four Jews were appointed as government translators and interpreters between 1816 and 1835: Abraham Salom Delvalle, Mordechay Ricardo, Moses Cohen Henriquez and Isaac Henriquez. The first two had been serving in that capacity from the time of the English occupation. Isaac Salas served for many years as government broker; Jacob de Abraham Jesurun as government clerk according to his lealty oath of 1822. Not until 1823 were the Catholic and Jewish communities allowed to share in the National Poor Fund heretofore restricted to the Protestant communities.

Little by little the Jews began to take part in one government council or another. They are encountered as members of the Council of Commerce and Maritime Questions, of the Communal Administration Council in 1830 with Moise Cardoze as its first Jew, and of the Island Council from 1844 with the appointment of Abraham Haim Senior.[28] It is noteworthy that as late as 1850 the Catholics had no representation in this very important Island Council then composed of five Protestants and two Jews. Long before their representation in that council, Jews had been serving as district chiefs and as members of each important government commission.

The salaries of the Protestant ministers had always been paid by the Dutch West India Company and later by the Colonial Government. While the Catholic priests were paid by the government starting with Pastor Niewindt in 1824, only in 1835 were the Jews allotted 1,000 florins annually for their rabbi or his titular substitute.[29]

In recognition of the measures setting them on an equal plane with the other citizens, grateful Curaçoan Jewry cooperated very closely with the government. When the devastating storm of 1825 swept Holland, they gave

[27] For details, see appendix 1, p. 616.

[28] *CC*, Aug. 17, 1844. President of the Island Orphans Chamber, member of the school commission, founder and president of the savings bank (Spaarbank), manager of a public lottery organized by Daniel da Costa Gomez de la Penha in 1850, founder of the banking house Edwards, Henriquez & Co., and one of Curaçao's biggest merchants (CGA, Not. Acts, y. 1848, vol. I, no. 11; Emmanuel, *Precious Stones*, pp. 455-56).

[29] RA, Royal Edict of Nov. 22, 1835, no. 1, Hoofd-Commissie Archives, no. 841, y. 1835.

three and one-half times more than the combined contribution of the Catholic and Protestant churches for the relief of the Dutch victims. In 1834 on the occasion of the bicentennial of the Dutch occupation of Curaçao, the Jews distinguished themselves by their patriotic manifestations. On that occasion they held a special prayer of thanksgiving in the synagogue. In July of the following year they paid great homage to visiting Prince Willem Frederik Hendrik, later King Willem II. In fact, Abraham de Isaac Henriquez was host to this royal guest at his *Zuurzak* plantation. In 1846 when the great drought of Surinam brought famine to Paramaribo, it was Jacob Abraham Jesurun who magnanimously supplied Governor R. F. van Raders, ex-governor of Curaçao, with a shipload of provisions at cost. For this kindness he earned the thanks of Surinam and King Willem II of Holland.[30]

THE SYNAGOGUE CELEBRATES ITS FIRST CENTENARY

For the Jews of Curaçao the synagogue symbolized everything dear to them. It recalled the troubles and the happy past of their community. A hundred years had elapsed since its inauguration by Haham Jesurun in Pesaḥ of 1732. Three generations had since come into being. The fathers and grandfathers of 1832 had lived through the communal strife of 1746-50, of 1770, 1785, 1796, 1811, and finally the conflict over Piza. But they had also rejoiced in the stately inauguration of 1732, the solemn service of the reconciliation of 1750, and the celebration of Haham Da Fonseca's Golden Jubilee of service to the community. In that holy house they had celebrated the happy and sad events in the lives of their beloved rulers of the House of Orange-Nassau. There they had also delighted in the joyful *ḥatanim* processions, heard the solemn sermons of circumstance delivered by four erudite rabbis, the stately funeral services offered for their distinguished members, the many prayers for rain or other relief — prayers which they would chant to melodies jealously handed down from father to son. When he took his seat in the synagogue, the member knew that his father and grandfather had sat there before him and that his son and grandson would occupy it tomorrow. For him it was all so holy and meaningful.

The parnassim and members decided to celebrate the first centenary of their synagogue with great splendor. For months they had been preparing for this event. They repaired the synagogue at a cost of 2,911.28 florins from contributions by the members and not from the Community Chest. Moses Lopez Penha composed eight liturgical poems — one on the order of a Psalm

[30] *CC*, Feb. 2 and Oct. 20, 1846.

of David — and two prayers in prose, one in fairly good Hebrew.[31] He set these poems to melodies familiar to the congregation. One of the melodies was adapted from the old Spanish romance *A Los Campos*[32] and another from the *Adon 'Olam* of New York's Shearith Israel. Twenty-four copies of these songs were made. Assessor David Namias and the *dayyanim* Penha and Benjamin de Salomon de Casseres invited the members to join in the singing. Ten Scrolls of the Law were used in this celebration which was conducted like a festival for Bridegrooms of the Law. As Pesaḥ of 1832 fell on Saturday, the scrolls could not be accompanied with lit candles. Benjamin de Casseres and David Namias de Crasto gave a sermon of circumstance in the presence of the governor and other notables while Mordechay Ricardo acted as master of ceremonies. The singing was carried over to the following day.[33]

Early in 1834 the community was reorganized.[34] So wrote the parnassim — A. H. Senior, Joseph P. Brandao and Moses de Marchena — to their Amsterdam colleagues on June 12, 1834. They gave no details.

THE RELIGIOUS TRIBUNAL
1826-1855

Despite the Alvares Correa conversion, the parnassim did not trouble to engage a rabbi from Holland. Amazed at this indifference, a Protestant minister asked Jewish friends why they did not have a rabbi and was told, he says, that "there was absolutely no need for one." But he noted that services in the synagogue were conducted regularly as though there were six rabbis. "The men appeared in the synagogue with regularity, better even than the Christians."[35]

The rabbinate was occupied by Assessor Namias. He had Benjamin de Salomon de Casseres in his Beth Din, and from 1827 Moses de Daniel Lopez Penha also. In certain cases Namias or Penha was assisted by Abraham de Jeudah Ben Atar (Abenatar).

Casseres, a merchant by trade, did not earn anything from the rabbinate. Penha gave up his business to devote full time to teach and expound ecclesiastical questions. He succeeded Namias as rabbinic assessor on the latter's

[31] This is remarkable, for Penha who was born in Curaçao did not have the background of an Ets Haim student. See appendix 18E and illus. 89.

[32] See Emmanuel, *Histoire des Israélites de Salonique*, pp. 199-200, for such ballads and the adaptation of their melodies to liturgical poems.

[33] *CC*, April 19, 1832.

[34] PJCAA, Catalogue 73a.

[35] Bosch, vol. III, pp. 110-11.

death in 1843 and held the post until he passed away on January 1, 1854.[36]

One can readily understand how little authority a tribunal of this type could exercise on the community in religious matters. So it is not surprising that several members demanded all sorts of religious dispensations. A certain Selomo Haim de Efraim Selomo Curiel, who was married to Jeudith de Jacob de Castro, died childless on August 7, 1832, at the age of twenty-nine.[37] His 26-year-old widow wished to remarry. She was subject to the laws of the levirate or *ḥalizah*,[38] which had to be performed by one of her three brothers-in-law: Elias, Jacob or Moses Curiel. Elias, the eldest, refused, and so did Jacob. Moses, the youngest, was in Aruba. The widow could not travel to Aruba and even if she could it was pointless to go where no Beth Din existed. Jeudith thereupon sought the intervention of the parnassim whose president was none other than her brother-in-law Elias. He in turn pressured the rabbinical tribunal made up of Namias, Penha and De Casseres. This powerless body yielded to the parnassim's wishes and allowed the widow to remarry on condition that she would promise "to observe the precept of Halisa at any time her brothers-in-law were disposed to carry it through." A haham of authority would have told the worthy president that it was up to him to give the *ḥalizah* and thus set a good example for the entire community. Five days later, on September 25, 1833, the widow married Benjamin de Salomon Salom Delvalle with the usual religious ceremonies[39] (illus. 87-88).

This compromise further demonstrates the mediocrity of the Beth Din. The obligation of the levirate lies with the husband's brothers and not with the widow. The permission granted was too daring for the period. Religiously it was equivalent to permitting a married woman to contract a marriage on the condition that she would accept a divorce whenever her first husband was disposed to grant it.

A similar case arose five years later. The Beth Din — composed of Penha,

[36] For more details on Penha and his titles, see Emmanuel, *Precious Stones*, pp. 85, 454-55.

[37] His grave could not be found in the cemetery; his vital statistics were obtained from CGA, Death Register, y. 1832.

[38] Deuteronomy 25:5-10.

[39] MIA, Minutas de Parnassim, Aug. 22, 1833; Beth Din of Lopez Penha Archives. The decision of the Beth Din was given in these terms: "Nos infrascriptos David Namias de Crasto Assessor, Moseh L. Penha e Benjn Selo. De Casseres formamos o corpo de Beth-Din . . . declaramos por esta haver a Senhora Jeudith V[iuv]a de Selo. H[ai]m Curiel . . . licitado a referida Sra Jeudith para poder celebrar seo Hymene con todas as legalidades Mosaicas. Entendendo que sera do dever da ditta Sra inda depois de casada de observar a todo tiempo o preceito de Halisa quando hum dos cunhados for disposto a effectuallo . . . Curaçao 7 Tisry Ao 5594" (Sept. 20, 1833) [MIA, Ket., vol. VIII, no. 60]. Namias himself solemnized the marriage on Tishri 12, 5594. According to Curaçoan tradition, one of the widow's brothers-in-law finally performed the *ḥalizah* years after.

David Gomes Casseres and Abraham Ben Atar — authorized Lea, the daughter of Rephael Namias de Crasto and widow of Jeosuah de Mordechay Henriquez, to remarry under the same conditions of the Curiel case.[40] In so doing they abolished an ancient biblical prescription.

ECCLESIASTICAL EMPLOYEES OF THE COMMUNITY 1815-1856

In addition to Namias and Penha who were responsible for the religious direction of the community, there were the following cantors, schoolteachers, ritual slaughterers, sextons, caretakers of the ritual bath and circumcisers from the period between Haham Da Fonseca's death in 1815 and Haham Chumaceiro's arrival in January, 1856.

CANTORS AND TEACHERS

Abraham Haim Mendes Monsanto — Hazzan.[41]
David Hisquiao Lopez Henriquez — Ribbi, b. 1772; d. 1822.[42]
Benjamin Hisquiau Bezalel de Casseres — Dayyan and hazzan without pay; d. September 5, 1837.[43]
David Rodrigues — Able teacher who entered service during Haham Da Fonseca's rabbinate and died in 1831.[44]
Isaac de David Lopez da Fonseca — Hazzan, 1827-32; more will be said about him after this list.
Moses Jesurun Lindo — Teacher in 1819.
Jacob Rodriguez Pereira — Teacher in 1819.
Daniel Cardozo da Costa — Assistant Hazzan in 1836.
Isaac Idanha de Casseres — Ribbi and ritual slaughterer; d. 1839.
Eliau Cardozo da Costa — Assistant ribbi.
Jacob de Abraham Sasso — Hazzan since 1791 under Da Fonseca's rabbinate. He died on January 13, 1840, at the age of 78 years.[45]
David de Abraham de Meza — Hazzan.[46]

[40] MIA, Ket. VIII, nos. 87-88. Namias did not officiate, for he was related to one of the widow's brothers-in-law. This is what Penha stated in the declaration of the Beth Din of Oct. 22, 1838.

[41] Hashcaboth Register, vol. I, month of Tishri. The year of death is missing. Perhaps he was one and the same person as Moseh Mendes Monsanto's son Abraham who was born in 1781 and served abroad as hazzan.

[42] Emmanuel, *Precious Stones*, p. 422.

[43] *Ibid.*, pp. 439-40.

[44] *Ibid.*, pp. 433-34.

[45] *Ibid.*, pp. 440-41.

[46] MIA, Hashcaboth, vol. I, month of Nissan; year of death missing. It is doubtful that he was the same person as David Hizquiau de Abraham de Meza who married in 1832.

David de Selomo de Castro — Ribbi, d. December 7, 1851.[47]
Samuel de Isaac Hoheb — Assistant Hazzan since 1847; d. 1859.[48]
David de Moise Cardoze — Hazzan since 1840. He delivered the eulogy at David Namias de Crasto's funeral in 1843.[49] Since the ecclesiastical administration then was subject to the whims of the parnassim, he, and not the Rabbinic Assessor M. L. Penha, signed the *ketuboth* from the time of Namias' death to Haham Chumaceiro's arrival in 1856.[50] Not always preaching to the liking of his coreligionists, he served the community until his death on January 20, 1871, at almost eighty years of age.[51]
Samuel Levy Maduro Jr. — Hazzan; more will be said about him immediately after this list.

RITUAL SLAUGHTERERS AND SEXTONS

Moses de Abraham Lopes Dias, 1815; Jeosuah de Mordechay Henriquez, 1822; Mosseh M. Morpurgo, 1823; Elias Namias de Crasto and Moses de Castro, 1834; Jacob Jesurun Pinto, also sexton in 1839, was replaced by his son David; Jacob Levy Maduro, also sexton since 1819; Moses Marache, sexton; Nissim H. Finsi, sexton.

CARETAKERS OF THE RITUAL BATH

Ribca Beruha Louzada, Hana de Samuel Levy Maduro and Rachel Osorio.

CIRCUMCISERS

Moses de Abraham Jesurun, Joseph de Jacob Curiel, Isaac Senior, Jacob Haim de Jeosuah Naar,[52] Jeosuah de Jacob Naar; Moises Frois Ricardo, active from 1830 to 1870[53] (illus. 86).

With the exception of the circumcisers who offered their services gratis, these employees were paid out of the Community Chest. In 1844 when it had receipts of 9,736.90 florins and disbursements of 8,522 florins, the salaries of the above employees, including those of a doctor for the needy, a bookkeeper, a secretary, and so forth, came to 4,033 florins.

[47] *Ibid.*, month of Kislev.
[48] *Ibid.*, month of Adar I.
[49] *CC*, Oct. 28, 1843.
[50] He signed the *ketuboth* "D. Cardoze C. S." — meaning C[haliaḥ]. S[ibur]. or hazzan.
[51] For details about him, see Emmanuel, *Precious Stones*, pp. 468-69.
[52] *Ibid.*, pp. 464-65.
[53] CGA, Rechtsbank, y. 1870.

CONFLICTS OVER CANTORS LOPEZ DA FONSECA, CARDOZE AND MADURO

Nominations for new cantors invariably were fraught with stormy discussion. When Isaac de David Lopez da Fonseca applied, influential men of the community like Moise Cardoze, Mordechay Haim Senior and David Gomes Casseres, objected to his inexperience and single state. On being consulted, the Beth Din approved the appointment provided that Da Fonseca finished his apprenticeship, married as soon as possible and until then refrained from officiating on Yom Kippur. He was engaged under these conditions in 1827. Shortly before the celebration of the synagogue, he threatened to resign unless his salary was increased to 1,000 florins annually. The parnassim accepted his resignation. He did not marry until 1833. Within the year he was engaged as cantor of the Jamaica community where he served until his death. This incident was disturbing enough to merit mention years later in the Moses Cohen Henriquez report to the High Commission for Israelitic Affairs in Holland.

On Cantor Sasso's death in 1840, Moise Cardoze's son David was taken on as hazzan at 1,500 florins a year. He had strong supporters in Moses C. Henriquez and several others who advocated the modernization of the religious services. He needed an assistant after Assessor Namias passed away. The parnassim accordingly consulted the Council of Elders and then began searching for an assistant cantor at the record salary of 700 florins annually. Two candidates came forth: David de Salomo de Castro of Curaçao who was disqualified for having applied after the time limit, and Samuel de Salomo Levy Maduro of St. Thomas. Born in Curaçao in 1798, Maduro had gone to St. Thomas when twenty. According to Moses C. Henriquez, Maduro had been assistant cantor in Curaçao before his ten-year engagement in that capacity in St. Thomas. Maduro wanted 1,000 florins a year. After a very noisy meeting of the Great Council of the synagogue on April 1, 1844, he was granted 900 florins over the objections of Corresponding Member Moses C. Henriquez (illus. 85).

Assistant cantor Maduro was the maternal uncle of Salomo Elias Levy Maduro who was making a name for himself in the synagogue and in Curaçoan commerce. In 1837 when he established the firm today known as Maduro & Sons, Salomo paid a communal tax of only four florins. He progressed steadily: in 1842 he paid 8 florins; in 1844, 24 florins and in 1849, 40 florins as against the 120 paid by men like Moses C. Henriquez, Haim Josiau C. Henriquez, Jacob Naar, David Valencia Jr., various members of the Jesurun family, and others. Naturally he protected his uncle. Five and one half months after the

latter's arrival, S.E.L. Maduro circulated a petition for his uncle's promotion to cantor without an increase in salary but with the right to wear a three-cornered hat and a collar on his ecclesiastical robe in place of the black jacket and knee breeches. Moses C. Henriquez complained that the object was to harass the "brave man" Hazzan Cardoze and to consider the assistant cantor on the same level as Cardoze. Maduro obtained only fifty-one signatures and these were not of the very important members. Moses C. Henriquez had Governor Elsevier intervene; as a result, the promotion never took place. However, after hearing Maduro's supporters, the governor authorized the assistant cantor to dress like Hazzan Cardoze and even to sit beside him.

Meanwhile Moses C. Henriquez wrote a lengthy letter to the High Commission of Holland against the assistant cantor and his party, and in favor of Hazzan Cardoze on whom he lavished much praise. S.E.L. Maduro and his friends also wrote to the High Commission to explain their side of the matter. Suffice to say that toward the end of 1844 Maduro returned to his post in St. Thomas where he officiated until his death in 1867.

In contrast to his assistant, Hazzan Cardoze was beardless and advanced in his ideas. He proposed the admission of girls to the religious schools and shocked the parnassim since this had never been done before.[54] In 1839 several reforms were effected — specifically what, has not been recorded although there is frequent talk about them. It is known that the manner of making freewill offerings was modified, that singing in a high voice in the synagogue was forbidden, and so forth. A number of the members wished to modernize their services on the order of the St. Thomas community.[55] In March, 1845, a choir of 26 boys was organized with the support of Moses C. Henriquez, his brother Samuel then community president, and Hazzan Cardoze. Because Art. 124 of the bylaws permitted no alteration in the rite, the majority of the community council accepted this innovation half-heartedly. Fearing sabotage by the conservative element, one of the organizers took the precaution of putting a notice in the newspaper about the choir. The result: the synagogue was surrounded by the curious and even by the police on the first night of Passover, 1845. The service took place in an orderly fashion without causing displeasure to the conservatives.[56]

[54] In 1845 Moses Lopez Penha tried to admit girls to the religious classes, without success. Haham Chumaceiro opened a Sunday School class for girls in 1860. Twenty-five attended (*The Occident*, Sept. 13, 1860).

[55] *CC*, May 29, 1841.

[56] A study of the documents relating to this incident shows the feverish interest in the elections for community councillor. Campaigners sent a boat to Coro, Ven., to fetch other members to vote in behalf of their candidate.

Their efforts to get the Dutch government's approval for a change in the services met with defeat — the Colonial Minister's decree of August 12, 1845, prohibited innovations.[57] In 1845 when the progressives wished to modernize various songs, S.E.L. Maduro of the conservative party vigorously objected. Moses C. Henriquez took the matter to the governor who agreed that the change desired could not be construed as a departure from the ritual. Between 1847 and 1849 there was discord in the community because of the antagonism between Corresponding Member Henriquez and the ultraconservative group over Hazzan Cardoze. Several members demanded new regulations and eventually got them. At the same time they decided to adopt as their official prayer book the one used by the Portuguese Jewish Community of Amsterdam and no other (Art. 138).[58] Other members clamored for a modernization in the religious services, specifically, that certain prayers were to be recited only by the cantor without congregational response. This was accepted in part by the conservatives after much deliberation.[59] At the bottom of these questions of a religious nature was a certain rivalry between the Cohen Henriquez family and S.E.L. Maduro who was making rapid strides in his business. These difficulties may be considered a prelude to the schism of 1864.

To the credit of the conservatives and liberals, they temporarily set aside their differences to unite in helping their oppressed brothers in Damascus, Rhodes, Poland and Russia. The community held a solemn service in the synagogue in May, 1841, when news arrived of Moses Montefiore's return to London after a triumphant visit to the Middle East in behalf of the Jews of Damascus. Moses C. Henriquez offered a discourse of circumstance. Very surprisingly he also composed for the occasion a poem in Hebrew in honor of Montefiore — *Az Yashir Moshe* — which was sung in the synagogue.[60] So we find the corresponding member sharing rabbinical duties with the assessor, even to the extent of writing verses in Hebrew. Three years later prayers were held in the synagogue for the oppressed Jews in Poland and Russia. Generally donations for victims of persecution were made during the prayer services.

[57] MIA, Minutas de Parnassim, Dec. 28, 1847.

[58] According to Governor Elsevier's report to Holland also telling of the "existing clashes" (CGA, *KV*, y. 1849). See also Obadia Mendes da Costa's letter published in *The Occident*, vol. V, 1847-48, pp. 514-15.

[59] *Shemah Israel*, Curaçao, May 12, 1865, no. 11, p. 143.

[60] According to a personal letter in the Mikvé Israel Archives written by Moses C. Henriquez to Josias Abinun de Lima of Coro on May 6, 1841.

ECONOMIC DEPRESSION

The prosperity of Curaçao then hinged on (1) its rainfall, and (2) the political and economic climate of the Spanish colonies — later Venezuela, Colombia and Santo Domingo.

After Bolivar's victory, Curaçao suffered a severe business depression, a continuous dry spell from 1819 to 1825 which ruined the planters, and in 1827 a smallpox epidemic that claimed many victims. The economic situation became so desperate that the tradesmen clamored for a free port. This was actually realized on January 1, 1827, but it came too late to help.[61] It was difficult to divert to Curaçao the trade concentrated in Danish St.Thomas, a free port since 1764.[62] Real estate values toppled. Houses worth 10,000 florins in 1828 brought as little as 2,000 or 3,000 florins in 1833.[63]

Meanwhile the government was taxing the community-owned properties at their old value. The parnassim therefore urged the High Commission for Israelitic Affairs in Holland to have the properties declared tax-exempt. And in this regard they also appealed to the Amsterdam parnassim for their support.[64] To cut costs the community stopped the practice (established since its foundation) of supplying the members candles, without charge, on Passover (to search for leaven), on the night of Tish'ah be-Ab, and on Ḥanukkah. As its moneys were invested in mortgages, the Jewish community sustained huge losses in 1834 — 23,568.80 florins in unpaid mortgages. The Jewish Orphans Fund lost 4,275.66 florins. This devaluation of real property continued until 1844, when the community sold five houses at public auction at a loss of 13,993.82 florins. The capital fund of 97,780.71 florins that it had in 1827 dwindled to 49,129.37 florins in 1849.

Since the Jews were landowners,[65] their capital diminished from day to day. There was no possible future in trade, and for that reason a number of Jews had to leave the island. In 1833 there were only 747 Jews in Curaçao.

[61] The Netherlands' Regulation no. 58 of Sept. 14, 1815, opened up the West Indian ports, including Curaçao, to ships of all nations. The inclusion of Curaçao, though not a free port, was to favor Dutch ships as they did not have to pay the 6% ad valorem duty required of foreign vessels (Gabriel Pinedo, *Oorlogs-Contrabande* [Amsterdam, 1882], p. 20, note 2).

[62] Charles E. Taylor, *Leaflets from the Danish West Indies* (London, 1888), p. 15.

[63] See *CC*, Jan. 4, 1834, for a description of the poverty in Curaçao during that era; also, *CC*, Dec. 18, 1841.

[64] Letter of Curaçao's parnassim — H. J. Cohen Henriquez and Jeosuah Naar — to their Amsterdam colleagues (PJCAA, Catalogue 72).

[65] According to the CEOE, no. 172, the Jews owned 45 plantations in 1842. The "Rooibrieven" of the CGA show that the Jews had many houses. For example, Jeosuah de Sola owned twelve houses, two of which were on Heerenstraat (*CC*, May 13, 1820); Esther de Abraham Jesurun, on her death

The number spurted to 864 in 1835, comprising 380 women, 114 boys, 100 girls and only 270 men. The parnassim tried to facilitate emigration by providing the needy with the necessary fare and a sum equal to the relief they would have received from the community over a six-month period. The benevolent society founded in 1839 with the aim of aiding the poor, clothing the children and giving them free schooling, helped greatly but not enough to stop the flow of Jews from Curaçao. This exodus continued until 1850, and is confirmed by the total absence of marriages in the community from August 24, 1847, to January 17, 1849.

EMIGRATION TO THE MAINLAND

Since the Curaçoan Jews enjoyed an enviable commercial reputation, their establishment in the Spanish Main was officially desirable. The government of Nueva Grenada, Colombia, by decree of May 6, 1819, accorded to "the members of the Hebrew Nation" the right to settle, guaranteed them religious liberty and the same "political rights" enjoyed by the other citizens.[66] Two years later on August 22, 1821, the Venezuelan government abolished the Tribunal of the Inquisition in these terms: "Article 1. The Tribunal of the Inquisition, also known as Holy Office, shall be expunged; it shall never be re-established and all its property and income shall be added to the public funds."[67]

In the face of such facilities and guarantees, the Curaçoan Jews settled in various parts of Venezuela and Colombia. Most of them flocked to Coro where they had settled sporadically since 1797 and permanently since 1825. Other emigrés expanded the Curaçoan colonies in St. Thomas, Santo Domingo, Jacmel (Haiti), St. Kitts, Barranquilla, Puerto Plata, Cartagena, Santa Marta, Rio Hacha, Puerto Cabello, Maracaibo, Barcelona (Ven.), Valencia (Ven.), Caracas, Puerto Rico, New Orleans, New York, and elsewhere.[68]

It was not easy to carry on a trade on the mainland. Although the commercial treaties between Colombia and Holland gave Dutch subjects the right to settle in Colombia and Venezuela, Articles 17 and 18 of the Colombian

in 1846, left at least 20 houses and the four plantations *Zuikertuintje*, *De Vrede*, *Rif* and *Watervliet*; Abraham de Meza, d. 1846, left nine houses, three of which were on Heerenstraat; Obadia Mendes da Costa left at least eight houses and the *Gerustheid* plantation in 1851; about the same time, Moses C. Henriquez owned eight houses and the three plantations *Bloempot*, *Macaai* and *Rust*.

66 *CC*, Jan. 8, 1820.

67 This decree came a year after Portugal allowed Jews to enter Lisbon.

68 See appendix 16.

constitution forbade the Jews from engaging in retail trade and settling in the interior. Those on the maritime coast could travel only five miles from port, and those situated on the shores of a river or lake could travel only a half mile upstream or downstream. Article 22 prohibited the Jews from practicing their religion and having cemeteries. This violated Article 15 of the trade agreement of 1820 between Holland and Colombia which guaranteed liberty of conscience to all Dutch citizens, including the Jews. Fortunately for Venezuela's honor, its congress modified Article 22 in 1830. In 1834 it granted religious freedom to all its people,[69] so that the Jews could have synagogues and cemeteries as allowed in Coro.

Certain leaders of the Catholic Church did not follow the laws.[70] The same was true of different government administrations. From time to time there were incidents like the Pardo-Senior matter that required the intervention of the Dutch government. In December, 1826, the merchants Isaac Pardo and Jacob Senior Jr. sold the commissary officer at Maracaibo flour and meat in return for which they received government bonds. When they tendered the bonds in payment of duty as was customary, these were refused. Because Pardo and Senior declined to pay in currency, they were imprisoned. Pardo was released after a boat of his was sequestered and sold. Senior won his freedom only after his brother-in-law came from Curaçao and paid the customs official. The Dutch authorities intervened in behalf of the merchants who eventually received a proper indemnity.[71]

DISORDERS OF CORO

As early as 1797 one or another Curaçoan Jew settled in the Spanish colony of Coro, which was only seventy kilometers from Curaçao. That year one Samuel Pereira Brandao renounced his Dutch nationality to become a Venezuelan citizen and resident of Coro.[72] A little before 1825 the Venezuelan government invited the Jews of Curaçao to settle in Coro. They were guaranteed complete protection and religious liberty. The Curaçoan Jews settled there not as undesirable refugees, but as merchants and sailors whose aim was to employ their capital, their credit and their experience to the benefit

[69] Article 218 of the constitution of Sept. 22, 1830. See also decree of Feb. 17, 1834, *Cuerpo de Leyes de Venezuela*, p. 130.

[70] *CC*, Jan. 23, 1841.

[71] K. H. Corporaal, *De Internationaalrechtlijke betrekkingen tusschen Nederland en Venezuela, 1816-1920* (Leiden, 1920), pp. 83-85; 590.

[72] OAC 108, Jan. 7, 1797. Communication of the late Jossy M. L. Maduro given to the author a few days before his sudden death.

of the province of Coro, Curaçao[73] and themselves. In appreciation of the Jewish interest in Coro, the Venezuelan government appointed the Curaçoan Jew David Hoheb[74] mayor of that city. Nevertheless, in 1831 certain Christian elements demanded their expulsion.[75]

Although the Jews of Coro had the right to build a synagogue, they refrained from doing so in order not to offend the religious feelings of the natives. They had a fine burial ground. In 1848, when they numbered some 160 souls, they conducted the Sabbath and Holy Days services in the home of A. M. Senior. They constituted a vital part of the economy, for they paid the greatest portion of the duty at the customhouse — some 60,000 to 70,000 Venezuelan dollars annually.[76]

During the revolutions of 1848 and 1854 the Jews cooperated closely with the local government and contributed generously to the upkeep of the garrison. After the revolution of July, 1854,[77] Governor Navarro of Coro wrote to the governor of Curaçao, manifesting his satisfaction with the loyalty of the Dutch citizens, mostly Jews, to whom he promised full protection. This same governor later gave his tacit aid to the fomenters of the disorders of 1855.

The province of Coro, like several others in Venezuela, found itself in constant need of money. The governor and the military commandant were in the habit of turning to the Jews for large sums for the maintenance of the garrison — a fort of 300 men — and sometimes also for the payment of government employees. On December 31, 1854, Jeudah Senior lent the sum of 500 pesos although he had not been paid for previous loans. The military commandant General Falcon demanded a new loan from the Jews who this time refused.

The Jews considered these operations too dangerous to continue indefinitely, especially since the public funds were being poorly administered. They knew, through Governor Navarro, that the central government at Caracas no longer stood behind these loans. The Jews did agree, however, to maintain a garrison of twenty-five men which was sufficient in peacetime. Their proposition

[73] Coro's exports to Curaçao for the year 1837-38 amounted to 11,417.64 Venezuelan dollars and her imports to 46,854.96 V.D. The next year her exports to Curaçao rose to 117,544.68 V.D. and her imports to 159,129.60 V.D. (CGA, KV, 1838-39). The Venezuelan dollar was worth two florins.

[74] He also was a ritual slaughterer. In 1832 his relative Samuel Hoheb published at his expense, in Caracas, Menasseh Ben Israel's *Mikve Israel e Esperanza de Israel*. Illus. 91.

[75] The year 1831 is given by the Coro refugees of 1855.

[76] *The Occident*, vol. V, 1847-48, p. 318; vol. VI, 1848, p. 155.

[77] On this occasion the Curaçao Government dispatched a warship to Coro to protect the Dutch subjects — mostly Jews (*CC*, July 7, 1854).

came too late. The governor had meanwhile disbanded the troops. On July 31, 1854, the soldiers threatened to attack the Jews whom they assured would not receive the governor's protection. The alarmed Jews appeared before the governor for assistance; he turned a deaf ear. Believing themselves exempt from punishment, the organizers of these riots published four pamphlets on the first, second and fifth of February, 1855: *La Mano de Dios*, *El Pueblo y los Judios*, *A los Judios* and *El Pueblo*.[78] These pamphlets incited the populace to attack the Jews. Words led to deeds. During the night of February 4, 1855, thirty armed persons, mostly discharged soldiers, fired on Jewish homes and sacked the commercial establishments of Jeudah Senior and Samuel Levy Maduro Jr. while shouting "death to the Jews and life to their money!" They desecrated the cemetery and demanded in loud cries the expulsion of the Jews. Meanwhile the governor of Curaçao sent the warships *Arend* and *Pallace* to Coro, a city of ten thousand souls, to protect the Dutch subjects.

Even before the arrival of the warships the Jews started leaving for Curaçao. The refugees, 160 in all, reached Curaçao on February 13 and found the entire community in sympathy with them. They appeared before Notary D. M. Rammelman Elsevier and related all the events in the form of a protest. Then they addressed themselves to the governor of Curaçao and to the consular agent of Venezuela in Curaçao.[79] They proved, among other things, that one of their previous loans had not been recognized by the central government of Venezuela. After this formality, the refugees published a

[78] *God's Hand*, *The Nation and the Jews*, *To the Jews*, and *The Nation*.

[79] We believe it of interest to furnish fuller details on these events as culled from the Notarial Acts of the CGA. The protest was signed by Jeudah Senior, partner of Abraham Haim and Jacob Senior; David Abraham Senior, representing Haim Cohen Henriquez and Herman Cohen Henriquez & Co.; Josias Lopez Henriquez, Isaac Namias de Crasto; Jeosuah da Costa Gomez for the firm of Jesurun & Da Costa Gomez; Jeosuah de Sola as partner of M. Alvares Correa Jr.; Haim Abinun de Lima Jr., representing his father E. A. de Lima; Isaac Abenatar Jr., partner of Abraham Jacob Senior; Jacob Delvalle; Elias H. Lopez, associate of S.E.L. Maduro; Joshua Jesurun; Jose Curiel for the firm of Jose Curiel & Son; Jacob Senior, Jacob Moreno Henriquez; Isaac Namias de Crasto Jr., associate of Mose Curiel; Jose Henriquez; Isaac Abraham Senior; Jacob A. Senior; Isaac Pereira; Abraham M. Senior, representing A. H. & J. Senior, and also as representative of O. M. da Costa & Jacob (Delosa) [De Sola]; Naftali Gomes Casseres, representing B(?). D. Jesurun; David Namias de Crasto; Isaac Lopez Henriquez — all Dutch subjects (CGA, Not. Acts, 1855, vol. I, no. 29, Feb. 15, 1855). There was another protest made by Eliao Pereira Brandao on Dec. 11, 1855 (*ibid.*, vol. III, no. 56), and a "Manifestación" signed by Isaac A. de Lima Jr. and the 23 coreligionists above cited. Protests also were lodged by the non-Jews Francisco Agnendo and Carlisto Azaaje of Trujillo, Ven., who appeared individually before the governor of Curaçao. The former stated that the Coro authorities had gone to the village of Savaneta on the day of the disorders (*ibid.*, vol. I, nos. 30-31). Among the victims who filed claims for damages were Isaac Abenatar for 21,400 florins and Jeosuah Jesurun for 12,000 florins (*ibid.*, vol. III, 1856, no. 95; 1857, no. 85).

brochure setting forth all the facts. It enumerated the benefits Coro had derived from the Jews, it stressed the Jews' constant respect for the laws and customs of the country, and it placed all blame for the riots on the Coro government authorities, not its people.

The Dutch government dispatched O. van Rees as special envoy to Curaçao to take charge of the matter. He demanded a large indemnity from Venezuela. Like Spain and Portugal in times past, Venezuela also tried to draw a line between Christian and Jewish Dutch subjects. Unwaveringly the Dutch government replied as it had replied to Spain and Portugal in the 17th century: "We do not recognize the difference of Christian or Jew; a Dutch subject is a Dutch subject."[80] As a result of this intervention Coro's governor and judge were dismissed. After prolonged deliberations, the Venezuelan government agreed to pay the Jewish victims an indemnity of 200,000 florins. These refugees presented a silver chandelier to Governor R. F. van Lansberge in gratitude for his intercession in their behalf while consul general from Holland to Venezuela. It bore this inscription: "The victims of the intolerance of the local authorities of Coro in February 1855 to their protector . . . R. F. Van Lansberge, Governor of Curaçao."[81] In 1858 these refugees returned to Coro in the company of Rabbi Chumaceiro.

As Curaçao's economic condition improved, emigration stopped. The arrival of several Curaçoan young men who had graduated from American or Dutch universities had a healthy effect on Jewish life. The benevolent society formed in 1839 was reorganized in 1853[82] to extend loans, without interest, to needy Jews who wanted to start a business or trade. Reorganized again in 1879, today it exists as the Alivio del Pobre.

While taking care of local needs, the Curaçoan Jews formed a committee to aid Jerusalem's poor. The gentlemen making up this committee — Moses C. Henriquez, E. Edwards, Sol C. Henriquez and Jeosuah Naar — remitted the respectable sum of 4,244.77 florins with a list of the contributors to

[80] A. M. Chumaceiro Az., *Zal het Kiesrecht Curaçao tot het kannibalisme voeren?* (Curaçao, 1895), pp. 19-21.

[81] Sources: CGA, Notarial Acts above cited; *CC*, Feb. 10, 17; March 3, 10, 17, 31; April 28; May 19; Sept. 29, 1855; July 17, 1858; March 31, 1860; *El Mara* of Maracaibo, Feb. 17, 1855; *The Jamaica Daily Advertiser*, March 22, 1855; *The Occident*, vol. 13, 1855, pp. 89-93; *Manifestación* (Curaçao, 1855), 29 pp., a very rare brochure containing, among other things, a protest signed by most of the Jewish merchants of Coro who had signed the notarial acts above cited, and also a reproduction of the anti-Jewish pamphlets distributed in Coro; Corporaal, *op. cit.*, pp. 143, 179, 186.

[82] The new committee members appointed on this occasion were Moses C. Henriquez, president; Benjamin Jesurun, vice president; Attorney Sol C. Henriquez, secretary; S. D. Cohen Henriquez, assistant secretary; Ralph Wolff, treasurer; Dr. Isaac Senior and E. Edwards, assessors (*CC*, July 2, 1853).

Moses Montefiore of London. The philanthropist wrote them on November 1, 1854, to thank the donors and committeemen for their generosity.[83]

The death of Assessor Moses Lopez Penha in 1854 left the rabbinate vacant. The community sent to Holland for a qualified spiritual head and found him in the person of Haham Aron Mendes Chumaceiro.

[83] See above, pp. 153-65, about the Curaçoan Jews' contribution to the Holy Land fund; Emmanuel, "Siyu'an shel Kehiloth ha-Sepharadim be-Amsterdam ube-Curaçao," *Sefer Safed*, I (Jerusalem, 1962), pp. 409-11.

92. HAHAM ARON MENDES CHUMACEIRO, 1810-1882

93. CHANDELIER GIVEN HAHAM ARON M. CHUMACEIRO BY FRIENDS DURING HIS VISIT TO AMSTERDAM, 1861

CHAPTER XVII

THE COMMUNITY BEFORE THE SCHISM OF 1864
1856-1864

THE MIKVE ISRAEL COMMUNITY has had only ten rabbis[1] in its service, a small number indeed. But it can be especially proud of having had ministers of the stature of Haham Chumaceiro (illus. 92).

HAHAM CHUMACEIRO

Aron de Jacob Mendes Chumaceiro[2] was born in Amsterdam on January 28, 1810. He studied at the Ets Haim Seminary of Amsterdam. In 1834 he attained the rank of *magid talmudi*;[3] six years later he obtained his rabbinical diploma[4] after he had been examined by four rabbis accredited by the High Commission for Israelitic Affairs in Holland. By 1836 he was at the service of a community.[5] An eloquent orator, he was awarded a royal silver medal[6] in 1839 for the best sermon delivered in the Dutch language. He was rector of the Ets Haim Seminary. In 1852 he was elevated to *Ab Beth Din* (president of the rabbinical

[1] Pardo, Lopez, Jesurun, De Sola, Farro, Carigal, Da Fonseca, Chumaceiro; the author, a graduate of *yeshiboth* of Salonika and the Jewish Theological Seminary of Breslau; and Moshe Amine.

[2] For further details about him, his family and forebears, see Emmanuel, *Precious Stones*, pp. 484-87; also, appendix 17, Chumaceiro.

[3] According to his son Joseph Haim M. Chumaceiro, *Jewish Encyclopedia*, under "Chumaceiro," our rabbi received the diploma of *morenu* in 1846. Jacob Isaac Mendes de Solla, preacher of the Dutch Jewish Reform Community of Curaçao, tells us that Haham Chumaceiro's diploma designated him as *magid talmudi* in contrast to De Solla's title of *magid mishné* — rabbi of second rank (A[rchives]. of the D[utch]. J[ewish]. R[eform]. C[ommunity]. = ADJRC, Legajo no. 18, 1875-1876). The year given by his son is inaccurate because when the High Commission recommended Haham Chumaceiro to the Ministry of Religion, it cited the diploma of 1840 as reproduced in *Precious Stones*, p. 485. At that time the four examining rabbis — two of them Sephardis — described him as *Rav u-Moré, Rauy le-horaha* (rabbi and master with the authority to judge and expound the Law). *Magid talmudi* is a degree below this.

[4] Under Royal Ordinance no. 252 of Oct. 13, 1825, and Ministerial Disposition no. 57 of June 27, 1831.

[5] By 1861 he had twenty-five years of service in different communities (*CC*, July 6, 1861).

[6] We have seen the sermon which merited the royal silver medal. According to his son in the *Jewish Encyclopedia*, *ibid.*, Chumaceiro received a royal gold medal in 1848 for another sermon in Dutch. There is reason to doubt this statement too, for a sermon of such significance would have been printed or the manuscript kept at the Ets Haim Library.

tribunal) and appointed associate rabbinic assessor under Ribbi Aron J. Vaz Dias of the Amsterdam community. The same year he also became editor and director of the *Weekblad voor Israelieten*, then Amsterdam's only Jewish weekly. Before coming to Curaçao he was an honorary member of the "Maatschappij tot Nut der Israelieten in Nederland." Between 1839 and 1855 he published several sermons;[7] also, a study on the history of the Amsterdam synagogue[8] about which he lectured in that very edifice. In spite of his profound Talmudic erudition, he was liberal for his time as these pages will unfold. By experience, rabbinic preparation, vast culture and tolerant character he was fitted to adapt himself to the Curaçao community. Precisely for those attributes King Willem III approved the High Commission's recommendation of Chumaceiro for the post.

Four days before his departure for Curaçao he delivered a farewell address[9] lamenting his impending separation from Amsterdam. This his friends published in 1856 with his portrait. On November 28, 1855, he sailed on the *Pegasus* with his wife Abigail de Jacob Lopez Cardozo and children Abraham, Joseph Haim and Simha. They reached Curaçao on January 19, 1856.

The Curaçao community was delighted to have a spiritual leader who was both enlightened and orthodox. Truly grateful, they lost no time in thanking the Amsterdam parnassim for sending them a rabbi as gifted as Chumaceiro. He was given a rent-free house which had been furnished decently at a cost of 1,748.50 florins. Although his annual salary of 2,000 florins was paid by the Colonial Chest, the parnassim and Chumaceiro himself petitioned the governor to raise it to the same figure as the dominie's: 3,000 florins. They also asked for the same pension rights enjoyed by the Protestant ministers. Governor R. F. van Lansberge agreed to the increase, but wrote to the Colonial Ministry in Holland for the pension. This letter ranks as one of the best written by a governor of Curaçao to his superiors about the Jews of Curaçao and their rabbi.[10] The letter was fruitful. The Ministry of Religion informed the High Commission for Israelitic Affairs on February 12, 1857,

[7] The sermons known to the author are *Zestal leerredenen* (Amsterdam, 1838), *Leerrede ter gelegenheid der kerkelijke Bevestiging eens Jongelings by het bereiken van zijn Dertiende Jaar* (Amsterdam, 1839), *Tweede Zestal leerredenen* (Amsterdam, 1843), *Tweetal Leerredenen gehouden . . . te Amsterdam* (Amsterdam, 1851).

[8] *Leerrede over Malachi III:4 . . . na de verbouwing van de Synagogue der Nederl.-Portug.-Israel.-Gemeente te Amsterdam* (Amsterdam, 1855). In 1863 he published a historical study in Curaçao which will be discussed later.

[9] *Afscheidsrede . . . gehouden op . . . den 24 November 1855 door A. M. Chumaceiro, Predikant, . . . beroepen tot Opperrabbijn bij de Port. Isr. Gemeente te Curaçao* (Amsterdam, 1856).

[10] RA, Archives of the Hoofdcommissie, letter of May 25, 1856, no. 119, suppl. 2, 1288/1.

that thenceforth the rabbi would have the same rights as the Protestant ministers of Curaçao.[11] In addition to the 3,000 florins for the rabbi's salary, the community also was to receive twenty percent of the slave tax — a return of some 500 florins a year.

The community had been without a rabbi for over forty years. Although religious services were held in the synagogue regularly, a generation had grown up without an adequate religious education. Chumaceiro thus faced a prodigious task in his early years. Since the death of the teacher David Rodrigues in 1831, the problem of teaching as a whole had not been solved satisfactorily. The educational society of 1839 which was set up to remedy this deficiency apparently petered out, for in 1845 Moses L. Penha opened the *Temime Darej* — the perfect way. Its object was to teach girls of five to thirteen years and boys from five years up.[12] This society evidently died at birth.

In February, 1856, barely four weeks after his arrival, Chumaceiro founded the Hebrath Mahaziké ha Torah Ets Haim Yeshivah, with himself as principal and headmaster and the parnassim of Talmud Torah as assistants. Five months later, in July, 1856, he formed an education committee. He appointed as secretary the young lawyer Sol Cohen Henriquez — the very same person who in 1853 had attempted to foster free education among the poor.

Chumaceiro sent to Amsterdam for schoolteachers. Joseph de Abraham Bueno de Mesquita arrived on July 25, 1856, with his sister Mariana, his wife Ribca Cohen Belinfante and his two children. Joseph de Aron Oeb Brandon came on October 19, 1856, with his wife Leah Brandon Bravo and his young son. Even before their arrival Sol C. Henriquez had been looking around for teaching personnel and a large, comfortable house which could be transformed into a school. Hardly had the teachers settled down when they fell victim to the yellow fever epidemic then ravaging Curaçao. Thirty-three-year-old Bueno de Mesquita succumbed on December 16, 1856, four months after his daughter Rosette; his colleague, 27-year-old Oeb Brandon, died on January 31, 1857.[13]

Undiscouraged, Chumaceiro obtained the governor's permission on May 27, 1857, to let Mesquita's widow teach Dutch, French and branches of primary instruction.[14] Her school was not exclusively Jewish.

[11] ". . . heb ik de eer . . . mede te deelen, dat het den Koning behaagd heeft mij te magtigen, om alsnog aan den Rabbijn by de Nederlandsch Portugeesch Israelitische gemeente op Curaçao, A. M. Chumaceiro . . . in dezelfde voorregten van andere geestelijken aldaar doen deelen" (RA, *ibid.*, Lett. B., no. 27, Feb. 12 and 20, 1857). The governor wrote to the community of the Minister's decision on March 9, 1857, nos. 132/4.

[12] According to a manuscript in the author's possession.

[13] For more details on Mesquita and Brandon, see Emmanuel, *Precious Stones*, pp. 459-61.

[14] In 1859 she directed the choir.

Chumaceiro did not restrict himself to educating the youth only. He opened a class for adults with gratifying response: forty attended.[15] Thanks to his efforts, by 1863 Curaçao became known as a center of religious learning. That year the community of Jamaica sent Moses Mendes Sollas and Joseph Pereira Mendes to learn *sheḥita* and become licensed ritual slaughterers.

In order to inject more religious life into the community, Chumaceiro had his son Jacob, a rabbi of Amsterdam, come over in 1859. During his four-month visit Jacob delivered several sermons. Seven years later he became Chief Rabbi of Amsterdam and held the post until his death on March 7, 1900.[16]

The community still lacked a qualified Hebrew teacher. In 1859 Chumaceiro sent to Holland for the young ribbi Haim Jeudah, the son of David Israel Santcroos. To him he gave his daughter Simha in marriage and a dowry of 1,600 florins. (Simha's godfather, Jacob Abraham Jesurun, added another 500 florins to this sum.) Chumaceiro also promised to give his son-in-law 400 florins yearly for ten years, so long as Simha lived, provided that Santcroos would not quit Curaçao during that period without Chumaceiro's prior consent.[17]

While cooperating with Congregation Mikvé Israel's progressives in modernizing the religious education, Chumaceiro watched over the proper conduct of religious matters, particularly the dietary laws. As early as 1857 the Mahamad had obtained from the government a concession of six butcher stalls in the meat market with the right to prepare such for the sale of *kasser* meat. The government permit specified that "once the meat was taken outside [of these enclosed stalls] it was considered 'tref' and could not be reintroduced."[18] Although he had a *shomer* (supervisor), Chumaceiro personally watched over the employees and their work. As customary in Holland, Chumaceiro prohibited the sale of all cheeses in 1861, even of those bearing a *casher* seal, unless they also carried the attestation of an accredited rabbinical authority. In 1867 when certain Jews refused to eat French bread on the ground that it contained forbidden ingredients, Chumaceiro made the necessary investigations and then sanctioned its consumption.[19]

Shortly after his arrival in 1856 Chumaceiro organized a *Beth Din* with David Cardoze and Haim Josias Cohen Henriquez.[20] The latter was replaced

[15] Chumaceiro's letter to the Amsterdam parnassim, Feb. 20, 1856 (PJCAA, bundle).

[16] He arrived at Curaçao on Jan. 29, 1859, and left the end of May (*CC*, Feb. 5 and May 28, 1859). From 1867 to 1875 he was editor-in-chief of the *Nieuw Israelitische Weekblad* of Amsterdam.

[17] CGA, Not. Act no. 207, y. 1859; MIA, Ket. VIII, no. 170.

[18] Government permit no. 552 of Oct. 26, 1857.

[19] *CC*, Feb. 9, 1867.

[20] MIA, Ket. VIII, no. 145. He is the only one designated in the Hashcaboth Register as "the distinguished Judge" (MIA, Hashcaboth I, month of Tamuz).

after his death on July 4, 1859,[21] by David Cohen Henriquez[22] who, in turn, was replaced by Samuel de Casseres and then by Abraham de Mordechay Senior.[23] In 1867 Chumaceiro had Haim Lopez Penha and Benjamin de Casseres[24] as associate judges on his *Beth Din*. Outside of Hazzan Cardoze, these judges were either merchants or members of the Mahamad or of the Council of Elders — men hardly qualified to adjudicate theological questions.

In 1859 with three years of careful study behind him, Chumaceiro tackled the ticklish matter of absolving the vow taken by the separatists in the Piza affair. He had the wall dividing the separatist cemetery from the Beth Hahaim[25] torn down. There were two strong arguments in his favor: most of the congregation of 1819 were no longer alive and he, a complete stranger to the dispute, could absolve a vow that several decades earlier Daniel Lopez Penha, as part of the community, could not. On this occasion the Mahamad, represented by its president Jeudah Senior and treasurer Benjamin de Casseres, had all the walls of the Beth Hahaim repaired.

Chumaceiro's activity was not limited to the Jewish community. In 1857 he organized an exposition of manual art by women, which took place in April, 1858.[26] Eleven hundred objects were exhibited and offered for sale — 40 from Amsterdam, 230 from St. Thomas and the rest from Bonaire, Coro, Maracaibo and, of course, Curaçao. The proceeds of 2,718 florins realized were distributed equally among the Catholic, Protestant and Jewish communities. Rabbi Chumaceiro earned some fine tributes from the government on this occasion.[27] His good name reached far and wide. The community of St. Thomas, composed mainly of native Curaçoans, invited him to visit them in 1858. They showered him with attention and gave him two exquisite silver trays with inscriptions in Hebrew and English, the latter reading as follows: "Presented to the Revd. Rabbi Aaron Mendes Chumaceiro by his co-religionists of St. Thomas as a token of their respect and esteem A. M. 5618." These he donated to the synagogue of Curaçao. The preacher of the St. Thomas synagogue returned this visit in 1862 and at that time delivered a sermon in the Curaçao synagogue in the presence of the governor and his adjutant.[28]

After his trip to St. Thomas, Chumaceiro saw that there was a crying need

[21] See Emmanuel, *Precious Stones*, pp. 461-63, for his epitaph and biography.
[22] MIA, Ket. VIII, no. 176.
[23] *Ibid.*, IX, no. 23.
[24] *Ibid.*, no. 33.
[25] See pp. 327-28 above.
[26] *CC*, April 24, 1858. The committee consisted of Rabbi Chumaceiro, president; Dominie A. I. Meijer, vice president; Pastor F. E. C. Kieckens, J. P. Fuhring and B. H. J. Huyke, secretaries; D. Senior, treasurer; Jeosuah de Sola, David M. Jesurun and M. Sasso (*CC*, Feb. 6, 1858).
[27] *KV*, y. 1858.
[28] *CC*, Jan. 11, 1862.

for religious indoctrination in various Jewish communities. In 1860 he presented a project to the *Archives Israélites* of Paris to found a school of Jewish missionaries who would educate those Jewish communities.[29] Of course he had chiefly in mind the Caribbean communities in Venezuela and Colombia which sorely lacked spiritual leaders.

In November, 1860, he left for Amsterdam where he was magnificently received. To the Ets Haim Library he donated Jacob de Jeosuah Naar's gift to him of three precious manuscripts written in Spanish by Dr. Isaac Orobio de Castro.[30] While in Holland, he appeared before the High Commission for Israelitic Affairs at The Hague vigorously to defend and obtain approval of his community's new bylaws. As president of the revisory committee, he assured them that the bylaws respected the rights of everyone and had been accepted by all the members of the community. The High Commission objected to Article 175 prohibiting prayer services from being conducted with a quorum outside of the synagogue. This was contrary to the spirit of the liberal laws enjoyed by Jews in Holland. They also objected to Article 32 which granted more power to the Corresponding Member in Curaçao than to the other members of the High Commission in Holland. Chumaceiro tried to justify the need for keeping these articles, and in this was supported by the Messrs. Teixera de Mattos and Mendes da Costa, the Portuguese Jewish community of Holland's representatives to the High Commission. Thus the bylaws were accepted with very few modifications.

Before Chumaceiro set out for Curaçao, seventy-seven members of the Portuguese Jewish community of Amsterdam, on the initiative of the parnassim, contributed toward the purchase of an exquisite seven-lamp chandelier. They offered it to him with a dedication in Hebrew and in Portuguese, the latter reading as follows: "Monumento de affeiçao offercido A o Venerado Rabbino Aron Mendes Chumaceiro, Haham em Curaçao 1861." This, too, he presented to the synagogue of Curaçao. He was urged to remain as their Chief Rabbi, but he declined the honor since he felt that Curaçao needed him more. He returned to the island on May 23, 1861. The following Saturday the community paid him great homage and in his honor took out twelve Scrolls of the Law. Shortly afterwards Chumaceiro sent the Amsterdam community a note of thanks for their touching gift, and so did David A. Senior, president of the community.[31]

[29] *Archives Israélites* (Paris, 1860), pp. 333-37.

[30] Those manuscripts were "Prevenciones diversas contra las vanas Ydolatrias de las Gentes"; "Prevenciones a Israel en los libros Propheticos"; "Respuesta a un Escrito que presentó un Predicante Francez del autor contra la . . . Ley de Moseh."

[31] PJCAA, bundle.

He went to work with heart and soul. In 1862 when smallpox struck Curaçao, he spared no efforts in helping all victims with no distinction as to race, color or creed.[32] Four prominent Jews — Samuel Levy Maduro Jr., Isaac Rodriguez Miranda, Abraham Jacob Jesurun and Abraham Cohen Henriquez — gave him a valuable gift in recognition of his self-sacrifice and published a tribute to him in the Amsterdam *Weekblad voor Israelieten* of December 26, 1862.

Chumaceiro, who ordinarily delivered his sermons in Dutch and Portuguese, was the last rabbi to preach in the latter tongue. Sometimes he preached as much as five times during a holiday as happened in Pesaḥ, 1865.[33] Exceptionally liberal for his day, he did not grow a large beard. In 1851 he had declared in Amsterdam that the oath of a Jew made without headgear was just as valid as when made with it. In 1860 he opened a Sunday School class for girls. A year later he was accused of being anti-Freemason because he had exhorted Freemasons in a sermon not to eat *taref* at their banquets. He defended himself against this charge in an article on Freemasonry which a convinced Freemason could not better.[34] He accepted into the community, without difficulty, children of white non-Jewish fathers or mothers, after the customary formalities.

In October, 1863, several Curaçoan Jews became affiliated with the Alliance Israélite Universelle founded in Paris in 1860. By March, 1864, the local committee[35] of the Curaçoan friends of the Alliance numbered eighty-eight followers. Alliance enthusiasts headed in La Guaira by Elias de Sola, in Coro by David A. Senior, and in Barranquilla by David de Sola, would send their generous contributions to the Curaçao committee for transmission to the central committee in Paris. Several Turkish rabbis were opposed to this benevolent society on the ground that it was dangerous to orthodox Judaism. Chumaceiro nevertheless declared himself "devoted to the institution and disposed to lend his cordial cooperation."

Such was the make-up of Chumaceiro, Chief Rabbi of the community during the division of 1864.

[32] *CC*, Oct. 25, 1862. Two years earlier Chumaceiro had organized a collection in behalf of the non-Jewish Lebanese victims of Turkish persecution (*CC*, Aug. 25, 1860).

[33] He then preached twice in Dutch and thrice in Portuguese (*The Occident*, vol. 23, June, 1865, no. 3, pp. 143-44).

[34] *CC*, July 6, 1861.

[35] Benjamin de Sola, president; Isaac Rodriguez Miranda Jr., Samuel Levy Maduro Jr., David Abinun de Lima, Anjel J. Jesurun and Elias Jesurun Henriquez (*Shemah Israel*, April 15 and Oct. 20, 1864, pp. 28, 83).

ECONOMIC SITUATION

An insight into the economic, social and cultural state of the community at this time is essential for a better comprehension of the grievous events of 1863-1864. A careful study of the documents of that era — marriage agreements, bills of purchase and sale of real estate and ships, tax registries, and so forth — leaves one amazed at the quantity of money disposed of by the Jews in their transactions. S. van Dissel, Protestant minister in Curaçao from 1855 to 1865, aptly noted: "The Jews speculated too much with money. They could dispose of so much money and undertake things of which one is astonished."[36]

Their financial might in this period is strikingly evidenced in their loans. The Jesurun firm since 1848 advanced huge sums to the Venezuelan government against the guarantee of customs receipts of various Venezuelan cities and government bonds. Regarded as the "small Rothschilds" of the Caribbean, the Jesuruns and two Europeans were granted by the Venezuela government in 1858 a thirty-year concession[37] to develop the textile industry throughout Venezuela. General Falcon, president of Venezuela, stifled his anti-Jewish feelings unleashed during the Coro disorders of 1855 and sent a delegation to Curaçao in 1862 to conclude a loan with Abraham J. Jesurun. As guarantee, he gave 25% of Maracaibo's customs duty receipts. This loan was renewed and increased in 1866. Jesurun received as guarantee $52\frac{1}{2}\%$ of the customs duty of La Guaira, 20% that of Puerto Cabello and all of the customs duty from Ciudad Bolivar and Maracaibo.[38]

Unhappily, the new governments would not always respect the agreements made by their predecessors. Venezuela suspended payment to the Jesuruns in 1875.[39] This failing often necessitated the intervention of Holland to protect the Jesurun interests.[40] Sometimes the governors of Curaçao were forced to dispatch warships to Venezuelan ports in order to free Curaçoan vessels, particularly of the Jesuruns, that had been sequestered by the Venezuelan government.

Wealthy Jews of this era owned many ships. Some even had dockyards where they built them. Between 1843 and 1875 the Jesuruns had a mercantile fleet of more than a hundred vessels.[41] Several of these ships had been travelling

[36] Cited by S. Kalff, *WIG*, 1926-27, p. 75.

[37] CGA, Not. Acts, y. 1848, vol. I, no. 82; vol. II, no. 30; vol. III, no. 6; y. 1849, vol. III, no. 1; y. 1859, vol. III, no. 246.

[38] For details about this transaction, see John de Pool, *ibid.*, p. 327.

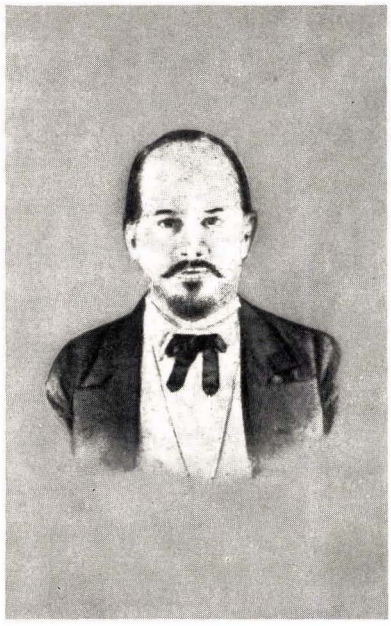
[39] De Pool, *ibid.*, pp. 333-34.

[40] CGA, Not. Acts, y. 1863, nos. 374, 425, 439; Corporaal, pp. 213, 215-16, 614.

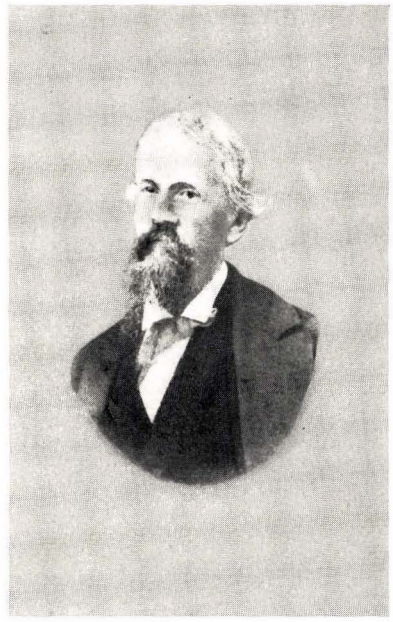
[41] CGA, Not. Acts from 1847 to 1864; Transport records from 1849 to 1860 listing the sale of real estate and ships; *CC* from 1845 to 1860; see appendix 3A.

94. BIRD'S-EYE VIEW OF WILLEMSTAD, CURAÇAO, BEFORE THE HURRICANE OF 1877 (SHOWING THE PROTESTANT CEMETERY)

95. THE WAAIGAT BEFORE THE DEMOLITION OF THE CITY WALL, 1850

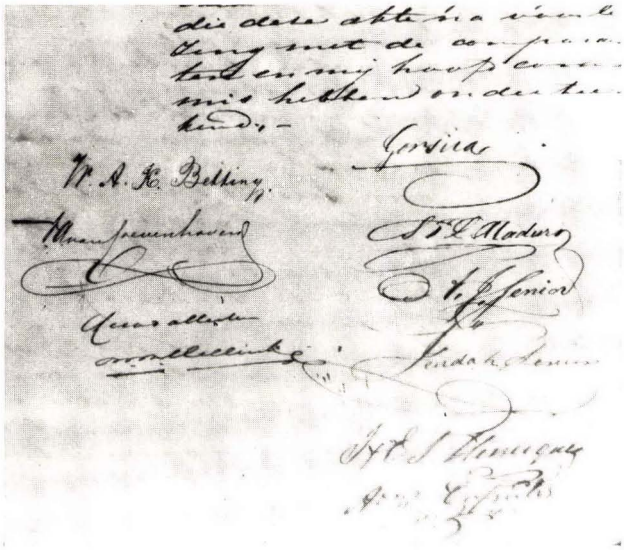


96. JEOSUAH JESURUN HENRIQUEZ, 1819-1862



97. ELIAS JESURUN HENRIQUEZ, 1820-1881

PARTNERS IN THE DEMOLITION OF THE CITY WALL, 1861



98. SIGNATORIES TO THE MADURO & CO. CONCESSION TO WRECK THE CITY WALL, 1861, PAGES 365-66

99. DAVID (BUCHI) SENIOR, 1822-1908, NOTED MERCHANT

ever since 1845 to Amsterdam, New York, Puerto Rico, Santo Domingo, and chiefly to St. Thomas and the Spanish Main. The Jesuruns had three dockyards, one having been in the *De Wilde* district since 1843. Later they acquired the Foulke dockyard known as *de Kleine Klip*.[42] In 1850 they became associated with the shipbuilder Jan van der Meulen,[43] but severed relations a few years later. Jacob Rois Mendez, owner of the *Diana* and other vessels, also had a dockyard which turned out between 1857 and 1862, among others, the vessels *Lutina*, *Curaçao*, *Colibri*, and *Uranus* of 75, 110, 39 and 29 tons, respectively. Salomo Elias Levy Maduro, founder of S.E.L. Maduro & Sons, also had several ships, among them: *Venus*, *Ocean Bird*, *Charm*, *Euphenie*, *Clemencia* and *Venus II*, some of which plied between Curaçao and New York.

In 1850 the Jews founded the *Curaçao Packet Company* under the management of Ephraim Hirsch Edwards, David A. Jesurun and the Gentile Abraham de Veer.[44] The Company had in its service two comfortable ships that transported the courier twice monthly from Curaçao to St. Thomas from where other vessels would carry him to Europe. Its capital stock of 45,000 florins was divided into thirty shares of 1,500 florins each. Twenty-five of these belonged to Jews, the Cohen Henriquez and Jesurun families owning five and six shares, respectively. No one person could hold more than three shares.

On the whole, the economic situation of the Jews then was exceptionally good. The dowries bestowed upon their daughters between 1849 and 1880, the real estate assessments and the communal taxation for 1862 reflect this.

[42] The dockyard had been in service from 1694. Foulke owned it in 1813 and, when he sold it to the Jesuruns in 1843, he had lengthened it to 207 meters (CGA, Cadastre, Correspondence, 1843).

[43] The wharf first belonged to Pieter Kier in 1765 (OAC 897, no. 219); four years later to Kier, van der Meulen and Ellis (OAC 905, March 2, 1769), and in 1773 to Michiel van der Meulen only (OAC 912, no. 17). In 1850 J. R. F. Baron van Raders and H. van der Meulen owned this wharf and another in Otrabanda. The Jesuruns bought Baron Raders' interest in 1850 and his interest in the Otrabanda wharf in 1851 (CGA, Transport 1850, 1851). In 1887 Jesurun and van der Meulen sold their wharves to Gorsira and Maal for 80,000 florins.

[44] RA, *Publicatieblad van Curaçao, 1816-1851*, no. 302; CGA, Not. Acts, y. 1850, no. 73. The Jewish shareholders were E. H. Edwards, 2 shares; Jeosuah Jesurun Henriquez, 1; Elias Jesurun Henriquez, 1; David Abraham Jesurun, 2; Jacob Abraham Jesurun, 3 (one for himself and one each for his minor sons Abraham and Moises); Jacob and David Abraham Jesurun, 1 jointly; Abraham Haim Senior and Jacob Senior Jr., 3 jointly; Isaac Rodriguez Miranda Jr., 1; Moses Mendes Monsanto, 1; Mordechay Henriquez, 1; Manuel Alvares Correa Jr., 1; David Mendes Monsanto, 1; Jacob Naar, 1; Elias Abinun de Lima, 1; Mozes Cohen Henriquez, 3; Haim Cohen Henriquez for his minor sons Abraham and Moses Haim, 1 share each. The Gentile shareholders were Abraham de Veer, 1; Felix Vidal, 1; Herman van der Meulen, 1; Mr. Jan Schotborgh Hendrikszoon, 1; Carel Mauritz Gaerste, 1.

DOWRIES

The well-to-do father of that day generally settled upon his daughter a dowry of 8,000-10,000 florins. There were some who provided very lavish dowries between 1849 and 1880, as the following list shows:[45]

Date	Bride	Bridegroom	Dowry Fls.
June, 1849	Abigail de Joseph Henriquez	Jacob Jeoshua Naar	47,928
Oct., 1850	Leah de Abraham Jesurun	Moses de Joseph Mendes Monsanto	72,997
Sept., 1851	Rachel de Obadia Mendes da Costa	Dr. Isaac de Jacob Senior	34,000
June, 1867	Alcida de Moses Cohen Henriquez	Elias de Joseph Pereira Brandao Jr.	32,500
June, 1868	Rachel de Elias Jesurun Henriquez	Elias de Daniel Jesurun	19,000
June, 1871	Hanna de Jeosuah Jesurun Henriquez	Jacob de Benjamin S. Delvalle	19,300
July, 1871	Rachel, sister of Hanna above	Jacob Cohen Henriquez	19,398
Jan., 1873	Esther, ,, ,, ,, ,,	Aron Alvares Correa	19,398
Apr., 1876	Delia, ,, ,, ,, ,,	Mordechay Cohen Henriquez	20,000
Aug., 1876	Rachel de Isaac Dovale Mendez	David de Rephael Pinedo	49,000
Nov., 1876	Emma de Moises Pardo Jr.	Emanuel Pinedo (marks)	36,000
Apr., 1880	Judith Gomes Casseres	Samuel Alvares Correa	20,000
Dec., 1880	Rebecca de Jeosuah Jesurun Henriquez	Isaac Cohen Henriquez	20,000
Dec., 1880	Sarah de Elias Jesurun Henriquez	Elias Salomo Levy Maduro	25,000

(See illustrations 88, 144, 176, 191, 275-278, 280.)

REAL ESTATE ASSESSMENT OF 1862

The general assessment on all real estate in Curaçao for 1862 amounted to 4,695,420 florins. The Jewish proportion was 1,561,950 florins, or about one-third, distributed in this manner:

	Punda	Pieter-maai	Scharloo	Otra-banda	Eastern Division	Middle Division	Western Division
Gen'l Assess.	997,650	650,595	441,000	1,305,025	524,350	305,700	471,100
Jewish Assess.	593,100	348,200	309,400	19,900	165,800	60,950	64,600

Total General Assessment . . . Fls. 4,695,420
Total Jewish Assessment . . . ,, 1,561,950

This classification reveals that the Jewish properties were concentrated in town, Pietermaai and Scharloo where one out of every two houses belonged to Jews.

[45] CGA, Huwelijksche voorwaarden 1869-1900, which also includes dowries from 1829; Curaçao Not. Acts. See appendix 17.

This fortune was chiefly concentrated in the Jesurun and Cohen Henriquez families. Together they owned property worth 671,600 florins or 43% of the general Jewish assessment. The succeeding figures show these two families leading the seven first families in real estate holdings:[46]

Jesurun	444,250	Alvares Correa	61,300
Cohen Henriquez	227,350	Jesurun Henriquez*	53,200
Henriquez*	114,265	Levy Maduro	47,000
Senior**	76,800		

* Some properties valued up to 10,000 florins for the "J." Henriquez families are more fittingly classed with the *Jesurun* Henriquez family rather than with the children of *Jeosuah* Henriquez.

** To this sum must be added the share of the Seniors in some real estate in Scharloo valued at 13,500 florins and registered in the name of H. E. Edwards C[um]. S[uis].

Between 1857 and 1868 one hundred thirteen houses were built in Curaçao. Twenty-seven of the costliest homes belonged to Jews.[47]

THE JEWISH COMMUNAL TAX OF 1863-1864

Since 1810 the communal budget was based on the fixed income and the estimated earnings of the community. Expenses invariably exceeded the receipts. To cover the difference, the Council of Elders taxed every member according to his financial ability. Known by the Portuguese term *finta*, this tax was generally levied over a two-year period. In November, 1862, the taxation set up for the years 1863 and 1864 amounted to the record sum of 4,907 florins. This had to be met by the 201 contributors as classed below.

48	members	taxed	at	the yearly minimum	of	3 florins
119	„	„	between	6 and 36		„
16	„	„	„	42 and 75		„
18	„	„	„	90 and 210		„

Before the schism of 1864 Curaçao's eighteen richest Jews paid the following *finta*:

Fls. 210 — Jacob Abraham Jesurun; the Widow of Haim Josias Cohen Henriquez
150 — Benjamin Jesurun Jr., David Valencia Jr., Isaac Pinedo Jr.

[46] These figures have been compiled from the Real Estate Tax Register of 1862 kept at the Department of Finance in Curaçao.

[47] CGA, Rooibrieven, y. 1868, vol. V.

120 — Leah Jesurun de Moses M. Monsanto, Abraham Jacob Jesurun, Daniel Jesurun Jr., Moses Cohen Henriquez, Elias Jesurun Henriquez, José Gomes Casseres, Jeudah Senior and Samuel Levy Maduro Jr.
105 — Dr. Isaac Jacob Senior
98 — Jeosuah de Sola
90 — Jacob Suares, J. J. Naar, S. E. L. Maduro[48]

Thus the Jesurun and Cohen Henriquez families accounted for almost forty percent of the taxation imposed on the eighteen wealthiest Jews of the community.

This financial exposition would be incomplete without a word on the slave holdings. On the emancipation of the slaves in 1863 the Jews owned 1,851[49] of the 6,751[50] slaves liberated. About 600[51] slaves belonged to the government. In the eighteen years preceding that event the Jews had freed 191 slaves. The Jesuruns owned the record number of 366. After them, Eva van Wijk, a Protestant, was the second largest slaveholder with 240 slaves. The government paid all the slaveholders an indemnity of 200 florins per slave.

The foregoing indicates that about 45% of all private wealth in Curaçao then was in Jewish hands.[52] It is therefore not surprising that the Jews were eager to contribute to appeals made in behalf of Catholic or Protestant charities, as for instance for the founding of the Catholic Hospital in 1855 and for a Protestant home for the aged some years later.[53] In 1861 when Holland suffered from a severe flood, Dr. Isaac Jacob Senior, president of the community, remitted the handsome sum of 1,125.50 florins.[54] Five years later the community treasurer Moise Pereira gave the directors of the Protestant Church 356.67 florins for their indigent.[55] Of course they did not neglect to contribute royally to different Jewish communities in Europe and Africa and to the Holy Land fund.

[48] See appendix 30 for the complete list.

[49] According to the CGA Slave Registers. These figures are given with reserve since the registers are not very clear.

[50] W. M. Hoyer, *Historia di Curaçao* (Curaçao, [1930]), p. 53.

[51] A. Jesurun, *Een gedenkwaardig feit* (Amsterdam, 1900), p. 46.

[52] Abraham Chumaceiro, *Zal het kiesrecht Curaçao tot het kannibalisme voeren?*, at p. 67, estimated that the number of Jewish merchants and plantation owners in 1894 was equal to that of the Christians. According to Hamelberg, *Antiquarische Denkbeelden buiten "Antiquiteiten,"* p. 20, the Jew in 1894 was three and one-half times richer than the Protestant and sixty-eight times richer than the Catholic.

[53] *CC*, May 14, 1870.

[54] *Ibid.*, March 2, 1861.

[55] *Ibid.*, Feb. 24, 1866.

A JEWISH COMPANY DEMOLISHES THE CITY WALL

Curaçao had attracted Jews of an enterprising spirit ever since 1634. The first Jew to land there vainly explored for gold.[56] Through the years Curaçao has had daring Jews launch risky undertakings. In 1747 the Dutch West India Company had wanted to enlarge the city by tearing down the wall and bastions on the east coast, north of the city, which they considered too old for defense purposes. Were it not for his sudden death early in 1754, Moses Penso would have realized that plan with his partner Willem Meyer.[57] The project was not tackled again until July 4, 1860. At that time a company was formed to demolish the wall and forts, to fill in part of the Waaigat waters and to build new streets, fine houses and shops. It was composed exclusively of Jews — S.E.L. Maduro, Abraham Jacob Senior, Jeudah Senior, Elias Jesurun Henriquez for the firm of J. & E. J. Henriquez, and Abraham Capriles. In compensation the company was to receive the stones of the bastions and the filled-in lands. Governor Crol granted the concession to them when he received the king's authorization.[58] Moses Curiel and Samuel Levy Maduro Jr. thereupon gave the government a guarantee of 10,000 florins for the faithful performance of the contract (illus. 96-98, 133).

The boundaries of the filled-in land received by the concessionaires are described in the government archives as follows: Starting from where Maduro & Curiel's Bank now stands to the Ruiterkade, to the corner of Columbusstraat from there south to Columbus-Madurostraat; all of Madurostraat to Maduro & Sons from the north side; also, from Ruiterkade-Columbusstraat to Marktstraat; from there south to no. 21 Pietermaai; all of Pietermaai to Columbusstraat from the north, as well as the entire eastern part of Columbusstraat.

Of this large block the government reserved 6,000 square meters on the Pietermaai side so that the concessionaires received about 34,000 square meters. This enterprise, which at first blush seemed very hazardous, developed into one of the best deals realized in Curaçao. A few years later Jeudah Senior, one of the concessionaires, sold Elias Penso & Sons a parcel on Prinsenstraat (now Madurostraat) for 17,100 florins; the land had cost him only a thousand! It is small wonder that the unexpected success of this undertaking caused friction and animosity between certain families. These frictions — and mainly these frictions — brought about the division of the community in 1864.

[56] See p. 38 above.

[57] See p. 229 above.

[58] Two contracts were seen: one in the Notarial Acts of Curaçao, y. 1861, II, nos. 111-112, and the other in CGA, Rooibrieven, correspondence 1851-1863. The contract published by J. Hartog in *The Story of the Maduros* (Aruba, 1962), pp. 130-32, omits the source.

On the completion of the contract, the government officially thanked the concessionaires on March 8, 1866, for their magnificent execution of a difficult job and released them from their guarantee of 1861. It is noteworthy that the government had not believed it worthwhile to undertake this work on its own.

JEWS IN THE U.S. CONSULAR SERVICE AT CURAÇAO

Toward the end of the 18th century the United States Government saw fit to establish her consular service in Curaçao. The prosperous Jewish merchants of Curaçao had been carrying on a brisk trade with the thirteen colonies since 1656. From time to time the Secretary of State appointed a Curaçoan Jew as consular agent, vice consul, and even consul. Moises Frois (1830-37) apparently was the earliest Jewish U.S.A. Vice Consul. He hoped to be promoted to consul when Louis Paimboeuf returned to the United States in 1837. The post went to his coreligionist Jacob Haim de Meza, a long-time resident of New York who had become a naturalized American citizen.

In July, 1852, Moses Jesurun was appointed commercial agent of the United States of America on the recommendation of U.S. Consul John Kelway. He too was a native Curaçoan who had become an American citizen in New York. In January, 1853, he became vice consul.

Toward the end of 1853 John Evans Young came to Curaçao as U.S. Consul. He disliked the Jews and dismissed Jesurun. He wrote to the Secretary of State, accusing the Jews of fraud. He considered their invoices on exports to America — mainly straw hats and salt — very low. The hats were turned out by women and children, mostly slaves. Thus cheap labor kept the costs down, and this was confirmed by the Dutch authorities of Curaçao. Nevertheless, in order to maintain good relations the Jewish merchants offered to pay double the consular duty on each invoice — or four dollars in place of two. Young rejected their proposition.

He compelled people taking an oath to kiss the Bible. This was never done before, and the Jews objected to it on religious grounds.

The New York Herald Tribune of May 17, 1854, carried an anonymous article branding the Jews of Curaçao as smugglers and U.S.A. customs-dodgers. The Jews of Curaçao pointed to Young as the author. There was a flurry of declarations by various Jewish merchants before the notary, and various articles by them in the *Curaçaosche Courant* against Young. A group of Jewish amateurs presented a dialogue, "The Diplomatist in a Fury," ridiculing Young. Thirty merchants — 27 Jews and three Gentiles — wrote to the Secretary of State, Washington, D.C., denying the first 27 accusations

levelled against them. All sought Young's removal.[59] Since he also was in trouble with the government authorities of Curaçao, Young was recalled. Shortly afterward the United States Government modified the method of administering the oath, to the satisfaction of the Jews.

In September, 1857, Moses Jesurun was appointed consul. He discharged his duties very conscientiously. During the Civil War, the warship *Sumpter*, flying the Confederate flag, dropped anchor at Curaçao to take on coal, water and other provisions. Jesurun wrote Governor Crol on July 18, 1861, that the steamer was a privateer and as such not to be allowed to enter the harbor. He pointed out that it was a menace to American vessels in Caribbean waters. Crol replied that the ship could not be considered a privateer. Immediately Jesurun wrote of the incident to the Secretary of State, and sent a copy of the letter to Crol. Jesurun was dismissed, and Richard E. Morse succeeded him. Realizing the value of having an experienced assistant, Morse kept Jesurun in his office. When Morse was away from the island, Jesurun carried out the duties of Acting Consul.

A few months after Morse arrived, the Confederate warship *Alabama* stopped at Curaçao for fueling. This time the Secretary of State did not dismiss his consul at Curaçao. Governor Crol was interested in doing business with both belligerents.[60]

Jesurun remained in office until Morse's death in 1864. Between 1873 and 1880 David Leon served as U.S. Vice Consul.

During this period a number of Jews served various countries as chargés d'affaires, and even as consuls, in Curaçao. When a warship of the country they represented came on a visit, they would give a gala reception for the captain and officers, and often the governor attended.

[59] The Jews who signed the petition were M. & H. C. Henriquez, J. R. Miranda, D. A. Jesurun, Elias Penso, J^{b} Ab^{m} Jesurun, A. J. Jesurun, J. J. Naar, Cohen Henriquez & Co., G^{l} de Marchena, Mordechay Henriquez, Benjamin Penso, Jacob Henriquez, E. Edwards & Co., A. J. Senior, Herman C. Henriquez, Daniel C. Henriquez & Son, Moise Pereira, David Pardo Jr., M. Penso (?), S.E.L. Maduro, D. Valencia, Mord^{y} de Marchena, Raphael Pinedo, S & B de Casseres, E. A. de Lima, Jeosua de Sola, Benjamin de Marchena. The three Gentiles were Van der Meulen & Co., Felix Vidal & Co., and Genereux J. R. de Lima (The National Archives, Washington, D.C., T 197/3, T 197/5, courtesy of Dr. Jacob R. Marcus, AJA; CGA, Not. Acts, 1855, II, nos. 50, 74, 77, 81; III, no. 12; *CC*, June 24, July 8, 22, 1854, June 9, 1855).

[60] National Archives, Washington, D.C., T 192/6.

CULTURAL STATE

The revolution of 1854 in Venezuela and the disorders of Coro in 1855 forced certain families to resettle in Curaçao. By 1865 the Jewish population grew to 963 souls as against 1,855 Protestants.

History has borne out that the intellectual level of a community is raised when there is an increase in numbers and comfort. At this period one finds a relatively high number of academicians and intellectuals in Curaçao cultivating a taste for art, poetry and the theater. In general, the Curaçoan Jew was fond of literature. Many Jewish girls took up French according to a letter of Moses Cohen Henriquez in 1845 to the High Commission for Israelitic Affairs in Holland. In Haham Chumaceiro's time most of the members spoke — and many of them wrote — more than one language. The more comfortable families sent their sons abroad to study in the universities of Holland, Germany or the United States. The community could then boast of having seven physicians, a lawyer and one judge.

There were some poetry enthusiasts. Abraham de Haim Josiau Cohen Henriquez wrote several poems in Dutch, one of which is still popular among the youth of Curaçao.[61] He also translated several poems of Charles Millevoye and Lamartine into Dutch.[62] There were others who wrote poems in Spanish, sometimes on Jewish subjects.[63]

Appreciation for the theater was fostered by amateur theatricals from the start of the 19th century. In 1860 Jacob Jeosuah Naar founded the Theâtre des Amateurs, later known as Teatro Naar.[64]

Freemasonry, which was then considered the "agent of civilization," enjoyed a large following among members of the community. In 1855 they were partly responsible for founding the Igualdad Lodge which currently does much good in Curaçao.[65] They also contributed to the founding of different lodges in Central America, Santo Domingo, Venezuela,[66] and Colombia.[67]

[61] It begins: "Myn God, geef aan een meid" (*CC*, Dec. 15, 1849).

[62] *Ibid.*, Feb. 9 and March 28, 1850.

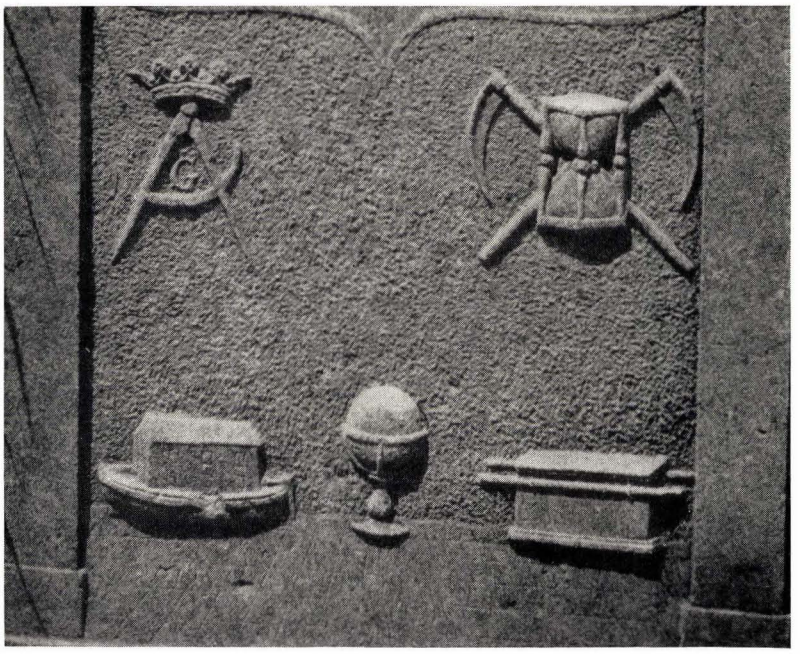
[63] An anonymous poem on Purim (*ibid.*, March 14, 1863).

[64] For more details on the theater, see pp. 480-81; also, Chapter XXIII for cultural life in general.

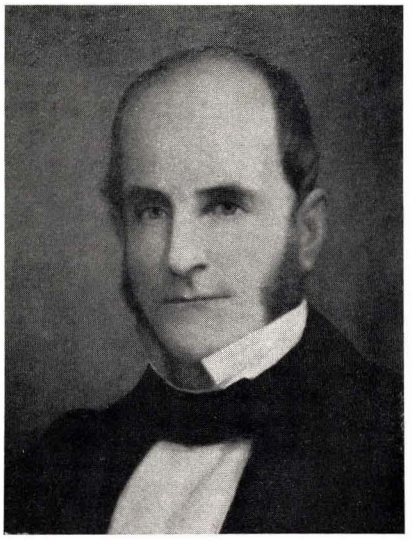
[65] For the activity of this lodge, see C. N. Winkel and J. H. P. Schrils, "De Vrijmetselarij" in *Oranje en de zes Caraïbische Parelen* (Amsterdam, 1948), pp. 123-25.

[66] José R. Henriquez, a half-Jew,·.· 30, was the first editor of *La Revista Masónica* of Caracas in 1866 and Isaac J. Pardo,·.· 33, was grand secretary of the Grand Order of Venezuela in 1866 (*El Espejo Masónico*, vol. 2 [New York, 1867], pp. 224, 288).

[67] As a point of interest we list the following Curaçoan Jewish *dignitarios* and active members of the Estrella de Colombia No. 6 Lodge of Barranquilla on July 3, 1866 (the number alongside the name referring to the corresponding degrees): David de Sola, 18, secretary; David Haim Senior,



100. MASONIC SYMBOLS AND TWO COLUMNS WITH THE LETTERS B AND J REPRESENTING A MASONIC TEMPLE, ON THE TOMBSTONE OF DAVID HAIM DOVALE, 1827

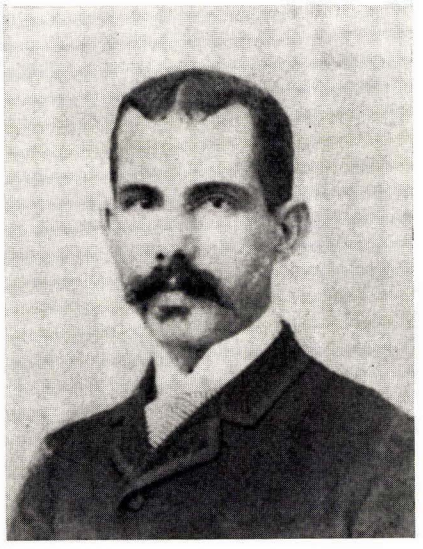


100A. JACOB FIDANQUE, CURAÇAO 1801 - ST. THOMAS 1885

100B. REBECCA MENDES MONSANTO, WIFE OF JACOB FIDANQUE, CURAÇAO 1810 - ST. THOMAS 1863

101. DAVID COHEN HENRIQUEZ, 1804-1871 (?), NOTED FREEMASON

102. DAVID J. DOVALE, 1824-1897, NOTED FREEMASON



103. HAIM DE GABRIEL DA COSTA GOMEZ, 1853-1941, NOTED FREEMASON

104. DAVID ERNESTO DE MARCHENA JR., VENERABLE MASTER, 1922-23

The Masonic ideals were so widespread that even Haham Chumaceiro accepted them although not a member. The Freemasons of Santo Domingo — mostly Curaçoan Jews — sent a letter of thanks to the Grand Commandeur of the French lodges on April 17, 1847, for having appealed to the Prussian monarch to compel the Prussian lodges to accept German-Jewish applicants as members.[68]

It comes as no surprise that the social life of the period was on a high level. As already observed, several Jews acted as chargés d'affaires or consuls of countries in the Western Hemisphere and Europe. Others did business with prominent people of the neighboring republics as food suppliers, and so forth, and gave brilliant parties in honor of their distinguished guests.

Such was the economic and cultural state of the Jewish collectivity during the division of 1864 which will be discussed in the next chapter.

18, treasurer; J. Alvares Correa, 3; Isaac Senior, 18; David Pardo Cadet, 3; M. Senior, 3; R[ephael]. N[amias]. Curiel, 3; M. Gomes Casseres, 18. Active members: D. J. Dovale, 18; R. Alvares Correa, 3; D. H. Dovale, 3, and J. J. Senior, 1 (*ibid.*, p. 32).

[68] The Jewish Freemasons who signed this letter were David Leon, J. Naar Jr., Raphael de Marchena, Ralph Wolff, H. Lopez Penha, Jacob Naar, Alexandre Victoria, Général de Marchena, Gérard de Marchena, Abraham Gomes Casseres, E. Benlisa, E. de Pin(n)a, Benjamin de Marchena, E. Wolff. The non-Jewish signatories were Noel Henriquez, G. Primet, C. de H. Evertsz, Jose de la Cruz Garcia and Dr. Jn. H. Fresmes (*Archives Israélites* [Paris, 1847], pp. 861-63).

CHAPTER XVIII

FOUNDATION OF THE DUTCH JEWISH REFORM COMMUNITY
1864-1963

WHILE THE SEPHARDIC JEW of the second half of the 19th century was devoted to his religion and people, he hardly was as orthodox as his Ashkenazic coreligionist. Sephardic rabbis, with very few exceptions in Smyrna and Constantinople, looked with favor upon the French schools opened in the Orient by the Alliance Israélite Universelle. The Chief Rabbis Asher Covo and Jacob Covo of Salonika gave these schools of the "Allianza" the credit they deserved.[1]

From the time of Maimonides to 1550 Sephardic rabbis eliminated or shortened certain *piyyutim* or liturgical hymns. Several centuries ago they also introduced the Spanish tongue into the ritual. The oldest translations include the Book of Esther which was read in the synagogue of Saragossa;[2] the *Haftarah* and some dirges of *Tish'ah be-Ab*; the *Mi Kamokha* of Jeudah Halevy which as late as the past generation was chanted in Spanish on the Saturday preceding Purim; the *Haggadah* and Song of Songs in *Pesaḥ*; the Sayings of the Fathers between Passover and Pentecost; the Book of Ruth; the *Hazharoth* of Gabirol chanted on *Shabu'oth*, and the *Berikh Shemé* at the opening of the altar.[3] No Sephardic rabbi since 1540 thought to excommunicate translators of the Bible or parts thereof into Spanish (Ladino), including the famous Ferrara Bible of 1553.

On questions of Law the hahamim were more liberal and to a certain degree more tolerant than their Ashkenazic colleagues.[4] This is why Reform did not make such headway in Sephardic communities.[5] Five or six com-

[1] Jacob Covo, *Discurso de la Sochetá Ets ha Haim* (Salonika, 1878), p. 6.

[2] Isaac Bar Sheshat, *Responsa*, nos. 389-90.

[3] Elkan N. Adler found "the amount of Ladino introduced into the service . . . quite astonishing" on his visit to Salonika in Yom Kippur, 1898 (Elkan N. Adler, *Jews in Many Lands* [London, 1905], p. 142).

[4] The author's father, Haham Samuel Isaac Emmanuel, a very pious rabbi of Salonika killed by the Nazis, was amazed to hear of the orthodox Ashkenazic custom of cutting the bride's hair before the wedding and replacing it with a wig. Married women of Salonika used a special coiffure to cover the hair.

[5] See below, pp. 510-11, Isaac Wise's opinion on this subject.

munities, it is true, accepted the organ, and others the modernization of religious services, but the traditional ritual remained intact.

THE DIVISION AND ITS CAUSES

Since 1839 certain minor modifications in the religious services had been demanded and obtained in part by several members of the Curaçao community. Now the liberals demanded reforms in an undiplomatic manner or considered themselves superior to certain members who insisted on keeping the traditions of their fathers unimpaired. The ultraconservative party looked with scorn upon the reforms and at times upon the reformers themselves. Then there was the spirit of animosity and rivalry among some families. All this stirred up tensions reminiscent of the communal conflicts of 1841, 1844, 1845, 1847,[6] 1848 and 1849.[7]

Innovations in the synagogue were generally fraught with strife and discord. The introduction of the boys' choir in 1845 provoked someone to print in the *Curaçaosche Courant* an indecent, burlesquing polemic in Spanish and Dutch between "a Jew, advocate of order," a reformer; and his adversaries, the conservatives.[8] Finally in 1848 several reformists withdrew from the community. It apparently took the intervention of Provisional Governor Elsevier to restore peace by making the conservatives accept certain changes.[9] Ironically, while the Jews closed their shops on Saturday and in so doing virtually paralyzed the island's business, while they ate *casher* food and celebrated Purim with much gayety, they ignored other religious precepts like the laws of the levirate or *ḥaliẓah* (pages 340-41).[10] Friction between the two groups continued until Chumaceiro's arrival in 1856.

The progressives expected to find in him a reformer, and their young

[6] In his letter to *The Occident*, 1847, Obadia Mendes da Costa wrote about the "misunderstanding and party feelings" among his coreligionists in Curaçao and wondered, "God knows when we shall be in harmony again" (*The Occident*, vol. V, 1847-48, pp. 514-15).

[7] See above, pp. 343-45.

[8] *CC*, *April* 18, 23; May 2, 10; June 7, 14, 28; July 5; and Oct. 18, 1845.

[9] Our hypothesis is based on a letter of 1864 from Governor Crol to the separatists referring to Ordinance no. 51 of Jan. 27, 1848, which apparently forbade the foundation of another community (ADJRC, Legajo no. 1, Correspondencia del Gobierno de esta isla, 1864-1865). The *Shemah Israel* of May 12, 1865, pp. 67 and 143, speaks of the events of 1848 and the changes made before Chumaceiro's arrival. See above, pp. 344-45.

[10] "A Curaçao, il y a environ 500 familles juives du rit portugais; ils exercent une telle influence dans cette ville que le jour du Sabbat il ne s'y fait aucune affaire, et que le Pourim juif constitue le carnaval. Mais à part ce repos sabbatique et la cuisine *cascher* (sic) on n'observe pas les autres usages du culte" (*Archives Israélites*, Paris, 1853, p. 91).

lawyer, Dr. Sol Cohen Henriquez, sincerely cooperated with him. The conservatives, on their side, were proud of their rabbi and his instructive moral sermons. They got along relatively well until 1861. That year Chumaceiro was unjustly accused of preaching against Freemasonry and forbidding the members from participating in a non-Jewish burial. The following year went by without incident because of the smallpox epidemic. Chumaceiro then found himself at the peak of his influence. He committed a psychological error when he demanded of the Council of Elders that "the parnassim be authorized, when any person does not obey the directions of the Haham, to refuse him any assistance either in the synagogue or at the Beth-Haim." The Council of Elders rejected his petition, replying: "Our community has for many years been composed of orthodox [members] and liberals. The rabbi is the spiritual chief as the president is the temporal head." In other words, the rabbi could not be given temporal powers.[11] Though thwarted in this bid for more authority, Chumaceiro still was on excellent terms with the progressives, including Abraham Haim Cohen Henriquez who was later to become his bitterest enemy.

PULPIT RIGHTS

The Reverend Meyer Nathan of the St. Thomas and Kingston (Jamaica) communities visited Curaçao in May, 1863. Twenty-one members, including Haham Chumaceiro's son, requested the parnassim to let Nathan preach before them in the synagogue. Everyone knew that Haham Chumaceiro had nothing against this. Without thinking to consult their rabbi, as they should have done, the parnassim invited Nathan to deliver a sermon. Then they told Chumaceiro that he was to step aside that Saturday in favor of Nathan. Deeply hurt, Chumaceiro considered himself suspended and applied to the Council of Elders. The parnassim — Dr. Sol Cohen Henriquez, Abraham Jacob Jesurun and Benjamin Pereira Brandao — were thereupon informed on May 18, 1863, that they had no right to dispose of the pulpit and could not authorize anyone to preach before them without their rabbi's consent. Meanwhile Nathan, while thanking them for the honor, replied that the "pulpit right fully belongs . . . to the Revd. Grand Rabbin . . . that social etiquette . . . prescribes [me] to decline your flattering invitation until the consent of the Reverend Grand Rabbin has been obtained."

[11] MIA, Minutas de Ancianos, 1862-1864. This letter to Chumaceiro was signed by the following progressive and orthodox members: A. Jb. Senior, Dr. Isaac J. Senior, A. C. Henriquez, Is. R. Miranda Jr., Mosé Curiel and Benjamin Jesurun Jr.

The Elders had acted too hastily, and had not listened to Samuel Levy Maduro Jr. and Benjamin Jesurun Jr. to put off answering the parnassim. As for Chumaceiro, neither friend nor relative could persuade him to relinquish his pulpit for a day. President Sol Cohen Henriquez, despite all entreaties, would not bring himself to ask Chumaceiro face to face for his consent. As Chumaceiro was very popular, the members were on his side. The deeply offended president and his two colleagues complained that the Elders should have consulted them and heard both sides before sending them the letter. The rabbi was an employee and as such, they held, had to follow orders so long as they did not violate religious precepts. The right to preach was not inherent in a rabbi and therefore they saw no need to ask for his consent. They complained of other irregularities in the community and in June, 1863, tendered their resignation en bloc. Their places were filled by the conservatives David Delvalle Henriquez, president; Benjamin de Casseres Jr., vice president; Isaac Pinedo Jr., treasurer. The progressives made up the opposition. The communal elections of 1864 held in December, 1863, favored the conservatives. Benjamin de Casseres Jr. was elected president, Isaac Pinedo Jr., vice president, and Mordechay Senior, treasurer. The mighty Jesurun and Cohen Henriquez families were removed from power, but were represented in the Great Council and in the Council of Elders.

EL PORVENIR

Their defeat in the parnassim elections spurred the Cohen Henriquez family to found the El Porvenir (The Future) society on December 17, 1863. In the minutes of their installation the founders attacked "the abuses and extravagant practices, the ignorances, the superstition and fanaticism . . . of our holy religion . . ." They promised "to remove the rags we see it covered with today, chiefly in this island . . ." and assured "that the Jewish religion called 'Reform' . . . is the only rational interpretation," and so forth. In order to gain members they were particularly careful to set forth in Article 14 of their bylaws that "it is the duty of every member to avoid and shun all manner of provocation that might cause communal discord." The aim of this society was "the propagation of the true principles of the Hebraic religion, to strip it of the abuses that deform it today."[12] Of its twenty-four founders, five were of the Cohen Henriquez family, three of the Jesurun family, and three brothers-in-law of these families. They elected a committee which decided to publish a review to disseminate reform ideas in the community. However, this organ

[12] *Shemah Israel*, no. 1, Curaçao, Jan. 29, 1864, pp. 1-6.

which they called *Shemah Israel*[13] actually was a polemical rather than a persuasive publication. Its editor-in-chief was Sol C. Henriquez' brother Abraham[14] (illus. 108, 171).

After the organization of this society and publication of its paper, communal relations became more and more strained. Moses Cohen Henriquez, Corresponding Member of the High Commission for Jewish Affairs in Holland, joined the El Porvenir society of which his son, Dr. Abraham Moses C. Henriquez, was president. With his exalted rank Moses could have placated everyone.

Eminent men outside of Curaçao were aghast at the defamatory terms El Porvenir used with relation to the Jewish faith. Rabbi Isaac Leeser, in *The Occident* of February, 1864, decried its tone and the expression that the Jewish religion is covered with "rags." He nevertheless counselled the members of the community to adopt a conciliatory attitude. *The Archives Israélites* of Paris also expressed the hope that El Porvenir "would rise above local questions and avoid . . . individualism."[15] This good advice of well-meaning neutrals unfortunately went unheeded.

Haham Chumaceiro, against whom El Porvenir was directed, defended himself in his sermons, much to the reformers' indignation. Chumaceiro alleged in his letter to the governor that the opposition had failed to submit a plan for reform although he had thrice requested them. He also asserted in the same letter that the opposition did not make any formal demand for reforms. This allegation does not correspond with what is known of the community's "sage," Benjamin de Sola, a man more objective than the rabbi in the entire question. Several days before the separation, De Sola advised "forgetting of hatred and injuries, that the reformers be moderate in their demands, the conservatives advanced in their concessions, and that the Rabbi write to Holland for the reforms which he alone could not accept."[16] The editor of the *Archives Israélites*, too, had wisely written: "Both sides have

[13] First issue, Jan. 29, 1864; last issue, no. 12, May 30, 1865 (illus. 171).

[14] Member of the Government School Commission in 1854; one of four persons authorized to sign money notes in 1855; member of the Island Tribunal in 1858-59; vice consul of Hamburg in 1861; consul of Italy in 1863 (*CC*, May 6, 1854, Dec. 1, 1855, Oct. 15, 1859, May 11, 1861; Government Disposition no. 54 of May 19, 1863); a founder of Edwards, Henriquez & Co.; president of the community in 1854-55. On November 5, 1856, he married Sara, the daughter of his uncle Jacob A. Jesurun, from whom he received a dowry of 14,500 florins. He died in Brussels in 1910 at 82 and was buried there in the Protestant cemetery (communication of the late Jossy M. L. Maduro). He left three sons, including Dr. Henry.

[15] *Archives Israélites*, 1864, pp. 233-34.

[16] *CC*, May 28, 1864.

addressed themselves to us . . . In a small community where everyone knows each other [and] it is obvious that they are related . . . it is all the more imperative to set up a moderate form of worship under one roof . . . Safeguard, first of all, the inner peace of our creed."[17] Probably a list of the reforms desired was eventually presented, for Chumaceiro promised the governor and the opposition to make reforms "exclusively in the religious services."[18] Given a chance, our liberal Haham would have accomplished this. Already in 1857 he had modified the memorial prayers, reducing the service considerably. In the High Holy Days of 1863 he had decided to employ only three of the ten Scrolls of the Law customarily removed on Yom Kippur night and on Hosha'na Rabbah. Surely, with a little more harmony among the families an understanding on the reforms could have been reached.

Lamentably the spirit of antagonism, exaggerated pride and the ambition to lead the community dominated both parties. Abraham Cohen Henriquez[19] justly remarked: "Certain individual animosities are unfortunately existent among several members of the Community . . . *this ambition for leadership was the cause of the division of the old community.*"[20] Haham Chumaceiro's son Abraham wrote in turn that "the 'El Porvenir' society and its paper . . . are only evil instruments which are used under the cover of ameliorating the religion to realize shameful individual vengeances."

Each party accused the other of being at fault. A tradition shared by reform and conservative alike told us by aged, upright people, has it that the government concession to Maduro & Co. to tear down the walls and bastions[21] was the main cause for the schism. Those same people believed that Haham Chumaceiro was indirectly implicated in this affair to the detriment of the powerful Jesurun and Cohen Henriquez families. It is our opinion that the good relations of these families with Chumaceiro soured toward the end of 1863 when they saw how well the Maduro & Co. undertaking had prospered (above, page 365). Chumaceiro used to write the letters in Dutch which the concessionaires sent to the government.[22]

Be that as it may, Chumaceiro was the scapegoat of these families. The cause of the conflict, then, was due more to personal and economic rivalries rather than to religious differences, as was pointed out in our *Precious Stones*,

[17] *Archives Israélites, ibid.*, pp. 684-85.
[18] *CC, ibid.*
[19] *Shemah Israel*, Aug. 31, 1864, p. 68.
[20] The emphasis is ours.
[21] See pp. 365-66 above.
[22] According to the late Sexton David Lopez Penha (1860-1942).

pages 462-3. That it was not over ideological reasons,[23] was the opinion of the late Jossy M. L. Maduro also. Shortly before his death, he stated in his letters to the author that as a result of the government concession to Maduro & Co., the Jesurun anchorage space in the Waaigat was considerably reduced. Disgusted over this and over the shift of leadership in the community, they turned against the synagogue.

THE RIFT WIDENS

The hostility between the parties was so great that the most trivial incident assumed grave proportions. Both parties lacked tact and prudence; both became offended over trifles. The Elders were unable to conduct regular meetings because the offended party would withdraw in signal of protest. Between February and May, 1864, three presidents of the Council of Elders resigned and, although unanimously voted president, Abraham C. Henriquez declined to serve. Probably Haham Chumaceiro spoke about peace in a fashion displeasing to the Henriquezes in his sermon of April 30, 1864. That day Dr. Sol C. Henriquez was called to the Torah as a Cohen. He refused to go up and left the synagogue while uttering terms unworthy of his dignity. The president Benjamin de Casseres then committed the error of censuring oversensitive Henriquez in public. In a letter to the parnassim Henriquez explained that he had declined the honor because the president had told him that members of the El Porvenir society would not be called to the Torah.[24] The parnassim vainly tried to make amends.

Meanwhile Sol's brother Abraham had an incident with the president, and Dr. Abraham M. C. Henriquez with Haham Chumaceiro. Sol's brother offered his apologies to the president, who refused to accept them, and on May 26 left the community. The following day several friends met with the opposition in the desire to avoid a schism. This last meeting must have been very stormy, for in the June issue of their organ A. C. Henriquez reported: "During these days passions overflowed, despotism reigned, abuses multiplied and followed one another like waves in a river's current."[25] To complicate matters, A. C. Henriquez had printed in the *Shemah Israel* of May 20 an article

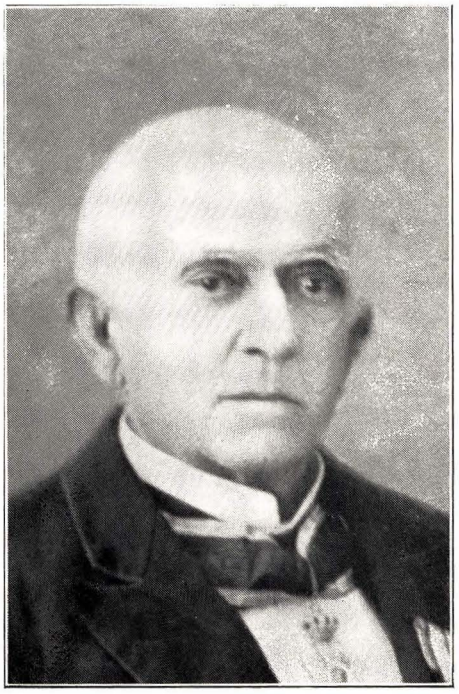
[23] This is confirmed by the Catholic historian De Pool (*Del Curaçao que se va* [Santiago de Chile, 1935], p. 204); also by the former hazzan of the Reform community, Dr. Maurits Goudeket, "De Vrijzinnig-Israelitische Gemeente 'Emanu-El,'" in *Christoffel*, Curaçao, Nov., 1955, p. 152; and by Dr. Johan Hartog, *Curaçao*, vol. II (Aruba, 1961), p. 857.

[24] The parnassim often misused the Holy Torah on the pretext of punishing a member, but actually to dishonor him. This they did even to one of their best rabbis.

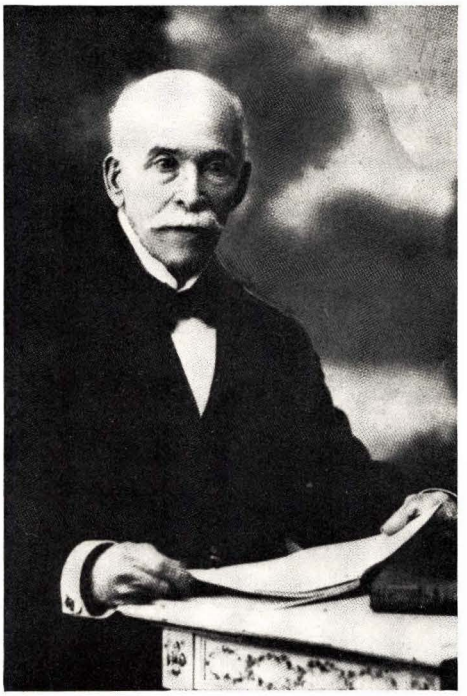
[25] *Shemah Israel*, June 22, 1864, p. 41.

105. JACOB ABRAHAM JESURUN, 1806-1875, THE CURAÇOAN ROTHSCHILD

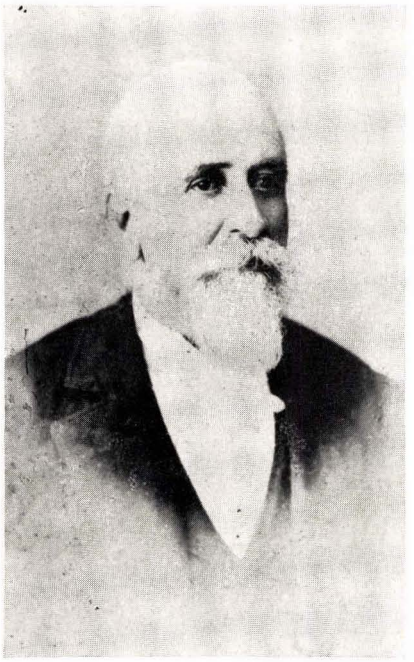
106. CLARA DE ABRAHAM PINEDO, 1805-1883, WIFE OF JACOB A. JESURUN



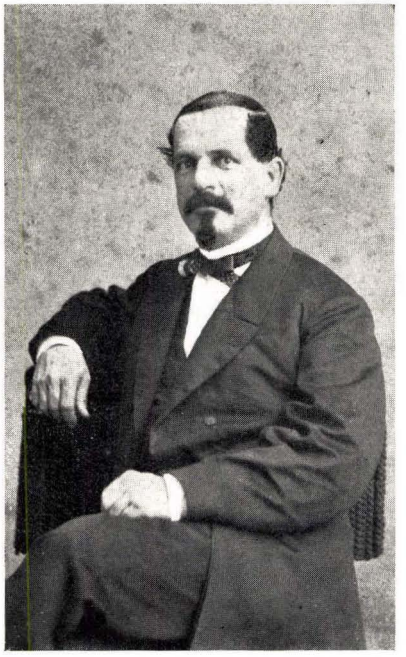
107. SOL COHEN HENRIQUEZ, 1827-1908, ATTORNEY GENERAL



108. ABRAHAM H. J. C. HENRIQUEZ, A FOUNDER OF EDWARDS, HENRIQUEZ & CO., 1856



109. ABRAHAM SALAS, 1837-1910, PRESIDENT OF THE CURAÇOAN TRAM [HORSECAR] COMPANY

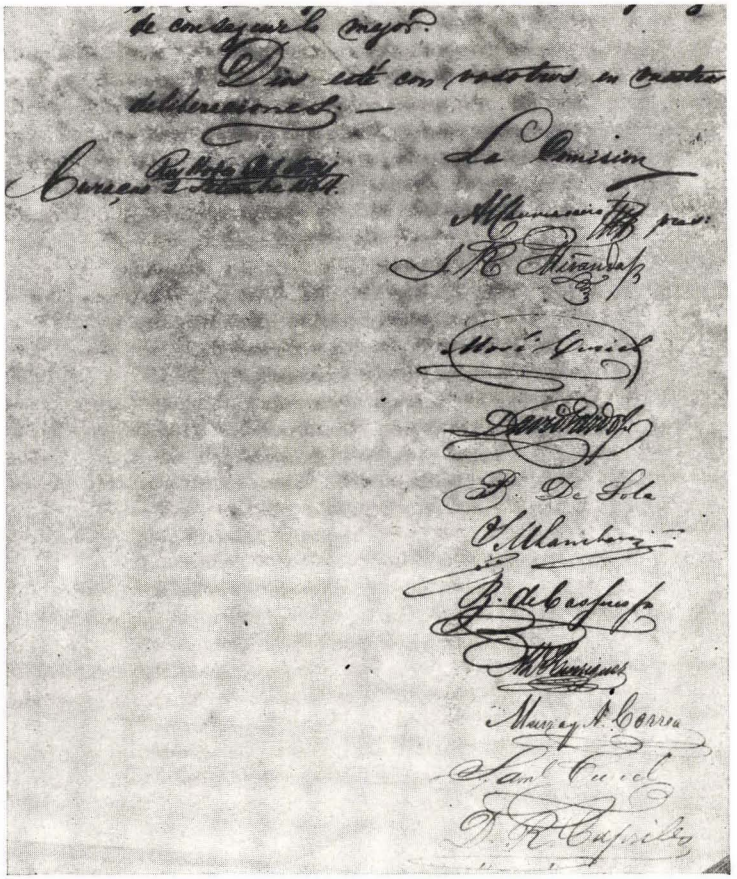


110. ANJEL J. JESURUN, 1824-1893, PLANTATION OWNER AND TRANSLATOR

111. DAVID ABRAHAM H. SENIOR JR., 1834-1898, BANKER AND MERCHANT

112. MOISES SALAS, 1811-1893, ASSISTANT READER OF TEMPLE EMANU-EL

113. SILVER TROWEL OFFERED BY THE JEWISH REFORM COMMUNITY TO JACOB A. JESURUN ON LAYING THE CORNERSTONE TO THE TEMPLE, 1865



114. SIGNATORIES, MIKVE ISRAEL COMMISSION CHARGED TO MAKE REFORMS, 1864, PAGE 393N

115. TEMPLE EMANU-EL OF THE JEWISH REFORM COMMUNITY, CURAÇAO, CONSECRATED IN 1867, NOW MERGED WITH CONGREGATION MIKVE ISRAEL

on the *Lamalshinim* prayer regarding "the traducers and apostates." It gave the erroneous impression that the Jews curse heretics, and naturally this aroused the indignation of the most well-intentioned members. With so much hatred and poor taste on both sides an amicable adjustment was impossible.

The opposition demanded, among other things, that Chumaceiro should not be allowed to speak extemporaneously.[26] The rabbi acceded to this. But the other conditions that are unknown to us were "arrogant" according to Chumaceiro's letter to the governor and dealt with matters which the parnassim were not able to pass upon. The opposition did everything possible to force their rabbi's resignation. Chumaceiro, however, felt "ever closer to the community." Here was a repetition of the Haham De Sola[27] and Hazzan Piza[28] affairs. Only now the overwhelming majority of the community supported Chumaceiro, a rabbinic authority with whom they had to reckon. Had Chumaceiro for the sake of peace given his resignation with the right to a substantial pension, the division could have been averted. Unhappily, the pride and antagonistic spirit of the *guevirim*, coupled with Chumaceiro's probable need of the position, did not permit the interested parties to make such a noble sacrifice.

THE OPPOSITION FOUNDS A NEW COMMUNITY

On May 28, 1864, a day after the meeting with influential members of Mikvé Israel had failed to bring about an understanding, twenty-five members of the opposition founded the "Dutch Jewish Reform Community." These founders and their relationship to each other are listed below.

1. Moses Cohen Henriquez — Father of nos. 2 and 3, father-in-law of no. 4, brother-in-law of nos. 7 and 13, uncle of no. 12. He was the Corresponding Member of the High Commission for Jewish Affairs in Holland.
2. Dr. Abraham M. C. Henriquez (physician) — Son of no. 1 and brother of no. 3 (illus. 145).
3. Herman C. Henriquez — Brother of no. 2. President of the Jewish Benevolent Society, member of the Administrative Council of the Savings Bank in 1854, Captain of the Citizens Militia, consul of Italy in Curaçao.
4. Dr. Sol C. Henriquez (lawyer) — Brother of no. 5, son-in-law of no. 1,

[26] "Niet meer voor de vuist zou mogen spreken."
[27] Chapter IX.
[28] Chapter XV.

brother-in-law of no. 19; judge of the Court of Justice, community president in 1863 during the incident over pulpit rights (pages 372-73 above; illus. 107).

5. Abraham C. Henriquez — Brother of no. 4 and son-in-law of no. 7.
6. Moses David C. Henriquez — Related to the first five founders.
7. Jacob Abraham Jesurun — Father of nos. 8 and 9, brother of no. 10, father-in-law of nos. 5 and 11, brother-in-law of nos. 1 and 13; vice president of the community in 1863 during the incident over pulpit rights; chief partner of the then famous Jesurun firm (illus. 105-106).
8. Abraham Jesurun — Son of no. 7 and brother-in-law of no. 11.
9. Dr. Moses Jesurun (physician) — Brother of no. 8, son of no. 7 and brother-in-law of no. 11 (illus. 146).
10. David Jesurun — Brother of no. 7.
11. Dr. Anjel Jacob Jesurun (lawyer) — Son-in-law of no. 7; brother-in-law of nos. 8 and 9 (illus. 110).
12. Benjamin Pereira Brandao — Nephew of no. 1, brother-in-law of no. 21; treasurer of the community in 1863 during the incident over pulpit rights.
13. Eliau Haim Abinun de Lima — Brother-in-law of nos. 1 and 7.
14, 15, 16, 17. David, Haim, Jeudah and Salomon — Children of no. 13. Haim and Jeudah were married to the daughters of Daniel C. Henriquez.
18. Dr. Isaac Jacob Senior (physician) — Related to no. 1 (illus. 144).
19. David Senior Jr. — Brother-in-law of nos. 4 and 5 (illus. 111).
20. Salomo Senior — Related to nos. 18 and 19.
21. Jeosuah Naar Jr. — Brother-in-law of no. 12.
22. Joseph I. Dovale — Related to no. 7.
23. Joseph Penso.
24. David Leon Hijo of St. Thomas which had a Reform community.
25. Isaac Pinhas Nunes Vas of Jamaica which had a liberal community.[29]

The founders elected a committee of five[30] and delegated their lawyers Sol C. Henriquez and Anjel J. Jesurun to draw up a constitution.

David Senior Jr. placed his home at the disposition of the new community for prayer services in the Reform rite. As the separation was not truly motivated by a desire for Reform, the reformers found it hard to pray bareheaded and without *taleth*. Services were conducted with covered head and members

[29] ADJRC, Actas no. 2, meeting of May 28, 1864.

[30] Moises Cohen Henriquez, president; Jacob A. Jesurun, vice president; Dr. Isaac Jacob Senior, secretary; Salomon David Cohen Henriquez and Sol Cohen Henriquez (ADJRC, *ibid.*, meeting of June 4, 1864, and not as erroneously reported in *Shemah Israel*, p. 44).

had the option of donning the *taleth* if they wished.[31] Only in 1882 after their old men had passed on was it decided to abolish the use of hat and prayer shawl by worshipers and minister alike.[32]

The new community obtained recognition from the Dutch government on May 12, 1865, "on condition that they, for having separated from the Dutch Portuguese Jewish Community, cease having a right to its belongings as well as to the enjoyment of its institutions."[33] Two months later they obtained a permit from Governor Crol to erect a cemetery. Although his disposition referred to Cantz'laar's ordinances of June 26 and July 2, 1821,[34] prohibiting the erection of new cemeteries, he nevertheless justified his authorization because the petition was made "individually" and not "collectively."[35] Crol virtually scrapped Governor Cantz'laar's legislation which was aimed at preventing the formation of a second Jewish community on the island.

On July 13, 1864, the reformers bought 1,900 square meters of land at Berg Altena. This was "to serve as a Jewish cemetery" near "the cemetery of the P. F. Diedenhoven family"[36] over whose remains a drycleaning store now stands. This they surrounded with walls and provided with a gate.

Now the separatists tried to blame the Mikvé Israel community for their separation, "those who in their blind passion sowed discord and are the cause of the division that today exists between us." They attacked Chumaceiro in sarcastic tones:

> And you, Sir, whom we called from distant lands to be our guardian angel, have you properly fulfilled your mission? Oh! How much passion, how much rancor have you displayed! And why? Does our holy design to move and identify ourselves with the spirit of the century merit so much reproval? Contemplate this picture . . . Minister of the Altar, a strange fire consumes us! Minister of love, this select community is divided! Minister of peace, war is not your mission! Minister of God, may He pardon you, may He enlighten you, may He bless you![37]

This accusation was signed by "the members of the new Dutch Jewish Reform Congregation." Among them were Abraham H. J. Cohen Henriquez[38] and

[31] MIA, File of 1865, letter dated Feb. 15, 1865.

[32] *American Israelite* of Cincinnati, Oct. 13, 1882.

[33] ADJRC, Actas no. 3, p. 28; Government Disposition no. 265, May 12, 1865.

[34] See pp. 315-16 above.

[35] ADJRC, Correspondencia del Gobierno, 1864-1875; Emmanuel, *Precious Stones*, pp. 40-42.

[36] CGA, Rooibrieven, 1864.

[37] *Shemah Israel*, June 22, 1864, p. 42.

[38] Shortly before his death he confessed to Moses Levy Maduro, in Brussels, that he had erred in taking the stand he did against the Mikvé Israel in the conflict of 1864.

Abraham J. Jesurun, who had treated Chumaceiro like a guardian angel for his self-abnegation during the smallpox epidemic of 1862.[39] After such a scathing denunciation, it is heartening to read tributes and letters in praise of Chumaceiro, such as the two letters from two governors, the kind note by Rabbi Isaac Leeser who esteemed Chumaceiro as one of the outstanding rabbis of the day, and the fine tribute of Mikvé Israel's Council of Elders which "approved all his acts as rabbi and speaker."[40]

Once they were convinced that they would never return to their beloved synagogue, the separatists took leave from it in these romantic, apologetic terms:

> Sacred edifice, holy temple, object of our love and veneration . . . burdened with *old abuses*[41] we have conceived the sweet hope to remove you from the *dense obscurity*[41] which the centuries have submitted you . . . We were accused of being religious vandals, that we have fought to destroy and not to conserve . . . Thus like a daughter who leaves the paternal roof to create a new family feels profoundly moved, and regrets the harsh necessity of separation, thus do we take leave from you. Yes, we feel the heart constricted . . . in fixing on you our last look and in giving you our last goodbye. Sacred synagogue, dear temple, alma mater, adieu."[42]

The comparison is not appropriate. A married daughter who leaves her parents' roof does not desert them; she returns to see them. This leave-taking from the synagogue again proves how artificial the question of Reform was. The reformers lamented separating themselves from the synagogue where they really wanted to remain but on their terms — without Chumaceiro as rabbi and without Benjamin de Casseres as president.

"INDECENT" PUBLICATIONS

When the German rabbis of Hamburg introduced Reform in 1818, they published certain reviews to propagate their ideas. The orthodox rabbis were at first generally incapable of defending themselves in a modern language. In Curaçao the situation was different. The dissidents had academicians and articulate men in their midst, and so did the conservatives. Chumaceiro, former editor of the *Weekblad voor Israelieten*, was an excellent stylist and so was his son Abraham. The conservative Benjamin de Sola, called "man of

[39] *Weekblad voor Israelieten* (Amsterdam), Dec. 22, 1863.
[40] Session of Oct. 12, 1864; *CC*, Oct. 29, 1865.
[41] The emphasis is ours.
[42] *Shemah Israel*, June 22, 1864, pp. 42-43.

knowledge and great wisdom," gave a remarkable answer to Abraham H. J. Cohen Henriquez' erroneous and dangerous interpretation of the *Lamalshinim* prayer. It was perhaps even superior to Chumaceiro's explanation of its origin in his pastoral letter.[43] Both sides utilized the press in defending their viewpoint, usually in a hardly academic manner.

In an effort to burlesque the *Shemah Israel*, Dr. David Ricardo Capriles, author of various medical studies, published a satiric paper, *Reid y Engordad* — Laugh and Grow Fat.[44] A few days later, on October 19, 1864, a reformist retaliated with a pamphlet[45] satirizing and lampooning Haham Chumaceiro.

The El Porvenir society celebrated its first anniversary with much pomp and fireworks. Its members, nearly all of them reformists, put on a skit, depicting a woman who, after abandoning her husband — an allegory for the Mikvé Israel — ends up by marrying the king. She says: "The past is nothing, the present little, 'The Future'" — an allusion to the El Porvenir society — "is everything."[46] Abraham Jacob Jesurun, vice president of the new Reform community, saluted the society with twenty-one rounds fired from his ship *Galgo*. Abraham Chumaceiro quickly pointed out in a satiric article that the government had not given its customary response to this volley. At the same time he ridiculed the preachers of the Reform community, describing them respectively as "doctor, lawyer, poet, consul, translator, planter, navigator, lieutenant and . . . gambler."[47] Benjamin de Sola, who saw both sides "of the errors and passions in which moderation is interpreted as weakness and counsels of conciliation as selfish concession," regretted these "indecent" publications.[48]

Both sides contributed to the *Archives Israélites* of Paris and *The Occident* of Philadelphia articles of the genre appearing in the Curaçao press. These discourteous writings clearly indicate that pride, selfishness, the personal interests of certain influential families on both sides, as well as a series of events centering about the personality of Haham Chumaceiro, *and not the desire for Reform, brought about the division.*

[43] *Shemah Israel*, pp. 44-49; *CC*, May 28, 1864. See Meir Melamed, *Mishpat Zedek*, vol. II (Salonika, 1615), *Responsa* no. 9, holding that a hazzan could not be dismissed because he had once modified the text of this prayer.

[44] De Pool, *Del Curaçao que se va*, p. 239; *CC*, Oct. 29, 1864.

[45] Reprinted in the *CC* of Oct. 27, 1866, on the introduction of the organ in the Mikvé Israel community. See *ibid.*, Dec. 13, 1866, for Chumaceiro's answer.

[46] *CC*, Dec. 31, 1864.

[47] *CC*, *ibid.* The committee of the DJRC called an extraordinary session to deal with this article, but decided not to take legal action against the author (ADJRC, Actas, Libro no. 2, p. 30).

[48] *CC*, Jan. 14, 1865.

This deep ill feeling and indignation between the two parties was, as in the conflicts over Haham De Sola and Hazzan Piza, reflected in the wills of the period. Salomo Elias Levy Maduro vehemently implored his sons in his second will of October 9, 1866, "never to join . . . the Dutch Jewish Reform Community."[49] Lea de Abraham Jesurun, wife of Moses Mendes Monsanto and sister of a founder of the new community, commanded her two sons in her will of 1868 never to abandon the Mikvé Israel community.[50] Various reformists revoked their bequests to the synagogue and made new ones in favor of the new community.

ATTITUDE OF THE MIKVE ISRAEL TOWARD THE NEW COMMUNITY

Unlike their predecessors in the conflicts of 1746-1750 and 1819-1822, the parnassim did not oppose the foundation of another community. Article 175 of the bylaws of 1861 prohibited prayer services to be conducted with a quorum outside the synagogue. The prohibition against the erection of new cemeteries was still in effect. The parnassim could have easily had the government postpone recognition of the new community until the High Commission for Jewish Affairs in Holland pronounced itself. Haham Chumaceiro could have written to his friends, the parnassim of Amsterdam, and to his son Jacob to defend the official point of view before the High Commission. There was a 90% probability that, with a little pressure by the Dutch government on both parties, a compomise might have been reached and the division averted.

The parnassim did not press their rights possibly because they preferred separation to a peace for form's sake. They were indignant over the disrespect shown their rabbi and obviously wanted no part of the opposition at whose hands they had suffered great difficulties and vexations from May, 1863 (and perhaps from March), to the end of May, 1864. Of course the loss was enormous from an economic and qualitative point of view. The community had benefited much by the administration of Dr. Sol C. Henriquez and his colleagues Jacob Jesurun and Benjamin P. Brandao. Henriquez had put order to many matters and had succeeded in increasing the capital of the community

49 Exactly as follows: "Eindelijk verklaart de testateur dringend te begeren, dat zijne kinderen *nimmer* (underscoring ours) overgaan tot de, eenigen tijd geleden, alhier gevestigde Nederlandsche Hervormde Israelitische gemeente" (CGA, Not. Acts, Oct. 9, 1866, no. 148).

50 Exactly as follows: "Dringend te verzoeken altijd tot de alhier zijnde gemeente 'Mikve Israel' te blijven behooren, die nimmer te verlaten, een verzoek waaran zij zoo veel gevigt hecht dat alleen de overtuigen dat het opgevolgd zal worden haar gelukkig makt" (CGA, Not. Acts, June 18, 1868, no. 84).

by more than 6,000 florins yearly. This achievement may have led the opposition to believe themselves indispensable and encouraged them to make demands unacceptable to the conservatives.

With a view toward determining their relations with the separatists, the Council of Elders named a commission of five persons[51] to study the situation. This commission asked Chumaceiro (1) whether the dissidents "must" or "could" retain prerogatives of Jews according to religious code; (2) whether a dissident Cohen, in the absence of another Cohen in the synagogue, must be called to the reading of the Torah; (3) if this Cohen could bless the community with the priestly benediction.

The last question was a very important one. Outside of one David Cohen Henriquez (brother of Moses Haim, founder no. 1 of the new community) who remained loyal to Mikvé Israel, all the Cohen Henriquezes joined the Reform community. No other members of the Cohen Family existed in Curaçao, the male members of the Cohen Peixottos having emigrated or disappeared.

To the first question Chumaceiro replied that they "could" but that they "must not" retain prerogatives as Jews. He went so far as to consider them as a religious sect.[52] As for the Cohen Family question, he was of the opinion that no dissident Cohen should be called to the Torah.

The question was raised whether the separatist members of the Hesed ve Emeth[53] could bathe the Mikvé Israel's dead and continue as members of this society. The rabbi and parnassim decided against this. Had not the separatists declared that "they did not wish their names to appear in any register of our Community"? The parnassim generously offered to let the society wash the separatist dead under orthodox rite. On this occasion the separatists Jacob A. Jesurun and D. M. Jesurun were ejected from the Hesed ve Emeth whose president and secretary then were Eliau Namias de Crasto and Manuel P. Curiel, respectively. In sympathy the following members of the society resigned but still continued as members of the synagogue: David Osorio, Daniel Jesurun, Jacob Henriquez, Moses F. Ricardo and Gabriel Cardoze.[54] Later, the separatists founded a similar society, the *Guemiluth Hasadim*, having the symbolic number of eighteen members,[55] with Jacob Abraham Jesurun as president.

[51] Isaac Rodriguez Miranda Jr., Elias Jesurun Henriquez, Moses Curiel, Isaac Namias de Crasto and Efraim Curiel.

[52] A similar opinion was held by a Reform rabbi in 1949. See below, p. 515.

[53] For details see Emmanuel, *Precious Stones*, pp. 63-68, and above, pp. 211, 309, 327.

[54] MIA, Hesed ve Emeth archives.

[55] See Emmanuel, *ibid.*, p. 66, for the symbolism of the number eighteen in such a society. This proves once again how conservative the reformists really were.

After due deliberation, the commission reported on the community's position toward the separatists. Separation, they felt, was "the lesser of two evils; that a peaceful separation, disagreeable as it may be, is preferable to a continuous struggle against the inevitable, systematic opposition and a well-known and persevering desire to humiliate the Rabbi." The commission, "with . . . the greatest impartiality . . . without sustaining passions," then adopted eleven points. All save two favored the separatists. These were the most important provisions:

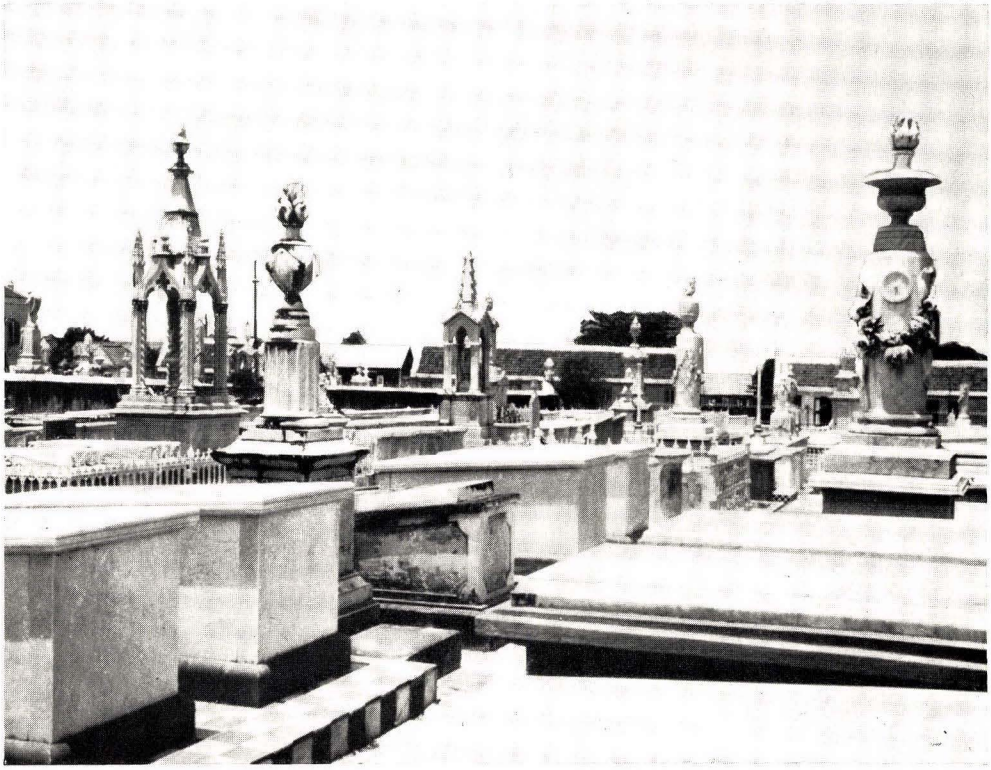
1. The separatists would be considered as Jews and could, if they wished, be called to the Torah.
2. Separatists who did not marry according to synagogue rite and prescriptions would not be considered religiously married.
3. Children of the dissidents could attend the religious schools of the community.
4. The Mikvé Israel's bathers could wash the separatist dead according to orthodox rite.
5. Jewish burial in the Beth Hahaim would be allowed to the separatists for two years (of course, according to orthodox rite).
6. Separatists could use graves already purchased.
7. Separatists desiring to return to the community could do so on paying all their communal tax arrears.
8. Separatists would be reinstated in the Council of Elders only upon serving anew as members of the Mahamad, of course by election.
9. Separatists could not vote or be elected to office for six years.

The last two articles rankled. Obviously they were designed to prevent the separatists from assuming rapid control of the community.

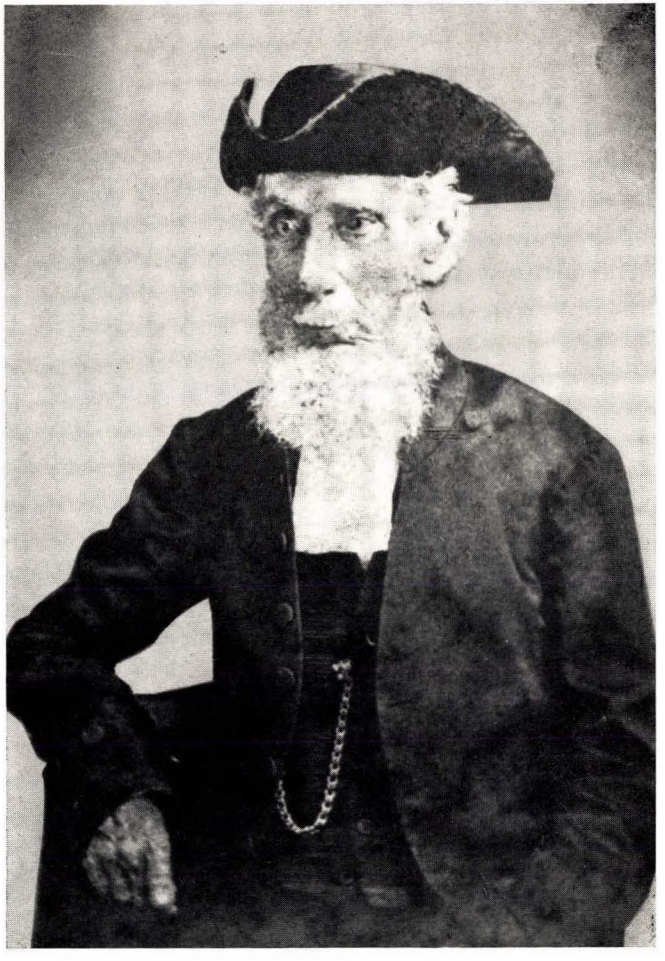
Some members wished to belong to both communities. The Council of Elders objected to this. They also refused to accept separatist bequests for saying memorial prayers until 1880 when the Mikvé Israel's new cemetery at Berg Altena was consecrated. The article was then modified as follows:

1. The Mikvé Israel would, on request, say memorial prayers free of charge for any member of the Reform community during the eleven months of mourning.
2. The Reform community's bathers of the dead could bathe their dead who wanted to be buried in the orthodox cemetery.
3. The orthodox community's bathers could not bathe a member of the Mikvé Israel who was to be interred in the Reform cemetery.
4. No memorial prayers would be recited in the synagogue for a member of the Mikvé Israel who was buried in the Reform cemetery.

116. TEMPLE EMANU-EL, CURAÇAO, AND SURROUNDINGS, C. 1870



117. BERG ALTENA JEWISH CEMETERY, CURAÇAO, 1936



118. JACOB MENDES DE SOLLA, RABBI OF TEMPLE EMANU-EL, 1876-1881

119. MOISE L. LEAO LAGUNA, PREACHER-READER OF TEMPLE EMANU-EL, 1884-1917

Several members of the Reform community had been creating difficulties over the administration of the fund of the Jewish Benevolent Society of 1853. (Its principal, which had grown to 13,043.81 florins in 1865, was deposited in the Orphans Court of the Mikvé Israel.) Although the Mahamad decided on April 5, 1865, to expel them from the society, the separatists nevertheless continued paying the annual dues of nine florins charged since its foundation.[56] They finally left, but demanded the restitution of the monies paid between 1865-1867. This was refused. In April, 1867, they retained Philippus van Alphen van Coevenhaven to sue the society in their individual names.[57] These plaintiffs were Sol,[58] David, Herman and Salomon D. of the Cohen Henriquez family, Anjel J. Jesurun, Benjamin Pereira Brandao, Haim and David Abinun de Lima.[59] The benevolent society did not engage an attorney, but chose two of its number — M. P. Curiel and Dr. D. R. Capriles — to defend the case with the assistance of Abraham Jesurun Dz. The case continued until the end of 1867 when it was evidently dismissed.[60] The Mikvé Israel remained with the money. Later on this benevolent society included in its fold members of the Reform community.

The celebrated Cámara de Orfaos, under the aegis of the parnassim, also was the subject of litigation. All Jews of Curaçao were under its jurisdiction by virtue of a regulation approved by Governor Lansberge in 1859.[61] The separatists inquired of Governor Crol whether they still had to submit to the Mikvé Israel's Cámara de Orfaos or whether they could apply to the National Orphans Court. Unlike Cantz'laar who sided with the parnassim in the Piza affair, Governor Crol cooperated fully with the separatists in the foundation of their community. He authorized them to deal with the National Orphans Court.[62] At their request he changed the name from "Orphans Court of the Jewish Community" to "Orphans Court of the Dutch Portuguese

[56] *CC*, July 9, 1853. In 1855 the community organized a lottery in behalf of this society (*ibid.*, July 14 and Nov. 24, 1855).

[57] In the beginning of the case the committee members of the benevolent society were Dr. S. M. Lansberg, M. P. Curiel, E. J. Henriquez, E. Jesurun, David L. Penha, Dr. D. R. Capriles and A. J. Senior. Later in the suit M. P. Curiel, Moise Pereira, E. Jesurun Jr. and Dr. Capriles were on this committee (illus. 97, 143, 148, 235, 277).

[58] He was associate judge at the time.

[59] As the separatists brought suit in their own behalf, the DJRC was not implicated in the affair; hence there is no allusion to these events in its records.

[60] CGA, Rechtsbank, 1867. The final decision of the court could not be found. According to a letter of the late J.M.L. Maduro to the author, the Mikvé Israel community won the case.

[61] Disposition no. 361 of July 9, 1859 (CGA, Rechtsbank, July 18, 1867).

[62] ADJRC, Actas no. 3, session of March 2, 1865; Royal decision of July 6, 1865; G. J. Simons, *Beschrijving van het eiland Curaçao* (Oosterwolde, 1868), p. 106.

Jewish Community." He also modified Article 14 of the bylaws of the Jewish Orphans Court to read that the Orphans Court had jurisdiction not over "someone belonging to the Jewish faith" but over "someone from the Dutch Portuguese Jewish Community," that is, the members of the Mikvé Israel only.[63]

All these questions were straightened out between 1864 and 1867. Nevertheless, peace was restored in the Jewish collectivity only after Haham Chumaceiro left for Holland in September, 1868. A ripple broke the calm in 1900. As the reformers did not have a circumciser that year, they were forced to turn to the circumcisers of the Mikvé Israel: Drs. David R. Capriles and Haim A. de Casseres. These gentlemen refused to circumcise children in any manner other than in accordance with synagogue rite, with prayer shawl, and so forth.[64] Aside from this incident, the two communities lived in harmony and intermarried. The marriage ceremonies were conducted according to the rite of the groom's community. The social life of the Curaçoan Jew was not affected.

At the bicentennial celebration of the Mikvé Israel synagogue in April, 1932, a friendship agreement was signed between the two congregations. As a result, the members of the Reform community officially participated in the brilliant ceremony held in the synagogue of their ancestors. Years later, in conformity with the author's wish expressed in 1957 in *Precious Stones*, p. 43, the wall dividing the Reform cemetery from that of the Mikvé Israel at Berg Altena was leveled to the ground in 1958. The dead were finally united in one cemetery, but under two administrations. In 1961 the lack of a spiritual leader in the Reform community and the lack of congregants in both houses of worship brought the two communities closer together. They organized joint prayer services which were held alternately in the temple and in the synagogue. More will be said about this later.

[63] A careful investigation of the Curaçao court records for that period discloses only two suits brought by the separatists against the Mikvé Israel community: (1) Sol C. Henriquez et al. *vs.* the Jewish Benevolent Society; and (2) David Moises Abraham Jesurun *vs.* the Orphans Court. These are the particulars in the second case: On June 25, 1856, David married Abigail (daughter of Rafael Pinedo) who brought him a dowry of 10,000 florins which David augmented by 5,000 florins (MIA, Ket. VIII, no. 144). Abigail died on April 18, 1860, leaving two children, Leon and Morris. David wanted to remarry. The Jewish Orphans Court, which had jurisdiction over all Jews of Curaçao (Art. 21 of the bylaws), ordered him to deposit 15,000 florins with it or give a good guarantee in behalf of his minor children. David sued and the Island Court surprisingly decided in his favor. David's marriage to Rachel, daughter of Moises de David Cohen Henriquez, on July 13, 1864, was the first to be registered in the Marriage Book of the Reform community (ADJRC, Libro de Matrimonios, no. 1; CGA, Rechtsbank, 1864).

[64] ADJRC, Actas, libro 6, session of April 6, 1900.

CONSTRUCTION OF TEMPLE EMANU-EL

Once they had their cemetery, the separatists opened a subscription to build their temple. At their request the government gave them a plot of land forty meters wide and fifty meters long in Pietermaai.[65] Thanks to some well-organized propaganda, they obtained donations from La Guaira (75 pesos), Coro (290 florins), Santa Marta (300 florins)[66] and Paris (4,528 francs).[67] Several non-Jews of Curaçao and elsewhere also contributed liberally — among them, Venezuela's president General Juan G. Falcon with a gift of 100 "solid pesos."[68] Wishing to set an example of tolerance, several members of the Mikvé Israel gave generously, e.g., the Jesurun Henriquez family, 1,050 florins, and Benjamin de Sola, fifty florins.[69]

In its own behalf the committee of the Reform community launched a voluntary loan among its members which was to yield 4% interest. As they did not reach their goal, they issued a second loan of 15,000 florins. This was divided into a hundred shares of 150 florins each, bearing 6%.[70] These loans brought in a total of 19,492.50 florins.

The first cornerstone was laid by Jacob Abraham Jesurun on December 17, 1865, the second anniversary of the El Porvenir society. At this time the committee offered him a silver trowel bearing the inscription: "The D[utch]. J[ewish]. R[eform]. Community to its president Mr. J[acob]. A. Jesurun, on the placing of the first stone of Temple Emanu-El, Curaçao, December 17, 1865."[71] As usual in such ceremonies, they buried in the foundation a leather case containing the names of the architect and the master mason, a list of the members of the community, a complete collection of the *Shemah Israel*, divers monies of the country, and different documents relating to the cere-

[65] Government Disposition no. 432/3 of July 22, 1865; ADJRC, Legajo no. 1, Correspondencia del Gobierno, 1864-65; CGA, Rooibrieven, 1865, no. 27.

[66] ADJRC, Legajo no. 2, letter of Nov. 16, 1864; Actas, Libro no. 3, y. 1865.

[67] "Subscription for the construction and completion of a Reform Jewish Temple in Curaçao (Antilles) opened in Paris by the delegates the Messrs. C. S. Benson & Co., 7 Rue d'Enghien" (ADJRC, Legajo no. 4, 1865; *Archives Israélites*, Paris, 1865, p. 140). Almost all of the Paris contributors were non-Sephardis.

[68] This sum was paid by Falcon's heir in 1872 (ADJRC, Copia de Cartas, Libro 2, nos. 193 and 195).

[69] ADJRC, Legajo no. 8, Documentos varios.

[70] Most of these shares were bequeathed by members of the Reform community for the recitation of memorial prayers for their departed. When the terrible hurricane of 1877 seriously damaged the temple, the Reform community opened a loan of 4,000 florins to cover repairs (ADJRC, Copia de Cartas, 1880, Report to the Governor).

[71] ADJRC, Actas no. 1, p. 20. See illus. no. 113.

mony.[72] For the occasion the organist J. G. Palm composed his "Temple March," and Jesurun's ship *Cleopatra* fired twenty-one rounds of cannon.[73] A grand ball was held that evening in the residence of A. J. Jesurun.

Two years later Temple Emanu-El[74] was completed at a cost of 61,792.97 florins.[75] It was magnificently dedicated on September 12, 1867.

APPEAL TO DR. SAMUEL ADLER

Since the Reform community was not founded mainly for ideological reasons, there was no one among its twenty-five founders able to orient the new community religiously. Already in October, 1864, they had addressed themselves to Dr. Samuel Adler, rabbi of New York's Temple Emanu-El, for advice and guidance. They asked him how to consecrate a cemetery, a temple; how to conduct prayers on going on or returning from a voyage (this custom was deeply rooted in Curaçao for many generations); also for prayers and ceremonies of circumcision, for naming a girl, for the Bar Miẓvah, for the sick, for recovery from illness, for marriages, for funerals, for memorial prayers to be said by the mourner the first seven days until the end of the year. They asked how to divide the portions in the Torah readings, about the Haftara, Sofar (Shofar), Kipur, Sucot, Sepher, "Tishnabeab;" whether the "Tephilin" were to be used; the location of the "Hejal," and so forth.

Because there were so many members of the Cohen Family in the new community, they asked if the Cohanim conserved their prerogative of being called first to the Torah and of performing the ceremony of the redemption of the first born son, *Pidyon Haben*.

The reformists did not have the faintest notion of the meaning of Reform — the pretext they had seized upon to justify their separation. On October 29, 1864, A[braham]. J[esurun]. Dovale wrote Dr. Adler:

> As the Congregation is without any one with whom to advice and very particular to establish the reform on a solid basis, may I request of you . . . *It is not a Rabi which is desired*,[76] but a man who understands his business well & can lead the members of his Congregation through their religious functions, explain the

[72] ADJRC, Legajo no. 9, Documentos relativos a la colocación de la primera piedra del Templo, 1865 a 1867.

[73] *CC*, December 23, 1865.

[74] The name "Temple Emanu-El" was given by Dr. Adler of New York's Temple Emanu-El (Herbert C. Zafren, "Samuel Adler: Respondent," *Essays in honor of Solomon B. Freehof* [Pittsburgh, 1964], p. 320).

[75] ADJRC, Libro de Caja, y. 1868.

[76] The emphasis is ours.

> law as is, in your Temple . . . Please let us know the origin of the History of this reform rite . . . the basis of their belief etc. etc. etc. We want to be well posted.[77]

Whether or not the history and basic principles of Reform were furnished we do not know. But Dr. Adler did send the necessary instructions, and even liturgical music. When the president Jacob Abraham Jesurun and the secretary Elias Abinun de Lima thanked him for enlightening them, they wrote that they had already introduced his religious music and ritual in their services.[78]

In June, 1865, they wrote Dr. Adler to learn whether one of their members [Manuel de Mordechay Alvares Correa] could marry his aunt, a sister of his father. Dr. Adler replied:

> Judaism, & particularly reformed Judaism, has always guarded with especial care against the infringement of the laws concerning the purity and sanctity of matrimony as enjoined by the Bible, & it would therefore, be contrary to the spirit as well as to [the] letter of our law to solemnize the marriage of a man with the sister of his father.[79]

Correa nevertheless married his aunt in a civil ceremony.

So, under Dr. Adler's guidance the Jewish Reform community became consolidated. Its existence was made possible thanks to a subsidy of 2,000 florins given by the Colonial Treasury since 1876 and approved by Governor Wagner for the salary of their titular rabbi. This sum was later increased to 2,500 florins and progressively raised to equal the like subsidy granted to the Mikvé Israel.

CANTORS AND PREACHERS OF THE REFORM COMMUNITY

From its inception the Dutch Jewish Reform community had difficulty in obtaining qualified rabbis. Perhaps, as Dovale had written, they were not too interested in a rabbi. With few exceptions this position was filled by cantors who performed rabbinical functions. These officiants were as follows:

Jeosuah de Abraham Haim Naar, a.k.a. Jeosuah Naar Jr. — He was born in Curaçao on August 17, 1817, and served the community until his death on April 10, 1874.

[77] AJA, Box 2575, courtesy of Dr. Jacob R. Marcus.

[78] AJA, *ibid.*; Zafren, *ibid.*, pp. 315-23.

[79] AJA, *ibid.*; Zafren, *ibid.*, pp. 322-23. See appendix 17, Alvares Correa.

Moises de Isaac Haim Salas — He was born in Curaçao on January 22, 1811, and occupied the position from his predecessor's death until De Solla's arrival in 1876 (illus. 112).

Jacob de Isaac Mendes de Solla — He was born in Holland in 1817. He was graduated there in 1841 as *Magid Mishné*[80] (second degree reader) and also held a doctorate in theology.[81] Before coming to Curaçao he had served as rabbi in several communities: the Beth Israel of Baltimore, Md. (until September 30, 1858); the Beth Jahacob of Montego Bay, Jamaica (1860 to August, 1862); a congregation in Philadelphia, and another in San Francisco (1865-67);[82] the B'nai Sholom of Quincy, Illinois (March, 1873-April, 1874). He had good letters of recommendation from the Baltimore, Jamaica and Quincy communities.[83]

De Solla arrived in Curaçao in 1876 and was engaged at an annual salary of 3,000 florins. He organized a religious school and introduced the confirmation of children of both sexes in accordance with the Reform rite of New York. He was very popular and was making excellent headway until a strong indisposition suffered by his wife in 1878 compelled him to leave for New York where he remained for a year. On his return to Curaçao, he announced in the *Curaçaosche Courant* his intention to hold classes in English, French and Hebrew; also, a class for a few students of both congregations who wished to prepare for the ministry.[84] During this period he completed his *Jewish Student's Companion*. Despite his good intentions he was unable to finish his second engagement for three years (1879-82) and left the island permanently the end of April, 1881. De Solla was considered Curaçao's best qualified and most appreciated Reform preacher (illus. 118).

He wrote the following works:

1. *A Polemic Essay on the Prohibitory Law of Intermarriage with Mamzerim* (Kingston, [1861]), 18 pages. In this controversial study De Solla permits intermarriage with illegitimate children of Jewish descent. Contrary to the rabbinic interpretation of the word, he states that a

[80] ADJRC, Legajo no. 18, 1875-76. See p. 353, note 3, about this title.

[81] According to the frontispiece, Jacob de Isaac Mendes de Solla, *The Jewish Student's Companion*.

[82] During his San Francisco engagement De Solla wrote to Dr. (Nathan) [Samuel] Adler, 12 Iyar, 5627 (May 17, 1867), to assist two of his sons. He lamented that he could not help them because of his inadequate salary and numerous expenses.

[83] ADJRC, *ibid.*

[84] *CC*, Aug. 30, 1879.

mamzer was not a bastard, but an inhabitant of Ashdod;[85] that the prohibition against a *mamzer's* entering the assembly of the Lord (Deuteronomy 23:3) does not apply to marriage with Jews. De Solla's interpretation was daring for the time. Apparently he himself had performed a marriage between an illegitimate Jew and a legitimate one.

2. *Kol Dibre Ha-Torah*, a vocabulary of the Pentateuch with an English translation . . . alphabetical index of the Hebrew words as a School Dictionary . . . a synopsis of Hebrew grammar (Philadelphia, 1865), 152 pages.[86]
3. *A Catechism of the Jewish Religion*, 58 pages.
4. *The Jewish Student's Companion*, in two parts: 1st part, Post-biblical history; 2nd part, Explanation of Mosaic Commands (New York: Hebrew Book Union, 1880), x, 241 pages.[87]

Moises Salas — During De Solla's stay in New York and after his final departure, Moises Salas officiated as hazzan until Laguna's arrival in 1884, and then as the latter's assistant. Impartial and very devoted to the community, Salas died on August 7, 1893.

Moise L. Leao Laguna — Born in Amsterdam in 1840. A graduate teacher, for ten years he officiated as hazzan of Rotterdam's Beth Tefila Portuguese community.[88] He arrived in Curaçao in June, 1884, with his wife and two children. Unlike De Solla, from time to time he had certain difficulties with the regents of his community. At first his religious school consisted of five children.[89] Later, in 1887, he opened a general school for boys under the direction of Miss Illidge and himself. In 1897 he was one of three directors of the Baralt College, a boys' school. His literary achievements are a catechism in Dutch and Spanish which remains in manuscript, and a 25-year Hebrew calendar published in 1896.[90] He died in 1917 after having served his community for thirty-three years (illus. 119).

[85] According to the second interpretation of Deut. 23:3 by Aben Ezra who referred to Zechariah 9:6 and Onkelos' translation and interpretation thereof. De Solla also refers to Nehemiah 13:23 in support of his contention.

[86] See *The Occident* of 1865, vol. 23, pp. 230-33, for an unfavorable criticism of this work by Isaac Leeser, and De Solla's response, *ibid.*, pp. 451-62.

[87] To publish this work De Solla invested all his resources. He wanted to go to New York to defend his interests according to his letter of November, 1880, to the committee of the Dutch Jewish Reform Community (ADJRC, Legajo, no. 23).

[88] ADJRC, Legajo no. 25.

[89] Ditto.

[90] *Calendario hebreo para un periodo de 25 años 5657-5681*, por Rev. M. de Leao Laguna (Curaçao: Imprenta del Comercio, 1896), 27 pp.

Mortimer de Samuel Alvares Correa (1877-1948) — A dentist by profession, he replaced his father-in-law, Hazzan Laguna, in 1918. He was a cantor of the Mikvé Israel community and a member of its Council of Elders. He remained in service until 1943.

The outbreak of World War II made it difficult to find a rabbi. The members of the Reform community were therefore obliged to attend the Mikvé Israel, which was happy to receive and serve them with the greatest cordiality. They called, and rightly so, Reform *Cohanim* to the Torah. It was a propitious moment for a merger of the two communities.[91] The Reform community eventually engaged Dr. Maurits Goudeket as their hazzan and preacher. He was a native Hollander who taught physics at the Peter Stuyvesant College in Curaçao. During his tenure the name of the congregation was changed to Jewish Liberal Congregation Emanu-El. It became affiliated with the Union of American Hebrew Congregations and the World Union for Progressive Judaism. Dr. Goudeket served from 1946 to his departure in 1960. Thereafter the Reform community from time to time engaged rabbis from the United States on a temporary basis. These rabbis were Dr. Max Raisin, Dr. Jacob Singer, 1959 (who filled in when Dr. Goudeket was on vacation), Rabbi Israel L. Kaplan, 1960, and Rabbi Bernard Heller, 1961.

For a short while, under an agreement made by the regents of both congregations in 1961, Rabbi Amine of the Mikvé Israel served both communities. Members of both congregations could thus attend both services on fixed days. This arrangement, the result of a compromise, did not last long. Both congregations then held their services separately. Since then, as the Reform community did not have rabbis until September, 1962, the services were led by one or another member.

The Reform community approached several rabbis. Finally in September, 1962, it engaged Simeon J. Maslin (Masovetsky), born on March 18, 1931, in Boston, Mass. He attended the Yeshiva University of New York from his thirteenth to his sixteenth year. In 1954 he received his Master of Arts degree from the University of Pennsylvania, and in 1957 was ordained rabbi at the Hebrew Union College, Cincinnati. More will be said about him later.

[91] While rabbi of the Mikvé Israel community, the author tried to unite the two congregations in 1937. The merger was vehemently opposed by an influential member of the Reform community, the late Haim Josias Cohen Henriquez. In his words, he did not wish to destroy the work of his father, Dr. Sol C. Henriquez.

CHAPTER XIX

THE MIKVE ISRAEL AFTER THE DIVISION 1864-1905

REFORM, AS ALREADY OBSERVED, was not the main reason for the split in the community. In principle it was, with certain reservations, acceptable to the great majority of the members. Several weeks after the Reform community was founded, the Council of Elders nominated a committee of eleven people headed by Haham Chumaceiro to study a project of reform.[1] After carefully probing the matter the committee decided, with the approval of the Council of Elders, to initiate the following reforms:

1. Formation of a mixed choir provided that there was a special enclosure for each of the sexes. This choir was to be accompanied at all services, excepting those of Yom Kippur, by an organ to be played by a non-Jewish organist.
2. Religious confirmation for both sexes.
3. Removal of the latticework in the women's gallery.
4. The elimination of all repetitions in the services, including the 'Amidah and Musaf, save those of Yom Kippur.
5. The elimination of various *kaddish* prayers.
6. The priestly blessing (*Birkath Cohanim*) to be performed only on Passover for being the anniversary of the synagogue, and also in the Ne'ilah service of Yom Kippur.
7. No repetition of the verses of the *maftir* at the Torah.
8. A special Scroll of the Law to be taken out for the *Bar Miẓvah* in the reading of the last eleven verses of Chapter X of Deuteronomy.
9. Elimination of the poem *Lekh leshalom geshem* (Rain, go in peace) prayed on the first day of Passover.[2]

[1] Chumaceiro, president; Isaac Rodriguez Miranda Jr., Mosé Curiel, David Pardo Jr., Benjamin de Sola, Salomon M. Lansberg, M.D., Benjamin de Casseres Jr., E. J. Henriquez, Murray Alvares Correa, Samuel Curiel and David R. Capriles, M.D.

[2] Although Curaçao needed rain, Haham Pardo and his successors kept this poem because the prayers are said in behalf of the Holy Land. Ribbi Joseph Covo of 18th century Salonika advised the elimination of this prayer because Salonika needed rain until as late as Nisan (*Ben Porath Joseph* [Salonika, 1797], p. 10a). This poem is not found in the Passover prayer book printed in Salonika in 1876 and 1908.

10. No further celebration of the anniversary of the "old" synagogue of 1703.
11. The *shofar* not to be blown before *Zemiroth* services on Rosh Hashanah.
12. The rabbi to chant the Kal Nidre once only.[3]
13. The circuits of Simḥath Torah not to be conducted with lighted candles.
14. A Levy in place of a Cohen to be called to the Torah since there were no members of the Cohen Family in the synagogue.
15. The rabbi to bless the public at the close of the Sabbath and Holy Day services.
16. The second feast days and various hymns of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur to be observed.
17. The *piyyutim* or hymns to be read and not sung.
18. The elimination of the individual memorial prayer and in its place a donation to be offered for a deceased relative by the person called to the Torah.
19. The last verses of the Psalms, and so forth, henceforth to be read by only one cantor in place of the usual chanting by the cantors in unison.

Mordechay Capriles and Samuel Curiel immediately went about organizing a mixed choir of sixty people. It made its début during the Feast of Ḥanukkah, 1864. Less than two years later, on October 24, 1866, they installed an organ at a cost of 9,000 florins.[4]

The editor of the *Shemah Israel*, who represented the separatists, was amazed at the rapidity with which the Mikvé Israel proceeded toward Reform.[5] A necessary evil, it was the best means of stopping the reformist propaganda and keeping the members of the old community loyal to their synagogue.

The *Archives Israélites*, regarded as the voice of Liberal Judaism in France, commented favorably on these reforms. It considered them "moderate" and "bound to the law without snuffing out the holy flame of religious feeling in the heart of the youth and the family circle."[6] *The Occident*, on the other hand, regretted the changes and particularly the introduction of the organ.[7] "We deeply regret," wrote Rabbi Leeser, the editor, "that the Rabbi should have found himself compelled to yield to the introduction of instrumental

[3] Later on they returned to singing it thrice.

[4] Part of this money was taken from the 4,655 florins realized from the sale of synagogue land in Otrabanda.

[5] *Shemah Israel*, pp. 65-67.

[6] *Archives Israélites*, Paris, 1865, p. 551.

[7] The correspondent for *The Occident*, when reporting the various innovations and changes in the Mikvé Israel religious services, did mention the choir but avoided saying it was mixed. For this reason Rabbi Leeser did not refer to it.

music in his Synagogue . . . and it is futile to have this needless work done by a non-Israelite. The organ, moreover, will soon render other changes necessary."[8]

In his defense Haham Chumaceiro alleged that nine months before the division he had proposed conducting a study of the various reforms; that although he had voted against the introduction of the organ, he realized that he had "to allow utter freedom to the community to carry through what was thought necessary" and that he would "never allow or *submit* to any thing at all that would interfere in the least with God's word or precepts."

The Occident replied that the introduction of the "Christian" organ into our worship is against our laws. It doubted that Chumaceiro would be able to control ultra reform and feared that when he left his community or died, the people would probably demand more changes and more reforms.[9]

Rabbi Isaac Leeser was quite right. A few months before his departure Chumaceiro was forced to make modifications and additions to those reforms. Since then nearly every cantor (from Haham Chumaceiro's departure to the author's arrival in 1936 the hazzan was the titular rabbi) introduced some innovation. These included the abolition of the second feast days and even the second day of Rosh Hashanah by Hazzan Duque; limiting the blowing of the *shofar* to ten blasts; conducting burials on the Sabbath before nightfall, and finally substituting for the *get* or religious divorce, a document typewritten in Dutch and in Hebrew. One reform led to another with the result that the community remained only partly orthodox. And that was the crux of the difficulties which the author experienced as their rabbi.

HAHAM CHUMACEIRO'S LAST YEARS IN CURAÇAO

After the foundation of the Dutch Jewish Reform Community, the Mikvé Israel was able to reorganize itself and work peacefully for the good of its members. Moses Cohen Henriquez was obliged to resign as Corresponding Member of the High Commission for Jewish Affairs in Holland. He was succeeded by Salomo E. L. Maduro who held the post until September, 1870, when the High Commission was dissolved (illus. 133).

So that the finances of the community would not suffer by the departure of the dissidents, the members taxed themselves voluntarily. Some even doubled their communal tax of 1862 in order to reach the sum of 5,085 florins as

[8] *The Occident*, 1865, pp. 476-78.
[9] *Ibid.*, 1866, pp. 133-39.

against the 5,241 florins of the previous taxation.[10] Despite this additional burden, they continued with their contributions in behalf of the Holy Land, the Jews persecuted in Tunis, the Cohen Family of Livorno and the community of St. Thomas when it was struck by the earthquake of 1867, and so forth.

Chumaceiro continued to give his very best efforts for the good of the community by interesting himself in matters relating to Holland and the island. In 1863 in commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the Dutch Revolution of 1813, he published a historic study on the Royal Family of Orange.[11] When the slaves were emancipated in the Dutch West Indies in 1863, he conducted a solemn service in the synagogue and distinguished himself with a brilliant sermon. In 1866 on the fiftieth anniversary of the reoccupation of Curaçao by the Dutch, patriot that he was, Chumaceiro celebrated this event with a special service and sermon in the synagogue. He composed fourteen circumstantial verses in Hebrew which were set to music by Mordechay Capriles and Samuel Curiel. Many Gentiles attended the service.[12] His son Abraham commemorated this fete with the Curaçao-Jewish colony in Coro.[13]

In 1867 during Chumaceiro's rabbinate the Jews were represented for the first time in the Government Council. That was when the King appointed Benjamin Jesurun Jr. to that body.[14] He had been a member of the Colonial Council since 1856.

[10] The following members paid the maximum tax of 210 florins: S.E.L. Maduro, David Valencia, Benjamin Jesurun Jr., Eliau Jesurun Henriquez and Isaac Pinedo Jr., as against their previous taxation of 90, 150, 150, 120 and 150 florins, respectively. See appendix 30.

[11] *CC*, Oct. 31, Nov. 7, 11, 21, 1863.

[12] *The Occident* of 1866-67, p. 96, carried a report of this service and the Hebrew verses by Chumaceiro. The sermon was published under the title *Toespraak naar Jesaja LXV, 22 ter gelegenheid van de vijftigjarige hereeniging van Curaçao met Nederland* (Curaçao, 1866), 19 pp.

[13] *CC*, March 11, 1866.

[14] Royal Disposition of Feb. 26, 1867, no. 49. Benjamin, son of Abraham Benjamin Jesurun, was born on June 4, 1813. In 1836 he married Leah de Abraham de Marchena and three years after her death on Dec. 7, 1856, he married Sarah de David Pardo. He was treasurer of the community in 1851-52. In 1855 he was appointed to the Island Tribunal, but declined the honor. In 1856 he was one of the gentlemen authorized to sign money bills (*CC*, Dec. 1, 1855); president of a commission named by the Department of Finances to tax real estate in 1856 (*ibid.*, Dec. 6, 1856); president of a commission to classify obligatory service in the Citizens Militia in 1857 (*ibid.*, May 23, 1857); member of the council of administration of the Savings & Loan Bank in 1858, 1860, etc. (*KV*, 1858, 1860); member of the Commission of Verification relative to the Emancipation of Slaves in 1863 (*CC*, April 18, 1863). In the split of 1864 he remained faithful to the Mikvé Israel. He was replaced in the Government Council in 1885 by Dr. Sol C. Henriquez, member of the Colonial Council since 1871 (*KV*, 1871, 1885). He died on July 9, 1889, and was buried beside his first wife in the Old Cemetery (our Catalogue no. 68).

Thanks to the intermarriages between members of the "orthodox" and Reform communities, in 1866 it was possible to found the Curaçao Ladies Hebrew Benevolent Society. As its members belonged to both congregations, the women could be likened to agents of peace. Very often they belonged to one congregation by birth and to the other by marriage. This society accomplished outstanding social work in the Jewish collectivity. In 1867 it arranged the first fancy fair which realized the sum of 1,285.75 florins.[15] This society also furnished some artistically embroidered material to adorn the pulpit and Scrolls of the Law.

Chumaceiro did not escape the effects of the smallpox epidemic of 1868. To regain his health he left for Holland on September 1, 1868, with his wife and adopted daughter, the orphan of teacher Joseph Oeb Brandon. From Amsterdam he sent his resignation to the Mahamad on May 14, 1871. He was then pensioned by the State with 1,092 florins a year as a government employee. Death came to him in Amsterdam on September 18, 1882, and he was deeply mourned by his former community. The parnassim of Mikvé Israel conferred upon him posthumous honors he so well deserved.[16] One of the Mikvé Israel's most active spiritual leaders, Chumaceiro is still mentioned with great respect. At his request he is referred to in the memorial prayers as *Morenu Ahuvenu* — our mentor, our beloved — as indeed he was.

HAZZAN HAIM JEUDAH ISRAEL SANTCROOS

After Chumaceiro's departure the community again found itself without a religious authority worthy of the name. David Cardoze, then 78 years old, filled the rabbinate until October 1, 1869. He resigned and Hazzan Haim Jeudah Israel Santcroos took his place. He was more competent, but less diplomatic than Cardoze.

Santcroos was born in 1828 in Amsterdam where he received his education. In 1849 he was graduated as preacher and in 1852 as teacher second-class, corresponding to our junior high school teacher. Under Chumaceiro's rabbinate he taught the advanced students mornings and evenings while his colleague David Salomo Namias de Crasto took charge of the primary grades. At first he acted as assistant hazzan and after 1870 as full hazzan. He preached in Dutch even in his father-in-law Chumaceiro's time, and served as *dayyan* (judge). A traditionalist, he refused to perform the marriage of a divorced woman who was unable to get a religious divorce for want of a rabbinic

[15] *CC*, March 30, 1867.

[16] For further details on the honors conferred posthumously, see Emmanuel, *Precious Stones*, p. 487.

authority in Curaçao.[17] When the parnassim of 1888 introduced the custom of having the bride sign the *ketubah*,[18] Santcroos unwillingly signed the first one but refused to perform other marriages. And he was in the right. The bride's signature, while not having the effect of annulling the document, weakens it. The *ketubah* is an act in which the husband assumes obligations toward his wife and not conversely. During his rabbinate the text of the *ketubah* was written entirely in Spanish and completely modified.[19] He had Isaac, son of the assessor David Namias de Crasto, assist him in the synagogue services until the latter's death in 1884.[20] Santcroos was a sincere and sometimes neurasthenic individual. He had conflicts with Cardoze and two grievous incidents with two influential members of the community with the result that the courts had to intervene in his behalf.

Four memorable events took place in Curaçao during his incumbency: the terrible hurricane of 1877; the establishment of the cemetery of Berg Altena (a plot of 3,900 square meters) in 1880; the celebration of the 150th anniversary of the foundation of the synagogue on the first night of Pesaḥ, 1882, and the Moses Montefiore centenary in 1884.

Sanctcroos served his community for thirty years and left for Holland in 1888, a sick man. He continued to receive his full annual salary of 1,200 florins until his death there in 1907.

THE HURRICANE OF 1877

Curaçao is justifiably considered a blessed island. Its climate is healthy and ideal for those afflicted with chronic pneumonia and tuberculosis.[21] Contagious diseases as a rule were imported by infected sailors from other ports. Its annual mortality rate of 4.8 per thousand inhabitants is very low for a tropical climate, particularly when a good part of these deaths represents the stillborn or infants dying several hours after birth. The Curaçao government is incorruptible and just. Its peaceful population cooperates with the government for the general welfare. Earthquakes are exceptionally rare. Curaçao is far from the hurricane zone. But it was once visited by a terrible hurricane,

[17] This concerns the case of Esther de Benjamin de Marchena who divorced Jacob Senior. The parnassim gave her a document in Spanish which they considered a *get*. One of the Elders solemnized her second marriage to Haim Senior (MIA, Ket. IX, no. 89 of Oct. 13, 1886).

[18] MIA, Ket. X, no. 1, Jan. 4, 1888.

[19] MIA, Ket. IX, nos. 45, 49, June 5, 1872.

[20] See Emmanuel, *Precious Stones*, pp. 470-71, for details about De Crasto's activity.

[21] Dr. David Ricardo Capriles asserted that "Curaçao is the healthiest spot in the entire world for the needy" (*Het Krankzinnigengesticht op Curaçao, Armen-verzorging* [Curaçao, 1883], p. 11).

the memory of which still lives in the minds of several of the older folk. That was the hurricane of September 23, 1877.[22] It struck on a Sunday, the second day of the Feast of Tabernacles. The winds raged. The waters of the sea rose so high that they reached the Waaigat. Houses along the shore were inundated. In Pietermaai many costly dwellings were demolished "as if having been of paper" tells the Consul Faxon report to the U.S. Secretary of State. Many fruit trees on the plantations were uprooted. Property damages came to some 1,400,000 florins.[23] There were seventeen casualties, including three Catholic nuns of the Rif Lazar-huis[24] (illus. 94, 120-125).

As most of the houses in Pietermaai and the city were inhabited by the Jews, the Jewish collectivity therefore suffered almost 50% of the general loss. The Jesurun firm lost three ships: the *Condor*, the *Sarah*, and the *Juliette*. Samuel Moshe Pereira Jr. and Moses Refael Pinedo were among the shipwrecked.[25] Temple Emanu-El was damaged.[26] The structure which served to house Mikvé Israel's funeral barge toppled to the ground. The Naar Theater was completely destroyed. The homes of the Widow Naar, Sol C. Henriquez, M. Monsanto, and the Widow Daniel C. Henriquez were almost totally demolished. The house of Hazzan Santcroos was ruined beyond repair; the Jewish community gave him 500 florins in relief. The Jewish victims were aided by their respective communities and by the Alliance Israélite Universelle of Paris which sent 1,000 francs.[27] Native Curaçoans from other shores gave generously to help the victims without distinction as to race or religion.[28] When the calamity passed, Santcroos organized a prayer of thanksgiving at the synagogue on the morning of September 28, during the Hosha'na

[22] Curaçao experienced several other hurricanes: that of Oct. 20, 1681, which destroyed the slave huts in Otrabanda, the only buildings then existing in that quarter; the devastating one of Oct. 17, 1807; the tempest of Sept. 25, 1876, which razed many houses, and the last of Aug. 17, 1886.

[23] The Colonial Report of 1877 estimated the damage at 1,161,243 florins; the U. S. Consul Faxon Report, at $2,000,000. The contemporary Van de Walle, *ibid.*, p. 139, and W. M. Hoyer, *Historia di Curaçao*, p. 62, set the figure at three million. The first figure is low and the others too high if the lists of the real estate taxation of the era are taken into account.

[24] The lawyer Chumaceiro distinguished himself on this occasion by carrying the wounded on his shoulders from the danger zone (A. M. Chumaceiro Az., *De Natuurlijke hulpbronnen van de kolonie Curaçao, Kritiek en Antikritiek* [The Hague, 1880], p. 68).

[25] According to a chronicle in manuscript by the late sexton David Lopez Penha.

[26] Repairs cost 4,046.42 florins (ADJRC, Legajo no. 21, 1878).

[27] *CC*, Feb. 23, 1878.

[28] On this occasion help came from Curaçoan Jews who had settled in Barranquilla, Cartagena, Puerto Cabello, Barquisimeto, La Guaira, Barcelona (Ven.), Carora, Rio Hacha, Maracaibo, St. Thomas, Santo Domingo, New York, London, Paris and Hamburg.

Rabbah service. Dr. David R. Capriles penned a 30-stanza poem in English vividly depicting the fury and destruction of the hurricane.[29]

CENTENARY OF MOSES MONTEFIORE

Rarely has a Jew been so highly honored during his lifetime by the Jewish people as was Sir Moses Montefiore (1784-1885). The Jewish communities of the diaspora celebrated the centenary of this great benefactor with magnificence. The Sephardim set the pace in demonstrating their admiration for one of their own who had consecrated his life to the service of the Jewish people in general,[30] and of the Sephardim in particular. If the latter benefited from his works, they also cooperated fully with Montefiore. The Portuguese Jewish communities in America and Europe used to send him contributions regularly for his admirable work in Palestine. Judah Touro of Boston and Newport bequeathed $50,000 "for the work of Moses Montefiore in Palestine" in addition to the large contributions he had made for the same purpose during his lifetime.

The community of Curaçao also responded generously to Montefiore's appeals. Proud of their great coreligionist, the Curaçoan Jews decided to pay Montefiore homage by celebrating his centenary with the greatest solemnity. A commission of eighteen notables from both congregations was formed as early as December, 1883, to prepare and successfully conclude this fete.[31]

This celebration gives us an insight not only into the social life of the Jews of the era, but also to the cordial relations existing between Jew and Christian.

On the night of October 26 (Ḥeshvan 8), a thanksgiving service was held in the synagogue. The men were dressed according to the strict rules of etiquette and the women were elegantly gowned. The synagogue was illuminated with taste. Governor van den Brandhof and high dignitaries attended

[29] Printed in *De Vrijmoedige*, Oct. 2, 1877. The local press gave the hurricane detailed coverage, e.g., *CC*, Sept. 29, 1877; *De Vrijmoedige*, Oct. 2, 6, 11, 1877; *El Imparcial*, Oct. 11, 1877, to mention three newspapers. U.S. Consul William F. Faxon sent a very interesting account of it with some nine pictures to the Secretary of State (National Archives, Washington, D.C., T 197/9).

[30] Besides numerous visits to the Orient and Palestine, Montefiore went to Russia twice and to Roumania once successfully to intervene in behalf of the Jews of those countries.

[31] This commission was made up of Benjamin de Casseres Jr., president; Moises de Sola, Manuel Penso Curiel, Manuel E. Penso, Herman C. Henriquez, Jesurun Penso, Elias S. L. Maduro, Jacob M. Lopez, president of the Mikvé Israel; Dr. E. I. van Lier, Mordechay Capriles, Salomon Senior, Haim M. Penso, Salomon Senior Jr., Efraim S. L. Maduro, José D. Pardo, Mordechay C. Henriquez, Cheri M. Leon and Abraham Salas, secretary (illus. 109, 136, 140, 235, 247, 280, 281).

120. PIETERMAAI AFTER THE HURRICANE OF 1877

121. ANOTHER VIEW OF PIETERMAAI AFTER THE HURRICANE OF 1877

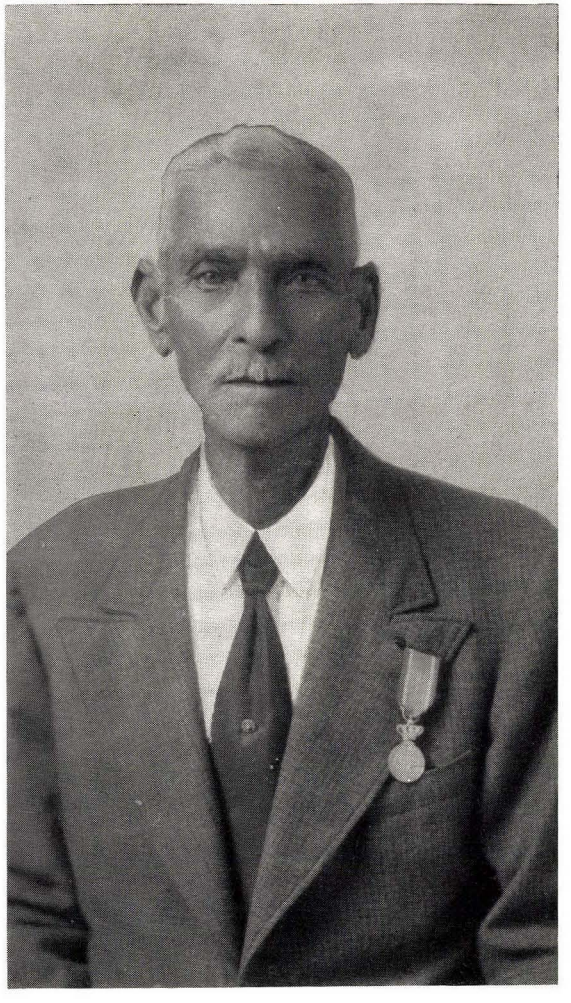
122. THE WATER FRONT AFTER THE HURRICANE OF 1877

123. THE MARKET AFTER THE HURRICANE OF 1877

124. THE WHARF AT OTRABANDA AFTER THE HURRICANE OF 1877

125. OTRABANDA AFTER THE HURRICANE OF 1877 (FACING THE SEA)

126. REVEREND JOSEPH HAIM DE ARON M. CHUMACEIRO, 1844-1905



127. DAVID HAIM LOPEZ PENHA, 1860-1942, DEVOTED SEXTON OF CONGREGATION MIKVE ISRAEL FOR FIFTY YEARS

the services. As officiating minister Santcroos delivered the sermon[32] while the mixed choir sang, among others, the Adon 'Olam "to the delight of all the participants."[33] The military band played several choice selections as the audience filed out of the synagogue. Club Gezelligheid lit up its property with fireworks.

The following morning the public attended religious services at Temple Emanu-El. Again the governor honored the Jewish community with his presence. For this celebration the officiating minister Leao Laguna composed a poem in Hebrew "admirably sung by the choir" — thanks to the music arranged by the Composer Palm. The governor congratulated Laguna on his sermon and at the same time offered his best wishes for Montefiore's health.

In consideration of the Jewish community the governor declared October 27 a holiday and ordered all government bureaus to be closed. Ship captains who were in port decked their ships with the flags of all nations as though it was a national holiday. It is no exaggeration to state that the Curaçoan non-Jew accompanied his Jewish fellow citizen in celebrating this festival as his very own.

After the Temple service alms amounting to 1,200 florins were distributed to the poor at the Colonial College. In addition donations were made to the following for their charitable works: Monsignor H.J.A. van Ewyk and the United Protestant Congregation, 150 florins each; F.E.C. Kieckens, "Chamberlain to His Holiness the Pope," 50 florins; the Curaçao Hebrew Ladies Benevolent Society and the Alivio del Pobre, 100 florins each.

At four o'clock in the afternoon the Fondo Montefiore was established. Moises de Sola, a merchant, delivered in English the following acrostic he had composed for this occasion:

Methinks, I hear proclaim'd on many a shore
On this, to us, joyful, auspicious day
Sentiments dictated by affection pure
Expressing the homage all wish to pay
Sincerely to Moses, the good Montefiore.

[32] The parnassim did not like the sermon which they considered long and forbade him to preach in the future (MIA, Minutas del Consejo de la Synagoga, no. 3, letter of Oct. 28, 1884, from president Lopez to Santcroos).

[33] John de Pool, who attended this service as a child, leaves us a fine description in his *Del Curaçao que se va*, p. 202. The parnassim gave especial thanks to the Misses Julia de Isaac de Marchena, Lelia Capriles, Raquel Capriles, and Rebecca de Mordechay Henriquez for their exceptionally fine singing.

Methinks, I see true innate joy beaming
On our dear Venerable Hero's face
Not mingled with any other feeling
Than that of love for the whole human race.
Every throb of that truly good man's heart
Forcibly tells us all that he feels when,
In act'ng kindly to others, he shares a part
Of the many blessings to him given.
Remember then, we must, brethren, by acts of charity
Ev'ry annivers'ry of this great man's nativity.[34]

The aim of this fund was to distribute every year on the 8th of Ḥeshvan, Montefiore's birthday, alms for the island's poor. This fund was created by the proceeds realized from a splendid exposition organized for the day which, with a collection, yielded the sum of 6,089.02 florins. This exposition, chiefly the work of the women, was a great success thanks to the cooperation of the non-Jewish ladies.[35] It gave this day the character of a public festival. The Fondo Montefiore still exists and is administered in conformity with its regulations.[36]

Besides this magnificent tribute, the Jew Elias S. L. Maduro and the Protestant A.L.S. Muller named their children, born on that memorable day, after the great philanthropist. The former called his son Mordechay Moses Montefiore Levy Maduro while the latter called his daughter Jeanette Marie Montefiora Muller. This Jew and Gentile adopted with pride the name of a great benefactor.[37]

THE RABBINATE

The departure of Santcroos in 1888 left the community without a minister. Appeals were made to Amsterdam, London and even New York for a cantor.

[34] *Centenario de Sir Moses Montefiore en Curazao, 8 Hesvan 5645 — 27 Octubre 1884* (Curazao: Imprenta del Comercio, 1885), p. 26 (illus. 172).

[35] A large part of the objects sold in this exposition were made by the women themselves. The first three prizes for the best Curaçoan work went to three non-Jewish women: the Widow R. R. Hoyer, Henriette Bartels and M. Nuboer.

[36] *Reglamento de la Sociedad "Fondo Montefiore"* (Curazao: Tipografia Excelsior, 1885), six pages.

[37] The organizing commission published *Centenario de Sir Moses Montefiore . . .* (Curazao: Imprenta del Comercio, 1885), 62 pp. This brochure contains the correspondence exchanged with Montefiore, his biography, all the details of the festival, the names of the members on the divers commissions, two poems (one by Laguna with the acrostic Moses Montefiore in Hebrew which was translated into Dutch because no Hebrew type was available, and the other in English by Moises de Sola), the sermons of Santcroos and Laguna in Dutch, three speeches delivered on this occasion, and so on.

The parnassim of Amsterdam announced the vacany in the newspapers, but no one applied. It was difficult for an orthodox cantor to accept a post in a synagogue having so many reforms. Until the office was filled Benjamin de Casseres Jr. took charge. He signed the marriage documents of August 15 and December 5, 1888, as the officiating minister. He had always been active in communal affairs. His services are best described in the following testimonial given to him on his fifty years of service to the community:

> For fifty years he labored zealously as reader of our Congregation, instructor of our youth, president and member of the Board of Parnassim and of the Board of Elders, director of the orphan funds and of the benevolent societies here established for the relief of the poor and afflicted and as treasurer for all gifts to the holy land.[38]

A direct descendant of the philosopher Spinoza's sister, De Casseres fought with all his energy to maintain the uses and traditions in the synagogue as much as possible and opposed radical reforms. On the occasion of his fifty years of service to the community and his 77th birthday, the Rev. J. H. Chumaceiro (of whom more will be said soon), M. P. Curiel and Jacob B. Delvalle organized in De Casseres' honor a service of grace in the synagogue on Saturday, February 4, 1899. During the ceremony they conferred upon him the title *Hanozer Batorah* — guardian of the Torah.[39] The Reverend Chumaceiro took advantage of the occasion to decry the practice of many Jews of opening their shops on the Sabbath.[40]

THE REVEREND JOSEPH HAIM MENDES CHUMACEIRO

In 1889 the parnassim finally engaged Joseph Haim, son of Haham Chumaceiro, as their minister. He was born in Amsterdam on July 3, 1844. At first he went into business.[41] Later he studied under his father for the rabbinate, but did not obtain a rabbinical degree.[42] For that reason the Hashcaboth Register and his epitaph style him as the "learned and intelligent, Nehim Zemiroth Israel." Chumaceiro had already served as rabbi of the following congregations: Beth Elohim, Charleston, S.C. (1867-1874); Nefusoth Yehudah, New

38 From a ms. on Benjamin de Casseres Jr. in possession of his heirs in Curaçao.

39 See Emmanuel, *Precious Stones*, pp. 472-73, for more details.

40 Ms. in possession of Mr. Abram E. Salas, Curaçao.

41 He was chief partner of Chumaceiro & Co. in 1866 (CGA, Rechtsbank, 1866).

42 Because Chumaceiro had used the term "Rabbinical Body" in a certificate issued to a Gentile (male) converted to Judaism, the Council of Elders wrote him that they recognized no Rabbinical Bodies. Article 1 of his employment contract limited his sermons to not more than twenty minutes.

Orleans, La. (1874-1880); Beth El-Emeth of Philadelphia, Pa. (1884-1887), and finally a synagogue in Evansville, Indiana. He presented two good recommendations to the Mahamad: one from Rabbi Isaac M. Wise of Cincinnati, and the other from Rabbi Jacob Voorsanger of San Francisco, both Reform rabbis.[43]

Several months after his arrival he organized the Young Men's Hebrew Association of Curaçao. Its aim was twofold: to keep the Jewish youth together and to educate them in the Jewish spirit. The program outlined by this society provided for "literary exercises at the residences of members and their friends; theatrical performances; publication of a journal dedicated to Young Israel; public concerts and balls; social gatherings."[44]

Chumaceiro carried out his program quite well. He edited the *Home Journal*, a review which appeared regularly on the first and fifteenth of every month.[45] He also organized literary gatherings in private homes. The idea was not new. In 1874 a society of young Jewish people known as "Diversiones de Salon" and later as "Entretenimientos de Salon" presented small theatrical pieces, monologues and dialogues in Jewish salons such as those of Mordechay and Dr. David Capriles, S. Cohen Henriquez, and others.[46] Chumaceiro was able to interest almost everyone in the community in his program. On Sunday, June 8, 1890, he presented *Los Corazones de Oro*[47] and *A Pluma y á Pelo*, a farce, in the Naar Theater for the benefit of the island's Poor Fund.[48] Governor Barge attended the performance. Severely criticized on this occasion, Chumaceiro felt obliged to defend himself in these terms: "We cannot censure in too strong terms, this common habit prevalent on this island[49] of criticizing all and everything . . . the actions and characters of well meaning people." He closed with the exhortation: "Stop to criticize, mind your own business,[50] sustain and support what you cannot deny."[51]

[43] MIA, Libro de Minutas, no. 4, meeting of May 7, 1889.

[44] *Home Journal*, no. 1, Nov. 1, 1889, contains the bylaws of this society.

[45] See p. 459.

[46] *El Imparcial* of Aug. 31, Sept. 2 and Oct. 12, 1874. Sometimes these soirées were attended by prominent non-Jews as well (*ibid.*, Nov. 16, 1874).

[47] By the Spanish author Luis Mariano de Lara. The actors were Rebecca Salas, Celia Marchena, Arturo de Marchena, D. Darío Salas, David M. Chumaceiro, Manrique Capriles, Moisés Salas M., and David A. Correa. The literary exercises, like the theatrical pieces, dealt with subjects of general interest.

[48] This presentation brought in 200 florins.

[49] Better read: "in this community."

[50] This is a rather strong statement to make in a paper read also by non-Jews. It could have been written only by a brother of the attorney Chumaceiro, by an honest and well-intentioned man.

[51] *Home Journal*, June 15, 1890.

Reverend Chumaceiro was principal of the religious school. This was under the supervision of the parnassim's Hebrew Educational Society whose aim was to encourage Hebrew and Bible study. In 1890 the school had an enrollment of 78 pupils and a teaching staff of six. The Misses Chumaceiro and De Marchena taught kindergarten classes; H. M. Penso, 2nd class Bible and Spanish; Miss Rachel de Casseres, 3rd class Bible and Prayers, English; M. de Sola, 1st class Biblical History and Catechism. Chumaceiro taught Hebrew.

He preached in Dutch, Spanish and English. Although he was not a graduate rabbi, his sermons are well written and accompanied by prayers of circumstance.[52] Because of some disagreement with the parnassim or because of family matters, he returned with his family to the United States in May, 1891. He gave poor health as an excuse. The parnassim waited six months for him and then accepted his resignation at the end of 1891. A few months later he became rabbi of the Bené Israel Congregation of Augusta, Ga., where he served until 1898. During Chumaceiro's absence and after his resignation, the religious services were conducted by Manuel Penso Curiel and Benjamin de Casseres Jr. As the latter was well advanced in years, he could not read the entire Sabbatical portion. His friend Curiel would end the reading with a Bible until the arrival of Cantor Jacob Ben Baruch in May, 1892. Ben Baruch also had certain difficulties with the voluntary hazzanim and left four months later for New York. He was replaced by Hazzan Salomo Jeudah Levy of Paramaribo for a few months. The parnassim were finally able to bring over Hazzan Eliezer Polak Jr. from Holland. He arrived in October, 1893, only to succumb to typhus on January 21, 1895, at the age of almost 28 years. Manuel Penso Curiel, Abraham Mordechay de Marchena and Benjamin de Casseres Jr. replaced him temporarily.

THE COMMUNITY AT THE END OF THE CENTURY

While the community was without a titular rabbi, the choir of both sexes was permitted to sit together and the Jew, A. Charlonis, was engaged as organist over the protests of Benjamin de Casseres Jr. In 1893 the community tore down the "Ajunta" or small house (facing Columbusstraat, near the synagogue) where the parnassim used to hold their meetings. That space was used to enlarge the synagogue courtyard at the northern end of which a wide staircase was built to the women's gallery. This was done at a cost of 4,000 florins.[53]

[52] See pp. 408-10 below.

[53] MIA, Copiador de Cartas, 1888-1893, letters of November 9, 1892, and Feb. 7, 1893.

On January 16, 1896, the Mahamad engaged Joseph Moses Corcos, cantor of Kingston, Jamaica. Here was a man with a feeling for Jewish history. In 1897 he published *A Synopsis of the History of the Jews of Curaçao* at Curaçao's Imprenta de la Librería. This brochure of forty-eight pages, written in haste, sometimes is historically inaccurate and contradictory.[54] Nevertheless, he has the distinction of being the first to write a general sketch on the history of the community.

Cantor Corcos, like J. H. Chumaceiro, Ben Baruch and Levy before him, also was not able to stay at his post for long. He was obliged to leave on April 30, 1898, over a quarrel he had had with Shoḥet Jacob Bivas. From 1900 to 1903 he served again as hazzan of Jamaica where he published *The Path of Faith*, a catechism on the Jewish religion.[55] From 1919 to 1922 he served as voluntary hazzan of New York's Shearith Israel, and from 1923 to 1925 as hazzan of Montreal's Shearith Israel. He returned to New York to engage in business again, and died there in January, 1926, at the age of fifty-three years.[56] In consideration of his services to the community, the parnassim of Curaçao sent a certain sum to his widow.

Once again the religious services were conducted by the veteran volunteers De Casseres and Curiel. The parnassim had no success in engaging Haham Chumaceiro's youngest son Benjamin, then hazzan of the Hamburg community. As it was not possible to obtain a European cantor, the Mahamad re-engaged Joseph M. Chumaceiro. He occupied the post for the second time at the end of May, 1898, after giving assurances that his wife would remain in Curaçao. A few weeks later he reorganized the Hebrew School. It was still under the auspices of the Hebrew Educational Society with Moises de Sola as president and Salomo de Casseres as secretary (illus. 131).

Even before his arrival the Jews and other islanders were making preparations for the coronation of Queen Wilhelmina. The parnassim had the front of the synagogue beautifully decorated (illus. 128). With their cooperation Chumaceiro organized a solemn service in the synagogue. As usual in such circumstances, it was attended by prominent people of the island. Samuel Cohen Henriques and David Mendes Chumaceiro wrote two poems in honor of their new sovereign — one in Dutch and the other in Spanish.[57]

Synagogue attendance was generally regular. The faithful, through their

[54] For example, pp. 38-39 with relation to Haham Da Fonseca's death.

[55] This 72-page booklet printed in Kingston was dedicated "to the Young Israelites of Curaçao, D.W.I."

[56] David and Tamar de Sola Pool, *An Old Faith in the New World*, p. 185.

[57] The first was printed by N. van Meeteren in *Oranje en de Zes Caraïbische Parelen*, p. 23; the second in *Miniaturas*, no. 11, Curaçao, August, 1926.

bearing and austerity, impressed the stranger who might join in the services. There are two reports on this subject, one of 1893 and another of 1898. The first, taken from *Les Indes Occidentales* of September 20, 1893, states:

> Since this morning Curaçao has worn an unfamiliar air. The many shops in the business district from Grand Rue to Punda, and in general all the Jewish firms, have been closed since yesterday evening. The numerous and distinguished Jewish colony of Curaçao, which is to say the soul of the island's commerce, is in effect celebrating one of its most important holidays: Yom Kippur, and to this we owe the complete closing down of their establishments and the somewhat deserted appearance of usually the most busy quarter.

The second account, by an American journalist who visited Curaçao in 1898, reads:

> Service is held in the synagogue every Saturday morning[58] and is attended by most of the substantial citizens of the town, elegantly dressed in black suits and high silk hats, and accompanied by their wives and daughters, arrayed with taste and elegance that would astonish a Parisian modiste. The Hebrews of Curaçao are proud of their synagogue and justly so. At heart they are nearly all religious and good-living people, and everybody who knows anything about the Jewish faith will admit that any person who lives conscientiously up to it cannot be otherwise than upright, honorable citizens and desirable neighbors.[59]

In spite of this religious interest some members of the Council of Elders asked for additional reforms. A commission — not including the conservatives De Casseres and M. Penso Curiel — was appointed to draft a plan.[60] Because some members were dissatisfied with the plan offered it had to be modified. They eliminated certain repetitions which the congregation chanted in unison. Even in Haham Chumaceiro's time the members went back to the practice of removing eight Scrolls of the Law in place of three for the Hosha'na Rabbah services. Now they returned to using three with the difference that the *shofar* was not to be blasted at each circuit but only once at the end. At Hazzan Chumaceiro's insistence it was decided to read the prayer for the Queen in Dutch rather than in Portuguese.[61] The most radical reform effected — and so considered by the liberal Chumaceiro who had officiated in various Reform synagogues in the United States of America — was the blowing of the *shofar* in two stages of five blasts each in place of the hundred blasts in eight stages.

[58] At that time there was at least one religious service every day.

[59] *The Monthly Illustrator*, vol. XVI, no. 1, New York, June, 1898, p. 24.

[60] The members of this commission were Manuel E. Penso, Isaac de Marchena, Mordechay Capriles, Abraham Jesurun and Moses S. L. Maduro (illus. 250, 281).

[61] A few years later they returned to reading it in Portuguese as is still done.

The Elder H. M. Penso asserted: "Reform is poison for the community," and predicted, "in accepting a reform, a door will remain open for more reforms."[62] Nevertheless, since Chumaceiro made no opposition,[63] the reform went through with nine votes in favor and six against. No attempt was made to drop the services for second feast days. These were observed until Cantor Battan's departure in 1922.

For reasons of health Chumaceiro went to New York for ten months. Again he was replaced by the voluntary hazzanim and by S. J. Levy of Surinam who was brought over for the second time especially to fill the vacancy.[64] Chumaceiro returned in January, 1903. But as his health left much to be desired, he was replaced in July, 1904, by David de Isaac Querido, hazzan of Paramaribo who had been in contact with the community since 1892. Despite his poor health, Chumaceiro devoted himself to the Jewish youth till the last months of his life.[65] He died about a year after his wife on October 5, 1905 (illus. 126, 130-132).

HAZZAN CHUMACEIRO'S WRITINGS

In Chumaceiro the community had its most cultured cantor in the second half of the 19th century. He was very liberal, for he solemnized a marriage on the first day of Shemini 'Aẓereth.[66] He introduced the communion of children at the festival of Shabu'oth. Like his fathers and brothers he displayed literary activity. During part of his residence in New Orleans (1879-1883) he was editor of the *Jewish South*, a weekly journal. He also authored the following works:

1. *The Evidence of Free-Masonry from Ancient Hebrew Records* (1st edition, Augusta, Ga., 1896; 6th ed., New York, 1921).
2. *La Revelación*, a Jewish catechism translated from English into Spanish (Curaçao: A. Bethencourt e Hijos, 1899), 55 pp.[67]

[62] MIA, Libro de Minutas, Colegio de Ancianos, meeting of Oct. 17, 1899.

[63] He declared that, like his father, he was for himself orthodox, for others liberal, and submitted to the will of the majority.

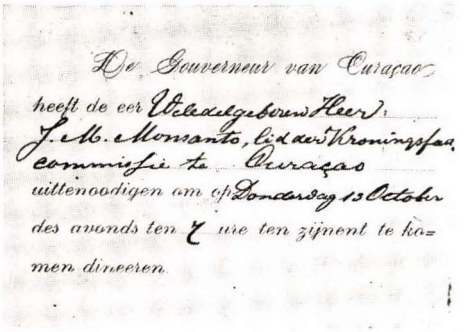
[64] He signed *ketubah* no. 50 of vol. XI as titulary hazzan.

[65] According to a document of May, 1905, in our possession.

[66] MIA, Ket. XI, no. 46 bis of 22 Tishri, 5661 (Oct. 15, 1900).

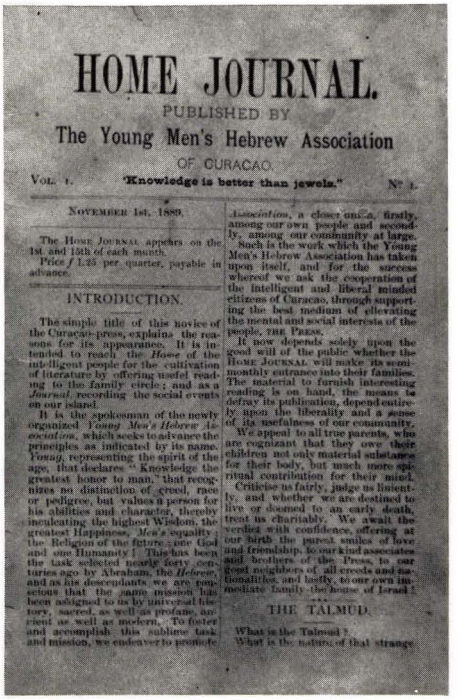
[67] A member of the Central Conference of American Rabbis, Chumaceiro wrote this booklet in English and in 1879 printed it in his *Jewish South*. Friends helped him with its Spanish translation. His preface states that he had thirty years' experience in teaching religion to the youth. Although written in a conservative slant, "it is nevertheless based on the liberal elements of religion in our progressive era." He dedicated the booklet to the "holy memory of God's servant . . . Haim Daniel Lopez Penha."

128. THE SYNAGOGUE DECORATED FOR THE CORONATION OF QUEEN WILHELMINA, 1898. THE INSCRIPTION READS: "ISRAEL'S HOMAGE TO THE NETHERLANDS AND ORANGE -- PEACE, LOVE AND UNION . . ." NOTE THE TWO STARS OF DAVID ON EITHER SIDE OF IT. THE TEN SHIELDS REPRESENT THE PROVINCES OF HOLLAND



De Gouverneur van Curaçao
heeft de eer Uwelaadgeboren Heer
J. M. Monanto, Lid der Kroningsfeest
commissie te Curaçao
uitteenoodigen om op Donderdag 13 October
des avonds ten 7 ure ten zijnent te ko=
men dineeren.

129. INVITATION TO JOSEPH M. MONSANTO, OF THE CORONATION COMMISSION, TO DINE AT THE GOVERNOR'S MANSION, 1898



HOME JOURNAL.

PUBLISHED BY

The Young Men's Hebrew Association

OF CURACAO.

VOL. 1. "Knowledge is better than jewels." N° 1.

NOVEMBER 1st, 1889.

The HOME JOURNAL appears on the 1st and 15th of each month.

Price *f* 1.25 per quarter, payable in advance.

INTRODUCTION.

The simple title of this novice of the Curaçao-press, explains the reasons for its appearance. It is intended to reach the *House* of the intelligent people for the cultivation of literature by offering useful reading to the family circle; and as a *Journal*, recording the social events on our island.

It is the spokesman of the newly organized *Young Men's Hebrew Association*, which seeks to advance the principles as indicated by its name. *Young*, representing the spirit of the age, that declares "Knowledge the greatest honor to man," that recognizes no distinction of creed, race or pedigree, but values a person for his abilities and character, thereby inculcating the highest Wisdom, the greatest Happiness, *Man's* equality the Religion of the future; one God and one Humanity! This has been the task selected nearly forty centuries ago by Abraham, the *Hebrew*, and as his descendants, we are conscious that the same mission has been assigned to us by universal history, sacred, as well as profane, ancient as well as modern. To foster and accomplish this sublime task and mission, we endeavor to promote *Association*, a closer union, firstly, among our own people and secondly, among our community at large.

Such is the work which the Young Men's Hebrew Association has taken upon itself, and for the success whereof we ask the cooperation of the Intelligent and liberal minded citizens of Curacao, through supporting the best medium of elevating the mental and social interests of the people, THE PRESS.

It now depends solely upon the good will of the public whether the HOME JOURNAL will make its semi-monthly entrance into their families. The material to furnish interesting reading is on hand, the means to defray its publication, depend entirely upon the liberality and a sense of its usefulness of our community.

We appeal to all true parents, who are cognizant that they owe their children not only material substance for their body, but much more spiritual contribution for their mind.

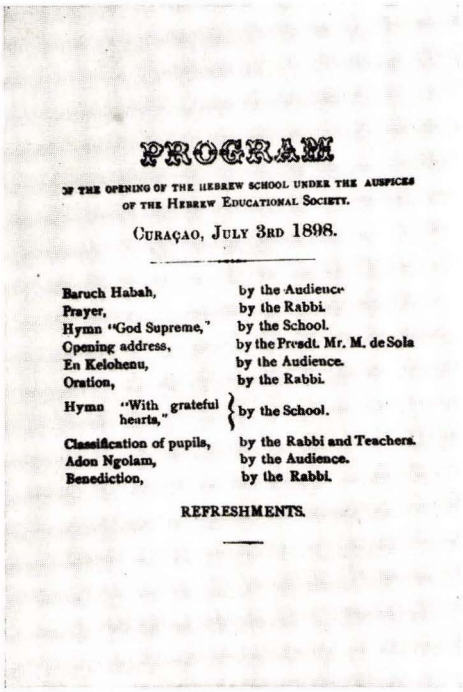
Criticise us fairly, judge us leniently, and whether we are destined to live or doomed to an early death, treat us charitably. We await the verdict with confidence, offering at our hearth the parent smiles of love and friendship, to our kind associates and brothers of the Press, to our good neighbors of all creeds and nationalities, and lastly, to our own immediate family the house of Israel!

THE TALMUD.

What is the Talmud?

What is the nature of that strange

130. ORGAN EDITED BY REVEREND → CHUMACEIRO, FIRST ISSUE, NOVEMBER, 1, 1889



PROGRAM

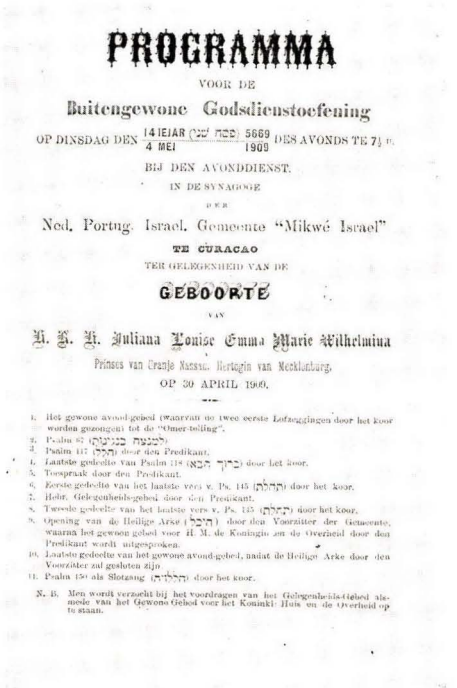
OF THE OPENING OF THE HEBREW SCHOOL UNDER THE AUSPICES OF THE HEBREW EDUCATIONAL SOCIETY.

CURAÇAO, JULY 3RD 1898.

Baruch Habah,	by the Audience
Prayer,	by the Rabbi.
Hymn "God Supreme,"	by the School.
Opening address,	by the Presdt. Mr. M. de Sola
En Kelohenu,	by the Audience.
Oration,	by the Rabbi.
Hymn "With grateful hearts,"	by the School.
Classification of pupils,	by the Rabbi and Teachers.
Adon Ngolam,	by the Audience.
Benediction,	by the Rabbi.

REFRESHMENTS.

131. PROGRAM OF RELIGIOUS SERVICES HELD AT THE OPENING OF HEBREW SCHOOL, 1898



PROGRAMMA

VOOR DE

Buitengewone Godsdienstoefening

OP DINSDAG DEN 14 IJAR (אייר) 5669 / 4 MEI 1909 DES AVONDS TE 7½ U.

BIJ DEN AVONDDIENST.

IN DE SYNAGOGE

DER

Ned. Portug. Israel. Gemeente "Mikwé Israel"

TE CURACAO

TER GELEGENHEID VAN DE

GEBOORTE

VAN

H. K. H. Juliana Louise Emma Marie Wilhelmina

Prinses van Oranje Nassau, Hertogin van Mecklenburg,

OP 30 APRIL 1909.

1. Het gewone avondgebed (waarvan de twee eerste Lofzeggingen door het koor worden gezongen) tot de "Omer-telling".
2. Psalm 87 (למנצח בנגינות).
3. Psalm 117 (הללו) door den Predikant.
4. Laatste gedeelte van Psalm 118 (ברוך הבא) door het koor.
5. Toespraak door den Predikant.
6. Eerste gedeelte van het laatste vers v. Ps. 145 (תהלת) door het koor.
7. Hebr. Gelegenheidsgebed door den Predikant.
8. Tweede gedeelte van het laatste vers v. Ps. 145 (ישמרו) door het koor.
9. Opening van de Heilige Arke (ויהי) door den Voorzitter der Gemeente, waarna het gewoon gebed voor H. M. de Koningin en de Overheid door den Predikant wordt uitgesproken.
10. Laatste gedeelte van het gewone avondgebed, nadat de Heilige Arke door den Voorzitter zal gesloten zijn.
11. Psalm 150 als Slotzang (הללוהו) door het koor.

N. B. Men wordt verzocht bij het voordragen van het Gelegenheids-Gebed alsmede van het Gewone Gebed voor het Koninkl: Huis en de Overheid op te staan.

132. SYNAGOGAL SERVICE HELD ON QUEEN JULIANA'S BIRTH, 1909

3. *Verdediging is geen Aanval* — Defense is not attack — the correspondence between a Christian divine and a Jewish rabbi on Jesus as the Messiah.
4. A study on the history of the Jews of Curaçao, in manuscript, mentioned in the *Jewish Encyclopedia* under "Curaçao."[68]

He also wrote many sermons. Among those known to have been published are one delivered on the occasion of King William III's 72nd birthday in 1889, and another on the marriage of Queen Wilhelmina in 1901, as follows:

1. *Leerrede . . . ter gelegenheid van de viering van den 72sten Verjaardag van Z. M. den Koning* door J. H. M. Chumaceiro, Predikant te Evansville, Vereenigde Staten van America (Curaçao, 1889), ii + 10 pp.
2. *Feestrede ter gelegenheid van het Huwelijk van H. M. Koningin Wilhelmina en Z. K. H. Prins Hendrik der Nederlanden, gehouden op Sabbath den 9n Februari 1901* (Curaçao, 1901), 16 pp.

Three sermons also appeared in his *Home Journal*, one in Spanish on January 15, 1891, and the following two in Dutch related to the Dutch Royal Family: 1) on the occasion of the King's 73rd birthday (March 1, 1890, issue); 2) on the King's death (December 1, 1890, issue). The sermon delivered on the King's last birthday carried the following hymn composed by Chumaceiro and sung in the synagogue that day:

Dear Holland, the land of the free,
  Sweet home of the exile and poor!
To Isr'el, host thou ever wert,
  Salvation's gate, protection's door.
For thee, my land, my fathers died; —
  For thee, they suffered, toiled and prayed;
Their wealth, their fame, their precious lives,
  Upon their country's altar laid.

King William, Holland's pride! in love
  This day around thy throne we draw;
Freedom's Prince,[69] to thee was given
  The majesty of right and law.
Righteousness o'er thy Sceptre be;
  Justice to thy Kingly diadem,
And peace be, on thy royal crown,
  God's favor'd smile, its brightest gem!

[68] See *Jewish Encyclopedia*, bibliographical notes on "Curaçao."

[69] This refers to the emancipation of the slaves in the Netherlands Antilles and Surinam.

Like his father and brothers, Chumaceiro also was fond of the Dutch language. Several months before his death he published a study on the necessity of propagating Dutch in Curaçao.[70]

Despite the incidents that he had with the parnassim,[71] the Jewish community of Curaçao still speaks highly of him.

[70] "De Nederlandsche taal op Curaçao," *Neerlandia*, 9th yr., nos. 7 and 8, July-August, 1905, pp. 156-58.

[71] He did not fear the parnassim and used strong terms in his sermons, for which he was reproved orally but not in writing (MIA, Libro de Minutas de Parnassim, meeting of April 8, 1901).

CHAPTER XX

ATTACHMENT OF THE JEWISH COLLECTIVITY TO CURAÇAO

THE CURAÇOAN JEWS have always been deeply attached to Holland and the House of Orange as earlier demonstrated. They responded to every appeal in behalf of Holland and Curaçao and, in times of stress especially, have sincerely cooperated with the authorities as ardently as the non-Jewish groups. If most of the Jews did not speak Dutch as late as 1919,[1] neither did the majority of Curaçao's white non-Jewish population. This was no reflection on their patriotism or love for Holland.

THE JEWS OPPOSE THE ABANDONMENT OR SALE OF CURAÇAO

In 1868 several members of the Lower Chamber of the States General of Holland proposed the abandonment of Curaçao. They contended that the colony was a heavy drain on the State Treasury which that year alone had disbursed 200,545 florins for Curaçao's administrative expenses. The Colonial Minister argued against giving it up since the request had not originated within the colony. Curaçoans were upset by the thought of a possible sale. Abraham Jesurun,[2] member of the Colonial Council, at once petitioned the

[1] M. B. De Lange-De Bruijn, commenting on his visit to Curaçao in 1919, remarked: "It is odd for Dutch to be a foreign language for Curaçao" (*WIG*, 1919-20, p. 438). See Emmanuel, "De Nederlandsche grafschriften op 'Beth Haim,'" *Geschiedkundige Opstellen* (Curaçao, 1943), pp. 55-58; 72-74. Dr. Molengraaf has this to say on the subject: "The Dutch . . . does not demand a knowledge of Dutch from his inferiors. He permits his children to speak what they will and often ends up by introducing the language of the domestics into the household . . . The result is that the Dutch language is ordinarily forgotten or badly spoken by the second generation" (cited by Theodoor C. L. Wijnmalen, *Les Possessions Néerlandaises dans les Antilles* [Amsterdam, 1888], p. 25).

[2] Born in Curaçao on April 20, 1839, to Daniel Abraham Jesurun and Ribca de Eliau Rodriguez Miranda. He was a member of the Colonial Council since 1867 and the fifth Jew so honored since 1844, after A. H. Senior, Jacob Senior, B. Jesurun Jr. and S. E. L. Maduro. Replaced in 1889 by Mordechay Cohen Henriquez, Jesurun reoccupied this post in 1893. For several years he was president of the Chamber of Commerce, member of the school board and secretary-manager of the famous phosphate company of Aruba. During the division of 1864 he remained faithful to the old traditions. He spoke and wrote several languages and was considered Curaçao's then most cultured man. He

governor to let the Colonial Council request the Lower Chamber of the States General to declare itself against abandonment. The governor referred the petition to the Colonial Council. There Jesurun declared: "This question belongs to the heart . . . We are Dutch, of Dutch origin and education and the inhabitants of this colony are attached to Holland." He implored the Council to do its utmost to persuade the Netherlands to keep Curaçao.[3] The Council took immediate action. It unanimously decided to appoint three of their number to draw up a report for the Lower Chamber proving why Curaçao should continue under Dutch rule. For the task they chose the councillors S.E.L. Maduro, H. Evertsz and A. Jesurun, who dispatched their report shortly afterwards.[4]

The question still was of topical interest in 1879. Venezuela's President Guzman Blanco wanted to buy Curaçao in order to eliminate it as a major base for all sorts of Venezuelan revolutionaries. He submitted his proposal to Abraham Chumaceiro, an attorney practicing before the Curaçao Court of Justice since 1870.[5] Shortly afterwards Blanco left for Europe to negotiate directly for the purchase.[6] He could expect the Dutch to be receptive. That very year the Dutch Treasury poured 236,288 florins[7] into Curaçao to cover its administrative expenses, although Curaçao had collected 40,000 florins

wrote a study on the emancipation of the slaves; also another very interesting study on the Curaçoan dialect, Papiamento, which was published in the first, second and third *Jaarlijksch Verslag van het Geschied-,Taal-,Land-en Volkenkundig Genootschap* (Amsterdam, 1897, 1898-1900). For several years he was on the committee of this society. In 1880 he married Rachel, daughter of David R. Capriles, and died on March 20, 1918 (illus. 137, 138).

3 *CC*, March 13, 1869.

4 *Ibid.*, April 10, 1869.

5 Chumaceiro received his temporary license to practice law on Sept. 16, 1870, provided he passed the bar examination in six months, which he did, and his full license in 1871 (CGA, Rechtsbank, 1870, 1871). Seven months later he defended Attorney General Sassen against Governor Wagner. It proved to be the most sensational trial held up to that time in the Curaçao Court of Justice (CGA, Rechtsbank, 1871). Sassen was very popular. The public had wanted to serenade him on the evening of November 24, 1871. The police interfered. They fired several shots into the crowd, killing one and wounding ten to twelve others, two of whom later died. Willemstad was put under martial law. Sassen was imprisoned and released on bail (Report of U. S. Consul Faxon to the Secretary of State, Nov., 1871, National Archives, Washington, D. C., T 197/8). For a more comprehensive eyewitness report, see Van der Walle, pp. 128-34.

6 *CC*, June 14, 1879. The American press also carried the news of Blanco's proposal (Van der Walle, p. 142).

7 Between 1867 and 1881 Holland contributed 2,027,020 florins to cover the administrative expenses of Curaçao and the five other islands of the Netherlands West Indies group. It continued making up the deficit of running these islands up to the end of 1931. See Pieter Th. Spencer Krafft, "Financiën," *Oranje en de zes Caraïbische Parelen*, pp. 256-57, for details on this outlay from 1895-1923.

in revenue from the exploitation of her phosphate mines by the Englishman J. Godden.

Abraham Chumaceiro happened to be in Holland during those negotiations. Though fifteen years old when he arrived in Curaçao in 1856 with his father Haham Chumaceiro, he always considered himself a native son of Curaçao. This patriot was so aroused by the way matters were prospering for Blanco that he dashed off his sensational, *Is Curaçao for Sale?*[8] In this pamphlet he vigorously opposed the sale of Curaçao.[9] Simultaneously he published a study on the natural resources of Curaçao[10] to show that the colony could be self-sustaining and not a burden on the central government of Holland.

Here again the Curaçoan Jews demonstrated their sincere attachment for their country and government — a government remarkable for its just and equitable laws in behalf of all its citizens of whatever race or creed.[11]

THE ADDITIONAL 30% CUSTOMS DUTY

Curaçao's prosperity depended largely on her trade with Venezuela. That vast, rich country was so often rocked by revolutions that sometimes, as in 1869, it was ruled by as many as seven different presidents in one year. The Venezuelan revolutionaries, like those from neighboring Haiti, Santo Domingo,

[8] *Is Curaçao te Koop?* (The Hague, 1879), 32 pp. Chumaceiro wrote the pamphlet in July, 1879.

[9] Among the notables congratulating Chumaceiro on its publication was ex-Governor A. M. de Rouville, who expressed himself in these terms: "I am in complete accord with you. I regret that the pamphlet was not written by myself" (A. M. Chumaceiro Az., *Zal het kiesrecht Curaçao tot het kannibalisme voeren?*, p. 2). See also Wijnmalen, *ibid.*, p. 4; *De Rotterdamsche Courant Algemene Nieuws en Advertentie*, August 31 and Sept. 1, 1879. On the other hand, the Jewish lawyer Edward I. van Lier, writing under the pseudonym "Ego," criticized Chumaceiro for this pamphlet (*De Vrijmoedige*, Aug. 28, 1879). Chumaceiro responded with another pamphlet, *Een Wanklank uit Curaçao* [The Hague, 1879], 44 pp.

[10] *De Natuurlijke Hulpbronnen van de Kolonie Curaçao* (The Hague, 1879), 91 pp. As this too was criticized by an anonymous writer in *De Vrijmoedige* of Feb. 26, 1880, Chumaceiro defended his position in his subsequent pamphlet, *De Natuurlijke Hulpbronnen van de Kolonie Curaçao, Kritiek en Antikritiek* (The Hague, 1880), 88 pp.

[11] This refutes Hamelberg, *Antiquarische Denkbeelden buiten "Antiquiteiten,"* pp. 13-18. The inhabitants of Curaçao generally did not have a conception of a fatherland or patriotism as Hamelberg understood it. Moreover, "the term 'patriot' was first used at the end of the seventeenth century for one who supported the rights of the country against the king . . . The word 'patriotic' in the modern sense was first used in 1757; the word 'patriotism,' in 1726 . . .; whereas 'nationalism' was not used at all until 1836" (Hans Kohn, *The Age of Nationalism* [New York, 1961], p. 647, note 42). The Protestant family of a planter who in 1820 had been established in Curaçao for a century were no more ardent patriots than their Jewish planter fellowmen also established in the same period. Both equally loved Holland, Curaçao and Orange.

Cuba and Puerto Rico, took refuge in Curaçao. There they were well received by the hospitable population without question as to party affiliation.[12] In 1870 Antonio Guzman Blanco (Venezuela's ad interim president in 1863) fled to Curaçao to plot against the legal Venezuelan government. Venezuela demanded his expulsion. Two hundred ninety-two citizens petitioned the king not to oust Blanco and his partisans. The Colonial Council and Attorney-General Sol Cohen Henriquez advised the governor not to send Blanco away, but he had to carry out the orders of the Dutch Central Government. Before the governor could act, Guzman Blanco disappeared. Two weeks later he was supreme head of Venezuela.

Blanco now decreed the suspension of payment to the Jesurun firm of a debt contracted by the Venezuelan government in 1866. Without any justification he requisitioned three of Jesurun's ships. During this time diplomatic relations between Holland and Venezuela were interrupted.

Another revolution erupted in 1874. After suppressing it, Blanco decreed the closing of Maracaibo and Coro to foreign ships. He thereby put a stop to the active trade conducted by the Jews, in particular, with these ports.[13] The Atlas and the Hamburg-Amerika shipping lines were forced to suspend service between Curaçao, Maracaibo and Coro. Fortunately for Curaçao, Blanco's successor Alcantara considered the decree of doubtful utility and removed the ban in May, 1878.

A year later Guzman Blanco again rose to power. Out of vengeance toward the Colonial Government of Curaçao or disagreement with his predecessor's policies, in 1882 he imposed an additional duty of 30% on merchandise coming from the Antilles.[14] It was aimed at Curaçao. He estimated that already in 1875 Curaçao had been exporting (and not paying the duty on) half the English and German goods illegally entering Venezuela.[15] This tax still is in effect.

These reprisals against Curaçao were manifestly unjust. Curaçao's hospitable population had vigorously opposed Blanco's expulsion in 1870. The closing of Maracaibo and Coro — ports vital to the Curaçoan trade — and

[12] Distinguished men who sought asylum in Curaçao included, among others, Simon Bolivar in 1812 and Emperor Faustin I (Soulouque) of Haiti in 1864.

[13] Guzman Blanco, a member of the Grand Masonic Lodge of Venezuela, held the highest degree then conferred — the 33rd ("Franc-masones ilustres que han desempeñado la primera majistratura de la Republica," *Boletín de la Gran Logia de Venezuela* [Caracas, August 1, 1918], p. 9). Most Curaçoan merchants were Freemasons. Blanco's desire for vengeance obviously exceeded his Masonic ideals.

[14] This decree was promulgated by the Congress of the Venezuelan Republic on May 1, 1881, and put into effect on May 3, 1882 (*KV*, 1881).

[15] In a series of articles written for the *CC* during February, 1876, under the heading "De Kwestie van den dag," the attorney A. Chumaceiro proved that Guzman Blanco's estimate was exaggerated.

the additional customs duty had a drastic effect on the Curaçoan economy. Trade dropped alarmingly. Imports decreased steadily between 1880 and 1885. Whereas Curaçao had imports of 5,559,412 florins in 1880, these slumped to 3,506,620 florins in 1882 and to 3,123,221 florins in 1885. Many Jews were therefore obliged to leave the island in search of better business opportunities. In 1865 the Jewish population numbered almost 1,000 souls. By 1886 it dwindled to 754.

Colombia followed the pattern set by Venezuela. On May 11, 1887, she levied an additional 30% tax on merchandise imported from the Antilles. The Curaçoans, and the Jews especially, had developed an active trade with Colombia to compensate for the trade barriers put up by Venezuela. Several Curaçoan firms had even established branches in Barranquilla. The imposition of this levy would have given the final blow to the already ruined island trade. Thanks to the intervention and sagacity of the Dutch Jewish Consul David Lopez Penha Jr.,[16] the Colombian Government, as a true friend of the Netherlands, abolished the tax.[17]

Even before the ports of Maracaibo and Coro were closed to them, the Curaçoan Jews had maintained commercial relations with Santo Domingo. Twice monthly, on the 4th and 19th days, the J. Jesurun & Son ship transported passengers, mail and merchandise to Santo Domingo and back.[18] Several Curaçoan Jews settled there, but were unable to increase in any appreciable number.[19] This traffic with Santo Domingo and Colombia relieved in some measure the drastic reduction in the trade with Venezuela.

Blanco had brought much hardship by his 30% boost in tariffs. A successor of his dealt Curaçoan commerce a more crippling blow. Cipriano Castro, autocratic president of Venezuela from 1899 to 1909, used the pretext of contraband to sequester Curaçoan vessels illegally and unjustly. Sometimes his warships pursued Curaçoan ships up to Curaçoan shores. In 1904 he levied an extra 30% tax on all merchandise destined for Maracaibo that was unloaded in transit at Curaçao. Soon 20 to 30 schooners and sloops lay idle in the harbor, their crews literally starving to death. Nothing could be exported to Venezuela. Eventually Castro stopped all intercourse with Curaçao. The islanders had hopes that the United States Government would intervene in their behalf.[20]

[16] Son of Haim Daniel and Rachel de Abraham H. L. Maduro, grandson of the Assessor Moses Lopez Penha, and great-grandson of Beth Din head Daniel Lopez Penha. He was born in Santo Domingo on June 20, 1846. One of his three brothers was the poet-journalist Abram Z. Lopez Penha.

[17] *CC*, July 22, 1887. [18] *Ibid.*, Feb. 13, 1869. [19] See appendix 16.

[20] Report of U.S. Vice Consul John Gaerste, Dec. 7, 1905, to the Secretary of State, National Archives, Washington, D.C., T 197/13.

The Jews suffered greatly by these laws. The Community Chest was compelled to make stiff economies and reduce the salaries of its employees, including Hazzan Chumaceiro. The community's real estate holdings, like all properties on the island, depreciated considerably. The situation improved after the foundation of the Curaçao Petroleum Company in 1916.

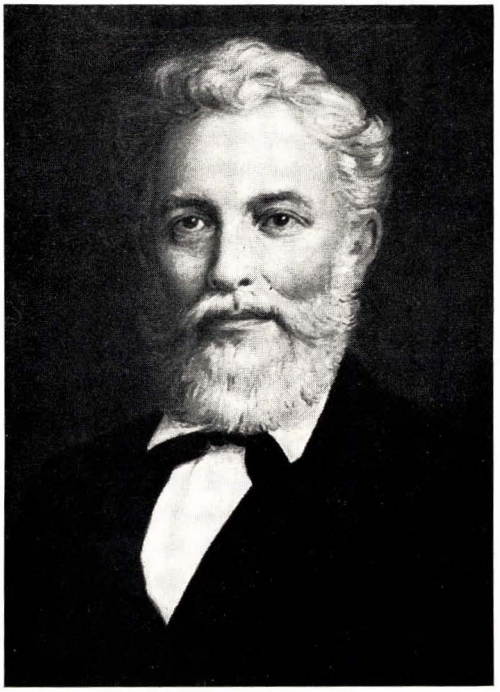
ADVENT OF THE SHIPPING AGENCIES

Most Jewish merchants owned the sailing vessels which carried their merchandise to ports of the mainland and the Antilles.[21] The advent of the steamship brought a steady decline in Jewish shipping. This loss was replaced by a new activity: the shipping agency. Curaçoan Jews are encountered as agents for large European firms as early as 1871. That was when Edwards, Henriquez & Co. began representing the Hamburg-American Line which made the run to Curaçao twice monthly (Hamburg-Le Havre-St. Thomas-Santo Domingo-Venezuela-Curaçao-Europe). In 1881 they were the agents for the Imperial German Mail (Hamburg-Curaçao-Hamburg). J. A. Jesurun & Son, and years later Haim Abinun de Lima, represented the Noorddeutscher Lloyd of Bremen. Sigismundo Weil & Co. represented the Royal Mail Steam Packet Company whose ships left Southhampton the 10th of each month and arrived at Curaçao after touching Trinidad, La Guaira and Puerto Cabello. Benjamin de Sola was the agent for Quesnel Frères & Co., whose ships called at Le Havre-Bordeaux-French Antilles-La Guaira-Puerto Cabello-Curaçao. Sol Senior Jr., and years later Jacob A. Jesurun & Son, and eventually David Leon, represented the famous Compagnie Générale Transatlantique (run, Bordeaux-Curaçao-Colombia). Several years later Samuel Maduro Jr. & Co. entered the picture as agent for the Harrison Line. Years later Jacob and David Jesurun represented The Royal Mail Steam Packet Co. and The New Zealand Shipping Co., both of London. From the beginning of the 20th century this activity has been concentrated in S.E.L. Maduro & Sons, which currently represents more than 600 shipping firms.

In the same period the Jews (principally the Jesuruns and later the Maduros) were the leading suppliers of water, coal and food for the ships. They also entered the insurance field and represented the large marine, accident, fire and life insurance companies.

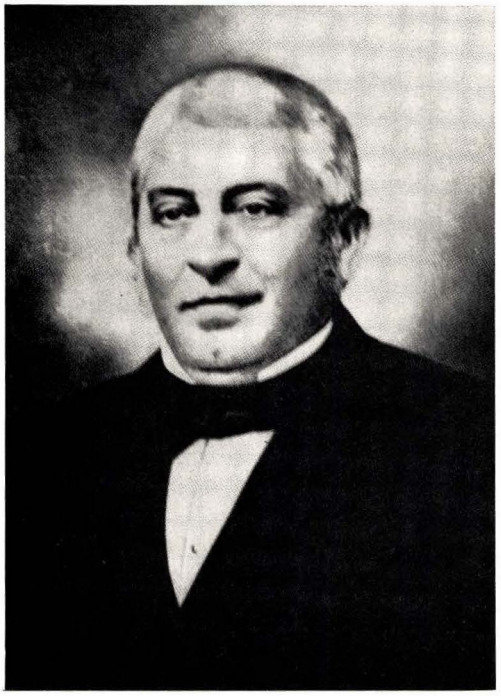
Thanks to all these activities of the Jews related to shipping and tourism on the one hand, and thanks to the Curaçao Petroleum Company on the other, Curaçao now ranks as the world's fifth largest seaport.

[21] See appendix 3.

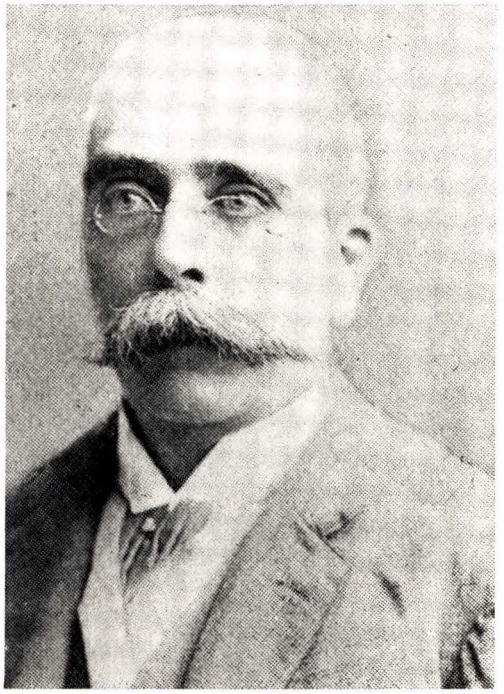


133. SALOMON E.L. MADURO, 1814-1883, FOUNDER OF MADURO & SONS, 1837

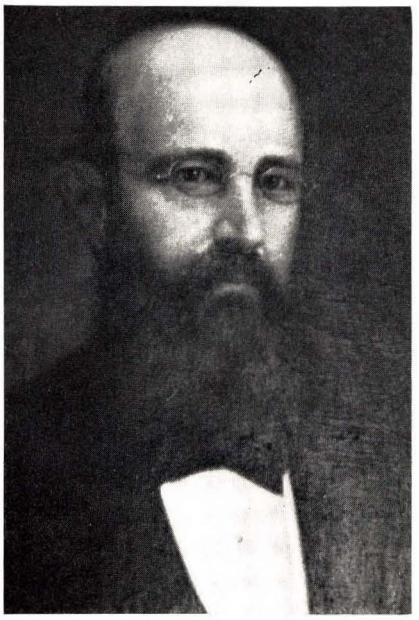
134. DAVID LOPEZ PENHA JR., DUTCH CONSUL IN COLOMBIA, 1887



135. EPHRAIM H. EDWARDS, A FOUNDER OF EDWARDS, HENRIQUEZ & CO. IN 1856



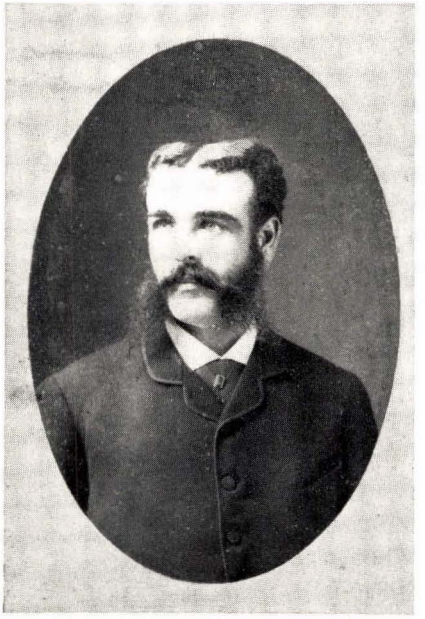
136. SOL JEUDAH SENIOR JR., 1844-1909, NOTED MERCHANT AND BELGIAN CONSUL FOR MANY YEARS



137. ABRAHAM DANIEL JESURUN, 1839-1918, MEMBER OF THE COLONIAL COUNCIL

138. RACHEL ROSE CAPRILES, 1861-1922, WIFE OF ABRAHAM DANIEL JESURUN

139. AN UNIDENTIFIED CURAÇOAN JEWISH LADY OF PAST CENTURY



140. JACOB MADURO LOPEZ, 1844-1903, PRESIDENT OF THE COMMUNITY

CHAPTER XXI

DOCTORS, SURGEONS, DENTISTS AND PHARMACISTS

PHYSICIANS, 1690-1816

THE PIONEERS OF 1659-1660 most probably counted among their number a general practitioner or a "surgeon" to administer to their health. Once it was organized the Mikvé Israel, like the parent community at Amsterdam, must have engaged a doctor and a "surgeon" to help him dispense the medicines and care for its sick poor. These early physicians are unknown to us since the old archives of Curaçao and of the community are missing. Below ia a chronological list of all the Jewish doctors who practiced in Curaçao of whom there is a record.

"DOITOR" ISAAC GOMES CASSERES

From Lisbon Dr. Gomes Casseres migrated to Amsterdam where he openly professed Judaism. There in 1690 he remarried his wife Ribca religiously. Also a Marrano, she was the daughter of his brother Dr. Manuel. By the end of the year they were in Curaçao where his sister Isabel Gomes (a.k.a. Isabel de Casseres, a.k.a. Sara de Leon) lived. Two and a half years later he succumbed to the epidemic of 1693.[1] Dr. Gomes Casseres bequeathed eighty pesos to the synagogue for memorial prayers for himself and his wife who lived until 1735[2] (illus. 270).

"DOR" ISAAC RAPHAEL OROBIO DE MATOS

The exact date of Dr. Orobio de Matos' arrival in Curaçao is not known. He may have been one of the first Jewish doctors to settle there. A relative of his, Yaacob Hisquiau O Robio de Matos, died in Curaçao in 1695. Another member of his family, Abraham, served as vice president of the community in 1703-04. Our doctor died in Curaçao on October 29, 1698.[3]

[DR.] DANIEL ISAAC LOPEZ

Possibly a victim of idle gossip, Dr. Lopez slew his young wife Lea de Jacob

[1] For more details, see Emmanuel, *Precious Stones*, pp. 185-86, 190-91.

[2] MIA, Hashcaboth Register, vol. I, months of Tammuz and Nisan.

[3] Emmanuel, *Precious Stones*, p. 196. †Dr. Gerard Aesten died the same year (declaration of Jan Doncker, ex-governor of Curaçao, GAA 6974, p. 1061, courtesy Dr. Simon Hart).

Naar and gave himself up. A few days later, after a hasty trial, he was brutally executed in 1706 (above, page 103). His wife's relatives sold his large assortment of drugs and remedies to the Curaçao Government for 200 pesos.

"DOUTOR" ISAAC DE ACOSTA

Dr. De Acosta probably arrived in Curaçao in 1692. He was listed among the income taxpayers for 1702, and served as president of the community in 5471 (1710-11). He died on November 26, 1718. His widow Ribca Cardozo died ten years later, leaving all her belongings to the Santa Companhia de Dotar Orphas of Amsterdam.[4]

[DR.] YOSSEPH YSRAEL DE ZARATE

The name "Ysrael" accompanying his surname tells us that Dr. Zarate's family, like the Israel Santcroos, Israel Monsanto and Israel Ricardo families, was of Marrano origin. Dr. Ysrael Zarate died on October 18, 1728. His widow Judith was still living in 1733.[5] The Iacob Israel de Sarate who died in 1737 may have been a relative.

"DOCTOR" ISHAC HISQUIAU CARDOZO

Dr. Cardozo is met in Curaçao before 1733. When he appears as doctor, he was already married to Rachel de Isaac Touro. They had five children: Abraham, Gabriel, Clara, Leah and Isaac. Dr. Cardozo died on November 24, 1753, during the epidemic then ravaging Curaçao.[6]

DR. (?) SAMUEL DE COSTA

Dr. De Costa is listed among the distinguished people of Curaçao between 1750 and 1762. As this is the only time he is encountered, he probably was a "surgeon" who was inadvertently referred to as doctor. (A surgeon was a doctor's helper who did cupping, bleeding with leeches, extracting teeth, and so forth.)

DR. ISAAC DE JACOB DIAZ JUNIOR

Immediately after Dr. Cardozo's death in 1753, the community wrote to the Amsterdam parnassim for a replacement. Although no established doctor was eager to go to Curaçao, Isaac de Iacob Diaz Junior[7] accepted the position.

4 *Precious Stones*, pp. 233-34.

5 *Ibid.*, pp. 246-47.

6 *Ibid.*, pp. 321-22.

7 Not to be confused with Dr. Isaac de Abraham Diaz who was born in Amsterdam in 1698 and died there in 1758. Our doctor carried the designation *Junior*.

Born in Amsterdam in 1725, he was recommended as a good physician who had first practiced medicine with "our famous Dor David de Meza" and later for himself.[8] The parnassim lent him 400 florins for the trip.[9] His wife Rachel Vaz de Oliveira remained in Amsterdam. Dr. Diaz was practicing medicine in Curaçao in December, 1754,[10] but apparently did not stay there too long.

DOCTOR JOSEPH CAPRILES

Born in Italy between 1727 and 1734,[11] Dr. Capriles probably was contracted by the Jewish community on a temporary basis in 1759 until Dr. Isaac Cardozo Jr.'s arrival. The Curaçao Government later engaged him as doctor of the garrison and navy.[12] He was known as "Doctor de la espada" — doctor of the sword — and as army doctor went about in uniform and sword. This appellation was used to distinguish him from his civilian colleague, Dr. Isaac Cardozo, who did not carry a sword. Dr. Capriles miraculously escaped death when the warship *Alphen* exploded in the harbor on September 15, 1788, as he was about to go on board to see the sick sailors.

In private practice he had occasion to treat important Christian and Jewish personalities. He married Esther Uliel in 1762 and after Esther's death, Rachel de Aron Henriquez Moron. He was very active in Jewish life. In 1769 he was among the prominent members who opposed the introduction of the *finta*.[13] As his medical practice did not bring him a sufficient income, he went into the shipping business with several others. He died on October 12, 1807, leaving among other children his two sons, Isaac and David. The inventory of his estate listed 161 bottles of assorted medicines.[14]

DOCTOR ISAAC CARDOZO JR.

Seven weeks after Dr. Cardozo's death in 1753, the Mahamad gave his widow 100 pesos for her son's fare to Amsterdam.[15] At the same time they requested

[8] PJCAA, Copiador de Cartas, 1750-57, the Amsterdam parnassim's letter of July 19, 1754, to the Curaçao community.

[9] *Ibid.*, Resoluçoens dos Tezoureiros do K.K. de T.T., no. 1, 1733-1784, meeting of July 11, 1754.

[10] WICA 218, act of June 1, 1758, referring to a patient he attended in December, 1754.

[11] He was not quite sixty when his daughter Esther married at the end of 1786. He was sixty and over on the marriage of his daughter Hana in 1795 (MIA, Ket. VI, nos. 37, 74). Therefore, he could not have been born in 1724 as stated by Vincente Davila, author of a chronicle on the Capriles family published in Caracas in 1928.

[12] Hoyer, *Historia di Curaçao*, p. 21.

[13] See above, p. 255.

[14] For more details, see Emmanuel, *Precious Stones*, pp. 402-4.

[15] MS, 14 Tebet, 5514.

their Amsterdam colleagues to watch over the young student.[16] After finishing his secondary education, Isaac enrolled in the Academy of Medicine of Zutphen, Gelderland,[17] in June, 1757. In 1765, and possibly earlier, he was in the service of the Curaçao community, earning 180 pesos annually.[18] Although he had been practicing medicine since 1765, he applied for a formal medical license in 1771, which was given.[19] Like his colleague Dr. Capriles, he also became interested in cargoes and ships. He went into partnership with his brothers-in-law Daniel, Isaac and Aron (a.k.a. Geronimo),[20] the sons of Benjamin Moreno Henriquez. In 1787 he is met in Amsterdam preparing to return to Curaçao as doctor of the community.[21] Three years later he resigned from the Hesed ve Emeth Brotherhood after a ten-year membership since he was going to settle at Cap St. François (now Cap Haitien) in Haiti. His wife remained in Curaçao.[22] He apparently died abroad. Dr. Isaac Cardozo Jr. was Curaçao's first native-born Jewish doctor.[23]

SURGEONS

Between 1718 and 1816 the following "surgeons" practiced with the physicians above listed:

IACOB ISRAEL ST. CRUZ

He was active in 1718.[24] On his death on August 29, 1759, he left, among other things, a quantity of drugs.[25]

ARON DE MOSEH ISRAEL ST. CRUZ

St. Cruz was active as a surgeon since 1724. In 1758 he was receiving seventy

[16] PJCAA, Copiador de Cartas, 1750-57, the Amsterdam parnassim's letter of July 19, 1754, to the Curaçao community.

[17] Communication of the late Jossy M. L. Maduro. Dr. Cardozo apparently returned to Curaçao in 1761 when he married Rachel de Benjamin Moreno Henriquez (OAC 887, no. 216; OAC 947, no. 266).

[18] MIA, Cuentas de Tezorero, 5525 (1764-1765), and loose papers.

[19] WICA 71, p. 216.

[20] OAC 902, no. 101. He was in partnership with Aron as late as 1772 (OAC 910, April 9, 1772, no. 98).

[21] PJCAA, Resolucoems do Mahamad, 5545-5551, meeting of 7 Iyar, 5547.

[22] OAC 133, July 7, 1791, no. 56; MIA, Hesed ve Emeth archives.

[23] See the illustration of his daughter's tombstone in Emmanuel, *Precious Stones*, facing p. 425.

[24] According to the Curaçao parnassim's letter to their superiors in Amsterdam anent the Campanel circumcision mentioned at p. 119 above (PJCAA, bundle).

[25] OAC 840, Sept. 5, 1759; Emmanuel, *ibid.*, pp. 92, 505, no. 506.

pesos a year as surgeon of the community.[26] He and Iacob I. St. Cruz above were probably related to the Amsterdam surgeon Isaac Santa Cruz, one of the only two Jewish surgeons admitted to the Surgeons Corps of Amsterdam about 1710. (The other was Isaac's brother-in-law, David Baruch Benavente.) Our surgeon was married to Esther de Daniel Moreno Henriquez, and died in Curaçao on July 12, 1766.

SAMUEL DE CASTRO ALMEYDA

Active in 1744;[27] d. December 29, 1757 (C 274).

DAVID (A.K.A. MANUEL) DE SOUZA BRITTO

Active since 1752.[28]

MANUEL DE BRITTO

Active in 1762.[29] Most probably David de Souza Britto and Manuel are one and the same person.

ABRAHAM MORENO DELGADO

He arrived in Curaçao about 1744 (app. 11). Between 1755 and 1756 he was called to care for the sick.[30]

DANIEL LOPES DE CASTRO

Born in Portugal, he married Abigail Alvares Correa in Curaçao in 1753. Like his colleague St. Cruz, he also received seventy pesos annually from the community.[31] He died on September 20, 1772.[32]

DANIEL MENDES DE CASTRO

He was born in Bordeaux, the son of Isaac M. de Castro and nephew of the generous Abraham Mendes de Castro. He married Esther de Daniel Gomes Casseres; on her death, her sister Rachel, and on her death, Lea de Benjamin Athias de Neyra in 1767. He was active from 1755 to 1779. He died on April 16, 1784.[33]

[26] MS, 8 Adar Rison, 5518. In 1743 the government consulted him as surgeon (OAC 851, no. 140).

[27] OAC 852, no. 236.

[28] MIA, loose papers. In his request of Ḥeshvan 1, 5513, to the Mahamad, Aron St. Cruz insisted on being given preference over Britto as he had served the community as surgeon for 28 years.

[29] *Naamlijst van 't Eyland Curacao* (Amsterdam, 1763), p. 21.

[30] OAC 19, Raad, Jan. 13, 1756.

[31] MS, 8 Adar Rison, 5518.

[32] Emmanuel, *Precious Stones*, p. 506, no. 571.

[33] He lies between his two first wives (*Precious Stones*, p. 511, nos. 784-786).

JACOB GARCIA DE PAZ

In 1760 he is encountered as surgeon[34] in the service of the community, in which capacity he continued until his death on May 20, 1774. After his first wife's death he married Rachel Israel Ricardo.[35] The inventory of his estate listed many bottles of medicine, various surgical instruments, eighty-five books and a quantity of manuscripts.[36]

DAVID TABOADA

He claimed six pesos for visits, plasters and unguents administered to Isaac Sasso during August, 1784.[37]

SAMUEL HAIM LOPEZ FONSECA

Son of Haham Da Fonseca, he was active from 1796 to 1803.[38] He left for Jamaica about 1815 and probably died there.

ISAAC GARCIA DE PAZ

He was the son of the surgeon Jacob G. de Paz, according to a government document of 1785.[39] He continued in his profession until his death in May, 1816.[40]

ABRAHAM ST. CROOS

He went to Curaçao about 1789 (app. 11). By 1797 he was a member of the Hesed ve Emeth Brotherhood. Referred to by the parnassim and Haham Da Fonseca as "Public Surgeon of this island," he would end his signature with the initials "D.C.," meaning surgeon. On February 4, 1811, he declared in favor of the young girl Clara, daughter of David Abraham Senior, in connection with an internal injury caused by a fall.[41] In the *Curaçao Gazette* of June 3, 1815, he made several useful observations on the importance of vaccination against smallpox.[42] He left Curaçao in 1816.

[34] MS, 13 Hesvan, 5521 (1760); MIA, loose papers. In 1769 he was receiving 100 pesos a year.

[35] He was the widower of Sarah de Mordechay Penso who left him five children: Rachel, David, Mordechay, Isaac and Abraham (OAC 884, Jan. 4, 1762).

[36] OAC 949, July 18, 1774, no. 322.

[37] MIA, loose papers, Aug. 21, 1784.

[38] OAC 138, Nov. 4, 1796, no. 104.

[39] OAC 65, no. 188, y. 1785.

[40] MIA, loose sheets. †Dr. J. Hudding replaced him as surgeon of the Jewish community.

[41] MIA, Ket. VI, no. 167a. This declaration was also certified by Haham Da Fonseca, the president Abraham Pinedo and the vice president Moise Cardoze. See also OAC 1000, no. 239, Nov. 22, 1798.

[42] See the *Curaçao Gazette* of July 31, Aug. 11 and 23, 1815, for a Jew-hating Scotsman's criticism of St. Croos and the answers of several Jews in defense of Judaism.

ABRAHAM SENIOR

In May, 1816, he appears among the candidates applying for the position of community surgeon.[43]

In June, 1816, three months after the Dutch repossessed Curaçao, the new government required the surgeons to pass an examination. Abraham St. Croos, who did not wish to practice, left Curaçao in May, 1816; Isaac Garcia de Paz had meanwhile died, and Abraham Senior failed the test. The Protestant Bartholomeus Hendrick Kegel[44] did well and was later engaged as surgeon for the Jewish community's poor. Years later one Jacob Penso practiced surgery without a license.

PHYSICIANS, 1816-1964

DR. BENJAMIN DE BENJAMIN DE SOLA

Dr. Benjamin de Benjamin de Sola indubitably was Curaçao's most important physician of his time. He was born in Amsterdam on February 27, 1748, four months after his father's death, for which reason he bears his father's name. He studied in Utrecht. There he received his medical degree in 1773 and the same year published his 27-page thesis, *Dissertatio medica inauguralis de matria prae alieno nutricis lectis necessitate ac utilate* (sic). It tells of the advantages of mother's milk over others. He dedicated it to his Gemara master and benefactor, Chief Rabbi Shelomo Salem (haham of the Portuguese community of Amsterdam since 1762); to Dr. Jacob de Meza, his teacher;[45] and to J. Belmonte, his pupil. The thesis ends with a poem in Dutch written by Dr. A. Coronel and dedicated to De Sola.[46]

De Sola also studied at the Advanced Colonial School of Paris where he received his degree in obstetrics.

Upon the completion of his medical studies, he settled in The Hague. From 1782 he lived in Nijmegen. There in 1790 he printed a short work in Dutch in favor of the vaccination of children in the hope of popularizing these inoculations.

He joined several scientific societies. In 1789 he published a medical study for the society of Arts and Sciences of the Province of Utrecht. From 1786 he was chief physician to William V of Orange. About 1791 he returned to

[43] Some slaves were also surgeons. One of them figures in the inventory of the estate of Abraham Delvaille who died in 1798 (OAC 1000, no. 41).

[44] OAC 509, June, 1816.

[45] Son of David, born in Amsterdam. He received his medical degree in Leyden on July 28, 1751. His thesis dealt with "Peripneumonia."

[46] B. de Gaay Fortman, "Benjamin de Sola," *WIG*, 1932-33, pp. 347-53.

The Hague where, in 1814, he published his *Discours, ou la première partie anatomique, physiologique et historique, sur les différents systèmes de la génération individuelle de l'homme.*

Before taking up medicine, De Sola had studied at the Ets Haim Rabbinical Seminary of Amsterdam where he distinguished himself.[47] For this reason his epitaph styles him as *HaHaham Hashalem* — the omniscient sage. That title is generally conferred upon a rabbi versed in the Talmud.

Dr. De Sola had two brothers in Curaçao: Jacob who settled in 1759[48] and died there in 1812, and Isaac who lived there since 1778. Their sons were businessmen, and one of them, Jeosuah de Jacob, was wealthy. The doctor was probably brought to Curaçao by his nephews. He arrived in 1816 with nine boxes of books. The parnassim engaged him on December 2, 1816, at 225 pesos a year[49] as Dr. Hudding had meanwhile resigned.

Shortly afterwards Dr. De Sola was convinced that the inflammation of the eyes complained of by several inhabitants was due to the intense reflection of the sun's rays on the white plastered houses. He addressed a petition to the Police Council, recommending legislation to ban the painting of houses all white. The government acted upon his recommendation in record time[50] — Governor Kikkert himself suffered from poor sight. It also thanked Dr. De Sola warmly for his zeal and vigilance for the health and welfare of the inhabitants. Several years later Dr. Daniel L. M. Peixotto wrote in connection with this disease and the ban on painting houses white:

> Weak sight is a very general complaint among the inhabitants, even in those that are young. But in Curaçao the white lime with which all the buildings . . . were formerly washed, has been a more actively exciting cause of these disorders. On this account it was that the government issued a decree forbidding the houses to be covered with any color lighter than yellow, since the operation of which the inhabitants are said to suffer less.[51]

The Jewish community and population of Curaçao were expecting greater achievements of this doctor who had done so much for them in so short a

[47] See details on these rabbinical studies, Emmanuel, *Precious Stones*, p. 415.

[48] *Ibid.*, pp. 407-9.

[49] MIA, Minutas de Parnassim, meeting of Dec. 2, 1816.

[50] The government decree of April 22, 1817, justified the ban "because they had learned from experts that the white walls of the houses were very injurious to sight." Offenders were subject to a fine of 25 pesos (*Publicatieblad van Curaçao, 1816-1851*, no. 14).

[51] "Observations on the . . . Diseases . . . Curaçao" (*CC*, May 3, 1823). The ban on painting the exterior walls of a house entirely white was renewed by the police as late as 1932.

time. To their misfortune, De Sola died suddenly on October 23, 1817.[52] (See illustrations 141,268.)

DR. DANIEL LEVY MADURO PEIXOTTO

The origin of the Peixotto family of Curaçao is given in detail in our *Precious Stones* (pp. 397-99). Dr. Daniel's grandfather Samuel de Moseh Levy Maduro married Lea de Daniel Cohen Peixotto. Their children — Moseh (Daniel's father), b. 1767; Daniel, b. 1769; Isaac, b. 1772; Rachel, Gracia and Esther — adopted their mother's maiden name. So Dr. Daniel bore the surname of his great-grandfather Daniel Cohen Peixotto who lived in Curaçao in 1740 and a year or so later married Gracia de Abraham Campos Pereira. Dr. Daniel's father Moseh was first married to Rachel de Isaac Jesurun Sasportas with whom he had two children, Samuel and Lea. After her death in 1793, he went to Amsterdam where he married Judith de Samuel Lopez Salzedo on April 19, 1797. Dr. Daniel was born in Amsterdam on July 17, 1799.[53] His father Moseh returned to Curaçao with his family where he is encountered as an important purveyor to the government. A devoted Freemason, Moseh was president of the community during the severe English blockade of 1804-05, and representative of the Jewish Nation to the Curaçao Government.[54] In 1807 Moseh thought of returning to Holland via New York, but remained in New York with his family. He probably went back to Curaçao briefly to attend to the sale of his town house.[55] He established himself as a merchant in New York, but found time occasionally to serve as one of the voluntary hazzanim under Shearith Israel's Hazzan Gershom Mendes Seixas to 1816. After Hazzan Seixas' death that year, Moseh officiated as hazzan without pay until 1820, while keeping up his business activities. From then on until his death in 1828 Moseh took over as full-time hazzan, also without pay, insisting that his salary go to Hazzan Seixas' family.[56]

[52] For his epitaph and further details, see Emmanuel, *Precious Stones*, pp. 414-16.

[53] In 1821 the Curaçoans J. Lopez Penha and I. Pardo declared before the governor of Curaçao that they used to visit the home of Daniel's father and they knew that Daniel was born in 1799 (OAC 294, p. 194). See appendix 29.

[54] Exactly from Jan. 23, 1805, to March 11, 1806 (OAC 1016, no. 34; OAC 1018, no. 86). See appendix 13.

[55] CGA, Rooibrieven, I, y. 1808. About the same period there was another Moses, also son of Samuel Levy Maduro, living in Curaçao. He died single on April 19, 1852, at the age of about 71, his funeral arrangements having been taken care of by the non-Jews Anthony and Chevalier Maduro (CGA, Death Register, 1852; *CC*, April 24, 1852). He probably is one and the same person prohibited by the parnassim from washing the hands of the Cohens in the synagogue because his Jewish mother was not married to his father (MIA, Minutas de Parnassim, meeting of July 10, 1822).

[56] De Sola Pool, *An Old Faith in the New World*, pp. 173-75.

As a lad, Daniel suffered from a "pulmonary affection."[57] He received his early education in Curaçao, probably under Ribbi David Isaac Rodrigues, and continued his elementary and secondary education in New York. He studied medicine at Columbia College and eventually developed into one of the leading physicians in the field of public health. He visited Curaçao for a few weeks in 1818. On May 14, 1821, he applied to Governor Cantz'laar for a license to practice medicine in Curaçao. His application set forth, among other particulars, that his father was born in Curaçao and his mother in Holland; that he came to Curaçao as a child and lived there for six years; that his father had intended taking the family to Holland, but remained in North America rather than risk capture by the English who were playing havoc with American shipping; that he had been in Curaçao for five weeks before this petition. He attached his medical diploma as a supporting document.[58] The license was thereafter granted "on condition that he obtained [Curaçoan] citizenship."[59]

Curaçao was plagued with a measles epidemic in 1821. To make matters worse, typhus broke out among several of the 2,000 Venezuelan refugees who came after Bolivar's victory over the Spaniards. Peixotto took care of a number of them. On December 8, 1821, he left for New York after giving De Sola & Son powers of attorney.[60] He returned to Curaçao in 1823. That year he published a very interesting study: "Observations on the Climate and Diseases of the Island of Curaçao."[61] Printed also in Dutch,[62] it defends Curaçao's climate against the allegations of other physicians to the contrary. "Curaçao," he wrote, "is proverbial for health," and "the people . . . characterized for sobriety . . . the old age to which the inhabitants reach . . . testify to this fact." Of the dwellings he said: "The houses are spacious and lofty and thickly piled upon each other." He then enumerated the main diseases encountered in Curaçao from time to time — weakness of vision, measles, diphtheria, and so forth — and told how he treated them. This work ranks as the best study of the early 19th century on the subject of the climate and diseases of Curaçao.

The young doctor did not remain long on the island. He returned to New York where he distinguished himself in medicine, science, philanthropy and Jewish communal activity. He died there in 1843.

[57] *CC*, March 15, 1823.
[58] OAC 294, no. 47.
[59] OAC 237, no. 482. See appendix 29.
[60] *CC*, December 8, 1821.
[61] *Ibid.*, March 15, April 5, May 3, 10 and 17, 1823.
[62] "Waarnemingen op het lucht-gestel en ziektens van het eiland Curaçao." Door D. L. M. Peixotto, M.D. te New York (*CC*, April 5, 1823, and subsequent issues).

DR. ISAAC DE HAIM ABINUN DE LIMA

Dr. De Lima's father Haim was the leader of the separatists during the communal upheaval of 1819-22 over Hazzan Piza, and a man highly considered. Isaac studied medicine in the United States of America and established himself as physician in Curaçao, "his native land," in 1827.[63] He invited the poor for free vaccination.[64] In 1832 he married Esther, the daughter of Jeosuah de Sola, from whom he received a dowry of 3,500 florins.[65] A little later he moved to Mayaguez, Puerto Rico, where he continued to practice until his death on November 10, 1840, forty-seven days after his wife. Both are buried in St. Thomas.

DR. SALOMON LEVY DE JONGH

He was born in Amsterdam in 1816 to the attorney Joseph de Jongh. His brother was the famous Dr. Luis de Jongh[66] of the cod-liver oil which bears his name. Salomon studied for a while in Utrecht,[67] and served as Surgeon Second-class Military Physician of the Garrison and Military Hospital of Curaçao. As a military officer, he was privileged to reside inside of "Fort Amsterdam." In 1837 he married Ribca, the daughter of Abraham Salom Delvalle, from whom he received a dowry of 12,000 florins.[68] De Jongh published a report on the treatment which he gave the sailors stricken by the epidemic of 1843. It was criticized by Dr. N. Rojer and praised after De Jongh's death by Dr. G.A.L. Ferguson.[69] In recognition of his medical knowledge, the Medical Society of Rotterdam named him its corresponding member in 1843. He died on June 8, 1849, at 33, from an infection contracted during an operation he had performed on a soldier[70] (illus. 142).

63 *CC*, March 6, 1827.

64 *Ibid.*, April 7, 1827.

65 CEOE 758, no. 60, March 9, 1832; MIA, Ket. VIII, no. 53.

66 In 1854 he received a concession to extract the minerals from the island of Aruba for a period of forty years (*CC*, March 4, 1854; CGA, Not. Act, 1854, vol. III, no. 44).

67 CGA, Death Register, 1849.

68 CEOE 769, no. 22; MIA, Ket. VIII, no. 79. One of the witnesses who signed the civil marriage document was "Hendrik Schonenberg Chief Surgeon of the Military Hospital and Garrison of this island" (CGA, Marriages, 1837).

69 *CC*, Dec. 9, 1854.

70 De Jongh owned the truck garden *Rosendaal* which he bought in 1847 for 650 florins (CGA, Rooibrieven, 1847). For his epitaph and other details, see Emmanuel, "De Nederlandsche Grafschriften op 'Beth Haim,'" pp. 67, 69-71, 77-78, and *Precious Stones*, pp. 451-52.

DR. DANIEL PRETTO

Mentioned in the *Archives Israélites de France* among the subscribers residing in Curaçao, he probably lived in Curaçao for a short while. Dr. Pretto is encountered in St. Thomas in 1844 as a member of the Community Council.

SALOMON DE LEON

The son of Daniel de Leon and Rachel Aletrino, he was born on May 17, 1823, in Surinam where he apparently received his education. On the completion of his studies in 1842,[71] he practiced "in Europe and in different parts of South America"[72] as physician, surgeon, obstetrician, dentist, oculist and specialist in the healing of yellow fever. In Curaçao he was a third-class military doctor of the Garrison and Military Hospital.[73] He married Sarah, the daughter of Moises de Abraham de Jacob Jesurun and Leah de David de Abraham Senior in 1851 in Curaçao.[74] She brought him as dowry an annual income of six hundred florins.[75] Several years later he was decorated by the King of Denmark as "Chevalier of the Danneborg Order."[76] About 1857 he left Curaçao for a while.[77] In the Colombian revolution of 1860, he "lent eminent services . . . and with good results" in caring for the wounded.[78] He returned to Curaçao in 1862 and offered his services to the public. He was so sure of success in the healing of yellow fever, performing operations and making perfect dentures that a patient not cured or satisfied did not have to pay the fee.[79] In 1864 he and his mother-in-law joined the new Reform community. After a long illness he died on January 18, 1865,[80] and was the first to occupy the Reform cemetery. His colleague, Dr. Abraham de Moises Cohen Henriquez, delivered the funeral oration.[81] He left an only son, the

71 Since he claimed to have had twenty years experience in 1862 (*CC*, July 19, 1862).

72 *Ibid.*

73 Although called "Doctor" by his contemporaries and regarded as a good physician, we doubt that he possessed the Doctorate. Certainly he had a medical degree received perhaps in Surinam.

74 MIA, Ket. VIII, no. 124; CGA, Marriages, 1851.

75 CGA, Not. Act, 1851, I, no. 76.

76 *CC*, Feb. 12, 1853; the decoration is mentioned in his epitaph.

77 *CC*, July 11, 1857.

78 Declaration of Samuel Pinedo printed in the *CC* of Feb. 4, 1860.

79 *CC*, July 19, 1862.

80 This corresponds with the date on his epitaph and the marriage document of his son Daniel (CGA, Marriages, 1882; CGA, Death Register, 1865) and not January 16 as given by *Shemah Israel*, p. 137. He left a will, dated Sept. 2, 1864 (CGA, Not. Act, 1864, no. 139). His wife Sarah (b. 1832; d. Dec. 16, 1900) lies beside him.

81 *Shemah Israel*, Feb. 28, 1865, pp. 137-38. See also *ibid.*, pp. 121-22, why Congregation Mikvé Israel officially refused to attend to this burial and why Haham Chumaceiro did not allow memorial services to be held for the deceased in the synagogue.

twelve-year-old Daniel who was to become one of America's greatest socialists (below, pages 449-53).

DR. ISAAC SENIOR

He was born on May 17, 1827, to Rachel Pardo and Jacob de David Senior, a member of the Colonial Council. Isaac pursued his medical studies in New York. In 1851 he obtained his degree in medicine and obstetrics and returned to Curaçao to set up practice. He received the sick "every day, except Saturdays and Sundays," and gave "advice gratis to the poor."[82] That year he married Rachel de Obadia Mendes da Costa from whom he received 34,000 florins as dowry.[83] Three years later he was appointed by the governor, with the approval of Curaçao's physicians, to take charge of the improvised hospital "Cher Asile."[84] He did a good job and was thanked for his services. For a certain period of time he engaged in business. At the request of his patients he resumed his practice in 1866,[85] and carried it on with devotion until his death. In 1866 he served with five Jewish colleagues — Morris de Jacob Jesurun, Abraham Moises Cohen Henriquez, Salomon Moses Lansberg, David Ricardo Capriles and Abraham David Jesurun — on a commission of eleven physicians appointed to take preventive measures against cholera then raging in the neighboring ports.[86]

As he was interested in rural life, Dr. Senior purchased the magnificent St. Joris plantation from Clasina Gorsira de Haseth in 1869 for 35,000 florins. He sold it in 1884 to A. Perret-Gentil at a profit of 3,000 florins[87] (illus. 13).

Like many Jewish doctors, he also served as an honorific circumciser, and helped to organize an important medical society in 1853.[88]

He took an active part in Jewish life. He served the Mikvé Israel community as vice president in 1860 and as president in 1861. He also was a founder of the El Porvenir society and of the Reform community in 1864; president of the latter in 1878,[89] and secretary of the local committee of the Alliance Israélite Universelle in 1868.[90] He died on January 1, 1906.[91]

[82] *CC*, May 3, 1851.

[83] MIA, Ket. VIII, no. 123; CGA, Matrimonial Conditions, 1869-1900, pp. 17-18; Not. Act, 1851, I, no. 43, II, nos. 9-10, III, no. 8.

[84] *CC*, Jan. 28, 1854.

[85] *Ibid.*, Jan. 13, 1866.

[86] *Ibid.*, Dec. 29, 1866.

[87] CGA, Transport, 1869 and 1884.

[88] *CC*, July 9, 1853.

[89] ADJRC, Actas no. 2, May 28 and June 4, 1864; Actas no. 6, 1878.

[90] *CC*, April 18, 1868.

[91] Dr. Senior was the eldest in a family of five sons (David, Haim, Abraham Haim, Mordechay

DR. MORRIS DE JACOB ABRAHAM JESURUN

Like many comfortable Curaçoan Jews of that era, Morris' father sent him to Europe for his medical education. In 1857, at the age of 22, Morris was graduated as surgeon and obstetrician.[92] He came home to practice. Every day for an hour he received the poor free of charge.[93] In 1863 he was appointed to serve with the doctors Salomon M. Lansberg and David R. Capriles on a commission of verification in connection with the emancipation of the slaves.[94] For several years he was on the Catholic Hospital staff and rendered his services without charge.[95] He married Julia de David Dovale in 1859[96] and died on January 19, 1886 (illus. 146).

DR. ABRAHAM COHEN HENRIQUEZ

Our doctor was born in July, 1829, to Moises Cohen Henriquez, the second Corresponding Member for the High Commission on Jewish Affairs in Holland.[97] When he was fourteen, his father sent him to study in Holland.[98] He practiced medicine in Curaçao in 1862[99] and was thanked for the care given the sick.[100] Dr. Henriquez played an important role in the schism of 1864 and bitterly opposed Haham Chumaceiro. He served as president of the Reform community in 1866[101] and delivered discourses of a religious order before the reformists had their temple.[102] In 1868 he married Ribecca, the daughter of Rephael Wolff.[103] He was still practicing medicine in Curaçao in 1872.[104] He died in Brooklyn, N. Y., in 1875 (illus. 145).

DR. SOLOMON MOSES LANSBERG

Outside of a few businessmen, the Ashkenazim who arrived in Curaçao in

and himself) and three daughters (Sarah, Leah and Clara) according to his father's will (CGA, Not. Act, 1855, I, no. 20). Dr. Senior left, among other children, his son Jacob, who was a dental surgeon in Curaçao and Ciudad Bolivar.

92 *CC*, Oct. 31, 1857.
93 *Ibid.*, Nov. 14, 1857.
94 *Ibid.*, April 2, 1863.
95 CGA, Rechtsbank, 1866. See footnote 125.
96 MIA, Ket. VIII, no. 173; CGA, Not. Act, 1859, I, no. 8.
97 CGA, Marriages, 1868, and Birth Register of the Mikvé Israel community.
98 *CC*, June 3, 1843; Dec. 7, 1850.
99 *Ibid.*, July 19, 1862.
100 *Ibid.*, Dec. 23, 1865.
101 ADJRC, Actas libro 2, of May 28, 1864; Actas libro 4, of Feb. 12, 1866.
102 *CC*, June 3, 1865.
103 ADJRC, Marriage Register, no. 3; CGA, Marriages, 1868.
104 CGA, Marriages, 1872.

the 19th century were, as a rule, soldiers. Nevertheless, there were four doctors among them: Jacob van Gelder, Salomon L. de Jongh, Moses Gerstl and Salomon Lansberg. The last succeeded to become president of the Mikvé Israel community[105] through marriage to a Sephardic girl of Curaçao. Born to Moses Nathan Lansberg and Clara Bronnet at The Hague on February 25, 1821, our doctor served as second-class military physician of the Royal Dutch Navy.

Dr. Lansberg opened his medical practice in Curaçao in 1858.[106] There he married Esther de Haim Josias Cohen Henriquez and received 12,000 florins as dowry.[107] He and Dr. David Capriles were rivals. Both men wanted to care for the community's sick poor free of charge, to dispense the medicines, and to serve as honorific circumcisers. In 1890, 1894 and 1898, Dr. Lansberg was the City Physician,[108] and as such president of the Medical Council. At the close of 1889 he was honored by the authorities for his fifty years of service as physician. Governor Van den Brandhof, in a report to the Colonial Council, said of Lansberg's activities:

> The fact cannot be disputed that in some measure we have to thank for its [the disease's] favorable termination the extraordinary zeal of the City Physician, S. M. Lansberg who, with exemplary care and never faltering willingness, always renders his valuable services whenever required.[109]

Although married to the sister of Haham Chumaceiro's adversaries, Dr. Lansberg remained loyal to Congregation Mikvé Israel. He was president of the community in 1875 when the new Community Regulations were put into effect, and again in 1878. He died in Curaçao on August 12, 1901, leaving among other children, a son Morris, judge of the Curaçao Court of Justice (illus. 143, 249).

[105] Two other Ashkenazim besides Lansberg became president of the community through marriage to Sephardic girls — Haim (a.k.a. Hayman) Alexander aCohen and Sevi Hirsch (a.k.a. Ephraim Edwards) — in 5588 (1827-28) and 5612 (1851-52), respectively. Sol M. Lansberg, who was Mikvé Israel's president in 1920, was born in Curaçao to a Curaçoan Sephardic Jewess.

[106] Government disposition no. 325, July 7, 1858.

[107] CGA, Matrimonial Conditions, 1879-1900, pp. 33-34; MIA, Ket. VIII, no. 169; CGA, Not. Act, 1858, III, no. 202.

[108] The City Physician was the president of the Medical Council. It was composed of physicians whose task was to examine doctors, dentists, pharmacists, assistant pharmacists and midwives who did not have a Dutch diploma. The City Physician had to survey public health and inspect the pharmacies (Dr. Philip H. Hartz, "De Geneeskunde," *Oranje en de Zes Caraïbische Parelen*, p. 171). See also government decrees of Nov. 14-16, 1838; Aug. 6, 1840, and Feb. 10, 1841, regarding the practice of the medical profession and the sale of medicine in Curaçao.

[109] *Home Journal*, Dec. 15, 1889; Jan. 1, 1890; Emmanuel, "De Nederlandsche Grafschriften op 'Beth Haim,'" pp. 63-64.

DR. DAVID RICARDO CAPRILES

On his father's side Dr. Capriles was a great-grandson of Dr. Joseph Capriles; on his mother's, the grandson of Bolivar's friend, Mordechay Ricardo. He was born on November 17, 1837, to Abraham and Rachel Ricardo Capriles. He studied in New York City where he was graduated as obstetrician on September 11, 1857.[110] He stayed on in New York about a year as private docent of the Medical School of New York, and in some capacity for the New York Dispensary.[111] In June, 1858, he returned to Curaçao to practice medicine.[112] A year later he married Hana de Abraham Senior.[113]

Dr. Capriles opened a pharmacy in 1861. It served as a kind of laboratory and first-aid station, and was known as the "Botica del Dr. Capriles." The government granted him the permit on condition that he operated his pharmacy in Pietermaai and abandoned his profession.[114] The following year he was authorized to practice medicine temporarily while retaining his pharmacy. Not until 1868 was he permitted to practice full time and operate his pharmacy too.[115]

For several years he was the physician of the insane asylum, physician of the second district, military physician with the rank of captain, member of the Sanitation Commission, medical lawyer at court and a skillful surgeon. Like many Jewish doctors, he also was an honorific circumciser. His works were not limited to the simple practice of his profession. He conducted some experiments in his laboratory in an attempt to discover the cause of certain diseases. According to a contemporary, he was fifty years ahead of his generation.[116] He courageously criticized the lamentable situation of public health in Curaçao. He published a report for the International Colonial Exposition held at Amsterdam in 1883 on the insane asylum, the causes and

[110] *CC*, Oct. 24, 1857.

[111] College of Physicians and Surgeons of the City of New York, session of 1857-1858; *Annual Report of the Board of the New York Dispensary, January, 1858*, cited by Baez Lavastida, *Biographie du Docteur David Ricardo Capriles* (Caracas, 1928), p. 6.

[112] Government Disposition no. 260, June 8, 1858.

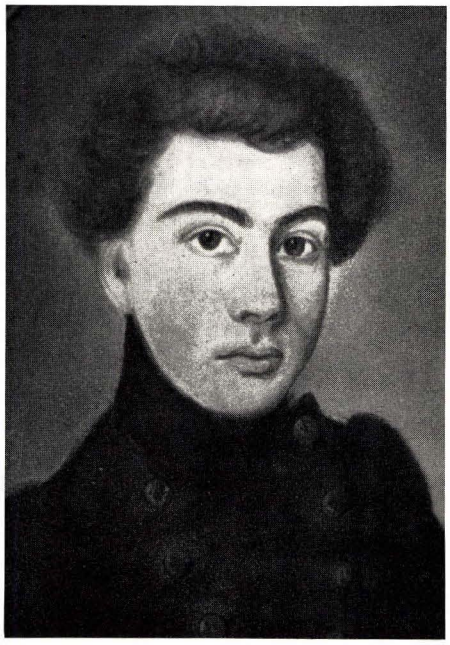
[113] MIA, Ket. VIII, no. 169. Hana brought a modest dowry of 3,500 florins (CGA, Matrimonial Conditions, pp. 106-7). In 1879 she purchased the Vreugdenberg plantation for 3,000 florins and sold it six months later for only 2,000 (CGA, Transport, 1879-80).

[114] *CC*, Oct. 26, 1861. "Ego" (pseudonym of the Jewish lawyer Edward I. van Lier) regretted that friendship among physicians in Curaçao at that time left much to be desired. Was Dr. Capriles forced to abandon his profession through the intervention of his colleagues, particularly Dr. Lansberg? This pharmacy still exists and is run by his grandchildren.

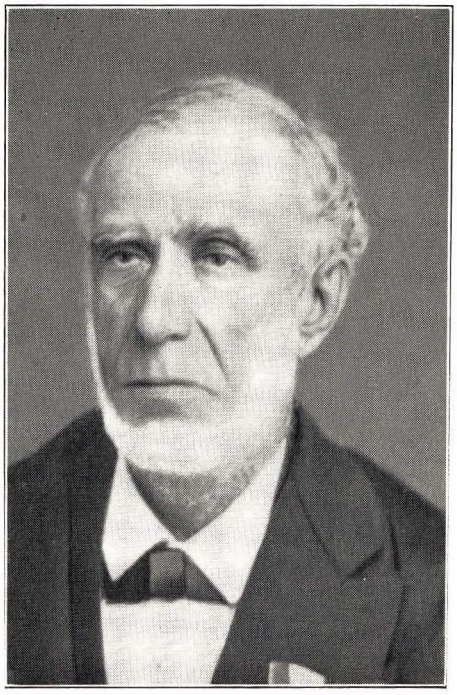
[115] *CC*, Sept. 6, 1862; June 2, 1868.

[116] John de Pool, p. 238.

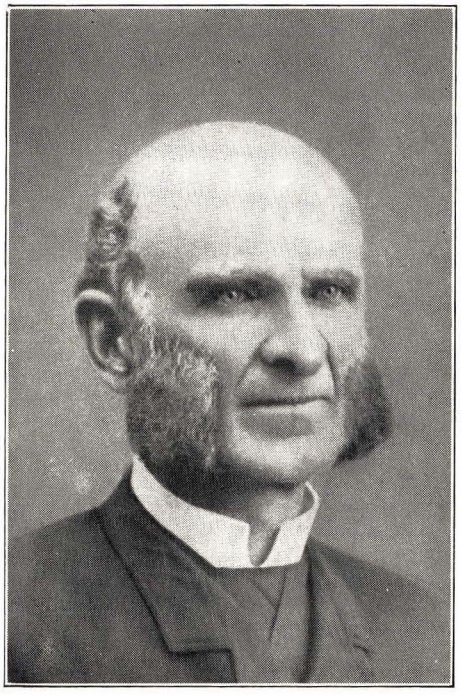
141. BENJAMIN DE SOLA, 1748-1817, PHYSICIAN



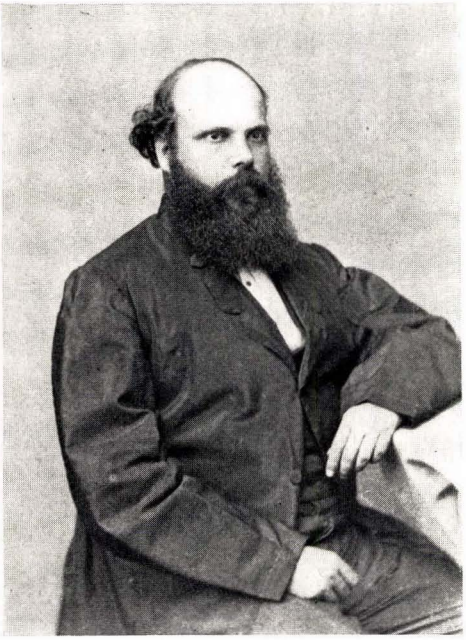
142. SALOMON JOSEPH DE JONGH, 1816-1849, PHYSICIAN



143. SALOMON MOSES LANSBERG, 1821-1901, PHYSICIAN

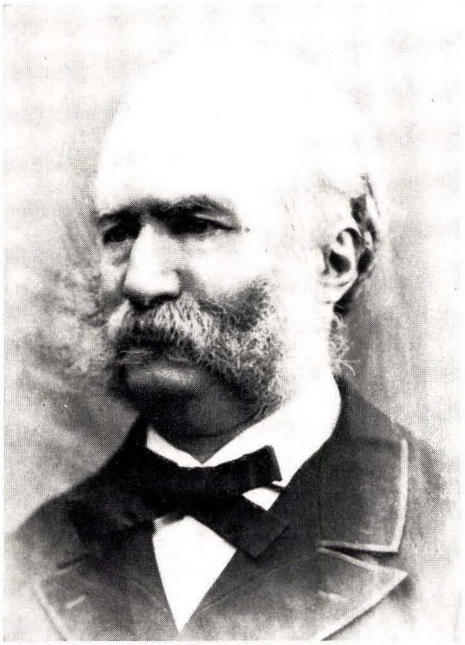


144. ISAAC JACOB SENIOR, 1827-1906, PHYSICIAN AND PLANTER

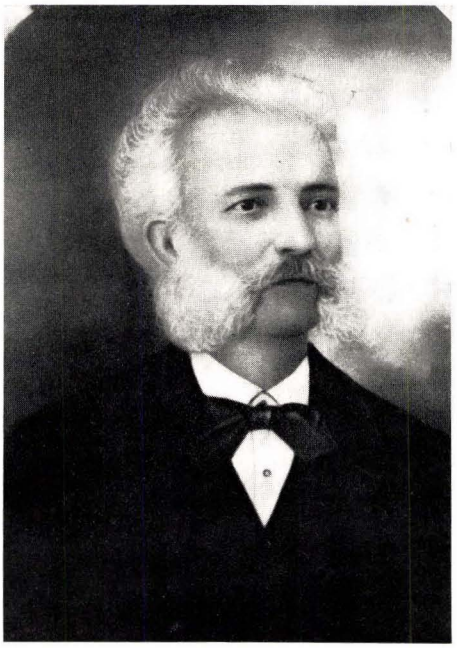


145. ABRAHAM MOSES COHEN HENRIQUEZ, 1829-1875, PHYSICIAN

146. MORRIS JACOB JESURUN, 1835-1886, PHYSICIAN



147. ABRAHAM DAVID JESURUN, 1839-1903, PHYSICIAN

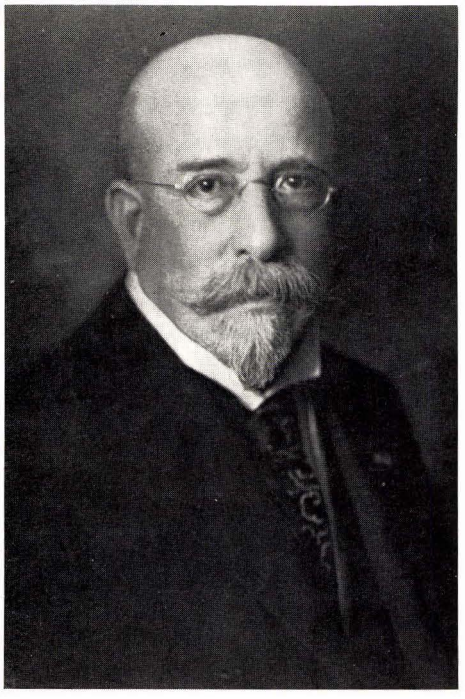


148. DAVID R. CAPRILES, 1837-1902, PHYSICIAN

149. DAVID M. RICARDO, 1847-1941, DENTIST, AND A FOUNDER OF THE VENEZUELAN RED CROSS WHOSE PRESIDENT HE WAS TWICE

150. MOZES GERSTL, 1859-1930, PHYSICIAN

151. MAURICE MORDECHAY COHEN HENRIQUEZ, 1878-1927, PHYSICIAN



152. DR. HAIM ABRAHAM DE CASSERES, 1854-1929, PRESIDENT OF THE MEDICAL COUNCIL

153. ISAAC HAIM A. M. CHUMACEIRO, 1875-1938, PHARMACIST AND A FOUNDER OF THE CURAÇOAN RED CROSS

treatment of mental derangement, and his recommendations for improving the social conditions of the poor with relation to their health.[117] Like Dr. Daniel L. M. Peixotto in his time, he considered the climate of Curaçao exceptionally healthy.

Dr. Capriles published a study on diphtheria, then a much-too-frequent disease in Curaçao. He also published, and distributed at his own expense, medical advice and directions aimed at the prevention of childhood diseases. He was a member and correspondent of various scientific institutions, and contributed articles to several journals and reviews of Holland, the United States of America and Curaçao.

This versatile doctor did not confine his activities to his profession. An eloquent orator, he found time to teach rhetoric to the women of Club Entre Nous. He was fond of literature, and spoke and wrote several languages. He wrote poetry in French, English, and Spanish.[118] The ironic pamphlet, *Reid y Engordad*, was his response to the Reform's *Shemah Israel*.[119] In 1882 he wrote and published in Curaçao a 32-page biography of the young poet David Lopez Penha.

Dr. Capriles, so aptly called "the physician of the poor,"[120] died on March 3, 1902. Besides his good name, he left five sons and three daughters.[121] His widow Hana joined him in 1917. In the words of a contemporary, "Dr. Capriles was indeed worthy of his country"[122] (illus. 148).

DR. ABRAHAM DE DAVID JESURUN

Born on February 12, 1839, Abraham de David Jesurun studied in Germany where he received his degree in obstetrics in 1857. Like his colleagues, he treated the poor without charge.[123] He was house doctor of the Vargas College where he taught German. (It had 92 boys in 1874.)[124] In the division of 1864 Dr. Jesurun, like his colleagues Lansberg and Capriles, remained loyal to

117 *Het Krankzinnigen gesticht op Curaçao, Oorzaken en behandeling der Krankzinnigheid op dit eiland — Armenverzorging op Curaçao* (Curaçao: Bethencourt & Sons, 1883), 16 pp.

118 On the twenty-fifth anniversary of the emancipation of the slaves, a committee headed by Abraham Salas with Samuel de Sola as secretary published *Fiesta Willem III* (Curaçao, 1888) in homage to King William III of Holland. At page 23 thereof, among other Spanish poems on liberty, are one by Abram Z. Lopez Penha and another by Dr. Capriles.

119 John de Pool, p. 240.

120 *CC*, Sept. 30, 1876; *Amsterdamsche Courant*, April 6, 1883.

121 Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Manrique, Heraclio, Raquel, Lea and Serafina.

122 Wijnmalen, *ibid.*, pp. 13-14.

123 *CC*, July 30, 1864.

124 *El Imparcial*, July 29 and Oct. 14, 1874; CGA, Not. Acts, 1866, no. 168.

the Mikvé Israel. Like Dr. Morris Jesurun, he too rendered his services gratis to the Catholic Hospital.[125] He died on May 17, 1903 (illus. 147).

DR. JOSEPH DE MORDECHAY HENRIQUEZ

He was active about 1884, and later settled in South America.[126]

DR. JACOB VAN GELDER

Born to Gerson van Gelder in 1860, our physician is met in Curaçao in 1886 as second-class military doctor of the Royal Dutch Army. He went to Port of Spain, Trinidad, where he married Rachel Reneta de Isaac Salas in 1888, and returned to Curaçao a few weeks later.[127] Dr. van Gelder died relatively young before 1895.[128] That year his widow married Lezer Mozes de Israel Leezer, first lieutenant of the infantry of the Royal Dutch Army stationed at Curaçao.[129]

DR. HAIM ABRAHAM DE BENJAMIN DE CASSERES

Dr. De Casseres was born on October 15, 1854, to Benjamin de Casseres, one of Curaçao's staunchest defenders of orthodoxy. He was brought up in the spirit of the Torah, and sent to study in Göttingen, Germany. He received his medical degree there on March 5, 1879, and returned to Curaçao. After getting his "Certificate of Competency" in 1880, he decided to settle in Venezuela, for there were five Jewish doctors in Curaçao at the time. There he received a medical degree from the Faculty of Medicine of Caracas. He practiced ten years in Ciudad Bolivar and Callao, and then established himself in Curaçao in 1890.[130] He was a member of the Medical Council in 1895 and its president in 1912 and 1913, during which time he replaced the City Physician. In 1916 he was one of the examiners of pharmacy candidates and midwives, and in 1917 physician of the Leper Hospital. Dr. De Casseres was appreciated by the authorities for his devotion to improving the sanitary conditions of the island.[131]

125 Jac van Baars, *Geschiedenis van het St. Elizabeths-Gasthuis te Curaçao, 1855-1905* (Curaçao, 1905), pp. 42, 44.

126 Communication of the late Jossy M. L. Maduro.

127 MIA, file of y. 1886, according to his application of February, 1886, for admission as a member of the community; CGA, Marriages, 1888 and 1895; MIA, Ket. X, no. 2.

128 His widow left fifty florins to the synagogue for memorial prayers for him in which he is referred to as, "The Experienced Physician."

129 MIA, Ket. XI, no. 20. So described in his civil marriage papers (CGA, Marriages, 1895).

130 *Home Journal*, April 15, 1890.

131 *WIG*, July, 1919, p. 232.

Like several of his Jewish colleagues, he was an honorific circumciser, and, like Dr. Capriles, he too refused to circumcise children of the Reform community unless the service was done with *taleth* in accordance with orthodox rite.[132]

Aside from his medical duties, Dr. De Casseres took an active part in the administration of the colony as a member of the Colonial Council from 1905 to 1919.

He died on December 26, 1929, bequeathing 500 florins to the synagogue for the saying of memorial prayers for the repose of his soul[133] (illus. 152).

DR. MOSES GERSTL

The son of Sem Gerstl and Theresia Rosenthal, he was born in Prague in 1859. He was graduated from the Medical School of Prague in 1883 and served his internship in the Government Hospital of Vienna. He practiced medicine in Vienna until 1888, when he left to become ship doctor for the Austrian Lloyds Steamship Line. In 1890 he was engaged as military doctor in Surinam and three years later as port doctor of Curaçao. There he married Serafina de Manuel Penso from whom he received 25,000 florins as dowry.[134] Dr. Gerstl left for Europe in 1926 and died there in 1930[135] (illus. 150).

DR. MAURICE DE MORDECHAY COHEN HENRIQUEZ

Dr. Cohen Henriquez was born in 1879 and studied in Amsterdam and Leyden. He served as second-class military doctor of the Royal Dutch Army, quarantine physician in 1907 and 1908; physician of the second district of the island in 1909; of the Insane Asylum in 1911 and 1913; secretary of the Medical Council in 1913 during Dr. De Casseres' presidency. In 1914 he organized a volunteer corps and first-aid post in "Waterfort" to care for wounded sailors of the battleships. It was a kind of improvised Red Cross. Only in 1931, on the initiative of the pharmacist Isaac H. M. Chumaceiro, was the Dutch Red cross established in Curaçao.[136] Dr. Henriquez married Ida de Jacob Maduro Lopez in 1908. In 1919 he left Curaçao and died in Nijmegen in 1927. His first son, the engineer Dr. Percy Cohen Henriquez, was Minister of Agriculture of the Dutch Antilles from 1949 to 1951. His second son Vivian is an electrical engineer in Curaçao.

132 ADJRC, Actas no. 6, meeting of April 6, 1900.

133 MIA, Hashcaboth Register, I, month of Kislev.

134 MIA, Ket. XI, no. 24; CGA, Marriages, 1895; Matrimonial Conditions, pp. 168-69.

135 *Miniaturas*, Curaçao, April, 1926.

136 Dr. William P. Maal, "Het Nederlandse Rode Kruis, afdeling Curaçao," *Oranje en de Zes Caraïbische Parelen*, p. 193.

There were other doctors during this period, sons of Curaçoans who did not practice in Curaçao. These physicians include Dr. Elias de Jacob Penso who was graduated in Amsterdam in 1907;[137] Manuel Michel de Marius M. Alvares Correa, who practiced in Amsterdam; Dr. Henry de Abraham H. J. Cohen Henriquez, in Brussels; Isaac de Menases Capriles and Isaac de Henry Baiz in Caracas; José Curiel Abenatar and Rolando de Elias Curiel in Coro, Venezuela; M. de Sola in San Salvador; Solomon de Sola, Montefiore de Solomon Levy Maduro and Harold W. Jesurun in the United States of America.[138]

The most outstanding among them were Dr. David de Leon (son of Cheri Moses de David Leon and Lea de Marchena), who studied in France where he attained a professorship in medicine; and Dr. David Lobo who founded the well-known David Lobo Clinic in Caracas. (He was the son of David Solomon Lobo and Clara de Jacob Haim Senior,[139] and brother of Sarah, the wife of the socialist Daniel de Leon.)[140]

DOCTORS WHO SETTLED IN CURAÇAO AFTER WORLD WAR I UP TO NOW

The medical corps of Curaçao has included among its physicians eight Jews born outside of Curaçao, men who for the most part settled during the last two wars. Numbered among them are the late Julius Benesch (d. 1962); H. J. Emanuels (both circumcisers also); L. A. de La Fuente, A. S. Fernandez, A. B. Gomperts; the late Philip H. Hartz, J. Podvinek (left), Jacques H. Reisel (left), Maurits Taytelbaum (left), P. E. Nassy, and David Moffi, neurologist.

Recently the Curaçoan Herbert (son of Michael) Pinedo started his hospital residency in Curaçao.

Of the physicians comprising the medical corps of Aruba, four are Jews who were born outside of the Dutch Antilles. They are the doctors D. R. de La Fuente, W. H. de La Fuente, E. M. Robles, and A. A. Schlachter (the last, also a circumciser).

DENTISTS

During the past hundred years there have been several Jewish dentists who got by on practical experience, e.g., A. H. Cortissoz, Isaac L. Henriquez, Mauricio A. Jesurun, Elias J. Pinedo, Jacob Isaac Senior, David Ricardo,

137 *El Tiempo*, Curaçao, Nov. 2, 1907.
138 Communication of the late Jossy M. L. Maduro.
139 MIA, Ket. VIII, no. 178.
140 ADJRC, Marriages, no. 27.

J. van Lier, David Naar, H. Lansberg, Mortimer A. Correa, Arturo Lopez Henriquez, and others, The only Jewish dentist now practicing in Curaçao is Dr. Jessy Jesurun. He is the son of Charles Jesurun and grandson of the Dr. Morris Jesurun above listed.

PHARMACISTS

In Curaçao, as in many parts of the Orient, remedies were generally dispensed by the doctor. To be sure there were some shopkeepers since the second half of the 18th century who sold herbs and spices. Only in 1847 is a qualified Jewish pharmacist encountered in Curaçao. His name is unknown to us. A subscriber to the *Archives Israélites de France* asked the editors whether the "only" pharmacist on the island, who was a Jew, could watch over the sale, the manipulation and preparation of his drugs with flame on the Sabbath and Jewish festivals. They replied that the Sabbath could be profaned in a case where the sick person was in danger; otherwise, a non-Jew should be employed on the Sabbath and be paid a part of the profits.[141]

Thus Curaçao had only one qualified pharmacist in 1847, and he was a Jew. Fourteen years later Dr. David Capriles opened his famous pharmacy. He was followed by Aron Capriles in 1872, and later by Abraham de Jeosuah Naar. Naar, who was born in Curaçao on March 19, 1861, studied in Marburg, Germany, where he received his doctorate in pharmacy in 1886,[142] and later another degree in Caracas. After a period in Ciudad Bolivar and Panama where he married Dagmar de Morris Osorio in 1892, he returned to Curaçao. He purchased the "Botica Alemana" to carry on his profession. He was known for his manufacture of "Curaçao Liqueur" and considered "the most learned apothecary in the country." He died on July 9, 1905. In 1897 the pharmacist Isaac Haim Mendes Chumaceiro opened "La Botica Excelsior" with Edgar Senior.[143] His pharmacy served as a first-aid station for the poor. Mention should also be made of the pharmacists Josias Lopez Henriquez Jr. (established in 1903), and Dario Salas (illus. 162, 242, 284).

Until the close of the past century it was customary for the head of a family to retain a doctor on a yearly basis to care for the entire family as well as the servants. Thus in the years when there was little sickness, he would try to

[141] *Archives Israélites*, Paris, 1847, pp. 814-15.

[142] His doctoral thesis was entitled: *Beiträge zur Kenntnis des Zimmtaldehyds* (Marburg, 1886) [communication of the late Jossy M. L. Maduro].

[143] CGA, Register of Business Houses, 1897.

pay the doctor less than the stipulated fee. In the years when epidemics raged, the doctor would ruin his health in trying to fulfill his medical contracts.

These devoted doctors often were on the staff of the Hospital for Lepers and the Insane which, since 1779, had been maintained by the contributions of the islanders, and by the Jews especially.

The Catholic Hospital owes much to the cooperation of these public-spirited Jewish doctors. In its early years when it was struggling for existence, the Jewish doctors volunteered their services to the Catholic Fathers and Sisters, its devoted administrators.

Indeed, the Jewish physicians of Curaçao were veritable pioneers in the field of public health.

As a final word, homage should be paid to the Curaçoan Jewish physicians and pharmacists for their devotion to the poor whom they treated without charge. They did not make fortunes out of their profession. Quite the contrary. They placed their knowledge, homes and pharmacies at the disposal of the needy. This is all the more praiseworthy when it is realized that most of the indigent were non-Jews, the Jewish community having always cared for its own poor.

This noble profession has almost disappeared from among the Curaçoan Jews in Curaçao. It is hoped that the younger generation will pursue university studies leading toward the professions, especially medicine, the golden art of their ancestors in Spain and Portugal.

CHAPTER XXII

CULTURAL LIFE

EDUCATION

EVEN THOUGH THE MAHAMAD took care of the religious and, to some extent, secular instruction of the children, the parents tried to complete the general education of their sons and sometimes of their daughters. From time to time, either on the initiative of the instructor or the parents, the children were grouped together to form a sort of class which they called "school." The first officially known school of this type was that conducted by David de Isaac Rodrigues.

Born in Amsterdam in 1774, Rodrigues arrived in Curaçao about 1793 with the assistance of the Amsterdam parnassim who advanced fifty florins toward the expenses of his trip.[1] He married in 1797, receiving a modest dowry of 500 pesos.[2] The parnassim thereupon engaged him to teach the advanced pupils at an annual salary of 82:4 pesos, plus other benefits. By 1808 he was earning 110 pesos. That year, because of words had with his colleague Isaac Idanha de Casseres, he was fined five pesos by the parnassim. He resigned in protest and was replaced by Haham Da Fonseca's son Samuel Haim.[3] In 1811 he was again in the service of the parnassim who allowed him to teach French privately (at four pesos a month) in his spare time. One of his students was Saul Haim Pardo.[4]

Rodrigues obviously did outstanding work to merit Governor Kikkert's praise in a report of 1818 to the Colonial Minister:

> For the past thirty[5] years, David Rodrigues of the Portuguese Jewish Nation, has been teaching here. [He is] A man of irreproachable conduct and skilled in his field. He teaches with depth the Dutch, French and Spanish languages, reading, writing and mathematics. His school at Willemstad is attended by

[1] See appendix 11, y. 1792.

[2] MIA, Ket. VI, no. 103. After his wife's death, he married his sister-in-law in keeping with the custom of the day, but without dowry (*ibid.*, VII, no. 8).

[3] MIA, loose papers, November, 1808, and not 1802 as given in the "Memorias Senior." His annual salary then was 350 pesos, possibly with his earnings as "surgeon."

[4] MIA, loose papers, July 1, 1811.

[5] Should read twenty-five.

> thirty pupils, more or less. All of them [are] his coreligionists, among them, children of needy parents. Only four of his pupils are studying Dutch. The others, in accordance with their parents' wishes, are taking up either Spanish or French. His teaching method is excellent. But his school lacks the books required, especially books in modern Dutch spelling.[6]

When the Dutch repossessed Curaçao in 1816, government schools were established: four "state schools, two of first rank and two of second rank." Rodrigues was taken on as teacher in one of the first rank or "first class" schools as his epitaph in Dutch discloses. His pupils were taught Spanish, French and Dutch. At first just a few children studied Dutch, but in time the number rose appreciably.[7] In spite of his pedagogical success Rodrigues, the father of nine, could not make ends meet. He owed money to several of his pupils' fathers who advanced him sums on account of his fees.[8] He continued teaching until his death on May 9, 1831.[9] The entire community mourned their beloved teacher. A letter of Moses C. Henriquez to his superiors in Holland tells us that Rodrigues had always maintained good order and discipline in his school, that many parents were most grateful to him and that his death was a deep loss to the community.[10]

Four members of his family interested themselves in education. In 1830 Rodrigues' son Isaac taught the "second class" of 24 pupils. Jacob and Sarah had planned to open a school, but never realized their goal. Lea was principal of a girls' school which closed down in 1833 because it had only twelve pupils.[11]

In 1848 the Mahamad opened a Talmud Torah school which was attended by some 70 pupils. Among its teachers were three distinguished men: Henry Nathan or Haim ben Nathan (b. 1812 in London), brother of the Reverend Moses N. Nathan of Jamaica; the Reverend David Cardoze and Benjamin de Casseres. Nathan also taught English. While at the Talmud Torah school he

[6] RA, Koloniën na 1813, no. 3743, Missives van Curaçao. Governor Cantz'laar's report of 1822 to the Colonial Minister disclosed that the teachers who taught Dutch did not know their subject thoroughly (RA, *ibid.*, no. 3751).

[7] Rodrigues apparently had a sizable number of pupils who learned Dutch according to what the Protestant Pastor Bosch tells in passing when discussing Rodrigues (vol. III, p. 5).

[8] Rodrigues' last will and testament (CEOE 756, no. 33).

[9] For more details on Rodrigues, see Emmanuel, "De Nederlandsche Grafschriften op 'Beth Haim,'" pp. 66-69, and *Precious Stones*, pp. 433-34.

[10] Letter of Jan. 29, 1836 (RA, Hoofdcommissie, letter no. 1054). The declarations by Governor Kikkert and Henriquez correspond with the information in Rodrigues' epitaph that "his pupils are most grateful . . . for the many good and useful things he taught them."

[11] KV, 1833.

obtained a license on February 19, 1849, to open a school in Otrabanda for "Young Ladies and Gentlemen." There he taught English, geography and arithmetic. Spanish and French were added to the curriculum in 1851 and Dutch in 1854.[12] It seems that he closed his school in 1861 when his library was sold to Benjamin de Sola.[13] Nathan married Sarah Lindo[14] in 1850. He died in London in 1872, leaving the Mikvé Israel 400 pounds sterling for the recitation of memorial prayers[15] for himself and his wife. She lived on until 1918.

There were other Jews who did tutoring or had their own schools.

Jacob de Efraim Curiel,[16] born in 1805, gave private lessons in French and Spanish in 1839.

Abraham Curiel, a contemporary of Henry Nathan, gave lessons to equip one for the practical aspects of life: "bookkeeping in double entry and set up in a double party," French and Spanish. He closed his school at the end of 1852 "to visit homes to give French and Spanish lessons to young ladies and to receive boys in his home."[17] As late as 1852 parents preferred having their daughters tutored at home.

A[braham]. J. Senior opened a private school in Willemstad in 1854 since Nathan's school was in Otrabanda.

Rebecca Cohen Belinfante, widow of the teacher Joseph Bueno de Mesquita, founded a school in Otrabanda in 1857. She taught Dutch, French and the usual branches of primary instruction to children of all faiths.[18]

In 1875 Jacob Lopez Penha conducted a boys' school in Pietermaai known as "Penha's School."[19]

José R. Henriquez, a half-Jew, founded the Colegio Colonial before 1877.

Daniel de Sola, who enjoyed an enviable reputation as schoolmaster, directed the Colegium Curaçao with a certain Brouwer.[20] Later he conducted the "Franklin School"[21] in Pietermaai until its closing in 1886.

The Reverend Jacob Mendes de Solla of the Reform community conducted the "Cosmopolitan School" for boys since 1876. One of the teachers on his staff was Marc Calish[22] of Amsterdam, "a master worthy of praise."

Jacob A. Curiel[23] gave "classes in languages and bookkeeping" in 1883.

12 *CC*, Jan. 24, March 1, 1849; *The Occident*, 1850, p. 526; *CC*, Sept. 13, 1851 and July 29, 1854.
13 *CC*, March 16, 1861.
14 MIA, Ket. VIII, no. 118; CGA, Not. Acts, 1850, I, no. 57.
15 MIA, Hashcaboth Register, months of Shevat and Tishri. See appendix 2 about his Rijkenberg plantation.
16 CGA, Marriages, 1839.
17 *CC*, Jan. 4, 1850; Dec. 11, 1852; Aug. 5, 1854.
18 *Ibid.*, Dec. 31, 1857.
19 *Ibid.*, Jan. 9, 1875.
20 John de Pool, p. 154.
21 *KV*, 1886.
22 *KV*, 1890.
23 *El Comercio*, Curaçao, Jan. 2, 1883.

The Reverend Moise Lopez Leao Laguna of the Reform community and Miss Illidge directed a school for boys from 1887 to 1889.[24]

With the introduction of a full curriculum in the government schools, the Jews closed their teaching establishments and kept up only the *medras* or religious school.

From their inception in 1816 the state schools were administrated by a commission or "school board" which always included a Jew.[25] In 1846 it had six members: a Jew,[26] two Catholics and three Protestants. Later, there were two Jewish members. Between 1886 and 1938, aside from a gap of several years, four Jews served as president of the school commission: Sol Cohen Henriquez, Mordy S. L. Maduro, his son Salomon, and Haim Cohen Henriquez.

INTERPRETERS AND TRANSLATORS

The Jews distinguished themselves not only as teachers of languages and general subjects, but also as translators and interpreters. Since Curaçao was a cosmopolitan island, the government and public required interpreters and translators of Spanish, Portuguese, English, French, Dutch and, in rare instances, also Hebrew. This function was filled chiefly by the Jews since the beginning of the 18th century. History has preserved for us the names of the following interpreters and translators, the first five having rendered their services without charge: Manuel Alvares Correa, Benjamin de Casseres,[27] Abraham Jesurun, Aron Moreno Henriquez, 1736; Samuel Idanha de Casseres,[28] 1741; Abraham Nunes Redondo,[29] 1742-1766; Jacob de David Osorio[30] since 1772; Aron Machorro[31] since 1781; Joseph Obediente in 1795; David Salomon de Meza,[32] d. 1804; Daniel Lopez Penha,[33] 1801-07; Abraham Salom Delvalle, 1807-19; Isaac Henriquez since 1807; Mordechay Ricardo since 1812; Moises Cohen Henriquez, 1820-28; Jeudah Cohen Henriquez in 1823;

[24] ADJRC, Legajo no. 30, Nov. 30, 1887; *KV*, 1890.

[25] Haim Abinun de Lima was the first Jewish member on the school commission.

[26] Moses Haim Cohen Henriquez. See our "De Nederlandsche Grafschriften op 'Beth Haim,'" pp. 62-63.

[27] WICA 214, July 31, 1708.

[28] OAC 6, July 12, 1741.

[29] OAC 812, y. 1742.

[30] OAC 201, nos. 95-97; OAC 133, no. 102. The fee for translating a page from Spanish into Dutch was one peso in 1772.

[31] OAC 210, no. 127.

[32] He also was a "procureur" — an attorney at law (OAC 1002, no. 258).

[33] According to the Lopez Penha Family Chronicle in manuscript.

Daniel de Sola about 1870-96; Haim J. Cohen Henriquez, Emilio Lopez Henriquez, and others. Several of these men retained their title or function for upwards of thirty years. Others like Osorio, Delvalle and Ricardo were in the employ of the Government.

LITERARY SOCIETIES

In order to encourage studies and letters, several Jews founded literary or historical societies. Four of the most important follow.

1. Sociedad Literaria para Utilidad y Cultura.[34] Founded in 1882 by Sol Cohen Henriquez and Gabriel Pinedo. It held its meetings in the basement of Temple Emanu-El and boasted of such celebrities as the attorneys Chumaceiro and Van Lier and the teacher Daniel de Sola on its roster of lecturers. Marc Calish[35] (d. 1890) was one of its very active members.
2. Historical Society of the Netherlands Antilles.[36] This organization was founded in 1896 under the initiative of J.H.J. Hamelberg,[37] government archivist. The attorney general Sol Cohen Henriquez was the president and guiding spirit during its brief existence. Several studies published by this society are still recognized as important source books on the history of Curaçao and the Dutch Antilles. Lack of funds and Hamelberg's appointment in 1902 as the Netherlands' chargé d'affaires at Caracas forced the society to suspend its publications.
3. Society for the Advancement of Instruction in Curaçao.[38] Of a membership of sixty, 34 were Jews, three of whom served on a committee of seven.
4. General Dutch Alliance (headquarters in Holland).[39] Nine men of good will, including three Jews, founded a branch of this organization in Curaçao. Its chief aim was to propagate Dutch culture. In 1905, forty-five of its 144 members were Jews.

34 Literary Society for Practical and Cultural Pursuits; in Dutch, exactly: *Letterkundig Genootschap tot nut en beschaving*. The regulations of this society were published in Curaçao in 1882, 12 pp.

35 ADJRC, Legajo no. 25, 1882; *KV*, 1890.

36 Exactly: *Genootschap voor de Geschied- Taal- Land- en Volkenkunde der Nederlandsche Antillen*. Sol Cohen Henriquez, Dr. David R. Capriles, E.S.L. Maduro and Abraham Jesurun were among its twelve founding members.

37 Born in 1862 to a Protestant minister, Hamelberg arrived in St. Eustatius at 18 years and in Curaçao at 25. His studies on Curaçao and the Netherlands Antilles are well documented and reliable.

38 Exactly: *Vereeniging tot bevordering van het Onderwijs op Curaçao (Report, 1902-1904)* [Curaçao, 1904]. The three Jews on the committee were Haim Cohen Henriquez, vice president; the Reverend Moise L. Leao Laguna, secretary, and the attorney Dr. Gabriel Pinedo, commissioner.

39 Exactly: *Algemeen Nederl. Verbond*. Its bylaws of 11 pages were printed in Curaçao in 1905. The Jewish founders were A. Alvares Correa, Moses S. L. Maduro and Edward S. Lansberg.

Jewish participation in these societies was motivated primarily by the sincere desire to see Curaçao develop itself not only commercially, but culturally as well.

LIBRARIES

The Curaçoan Jews, like the other inhabitants of the island, did not produce authors or poets of note. With few exceptions, most of the good books about Curaçao were written by foreigners. The warm climate on the one hand and the absence of a truly intellectual atmosphere on the other suppressed any desire that a planter or merchant might have had to study in his free time. And for the same reasons there was a dearth of private libraries in Curaçao. Between 1756 and 1864 less than a handful left sizable libraries on their death:

1. Mordechay de Jeudah Senior, 1756, a thousand books, more or less, in different languages.[40]
2. Dr. Benjamin de Solas, 1817, nine boxes of books (which he had brought from Holland a year earlier).
3. Haim Abinun de Lima, 1833, 391 books.[41]
4. Abraham H. de Meza, 1846, 294 books.

Obadia da Costa (d. 1851) had offered for sale a fine collection of English books in 1821.[42]

Several members of the Curiel, Jesurun, De Sola and De Marchena families also owned libraries.

Only in 1842 when the Protestant C. Gorsira[43] decided to rent books from his private collection to book lovers, did Curaçao have its first "public" library. It was called the Lees-Bibliotheek. In general, as late as 1904, "buyers of books in Curaçao were rare."[44]

AUTHORS

Curaçao has produced the following writers in addition to the rabbinic authors mentioned in earlier chapters.

[40] OAC 873, no. 3, Dec. 22, 1756.

[41] OAC 1563, no. 157; OAC 1129, no. 9; CEOE, no. 214.

[42] CGA, Not. Acts, June 19, 1846; y. 1847, no. 202; *CC*, July 21, 1821.

[43] *CC*, Feb. 12, 1842. Besides Gorsira, the following non-Jews left books on their death, the last two, valuable ones: Petronella Elizabeth Coerman, dowager of the deceased Count de Larrij, 243 volumes (CEOE 799, nos. 37-42), Mathias Erasmus van der Dijs in 1859, and Caspar Lodwijk van Utrecht in 1862 (CGA, Not. Acts, 1859, no. 100; 1862, no. 159).

[44] H. P. N. Muller, *Door het Land van Columbus* (Haarlem, 1905), pp. 445-46.

"THE POET"

A Jew who lived in Curaçao in 1697.[45]

YEOSUAH DE JACOB NAAR (1745-1812)

1. "Fundamentos de la cristiandad implican a la razón natural, y a la sagrada escritura," a 23-page dissertation in manuscript.
2. A treatise[46] written between 1792-94 attempting to prove that the Messiah would come in 1806 and that the city of Jerusalem would be rebuilt in 1808.

Naar[47] died while president of the community, leaving, among others, several manuscripts to his son Jacob. The latter presented three to Haham Chumaceiro who eventually turned them over to the Ets Haim Library (page 358).

GABRIEL DE ABRAHAM PINEDO

1. *Oorlogs-Contrabande*,[48] a thesis presented to the Law Faculty, University of Amsterdam, in 1882. In the preface Pinedo promised to return to Curaçao and work for the future and prosperity of the colony. This he actually did.

ABRAHAM MENDES CHUMACEIRO

The son of Haham Aron M. Chumaceiro, born November 16, 1841, in Amsterdam. He arrived at Curaçao with his father in 1856 and in 1862 married Abigail de Josiau Lopez Henriquez. After having been an accountant, merchant and owner of a printing shop,[49] he studied law. Without doubt, he was the greatest lawyer of Curaçao in his day. He fought energetically for the island's progress and even advocated the teaching of Papiamento in the schools.[50] We know of his following publications:

1. A patriotic discourse delivered in Coro in 1866 on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the Dutch repossession of Curaçao.
2. *Het Eiland Bonaire* (The Hague, 1867), a study on Bonaire, an island in the Dutch West Indies.

[45] According to David Levy Mendes' letter to his brother Manuel Duarte, Nov. 8, 1697 (Ets Haim Library).

[46] According to a catalogue of the "De Castro Collection of Books" sold in Amsterdam in April and May, 1899 (G. A. Kohout, "Judaica-Americana," *PAJHS* 9:149).

[47] For his epitaph, see Emmanuel, *Precious Stones*, pp. 405-6.

[48] Published in Amsterdam in 1882, 161 pp.

[49] CGA, Register of Business Houses, 1871.

[50] *CC*, Sept. 1, 1882.

3. *Lo que en Venezuela Llaman Partido Liberal Jusgado por si Mismo* (Curaçao, January, 1871), a pamphlet [by Chumaceiro] written anonymously. Jacob Rois Mendes, commercial chargé of Venezuela, sued Chumaceiro for having written, published and allowed this pamphlet attacking the Venezuelan government and Mendes personally, to be distributed. The judge Sol Cohen Henriquez petitioned the governor to be disqualified from judging the case. The Protestant Judge Muller, who took over, sentenced Chumaceiro to pay a fine of 200 florins and 50 florins' court costs.[51]
4. *Is Curaçao te Koop?* (The Hague, 1879), 32 pp. Chumaceiro opposed the sale of Curaçao and offered suggestions for its becoming self-supporting (page 413, note 9).
5. *Een Wanklank uit Curaçao* (The Hague, 1879), 44 pp. A pamphlet in defense of the English engineer J. Godden, an operator of the Santa Barbara phosphate mines, against the attacks of "Ego" (pseudonym of the Jewish lawyer, Dr. Edward Isaac van Lier).
6. *De Natuurlijke Hulpbronnen van de Kolonie Curaçao* (The Hague, 1879), 91 pp. Chumaceiro suggested that Curaçao should develop its natural resources in order to boost its economy.
7. *De Natuurlijke Hulpbronnen van de Kolonie Curaçao, Kritiek en Antikritiek* (The Hague, 1880), 88 pp. This was an answer to "Ego" and others who criticized the preceding pamphlet.
8. *Een Gevaar voor Onze Koloniale Begrooting* (Curaçao: International Printers, 1882), 16 pp. Chumaceiro opposed the reduction of certain export taxes the government was thinking of granting the Phosphate Company of Aruba.
9. *De Proef op de Som* (Curaçao: International Printers, 1884), 15 pp. This pamphlet is an amplification of the preceding number, more or less. It was translated into Spanish as *La Prueba de la Cuenta* (Curaçao, 1884), 20 pp.
10. *Aan Onze Mede — Aandeelhouders in de "Aruba Phosphaat Maatschappij" en het Publiek* (Curaçao: International Printers, 1884), 11 pp. This pamphlet [by Chumaceiro], written anonymously, attacked Van Lier in the affair of the Phosphate Company of Aruba. Van Lier, in turn, defended his point of view in an 18-page pamphlet.
11. *Een Ernstig Woord over een Ernstig Onderwerp* (Curaçao: Bethencourt & Sons, 1884), 31 pp. Chumaceiro deplored the lamentable state of public instruction and suggested an appreciable increase in the school budget in order to open several good schools.

[51] CGA, Rechtsbank, Penal Questions, 1871.

12. *Na een Langen Strijd* (Curaçao: Bethencourt & Sons, 1888), 7 pp. A funeral oration delivered November 2, 1888, on the death of Willem Pieter Maal.
13. *Eene te Haastige Tenuitvoerlegging van een Strafvonnis* (Curaçao: Bethencourt & Sons, 1891), 31 pp. This attacked Attorney General Sol Cohen Henriquez for his speedy execution of a penal sentence against the English ship *Curaçao*.
14. *Wie Heeft Beheerd? en Hoe is Beheerd?* (Curaçao: Commercial Printers, 1892), in quarto, 67 pp. A very interesting plea in connection with an inheritance suit brought by Jesurun Penso, Jacob Baiz and Julius Lopez Penha against their mother-in-law Abigail Henriquez (widow of Jacob Jeosuah Naar) and her son-in-law Herman Cohen Henriquez as administrator of the estate. Thanks to this plea, the following particulars are brought to light:
    a. The dowry brought by Abigail de José de Jacob Henriquez [in 1849] was 47,928.64 florins; with interest to 1892 it was evaluated at 86,606.77 florins.
    b. Each of Naar's daughters received a dowry of 8,000 florins.
    c. Naar left a fortune valued at the time of his death at 227,400 florins outside of the houses destroyed by the hurricane of 1877.
    d. Naar's real estate yielded a net profit of 8%.
    e. Naar left, among other properties, four plantations: Rondeklip, Jan Zout Vat, Popo and Coraal Patien valued at 50,000 florins.
    f. Naar's snuff factory was a veritable "gold mine." The manufacture of the snuff was a jealously kept family secret.

Chumaceiro's plea accused Herman Cohen Henriquez[52] of maladministration of the estate for personal gain. The trial caused quite a clamor in its time.

15. *Bij den Dood van David Lopez Penha Jr. — Een Brief aan Zijne Grijzen Vader* (Curaçao: Bethencourt & Sons, 1893), 15 pp. A eulogy delivered on the death of David L. Penha Jr. The Spanish translation[53] was printed by the same publishers the following year.
16. *Zal het Kiesrecht Curaçao tot het Kannibalisme Voeren?* (Curaçao: Bethencourt & Sons, 1895), 70 pp.[54] A reply to an article[55] by the Protestant historian and archivist J.H.J. Hamelberg who opposed universal suffrage in Curaçao.

[52] See above, p. 377.

[53] Communication of the late Jossy L. Maduro.

[54] For the benefit of the victims of the storm which struck Holland on Dec. 22, 1894. The same year this pamphlet was translated into Papiamento (71 pp.) by the Catholic Paul F. G. Curiel and printed at Curaçao's Oficina Marítima.

[55] In the November, 1894, issue of Amsterdam's *Vragen van den Dag*.

Hamelberg honestly believed that if universal suffrage were granted for the election of representatives to the Colonial Council, whose members up to that time were Crown appointees, the administration of the colony would be endangered. He considered two systems of election: 1) by a "propertied electorate" and 2) by an "electorate of the masses." Hamelberg assumed that under the first system the Jews, then some 850 souls and "the wealthiest of the population," might obtain a majority in the Colonial Council. Because the Jews "were usually merchants, not linked by ties of blood or history or tradition to the Netherlands," Hambelberg feared that they would not espouse the true interests of Curaçao. Under the second system, he felt that the colored population, being the overwhelming majority, would dominate the whites and "Curaçao would become a second Haiti."[56]

Chumaceiro defended Curaçoan Jewry, proving their attachment to Holland through several historic facts. He emphasized that the Jews also were plantation owners; that in 1894 the number of Jewish merchants and plantation owners equaled that of the non-Jewish merchants and plantation owners, 63 to 63.[57] He ardently defended the colored race whom he considered to be intelligent.[58] He ended his pamphlet with the proposition that every person paying a monthly rental of 25 florins for his apartment should have the right to vote.

Hamelberg answered this pamphlet with one of his own,[59] defending his position with the following arguments:

a. According to English historians, Negroes are inferior to whites.
b. There were only a few Jewish families in Curaçao who employed Dutch customs.
c. The Jew was three and one-half times richer than the Protestant and 68 times richer than the Catholic.[60]

He therefore recommended a Dutch administration which he considered neutral for the colony. While a Protestant, Hamelberg was sympathetic toward the Catholics and positively was not anti-Semitic. He wrote in 1895 what he honestly thought.

Nevertheless, history justified Chumaceiro who did not live to see the result of his campaign. (He died on August 19, 1902.) Not until 1937 did the Curaçoan people obtain the right to vote. At first it was restricted to men of certain categories, but in 1948 granted to all men and women. At the

[56] *Zal het Kiesrecht . . .*, p. 11 (Fortman, *WIG*, 1924-25, pp. 395-96).

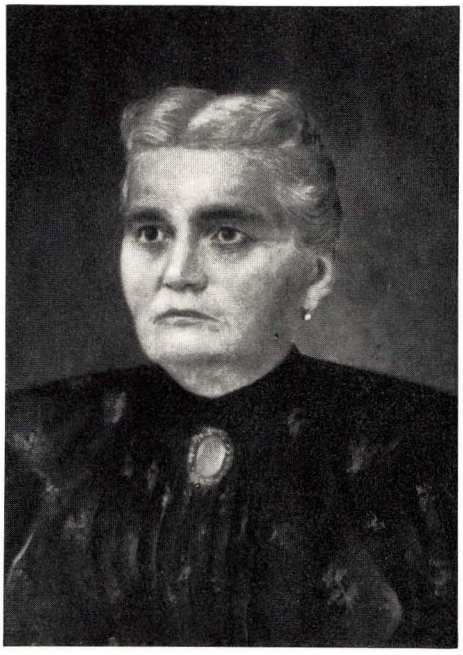
[57] Here Chumaceiro forgot the proportional representation. In 1894 there were about 850 Jews as against 2,500 Protestants and 23,400 colored Catholics in Curaçao.

[58] *Zal het Kiesrecht . . .*, pp. 24-31; 37-56.

[59] *Antiquarische Denkbeelden buiten "Antiquiteiten"* [Curaçao?, 1895], 53 pp.

[60] *Ibid.*, pp. 6-13, 20.

154. ABRAHAM M. CHUMACEIRO, 1841-1902, FAMOUS LAWYER WHO ADVOCATED UNIVERSAL SUFFRAGE



155. ABIGAIL LOPEZ HENRIQUEZ, 1844-1930, WIFE OF ABRAHAM M. CHUMACEIRO

ZAL HET KIESRECHT
CURAÇAO
TOT HET KANNIBALISME
VOEREN?

DOOR

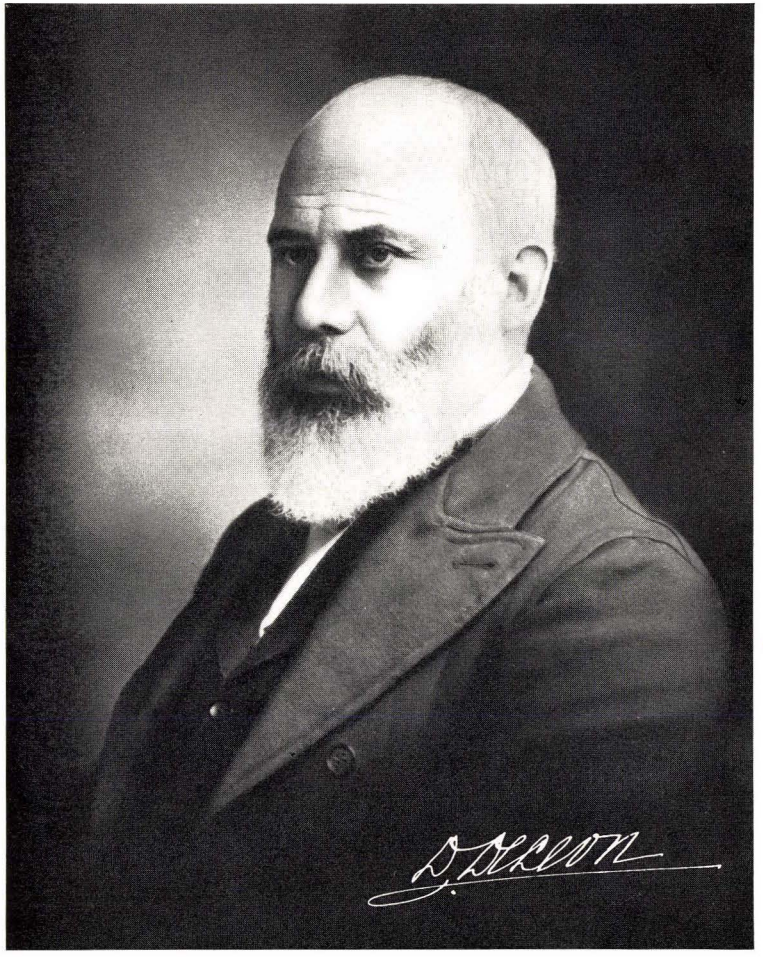
A. M. CHUMACEIRO Az.

UITGEGEVEN TEN VOORDEELE VAN DE NOODLIJDENDEN DOOR DEN STORM, DIE DEN 22n. DECEMBER 1894 IN NEDERLAND GEWOED HEEFT.

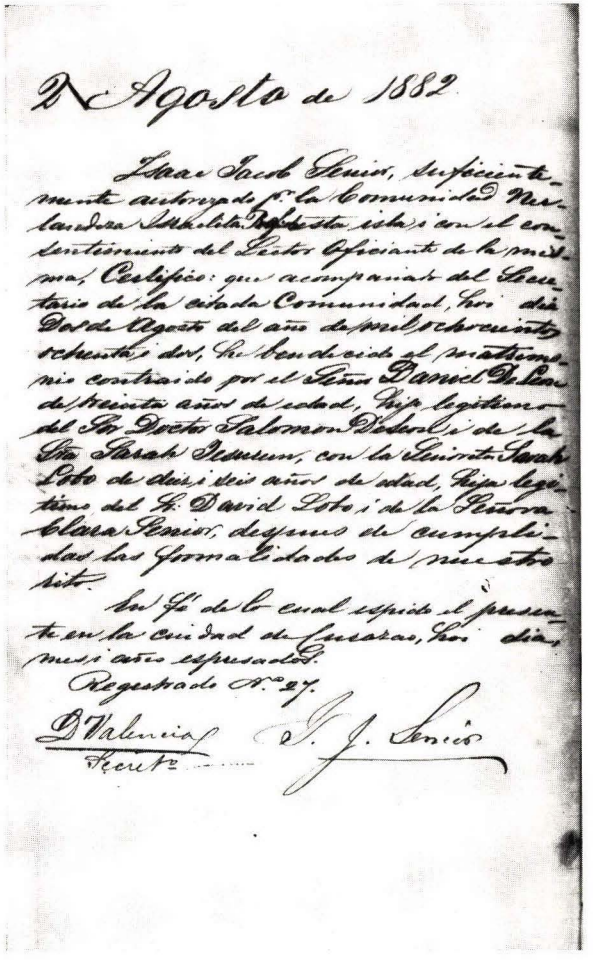
1895
DRUKKERIJ VAN A. BETHENCOURT EN ZOONEN.
CURAÇAO.

156. TITLE PAGE, ABRAHAM M. CHUMACEIRO'S PAMPHLET ADVOCATING UNIVERSAL SUFFRAGE, 1895

157. PLAQUE ON THE TOMBSTONE OF ABRAHAM M. CHUMACEIRO, PAGE 449



158. DANIEL DE LEON, A GREAT AMERICAN SOCIALIST (B. CURAÇAO, 1852; D. NEW YORK, 1914)



2 Agosto de 1882

Isaac Jacob Senior, suficientemente autorizado p.r la Comunidad Nerlandesa Israelita Reformista isla, i con el consentimiento del Lector Oficiante de la misma, Certifico: que acompañado del Secretario de la citada Comunidad, hoi dia Dos de Agosto del año de mil ochocientos ochenta i dos, he bendecido el matrimonio contraido por el Señor Daniel De Leon de treinta años de edad, hijo legitimo del Sor Doctor Salomon DeLeon i de la Sra Sarah Jesurun, con la Señorita Sarah Lobo de diez i seis años de edad, hija legitima del Sr. David Lobo i de la Señora Clara Senior, despues de cumplidas las formalidades de nuestro rito.

En fé de lo cual espido el presente en la ciudad de Curazao, hoi dia, mes i año espresados.

Registrado N.o 27.

D. Valencia
Secret.o

I. J. Senior

159. MARRIAGE RECORD OF DANIEL DE LEON AND SARAH DE DAVID LOBO AT THE JEWISH REFORM COMMUNITY, CURAÇAO, 1882

opening of the first session of the Legislative Chamber in 1938, a tribute was paid to Chumaceiro's memory. On that occasion this author, as rabbi of the community, was invited to speak in the presence of the newly-elected deputies before the grave of this great friend of Holland and Curaçao. Upon Chumaceiro's tombstone these gentlemen placed a marble plaque bearing this inscription:

> At the opening of the Legislative Chamber, the population of Curaçao respectfully commemorates the very noble gentleman Abraham Mendes Chumaceiro, son of Aron, ardent promoter of universal suffrage for this domain. Curaçao, April 5, 1938[61] (illus. 156-157).

Governor P. Kasteel later named a street in honor of Chumaceiro.

In addition to his pamphlets, Chumaceiro published numerous articles in various newspapers of Curaçao and Holland, and especially in his own journals.

EDWARD ISAAC VAN LIER

Born in Amsterdam on December 24, 1842, Lier received his doctorate in law in June, 1865. He arrived in Curaçao in 1875 and a year later married Sara Salomon.[62] He wrote several pamphlets on problems confronting Curaçao under his pen name "Ego." He died in 1906.

DANIEL DE LEON

Daniel, one of the shining stars of the American Socialist Movement, was born in Curaçao on December 14, 1852, to Dr. Salomon de Leon[63] and his wife Sarah de Moses A. Jesurun. He received his early education in Curaçao. Like the other children of the Jewish community, he also attended the religious school where Hazzan Santcroos taught. Since his father left the island about 1857, Daniel was brought up under the guidance of his mother and his uncle, the attorney Dr. Anjel Jacob de Moises Jesurun. In 1866, a year after his father's death, Daniel was sent to Hildersheim to continue his studies. Later, he attended a gymnasium in Amsterdam and subsequently the University of Leyden where he received his Master's Degree and eventually his Ph. D. in 1872.

Though prepared to follow an attorney's career in Curaçao, Daniel left for New York where his mother's kin resided. There he taught Latin, Greek and mathematics. He also took courses at Columbia Law School from where

[61] "Bij de opening der Staten herdenkt de bevolking van Curaçao eerbiedig den Weledelgestrengen Heer Abraham Mendes Chumaceiro Az. vurigen voorstander van het kiesrecht voor dit gebiedsdeel. Curaçao, 5 April 1938" (illus. 157).

[62] CGA, Marriages, 1876.

[63] See above, pp. 428-29.

he was graduated with honors in 1878 as Doctor of Laws. That year he received prizes in international and constitutional law and was thereupon appointed lecturer on international law at Columbia College. He held this chair for two successive three-year terms and soon attained a professorship at Columbia. Somehow he found time to practice law in New York City at 132 Nassau Street even before his marriage in 1882.[64] His entrance into the labor movement in 1886 and his support of Henry George for mayor were causes for his severance from Columbia. In 1889 he joined the Socialist Labor Party and became one of the creators of the socialist philosophy. Nicolai Lenin declared that De Leon's ideas "of an industrial state are in advance of Karl Marx's theories." In 1902 De Leon was a candidate for governor of New York State, but was not elected.

In his early years De Leon was accompanied everywhere by his mother who sold all her belongings in Curaçao for his benefit. (His brothers Morris and Anjel had died, Morris in 1857 at eight years and Anjel at 14 months during the epidemic of 1863.)[65] She had shared with her brothers and sisters (Anjel Jacobo, David, Esther, Delia, Amalia Abigail, and Roselina Rachel) in the large fortune left by her father Moises de Abraham Jesurun[66] to her mother Lea Senior on his death July 14, 1853.

De Leon returned to Curaçao when he was about thirty. On August 2, 1882, he married Sarah, the 16-year-old daughter of David Salomon de David Lobo and Clara de Jacob Senior.[67] The wedding took place at the home of the bride's maternal uncle Dr. Isaac Jacob Senior (page 429), who performed the ceremony with the authorization of the Dutch Jewish Reform Community and their Hazzan Moises Salas.[68]

64 When he married in 1882, he told the clerk at the Marriage Bureau in Curaçao that he was an "attorney at law" by profession (CGA, Marriages, Aug. 2, 1882). He was still practicing law in 1884 (ADJRC, Legajo no. 27, Documentos Varios, 1884).

65 MIA, Death Register, 1857; CGA, Death Register, 1863.

66 Captain of the Reserve Land Force and District Chief. Moses A. Jesurun, by his will of April 30, 1822, which was modified on July 4, 1853 (CGA, Not. Acts, 1853, II, no. 53), bequeathed his entire estate to his wife whom he considered his sole heir. Among the properties he left were the Ste. Marie or Rif plantation of 714 hectares with 69 slaves (40 men and 29 women), 87 horn beasts, 352 sheep, 254 goats, 48 asses, five bulls, etc. Lea sold this plantation to her son Anjel Jacobo Jesurun for 52,600 florins (CGA, Transport, 1855, nos. 3, 6).

67 Senior was a member of the Colonial Council from 1855 to 1856. David, a brother of the bride, was the Dr. Lobo who founded the Lobo Clinic in Caracas.

68 ADJRC, Marriage Register, no. 27. The *ketubah* was signed by Dr. Isaac J. Senior and David Valencia, secretary of the Reform community. The witnesses to the civil marriage were De Leon's maternal uncles Dr. Anjel Jesurun and his brother David; the bride's maternal uncles Dr. I. J. Senior and his brother David (CGA, Marriages, 1882).

This was not a happy marriage. De Leon, who in his theories and activities had attempted to bring happiness to thousands of human beings, brought unhappiness first to his mother and then to his wife. He who had undertaken the gigantic task of creating industrial unionism in the United States did not succeed in caring for his own family. As a bachelor he had paid an annual tax of 3.50 florins to the Dutch Jewish Reform Community of Curaçao. After his marriage this sum, certainly with his authorization, was increased to five florins. As he was derelict in his payment, he was politely requested to clear up his debt since contributions to his congregation were entirely voluntary. Unable to pay this modest sum, De Leon was forced to resign.[69] This incident must have chagrined his mother immensely, she who at one time was among the most active women in the community.[70] She was exasperated with him for having sacrificed his family and fortune for the Socialist Movement. Before her end she expressed the desire to be buried in Curaçao beside her husband without Daniel's knowledge. This was actually done.

De Leon's complete devotion to the Socialist cause and economic pressures did not make for harmonious relations with his wife. They worsened when he banished his son Solon[71] from the house for denouncing the Socialist Party in order to obtain a teaching assignment at Columbia College. Shortly before his death, De Leon voiced regret for having sacrificed his wife[72] for the Party. His earnings as Party editor amounted to twelve dollars a week and eventually to thirty dollars. He never requested compensation for his lectures. When he passed away, the Party owed him $3,500.[73] He died poor leaving a name — despite his advanced theories for that period — which honors Curaçoan Jewry.

De Leon was a prolific writer of labor articles. In 1891 he was editor of *The People*, a Socialist newspaper; from 1900 until his death in 1914, editor of *The New York Daily People*.

In addition to numerous articles which cannot be included within the scope of this work, he translated into English various sociological and economic works by European authors. The most important of these are Eugene Sue's *Mysteries of the People*, *The Pocket Bible*, *The Carpenter of Nazareth* and *The Pilgrim's Shell*. He also translated and annotated Ferdinand August Bebel's *Woman under Socialism* (New York, 1904), the best translation extant.

69 Letter of June 30, 1884 (ADJRC, Legajo no. 22, 1879, and no. 27, Documentos Varios, 1884).

70 In 1867 she organized a collection among the women for the construction of Temple Emanu-El (ADJRC, Legajo no. 7, Correspondencia de diversos, 1867).

71 Solon de Leon was connected with Kittrell College, N.C.

72 In 1892 De Leon married the non-Jewess Bertha Canary who bore him five children.

73 C. Farina, *The New Review*, 1914, II, no. 7, pp. 390-99.

Little is known of De Leon's participation in Jewish life. His mother's influence and the memory of his Curaçoan Jewish community must have left a profound impression upon him. The outbreak of the Kishineff pogroms in 1903 led him to write "Anti-Semitism, its cause and cure." This study was published in 1921 by the National Executive Committee of the Socialist Labor Party in New York City as one of the answers to Henry Ford's anti-Semitic propaganda. De Leon set forth that the "Semitism" created by gentile theology is the cause of anti-Semitism:

> So long as a Jew is made a God, a Jewess the mother of God, another Jew the stepfather of God and . . . other Jews are worshiped as members of a nobility that surrounds the throne of the celestial temporal king . . . will there be "anti-Semitism," to wit, "Semitism."

De Leon made reference to Bernard Lazare's *Antisemitism — History and Causes* (Paris, 1892). Like Lazare, De Leon too did not believe in a pure Jewish race and maintained that only socialism could resolve the problem of anti-Semitism. But he did not share Lazare's insistence on the disappearance of the Christian religion[74] although he considered it to be the chief cause of anti-Semitism.

He wrote his study at a time when anti-Semitism was supported by the French clerical party and the Russian pogroms were provoked by fanatics carrying the cross. The Christian religion, like the Jewish religion, will not disappear, and socialism has not resolved nor will resolve the problem of anti-Semitism. However, it is to be hoped that the heads of the churches will completely remove from their ritual passages that are hostile to the Jews, particularly those which do not conform to historical truth. The day when this noble modification is effected, the Church will merit a place of honor in the history of peace and human fraternity.

During those years the Po'alé Zion (Zionist Socialists) Movement was very active. De Leon opposed it because its chief aim was to restore a nationality incompatible with Socialism.[75]

De Leon died in New York City on May 11, 1914. The Socialist Labor Party still celebrates his birthday with special speeches. He is esteemed as

[74] In 1879 De Leon had a discussion with Felix Adler on whether or not the Jews should celebrate Christmas. At that time De Leon did not believe in the disappearance of Christianity. But he went so far as to advocate a union with the Christians on condition that the "idea of his [Jesus'] Jehovaship" would be repudiated (*New York Reformer and Times*, Feb., 1879, p. 5 [photostatic copy, courtesy Dr. Jacob R. Marcus, director American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati]).

[75] Arnold Petersen, *Daniel De Leon Internationalist* (New York, 1948), p. 19.

one of their great figures who gave a definitive philosophy to industrial socialism[76] (illus. 158, 159).

DAVID DARIO SALAS (1872-1937)

Novelist, poet and journalist, who also practiced as a pharmacist and optician in Curaçao (illus. 162).

1. *Luisa, la Marquesa de Lorentini*, also entitled *Por Capricho del Destino* (Curaçao: Bethencourt, 1890), a drama which, according to the *Home Journal* of October 15, 1890, was Salas' "first composition."
2. *Los Escollos* (Curaçao, 1911), a drama in verse in three acts.
3. *Josefina* (Curaçao, 1899; 3rd ed., Barcelona, 1930), a novel.
4. *Raul* (Curaçao [?]; 3rd ed., Barcelona, 1952), a novel.
5. *In Memoriam, a mi Madre* (Curaçao: Bethencourt, 1895), poems.
6. *Rimas* (Curaçao, 1911). These poems were dedicated, among others, to Abraham Z. Lopez Penha, p. 16; David de Marchena, p. 17; Moises Curiel, p. 28; David M. Chumaceiro, p. 63.
7. *La Lucha de una Madre* [Curaçao (?), 1911].
8. "Azul y Negro," a collection of short stories.
9. "Páginas del Corazón," poems.
10. "Curaçao, its History, Character and Customs."[77]

The last three works remain in manuscript. Salas also was editor or otherwise associated with five periodicals of Curaçao. In appreciation of his writings, the Venezuelan government decorated him with the Medal of Public Instruction, and with the Medal of the Liberator, 3rd and 5th class. He died on August 22, 1937. Grateful Curaçao has named a street in his memory.

The second half of the 19th century saw a number of Curaçoan Jews, or children of theirs born or living abroad, distinguish themselves in prose and especially in poetry.

DAVID DE HAIM LOPEZ PENHA JR. (1846-1893)

Consul of the Netherlands at Barranquilla. He published among other works:

[76] *Who's Who in America, 1914-15*, p. 617; Olive M. Johnson, *Daniel de Leon, American Socialist Pathfinder* (New York: New York Labor News Co., 1923 [Socialist Labor Party]). David Herreshoff, "Daniel de Leon: The Rise of Marxist Politics," in Harvey Goldberg's *American Radicals* (New York, 1957), pp. 199-215. For works on De Leon, see Herreshoff, *ibid.*, p. 215. Most of De Leon's publications are listed in the Library of Congress Catalogue under "Deleon, Daniel."

[77] According to a list of his works appearing on the last page of his novel *Josefina*.

1. *Los Israelitas y sus Detractores* (Barranquilla, 1875), a 19-page pamphlet.
2. *Los Genios* (Barranquilla: Imprenta Americana, 1880), 61 pp., his Spanish translation of Victor Hugo's *William Shakespeare*.

ABRAHAM Z[ACHARIAS]. LOPEZ PENHA

Born in 1865, Abraham (brother of the preceding author) settled in Barranquilla. In 1893 he published the *Revista Azul*, a monthly literary review. He wrote poetry not only in Spanish, but in English and French as well.[78]

1. *Cromos* (Paris, 1894), a work of prose and verse.[79]
2. *Camila Sanchez*.[80]
3. *La Desposada de una Sombra*.[80]

DAVID MENDES CHUMACEIRO

1. *Crisálidas* (Curaçao, 1898), a collection of poems with a prologue by Benjamin Abraham Jesurun.
2. *En la Festividad de sus Natales*, a poem dedicated to Queen Wilhelmina of the Netherlands in 1893. It was reprinted in Curaçao's monthly review *Miniaturas*, August, 1926.
3. Prologue to the well-known poet Adolfo A. Wolfschoon's *Poesias*, in 1894.

Besides his interest in poetry, Chumaceiro was a noted philatelist. In a local newspaper he announced the publication of his *Guía de Filatelistas*, a study of all the philatelic publications of Central and South America.[81]

SAMUEL COHEN HENRIQUEZ (1845-1907)

Brother of Sol Cohen Henriquez, known for his poems in Dutch often published in honor of Queen Wilhelmina.

ABRAHAM DANIEL JESURUN (1839-1918)

Specialist in Papiamento. His studies appeared in the first and second publications of the *Historical Society of Curaçao* (Amsterdam, 1897, pp. 95-100; 1898, pp. 75-102). See above, pages 411-12; illus. 137-138).

[78] For example, *Revista Azul*, pp. 134-35, 139.

[79] According to *Revista Azul*, pp. 116-17; *Las Tres Américas*, no. 20, New York, 1894; *Habana Elegante*, no. 32, Aug. 12, 1894. The last two newspapers printed photographs of Penha with a biographical sketch (illus. 160).

[80] Communication of the late Jossy L. Maduro.

[81] *El Correo del Caribe*, Curaçao, March 10, 1892.

BENJAMIN ABRAHAM JESURUN (1867-1936)

His poetry appeared in various papers. He wrote the biographical sketch accompanying the poems he published of the Curaçoan Catholic poet J. S. Corson (Nijmegen, 1914). See illus. 228.

ELIAS DE DAVID CURIEL (1871-1924)

Born in Coro, Ven.; a descendant of the first Curiel who arrived in Curaçao in 1707. His poetry: "Apéndice Lirico," "Poemas en Flor," and "Musica Lirica," appears in a collection compiled by Luis Arturo Domingo as *Obras Poéticas* (Caracas, 1961).

ELIAS MORENO BRANDAO (1891-1943)

Los Privilegiados, Novela de Costumbres (Curaçao, 1915), 92 pp.

HERBERT MARIUS ALVARES CORREA

1. *The International Controls of Public Finances, a Treatise of International Law* (Amsterdam, 1926), 200 pp.
2. *The Alvares Correa Family of Curaçoa and Brazil, a Genealogical Study* (The Hague [1965]). I do not believe that Catharina Alvares Correa who is buried in Bahia's Holy Grace Church is related to the Alvares Correa family of Livorno-Curaçao. It is my impression that the Alvares Correa family originally was Alvares. (See appendix 17, "Alvares Correa.")

EMILIO LOPEZ HENRIQUEZ (1885-1967)

1. *Comentarios del Reglamento de la Comunidad Neerlandesa-Portuguesa "Mikvé Israel"* (Curaçao, 1919). Lopez Henriquez contended that the parnassim's interpretation of the communal laws did not apply in his father David's case.
2. *Aclaraciones Convenientes* (Curaçao, 1920). Correspondence exchanged between David L. Henriquez and the parnassim of the Mikvé Israel relative to his communal tax arrears. Emilio upholds his father's stand.
3. *Añoranzas de una Vida Meritoria* (Amsterdam, 1937), 52 pp. A biography of Rebecca Cohen Henriquez and her activities in Club Entre Nous.
4. *Album-Guía Curazao* (Curaçao, 1946), 91 pp. An illustrated tourist guide with historical facts on Curaçao.
5. "Síntomas Etnológicos Curazoleños," a study published in *Geschiedkundige Opstellen* (Curaçao, 1943), pp. 79-92, listing various poets, writers and artists of Curaçao from 1870 to 1943.

In addition to these writers there are several authors of doctoral theses and short studies published from 1860 to our time. Subjects related to the Jewish religion, Judaism or Jewish history are limited.

Anjel J. Jesurun[82] translated S. Cahen's small work of a moral, religious nature from French into Spanish (Caracas, 1845 [70 pp. in 16mo]; 2nd ed., Curaçao 1896). This he prefaced with an introduction to Jewish history under the heading: "Elementary Principles of Religion and Moral Instruction."

Raquel Curiel translated Henry Loeb's small work of religious instruction into Spanish as *El Sendero de la Fé* (Curaçao, 1911), 47 pp.

Mauricio Namias de Crasto translated a French work on Dreyfus into Spanish as *Las Pruebas de la Inocencia de Dreyfus* (Curaçao: Bethencourt, 1898), 32 pp., and wrote the prologue.

The late Jossy M. L. Maduro published a study about the Jews of Curaçao, "De Portugeesche Joden in Curaçao," *Gedenkboek Nederland-Curaçao* (Amsterdam, 1934), pp. 69-78; also, a genealogical study on the Levy Maduro family published by A.J.C. Krafft in *Historie en Oude Families van de Nederlandse Antillen* (The Hague, 1951), pp. 100-18, in folio.

Isaac Jessurun Cardozo published a 40-page pamphlet, *Oldest Synagogue in the New World* [Curaçao, 1951; 2nd ed., 1955].[83]

NEWSPAPERS AND JOURNALISTS

Journalism in Curaçao was such a grossly underpaid, thankless profession that it is surprising to see the active participation of Jews in the printing, editing or direction of the papers that merit mention.[84]

1. *Shemah Israel* — a Spanish paper, more polemical than informative, put out by the reformists' El Porvenir Society on the average of every forty days. Editor-in-chief, Abraham H. J. Cohen Henriquez; printers, the non-Jews A.L.S. Muller and J. F. Neuman of the *Curaçaosche Courant*. The first issue came out on January 29, 1864; the twelfth and last, on May 30, 1865. It stopped when the Reform community was founded whereupon the editor published a table of contents. It was the second newspaper to appear in Curaçao since the weekly of 1812, *The Curaçao Gazette*. Format, $22\frac{1}{2}$ cm. × 13 cm., eight to sixteen pages.

[82] With Isidoro R. Arcay he translated into Spanish both volumes of Alexandre Dumas' *Memoirs of a Physician* (Caracas, 1847).

[83] Much of the data in this booklet is not accurate and should be consulted cautiously.

[84] We have made use of Johan Hartog's *Journalistiek Leven in Curaçao* (Nijmegen-Utrecht, 1944), adding new numbers and completing certain information.

160. ABRAHAM Z. LOPEZ PENHA, POET AND JOURNALIST, 1885

161. MAURICIO NAMIAS DE CRASTO, 1879-1913, JOURNALIST

162. DAVID DARIO SALAS, 1872-1937, SPANISH POET AND WRITER

163. EMILIO LOPEZ HENRIQUEZ, 1885-1967, NOTED JOURNALIST

164. "THE QUINTETTE" READING CLUB, ABOUT 1898. FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: ELEANOR DE LIMA, ELEANOR DE JONGH-SALAS, ANITA DE SOLA, REBECCA DE JONGH, AMY GOMES CASSERES-CAPRILES

165. HAIM ABRAHAM SENIOR, 1851-1941, JOURNALIST AND ASSISTANT CANTOR

166. MOSES MICHAEL PINEDO, 1878-1945, NOTED JOURNALIST

2. *Reid y Engordad* — a humorous sheet in Spanish edited in 1864 by Dr. David Ricardo Capriles in response to the *Shemah Israel*.[85]
3. *Noticioso* — a Spanish weekly directed against Guzman Blanco, president of Venezuela. Edited and printed by Abraham Mendes Chumaceiro in his own printing shop in 1870.
4. *De Onpartijdige* — A Dutch weekly appearing every Thursday from October 6, 1870 to July 16, 1871. Edited by Abraham Mendes Chumaceiro and published by the non-Jew A. J. Pijpers until his death on August 25, 1871, when Chumaceiro took over. It was printed at the Commerce Print Shop[86] owned by Chumaceiro and Isaac Osorio Jr. See no. 6.
5. *The Impulse* — "a [weekly] journal of news and literature" from October 2, 1871 to February 12, 1872. Edited by Daniel de Sola.
6. *El Imparcial* — a Spanish weekly, successor to no. 4 above, from July 22, 1874 to May 5, 1916. First printed at El Imparcial and later at the Imprenta del Comercio. Editor-owner in 1874, José R. Henriquez (a half-Jew) until the following year when Jesurun Penso became co-editor and, after Henriquez's death, sole editor. Abraham Chumaceiro was one of its regular contributors at this time. *El Imparcial* became a bi-weekly in 1890 when Haim Moises Penso took charge of the paper with Jesurun Penso.[87] On the latter's death on November 28, 1894, Haim Penso (for many years secretary of the Mikvé Israel community) remained as sole editor until he passed away on February 12, 1912. After the week of mourning, the journal was published under the direction of Abraham David Capriles and Elias Moreno Brandao.[88] Ten months later Benjamin A. Jesurun replaced them and continued until 1915 when E. Moreno Brandao took charge up to its suspension on May 5, 1916. Format, grand folio, in four pages.*
7. *El Semanario del Hogar* — "a literary periodical [in Spanish] dedicated to the family." Published and edited by Haim de Abraham Senior (1851-1941) four times a month from February 8, 1884 to December 19, 1885.

[85] John de Pool, p. 239; *CC*, Oct. 29, 1864.

[86] *CC*, Oct. 8, 1870. Originally owned by Chumaceiro, the printing shop became known as "Handelsdrukkerij" when he went into partnership with Osorio on April 1, 1871. Chumaceiro put up two-thirds of the capital of 2,500 florins. He took care of correcting the proofs and publishing the Dutch weekly in the printing shop while Osorio occupied himself with the administration of the business. Both partners had the right to draw 75-100 florins monthly (CGA, Register of Business Houses, 1871).

[87] *Home Journal*, April 15, 1890.

[88] *Curaçao*, Feb. 20, 1912.

* P. M. Sasso, editor of *La Industria*, published about 1879, was not Jewish.

Format, 28 cm. × 22 cm., in eight pages. The accompanying four-page supplement *Carátula* was distributed gratis to subscribers only. See no. 8.

8. *Carátula de El Semanario del Hogar* — cables, diverse news items and advertisements. Both papers were carefully printed at the editor's Excelsior Print Shop. Same format as *El Semanario*. See nos. 7 and 15.
9. *Express Office* — Curaçao's second daily,[89] a commercial paper. Published and edited by Josias P. Fidanque toward the end (?) of 1884.[90] See no. 11.
10. *El Cometa* — a Spanish paper published by (David) [Daniel] A. Cardozo[91] in 1885.
11. *Oficina Marítima* — a Spanish daily, printed on one side only, devoted to "port movement, cables and announcements," successor to no. 9. Published by Josias P. Fidanque in the beginning of 1885. The *Boletín de la Librería* of March 31, 1885, hailed it as "of great use for business" and announced that it had "enlarged its format from the first of the present month." In 1892 it was edited in the Phare de Curaçao print shop. In 1898 when the *Oficina Marítima* had its own print shop, the format was enlarged from 25 cm. × 34½ cm. to 38 cm. × 54 cm. After Fidanque's death in 1901, the publication passed to Arturo J. Fidanque and the non-Jew A. Hendrik Senior. It continued until 1902.
12. *El Cronista* — a Spanish bi-monthly of general interest first appearing on February 5, 1885. Edited by Daniel de Abraham Cardozo (1852-1898) for a short while and printed at El Ensayo. In its second issue of February 20, 1885, the editor suggested that the government give "a subvention to the paper that was vigilant . . . for the good of our country." Format, 31½ cm × 22½ cm., in four pages.
13. *El Progreso* — a Spanish paper appearing three times a month; devoted to literature, business and advertising. Editor-owner, Mauricio Pinedo; printer, El Ensayo. The second number came out March 17, 1885.[92] Format, 31½ cm. × 22½ cm., in four pages.
14. *El Observador* — a Spanish paper (and occasionally in Papiamento also)

[89] The first was *El Diario* by †Guillermo Ernst, initially appearing in November, 1884.

[90] W. Hoyer stated in *La Prensa* of April 9, 1934, that the publisher was Abraham Namias de Crasto, editor of a paper of the same name in Aruba in 1874. While it is possible that Fidanque took over De Crasto's paper, the two papers may not be identical. John de Pool spoke of the Curaçao paper in this fashion: "I also recall the 'Express Office' of the Fidanque brothers. This Journal was purely commercial" (p. 125).

[91] According to Hartog (*ibid.*, p. 34), but the name must be *Daniel* Abraham Cardozo, the same as the editor of no. 12.

[92] The paper must have made its debut on March 7, 1885. Its appearance was hailed by the *Boletín de la Librería* of March 31, 1885. It is difficult to ascertain whether this paper still existed in 1907, in which event *El Progreso* would have been 22 years old in 1907 and not 16 as stated by the *Amigoe*

appearing on the 5th, 15th and 25th of every month; devoted to "commerce, politics, literature, industries, announcements and advertising." Editor-publisher, Jacob de Isaac Moreno [Henriquez]; printer, El Ensayo. The first number appeared in May, 1886, in a format of 31½ cm. × 22½ cm., four pages. In December, 1886, the paper became a weekly, coming out every Tuesday. It was printed in folio at the International Printers. While not a pronounced friend of the Catholics, the editor occasionally published sympathetic notes on Catholic life in Curaçao, e.g., the December 14, 1886, issue. See nos. 24 and 26.

15. *Notas y Letras* — Curaçao's then most important literary and beaux arts weekly in Spanish to which prominent writers[93] of the neighboring countries contributed articles; successor to Haim Senior's no. 7. Editor, Haim Senior; directors, the non-Jews J. S. Corsen and E. H. Romer. The first issue appeared on July 3, 1886; the last, in January, 1888. Pages 294-96 of the paper carry the waltz "Pensée" composed by Abraham M. Capriles and dedicated to his friend Abraham Z. Lopez Penha. Format, 28 cm. × 22 cm., in eight pages.
16. *La Tira* — a supplemental sheet to *Oficina Marítima*, no. 11, with the same editors. The first number appeared between January 7 and January 13, 1887, and was lauded by *El Imparcial* of January 14, 1887.
17. *Home Journal* — a bi-monthly in English "published by the Young Men's Hebrew Association of Curaçao." Edited by the Reverend Joseph Haim Mendes Chumaceiro[94] from November 18, 1889 to January 15, 1891, and printed at Bethencourt & Sons. The only Jewish review which the community had up to that day, it was truly instructive and free from parnassim influence. From time to time it carried articles in Spanish contributed by D. Dario Salas and Benjamin A. Jesurun, and in English by one M. C. [Moises Curiel?]. Format, 25½ cm. × 17½ cm., regularly in eight pages (illus. 126,130).
18. *Boletín del Hotel del Comercio* — a hotel newsette in Spanish providing "all information to the traveling public . . . articles of literary merit" thrice monthly.[95] Edited by Abraham Salas,[96] "supervised by the proprietor of

di Curaçao of September, 1907, unless reference was made to another paper of the same name. W. Hoyer, *ibid.*, mentioned another *El Progreso* edited by J. de Jongh from 1890-1913, which must not be confused with ours.

[93] John de Pool, *ibid.*

[94] About Chumaceiro as hazzan and preacher, see above, pp. 403-405, 408-410.

[95] Since we possess no. 42 of the second year, dated Nov. 24, 1891.

[96] In 1885 a certain Isaac Salas, born in Curaçao, was editor of the *Trinidad Chronicle* (*El Cronista*, Curaçao, Feb. 20, 1885).

the hotel, Jorge I. Salas," and printed at Bethencourt & Sons. Its first number, October 15, 1890, was lauded by the *Home Journal* of the same date. Format, 35 cm. × 25 cm., in four pages.

19. *El Correo del Caribe* — a Spanish monthly dedicated exclusively to philately.[97] Directors-administrators, David Mendes Chumaceiro and (?) De Lima; publishers, Bethencourt & Sons. The first issue appeared in January, 1891. Format, 35 cm. × 25 cm., in four pages.
20. *El Ganimedes de las Damas* — a literary paper in Spanish published by David Dario Salas from February, 1893 to 1904. See nos. 21, 25, 27 and 28.
21. *El Poema* — a bi-monthly literary review in Spanish. Edited in 1895-1896 by David Dario Salas and the non-Jews Ramón Ayala, Pancho Arvelo and John de Pool. Salas obviously was one of the directors since De Pool mentions him as the owner.[98]
22. *Diario del Comercio* — a Spanish daily, in folio, printed on one side only from January (?), 1897 to 1908. Editor-director, Mauricio Namias de Crasto; publisher, Bethencourt & Sons. In January, 1905, Abraham Namias de Crasto was the provisional editor. Format, 39 cm. × 54 cm. See no. 27 and illus. 161.
23. *El Clarín Americano* — a Spanish quarterly edited by Arnold J. Salas in 1897.
24. *El Zancudo* — a newspaper which appeared "once and more each week" in Spanish, and Papiamento mostly. Editor-publisher, Jacob Moreno of nos. 14 and 26; printer, El Zancudo. It first appeared in July (?), 1897. Format, 25 cm. × 18 cm. Circulation, 500 copies.
25. *La Patria Venezolana* — a Spanish paper appearing from 1898 to 1900. Editor, D. Dario Salas of nos. 20, 21, 27 and 28.
26. *Diario de Curaçao* — a Spanish daily directed by Jacob Moreno[99] of nos. 14 and 24, and printed by El Zancudo. It came out in June, 1902, in a format of $33\frac{1}{2}$ cm. × $40\frac{1}{2}$ cm. In October of that year the journal was printed on both sides while maintaining its folio format, only to return to a one-side sheet in a format of 41 cm. × 35 cm. in January, 1903.
27. *Boletín Comercial-Handelsblad* — a Spanish daily (rarely with anything in Papiamento) that appeared from August 1, 1908 to January 31, 1951.

[97] In the same period Chumaceiro & Co., traders in stamps and agents of philatelist publications, maintained offices at 173 Park Row, New York City, and at 565 North 11th Street, Philadelphia.

[98] "'El Poema' of a literary nature of Dario Salas" (De Pool, p. 125).

[99] A Venezuelan who settled in Curaçao poked fun at Editor Jacob Moreno of the *Diario de Curaçao*: "He had more papers than 'placas' that go into a florin" — the florin is divided into forty placas (*Venezuela ante el Conflicto con las Potencias Aliadas, 1902-1903*, II [Caracas, 1905], p. 509).

Articles, contributed mainly by outsiders, were in Portuguese, Dutch and Spanish. Administrator, the non-Jew Pedro da Costa Gomez; publishers, Bethencourt & Sons. Though there is no mention of its first editor, he probably was a Jew since this paper was the successor to no. 22, the *Diario del Comercio* of Mauricio Namias de Crasto. Later, D. Dario Salas edited the *Boletín* until 1933 when Moses Michael Pinedo bought the paper and took over the editorship. Isaac Bloch became co-editor in 1937, attaining full editorship in 1940. After Pinedo's death in 1945, his son Michael Herbert Pinedo remained in possession of the printing shop while Abraham Cohen Henriquez took charge of the paper. For a certain period Mrs. Deborah Beatrix Salas de Samuel De Sola worked in the editing department. Although the editors and most of the readers were Jews, this paper did not publish more Jewish news than any other paper of Curaçao. In fact, the *Boletín* was so neutral that it avoided printing articles of proper depth. Circulation: 600 copies, the same as the non-Jewish daily *La Prensa*.

28. *Iris* — a Spanish literary and recreational publication that appeared from March 11, 1910 to 1911. Editor, D. Dario Salas. See nos. 20, 21, 25 and 27.
29. *Bulletin of Wireless Messages* — founded in 1918. Managed by a non-Jew until its acquisition by Arturo Lopez Henriquez in February, 1923. It went out of existence the same year.
30. *La Esperanza* — a Spanish weekly in tabloid format that appeared from January, 1923 to the beginning of 1924. Editor-publisher, Emilio Lopez Henriquez, brother of Arturo of the preceding paper.
31. *De Schoolrevue* — monthly organ, in Dutch, of the Hendrik School put out by its students since October, 1925. Norman M. Chumaceiro and Richard Cohen Henriquez were two of the four student editors.
32. *La Prensa* — a Spanish daily founded in 1928. Emilio Lopez Henriquez, of nos. 30, 34 and 35, was its editor from 1940 to 1947 (illus. 163).
33. *Mensajero de Cinelandia y Roxy* — a bulletin in Spanish of the theaters' screen offerings. Edited since October 27, 1933, by the proprietors, mostly Jews, including the manager Alfred Moron Jr.
34. *El Amigo del Hogar* — a Spanish publication edited by Emilio Lopez Henriquez and printed by Tipografía Mercantil. It appeared in January,[100] 1934, and lasted barely a year. Format, 26 cm. × 19 cm., in 16 pages.
35. *La Tribuna* — a Spanish weekly of general interest, in folio, from August 11, 1934 to [August?], 1935. Editor-publisher, Emilio Lopez Henriquez of nos. 30, 32 and 34; printer, Imprenta Nacional.

[100] Since we have a copy of an article by Emilio L. Henriquez dated January, 1934.

36. *Elite* — a Spanish daily founded and edited by Freddy de Dario Salas. Published by Oscar and Max Salas in their Elite Print Shop from May 1, 1936 to October 3, 1936. See next number.
37. *Elite* — a Spanish monthly edited by Freddy Salas from November, 1936 until May, 1937.
38. *Sports* — a Spanish sports monthly from June, 1937 to January, 1938. Edited by Freddy Salas and printed at Elite Printers. See nos. 36 and 37.
39. *C[uraçaose]. S[port]. C[lub]. Praatje* — a bi-monthly in Dutch, Papiamento and English put out in 1939 by the Sporting Club of Curaçao whose members, for the most part, are Curaçoan Jews. Three of its five editors were Jews: René Moreno, Herbert and Oscar Salas. Printed at De Stad N.V.
40. *Mikvé Israel* — originally the monthly organ of the Dutch Portuguese Jewish Community "Mikvé Israel," in Dutch. Edited by Cantor Isaac Jn. Cardozo from March, 1940, with some interruption, until 1954. Printed by De Stad N.V., and after September, 1944, by Paulusdrukkerij.
41. *Daily Force* — an English and Spanish daily for the American Forces in Curaçao from February 8, 1942 (three days before the landing of troops in Curaçao) to July 31, 1944. Edited by Sergeant Harold Cohen until February 16, 1944, and from then on by Brummel S. Goodman until July 25, 1944, a week before the paper suspended publication. Printed at Paulusdrukkerij.
42. *Economische Berichten* — a government publication in Dutch printed at *De Curaçaosche Courant*. Edited by Eduard M. Elias from July, 1943 to June, 1944.
43. *Monthly Bulletin of Temple Emanu-El* — organ of the Dutch Jewish Reform Community. Since August, 1960, edited by Abram E. Salas, and from 1962 to August, 1963, by Rabbi Simeon Maslin.
44. *Mikvé Israel Congregation News* — weekly organ of the Mikvé Israel Congregation. Edited by Rabbi Moshe Aminé with the collaboration of Mrs. Rebecca Robles de Frank Delvalle from October, 1960 to August, 1963.
45. *Mikvé Israel-Emanuel* — monthly bulletin of the merged communities Mikvé Israel and Temple Emanu-El. Edited by Rabbi Maslin since September, 1963, and since May, 1967, by Rabbi Leo M. Abrami.
46. *Bulletin of the Community Shaarei Tzedek* — a bi-monthly bulletin of the Ashkenazic Congregation edited by Rabbi Dr. Menachem M. Fitterman, December, 1967 to June?, 1968 (illus. 301, 302).

In addition to these papers,[101] there were several which appeared in mimeograph form. Two of these involve Jews or concern Judaism: *Maduro News*, monthly organ of the employees of Maduro & Sons and Maduro & Curiel's Bank; and *Shomer Hanohar*, a bi-monthly in Dutch put out by the young men of Club Union, mostly Ashkenazim. Both appeared in 1944, the latter irregularly. The *Keren Kayemeth Bulletin*, a monthly of short duration, came out later.

Periodicals published in Aruba and edited by Jews include Abraham Namias de Crasto's *Express Office* of 1874, and Simson Vieyra's *Aruba Post* founded in 1938.

In general, the Jewish journalists, like most of their non-Jewish colleagues, were not professionals. The editors of *Shemah Israel* were amateurs. So were the following: Dr. Capriles, a very busy physician; Abraham M. Chumaceiro, a lawyer; Daniel de Sola, a schoolmaster; Jesurun Penso, a business agent; Haim Penso, a person of independent means; Daniel Cardozo, a tobacco manufacturer and real estate salesman; Haim Senior, printer and merchant; Jacob Moreno, owner of an "ice cream and confectionery store" (1885) before the publication of his papers; D. Dario Salas, pharmacist and optician; Abraham D. Capriles and Elias Moreno Brandao, merchants; Moses M. Pinedo, a cigarette manufacturer in 1898, and so forth. They wrote because journalism was stronger than themselves just as the prophets of Israel prophesied in spite of themselves. It is to their credit that they were objective, a quality very difficult to maintain in Curaçao. Rarely would they accept articles directed against Catholics or Protestants. Though his articles seem biased, Jacob Moreno was not a confirmed anti-Catholic. Jewish publishers and directors participated in local politics, but without passion. The *Shemah Israel* was virulent only when it concerned itself with Jewish life and the lawyer Chumaceiro in politics. Jewish newspapers have given more space than other papers to local Jewish matters and Jewish social life while maintaining their neutral character.

PRINTING

Although nothing in the old archives of Curaçao or in the inventories of decedents' estates (of Christians and Jews alike) definitely says so, there must have been a printing shop on the island in the second half of the 18th

[101] E. de Marchena, editor of *The Advertiser*, Curaçao-Aruba, 1932, was not a Jew.

century. The inventory of the estate of Jeosuah Guidon Mendes (d. 1797) listed among other belongings "a small printing press."[102] The Scotsman William Lee installed a printing shop in Curaçao in 1812. During the second half of the 19th century a number of printing houses burgeoned: the "Handelsdrukkerij" of Chumaceiro-Osorio; "El Imparcial" of Haim Moses Penso; the "Excelsior" of Haim Senior; the "Elite" of Oscar and Max Salas, and the printing plant of Arturo L. Henriquez, to mention a few. They were fairly good for their time. Outside of five booklets, including Dr. Angel Pulido's *Los Judios Españoles y su Idioma Castellano*,[103] the Jewish printers did not print books of Jewish interest.

The Jews kept up their journals, reviews, and the like, at great personal sacrifice. With circulation varying between 400 and 1,000 copies, it is small wonder that several papers of theirs (as well as of their non-Jewish colleagues) had an ephemeral existence. The government did not subsidize any newspaper although Daniel Cardozo did open the question. Therefore, it is all the more commendable that several editors, while harried by money problems, still managed to produce weeklies of incontestable literary merit. Special praise goes to Haim Senior for his *El Semanario del Hogar* (no. 7) and his *Notas y Letras* (no. 15), and to Dario Salas for his publications.

Indeed, the Curaçoan Jew made a substantial contribution to the Curaçoan press and exerted a considerable influence on the island's political and social life.

[102] OAC 997, no. 181.

[103] Edited by Haim Moises Penso; printed (with 13 words in Hebrew) at the Imprenta del Comercio in 1904, in quarto, 88 pp.

CHAPTER XXIII

JEWISH CONTRIBUTION TO THE GENERAL DEVELOPMENT OF CURAÇAO

DOWN THROUGH THE AGES, wherever they settled, the Jews contributed enormously to the economic and cultural development of the land. Seventeenth century Amsterdam, and Salonika up to 1917 — to mention only two Jewish centers — owed their prosperity in a large measure to the Sephardic Jews. From the time Samuel Cohen landed with the Dutch colonizers in 1634 and vainly dug for gold, little Curaçao has, to a marked degree, depended for her growth on Jewish energy, spirit of enterprise and capital. The Jews participated in practically every phase of the island's development.

AGRICULTURE

From the very outset the Jew engaged in farming[1] and in the course of time acquired most of Curaçao's choice plantations (appendix 2). Like his Protestant colleague, he found it a constant struggle to eke out a meager livelihood from the dry, rocky soil. In addition to garden vegetables, he tried cultivating sugar cane, cotton and tobacco, without much success. Some of his more persistent brethren doggedly continued with their costly, almost always fruitless, experiments as late as 1918. The last of these patient men included such "warriors" as Dr. Sol Cohen Henriquez (1897),[2] his nephew Anjel Cohen Henriquez (1907)[3] and Alfred Jesurun (1918). Several planters like Julius Lopez Penha devoted considerable time to experimenting with the culture of European fruit trees and cattle-raising (illus. 13, 222-223, 226-229).

Virtually "an arid rock beneath a copper sky," Curaçao has always had a water problem. Julius Lopez Penha tried to solve it by introducing modern, perfected windmills. For some these proved a boon. In 1888 Edward and Benjamin A. Jesurun installed several windmills on their Groot Kwartier and Joontje plantations. With a reserve supply of 42,000 gallons of water,

[1] See above, pp. 62-68.

[2] See page 67.

[3] *KV*, 1907. Anjel's father Samuel also made some experiments with aloe (H.P.N. Muller, *Door het Land van Columbus*, p. 427).

the Jesuruns could adequately water their livestock (600 sheep, 400 goats and 25 milk cows) and irrigate their 400 orange trees (employed in the manufacture of the famous "Curaçao Liqueur") and the divi-divi they exported to Germany and Holland.

In 1901 the Curaçoans founded a society for the encouragement of agriculture. Twenty-seven of its first 108 members were Jews. Three years later Haim J. Cohen Henriquez and the Jewish planters took a very active part in the Colonial Exposition of 1904 where they turned over their modest farming experiences for the benefit of all the planters.

THE "DE VREEDE" CORN MILL

A mill for grinding corn had been installed in Otrabanda, near "Contientie Stiegh," even before 1734. It was operated by the partners Isaac de Jacob Levy Flores and the non-Jew G. van Cales, the former holding a two-thirds' interest valued at over 6,462 pesos. They were required to pay the Dutch West India Company an annual tax of 300 pesos on the mill in addition to grinding corn for the soldiers of the garrison free of charge. Flores' share eventually passed on to his heirs, the children of Abigail Salomon and Jochem Alexander of Amsterdam, namely: David, Mordechay,[4] Salomon, Lion and Joseph Jochem Alexander. (At least two of Flores' heirs — Mordechay, and Joseph — settled in Curaçao.) Van Cales sold his one-third interest to Hendrick Barend Resthuijs who registered himself as sole owner of the mill. The Alexander brothers thus found themselves in deep difficulty and had to enlist the aid of the Island Council. In 1767 Resthuijs was finally compelled to furnish an accounting for the years 1751-1767. A year later he sold his interest to Abraham de Marchena, Isaac de Marchena, and Isaac de Abraham de Marchena.[5] The mill now was completely Jewish-owned.

The Marchena prosperity was short-lived. In 1786, if not earlier, hand-operated corn mills were making their appearance. These mills cut so deeply into their business that by 1793 the Marchenas were unable to meet the annual tax of 300 pesos. They petitioned Governor De Veer to let them appeal to the States General of Holland for a year's time within which to pay the tax arrears. At the same time, they demanded that the residents should be restricted to grinding corn for their personal use only. These hand mills, the Marchenas alleged, had caused them to sustain losses of 25,132:3 pesos. Nevertheless, within the twenty months prior to filing their plea, they had

[4] For his epitaph and biography, see Emmanuel, *Precious Stones*, pp. 348-49.

[5] OAC 906, Dec. 13, 1768.

ground 82,002 pounds of corn for the government. The governor granted the first part of their petition.

In spite of all their efforts, the Marchenas kept realizing less and less from their mill and had to stop operating it about the time of the English occupation. In 1819 the real estate records still showed the Marchenas as owners of a one-third part of the mill, which was assessed at a mere 600 pesos. As corn was the main staple of the slaves and population alike, the Marchenas and their predecessors had rendered a great service to the island for almost three quarters of a century.[6] (See illus. 38 for the location of this mill.)

PORT INSTALLATIONS

Curaçao is famous for its natural port. Yet, it was necessary to construct and fit it up with docks and drydocks for building and repairing ships. The Protestant Van der Meulen and the Catholic Foulke[7] did the spadework. It remained for Jacob A. Jesurun, Jacob Rois Mendes,[8] the American Consul L. B. Smith, and later the Maduros to enlarge their wharves for the accommodation of ocean-going vessels. Jesurun took the first step in this direction by extending his "De Wilde" wharf[9] (on the site of the military hospital of 1727) in 1843, and again in 1845.[10] After those operations he was able to build several ships. Evidently there must have been prodigious commercial and building activity to warrant Anjel J. Jesurun's renting Mrs. Mattey's wharf in 1861.[11]

Near these installations the Jesurun firm maintained a large coal depot in 1874 to fuel the ships. In the same period they also owned a dockyard equipped to repair up to ten ships at a time,[12] for which purpose they employed one

[6] WICA 218, March 3, 1758; WICA 478, pp. 67-69; WICA 591, pp. 235-36; OAC 135, no. 39; OAC 189, no. 37; OAC 852, no. 257; OAC 903, Sept., 1768; OAC 907, no. 31; OAC 1143, June 10, 1740; OAC 554, no. 132.

[7] On Oct. 19, 1790, Pierre Brion, father of Admiral Brion, paid 4,000 pesos to Stuylingh & Boudewyn Vos for a one-sixth interest in "een Klip of Timmerwerf in 't Schottegat besuyden de werf van wylen de wede Jan Kocks" (OAC 1092, no. 152). Brion may have acquired the other shares as well. When he died in 1799, his son-in-law Joseph Foulke inherited this drydock. Foulke still owned it in 1818 when it was assessed at 35,600 pesos (OAC 554, no. 651; CGA, Rooibrieven, July 4, 1809).

[8] CGA, Not. Acts, 1861, no. 88.

[9] According to two petitions presented to the governor on July 17 and Dec. 22, 1843, respectively, by Esther de Mozes Henriquez, widow of Abraham de Jacob Jesurun, "citizen and resident of this island" (CGA, Correspondence, Cadastre, 1843). See illus. 222.

[10] CGA, *ibid.*, document dated July 24, 1845.

[11] *CC*, Sept. 28, 1861.

[12] *El Imparcial*, Oct. 7, 1874.

hundred workmen. In 1887 the Jesuruns sold their two shipyards and two wharves, both "large" and "small," to Gorsira and Maal.

In 1901 S.E.L. Maduro & Sons purchased from the heirs of L. B. Smith the dock coal yard "Nieuwe Werf." It was equipped to supply up to 4,000 tons of coal monthly to ships touching Curaçao. As their dock was not adequate for their needs, they constructed another. It was officially inaugurated on September 3, 1913, as the "Juliana Wharf" in honor of the then Princess Juliana. In 1916 they bought John Godden's "Motet" dock where, as on the former, they built and repaired ships until 1926, and possibly later. In 1919 they launched Curaçao's largest ship, the 1,590.67-ton *Pioneer*.[13] They also built four more wharves: the Emma and the Wilhelmina in 1917-18; the Hendrik and Oranje in 1927.

MAIL SERVICE

Ever since the 18th century Jewish-owned passenger and cargo ships had been carrying mail destined for New York, Santo Domingo and sometimes Amsterdam. After the second half of the 19th century the government entrusted Jesurun & Co. to transport mail for Europe via Venezuela and St. Thomas. This firm rendered its services free for several years.[14] The Jewish community retains a precious souvenir of this period: postage stamps issued by Jesurun & Co. They are the only stamps ever issued by a Curaçoan firm for its own account that were recognized by the government (illus. 169).

In 1897 Moses L. Maduro ran a mail-passenger-cargo packet, the schooner *Aurora*, between Curaçao and Coro. It was considered by the Venezuelan government as the "fastest and most comfortable sailing vessel" between these points.

Thus, communications between Curaçao and neighboring and distant ports were made possible partly through Jewish initiative.[15]

COMMERCE

Commercial activity in Curaçao dates from 1651. Most of the trading was done by Jews, according to the old archives of Curaçao and the Dutch West

[13] *KV*, 1913-27; Johan Hartog, *The Story of the Maduros*, pp. 145-46, 149, 151-52, 157, 164.

[14] *KV*, 1861, 1868, 1873, 1874; CGA, Not. Acts, 1861, III, no. 354; CGA, 1863, no. 374.

[15] Meanwhile cable connections between Curaçao and the United States of America were established in July, 1888, via Santo Domingo, Haiti and Cuba. The rate was $2.50 a word for points east of the Mississippi (communication of U.S. Consul L.B. Smith to the Secretary of State, National Archives, Washington, D.C., T 197/10).

India Company, the accounts of travelers and chroniclers, and the reports published by the Colonial Government. In contemporary times business in Curaçao has been predominantly in Jewish hands. One is amazed at the tremendous volume of trade transacted on this tiny island of barely 125,000 souls — trade that runs into millions of dollars. The Jewish merchant enjoys an excellent reputation[16] among the exporters in the United States of America, Europe and the Far East. He provides the Curaçao Government with an important source of revenue: the customs duty he pays on his imports.

INDUSTRY

Curaçao lacks natural resources and has always been faced with the problem of obtaining skilled workers. Industry has therefore not been able to survive for long. Among the notably few exceptions was the manufacture of snuff which flourished in Curaçao for 120 years. It was introduced into the island in 1783 by one Abraham (a.k.a. Antoine) Delvaille, most probably a Bayonnian, who had spent some time in French Santo Domingo. He opened his first factory in Pietermaai. In the beginning he operated it with Jacob Rodriguez, later with Isaac and Abraham Rodriguez Miranda,[17] and still later with his nephew. He not only supplied the home market, but the neighboring countries as well. The snuff destined for Maracaibo he put up in bottles.[18] When he died (June 20, 1798), his factory was situated on the St. Jago plantation in Scharloo. Haim Gabriel da Costa Gomez bought it — a two-house affair — and the plantation on which it stood for 9,140 pesos,[19] and continued manufacturing the snuff. As his business thrived, he opened another factory outside of the city gates.[20]

Several contemporaries engaged in the business. Daniel de David Gomes Casseres ran a snuff factory since 1797, also outside of the city gates. By 1805 it was worth 15,578:4 pesos.[21] He bequeathed it to his son David who was to assume ownership only after his mother passed on.[22] A. and Elias Delvaille, cousins of Curaçao's pioneer in the business, owned a factory in

[16] Very often the wills of Curaçoan Jews directed the payment of all debts before any other claims, e.g., the will of Sarah da Costa Gomez, widow of Samuel Cohen Henriquez, in 1854 (CGA, Not. Acts, 1854, no. 93).

[17] OAC 981, nos. 30, 38.

[18] OAC 140, nos. 79, 94.

[19] OAC 140, nos. 109, 111.

[20] OAC 1017, no. 75.

[21] OAC 1016, no. 35.

[22] OAC 1028, May 26, 1809.

1807. It must have been a very prosperous enterprise, for they had to pay a stiff tax of five pesos monthly to cover mailing costs.[23] Jacob Naar opened a snuff factory in 1812. A year later Samuel Cardoze gained popularity through his "art of making snuff." The same year David Abinun de Lima & Bros. announced the opening of a tobacco factory that would furnish nine different types of tobacco "for chewing and in powder."[24] In 1832 several Jews, veterans in the business, renewed their licenses for the manufacture of snuff: Jacob Delvaille, Daniel Gomes Casseres & Bros., Moses Jesurun and J. Naar.[25]

The "Shon Cobus" snuff (named after Jacob de Jeosuah Naar Sr.) seems to have been Curaçao's favorite brand, according to what the eminent lawyer Abraham Mendes Chumaceiro wrote in 1892:

> The snuff factory of Cobus Naar the elder was always a gold mine. Its yield was sufficient to assure the carefree and abundant existence . . . of several families. The manufacture passed from father to son and the place of sale always remained the same . . . No snuff, no matter by whom it was prepared, had the same qualities as that of "Shon Cobus." The manufacturing secret also belonged to the family.[26]

The sale and manufacture of snuff continued to be a Jewish enterprise[27] as late as 1857. Herman Cohen Henriquez (son-in-law of Jacob J. Naar) is encountered as the owner of Curaçao's leading snuff factory in 1899.[28]

The manufacture of snuff gave rise to an allied industry: the production of small containers for the snuff. These were first used by the women and later by the gentlemen. This explains the frequency with which these little gold, silver and, at times, pearl-studded boxes appear in the inventories of decedents' estates of the period.

With the discontinuance of the custom of offering snuff in polite society early in the 20th century, this industry disappeared completely from Curaçao.

Meanwhile the manufacture of cigarettes had been developing. Moses M. Pinedo and other Jews took an active part in it. But since they could not meet the tough competition of the Havana market, this industry soon went out of existence (illus. 166, 170).

[23] This tax was imposed in 1810 by the English governor (OAC 482, no. 70).

[24] *Curaçao Gazette*, June 18, 1813.

[25] CEOE 311, y. 1832.

[26] Abraham M. Chumaceiro Az., *Wie Heeft Beheerd? en Hoe is Beheerd?* at p. 43. See above, p. 447, about this pamphlet.

[27] According to the renowned Dominie S. van Dissel, *Herinneringen en Schetsen* (Leyden, 1857), cited by S. Kalff, *op. cit.*, pp. 74-75. Dominie Bosch also reported that the tobacco manufactured in Curaçao was well known in Holland (vol. I, p. 297).

[28] *Venezuela en Europa*, Caracas, April, 1899, p. 585.

Several efforts were made to develop the phosphate mines in Curaçao and Aruba. In 1875 the Protestants Godden, Gorsira and Maal exploited the phosphate on the Santa Barbara plantation formerly belonging to the Naar family. Four years later a large contingent of Jews started operations in Aruba.[29] In 1886 a group of financiers, seven Jews and three non-Jews, founded the Rondeklip Society[30] to mine the phosphate in Curaçao. That year another group, also predominantly Jewish, founded the Ascension Society to extract the phosphate on the Ascension and Engelberg properties.[31] Neither group made much headway.

In 1905 the attorney Gabriel Pinedo obtained a 15-year government concession to mine the phosphate on "Klein Curaçao." Like several contractors before him, Pinedo fell short of his expectations. He was still actively engaged in those operations in 1913 when he exported 1,196 tons.[32]

The Jesurun family sank a considerable fortune in an attempt to exploit the mines of Bonaire.[33]

The Maduros, like the Jesuruns, invested stupendous sums for the industrialization of Curaçao, but were not always successful. Of the three large enterprises undertaken — the generation of electricity in 1901, the canalization of water in 1902 (both bought from the estate of L. B. Smith, U.S. Consul in Curaçao), and the manufacture of ice — only the first proved productive despite the vast capital invested for the improvement of the others. After many setbacks, the Maduros sold their electricity concession in 1927 to the present gas and electric company, and their water rights to the government in 1928.

About 1900 Arturo de David Lopez Henriquez began manufacturing bath soap, for which he was awarded a silver medal in the Colonial Exposition of May, 1904. Despite this encouragement, he was unable to continue.

The straw hat industry of Curaçao, particularly that of Panama straws, had its greatest promoter in Haim J. Cohen Henriquez. In 1906 he began holding classes for plaiting the straw in his home in Pietermaai. A few years later he went on three government missions in connection with the industry: to Maracaibo in 1910, to Puerto Rico in 1911, and to Europe and the United States of America in 1913.[34] In 1921 his grateful students and alumnae ap-

[29] See Chapter XXVI, *Aruba*.

[30] *Statuten van de naamloze vennootschap "Rondeklip Maatschappij"* (Curaçao, 1886).

[31] CGA, Not. Acts, no. 3446, Dec. 10, 1886.

[32] *KV*, 1905; Father Euwens, "Klein Curaçao," *WIG*, 1925-26, p. 409.

[33] As related to the author by a direct descendant of this family.

[34] Of these trips he left the following accounts: *Rapport van den Heer H. J. Cohen Henriquez van zijn reis naar Maracaibo in Zake vlechtstroo voor de Hoedenfabrikatie* [Curaçao, 1910?], 40 pp.; *Verslag van*

pended a plaque beside the door to his home in appreciation of his 15-year effort to help them since the first course held in that building.[35] One can understand their gratitude. As most of the hats were turned out in private homes, Henriquez had provided many colored families with the means of earning a livelihood (illus. 173-175).

J. D. Capriles & Co. opened a spaghetti factory in 1911.

A few years before World War II, a non-Curaçoan Jew founded a shoe factory which proved very useful during the war. It closed down after the owner's death because of the strong competition of the foreign shoe market and Curaçao's perennial labor problem.

A garment factory, also founded by a non-Curaçoan Jew a few years ago, could not run for long, again because of competition and the labor problem.

In 1960 Maduro & Sons, B. de Castro & Sons and several Dutch firms founded a paint factory known as the *Antilliaanse Verffabriek.*[36]

Of signal importance is the dairy industry developed since 1962 by Otto Senior under the name Ritz. By using powdered milk as a base, he has been able to reduce the high cost of milk in Curaçao and thus increase its consumption.

There are some people who believe that the customs duty should be increased in order to encourage local industry. In our opinion such a measure would prove ineffective.[37]

BANKING

The planter, merchant, navigator or industrialist could not always have at his command the capital needed for the proper conduct of his enterprises.

de reis naar . . . Porto-Rico van H. J. C. H. (Curaçao, 1912), 34 pp.; *Rapport van de reis naar Europa en de Vereenigde Staten van Noord America door H. J. C. H.* (Curaçao, 1914), 53 pp.

[35] The plaque reads as follows:

HULDEBLIJK AAN DEN HEER
H. J. HENRIQUEZ
Leider der Stroohoedenvleghtnijverheid
in de Kolonie CURACAO
Ter herdenking van het vijftienjarig bestaan
van de eerste vlechtcursus, die onder zijne
Leiding in dit Gebouw werd geopend.
1906-3-Augustus-1921
Leerlingen & Oudleerlingen

(Homage to Mr. H. J. Henriquez, Promoter of the Straw Hat Industry in the Colony of Curaçao, to commemorate the 15th anniversary of the first plaiting course held in this building under his direction. August 3, 1906-1921, Students and Alumnae).

[36] Johan Hartog, *The Story of the Maduros*, pp. 168-69.

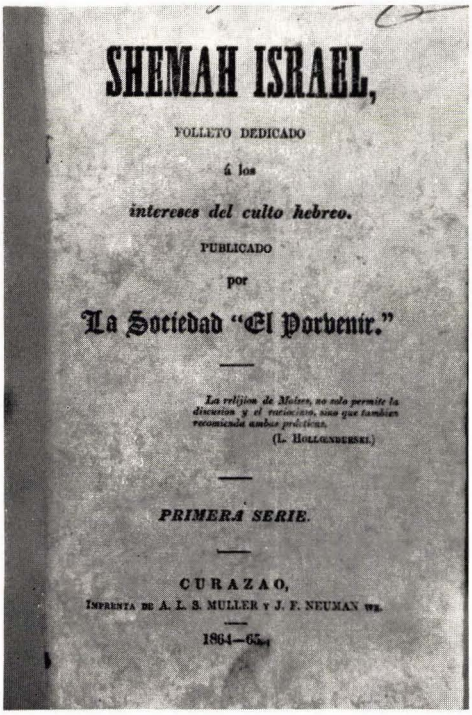
[37] Compare W.F.G. Mensing, "Industrieën," *Oranje en de zes Caraïbische Parelen*, p. 289.

167. MONEY COUPONS OF FLORINS 25¢, 50¢, 1.00 AND 2.50 ISSUED BY S.E.L. MADURO & SONS IN 1893 AND RECALLED IN 1901

168. MONEY COINED BY CURAÇOAN JEWS: JESURUN & CO. AND JACOB JEOSUAH NAAR, 1874

169. THE JACOB ABRAHAM JESURUN & SON POSTAGE STAMP, 1861

170. ADVERTISEMENT FOR CIGARETTES MANUFACTURED BY M. M. PINEDO & CO., CURAÇAO, 1898


SHEMAH ISRAEL,

FOLLETO DEDICADO

á los

intereses del culto hebreo.

PUBLICADO

por

La Sociedad "El Porvenir."

La religion de Moises, no solo permite la discusion y el raciocinio, sino que tambien recomienda ambas prácticas.

(L. HOLLENDERSKI.)

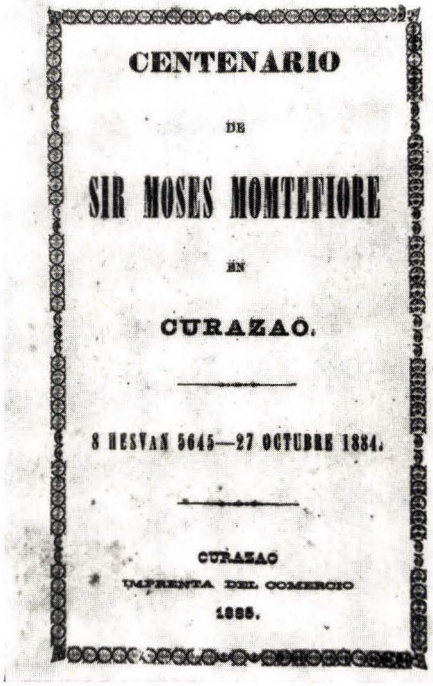
PRIMERA SERIE.

CURAZAO,

IMPRENTA DE A. L. S. MULLER Y J. F. NEUMAN HZ.

1864—65.

171. TITLE PAGE, ORGAN OF EL PORVENIR SOCIETY, 1864-1865


CENTENARIO

DE

SIR MOSES MONTEFIORE

EN

CURAZAO.

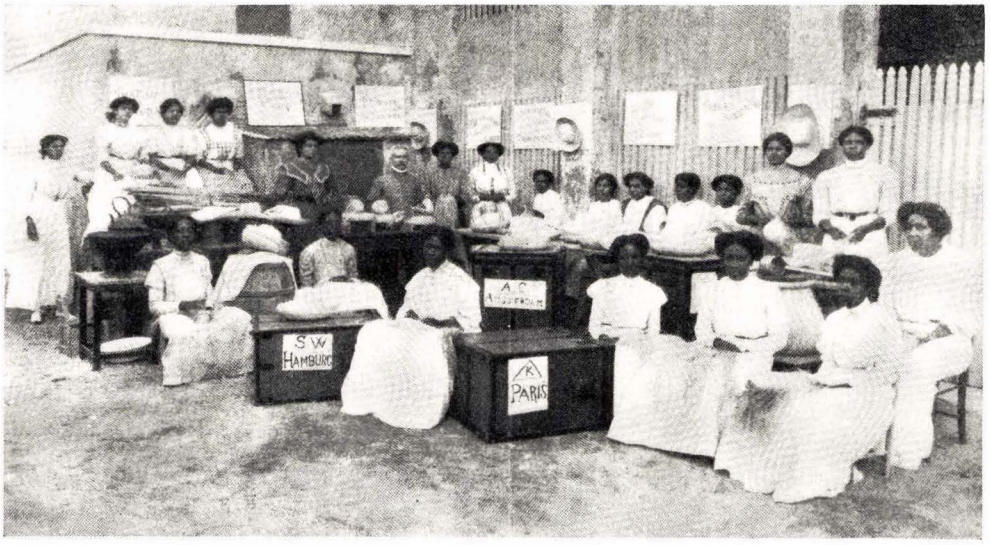
8 HESVAN 5645—27 OCTUBRE 1884.

CURAZAO

IMPRENTA DEL COMERCIO

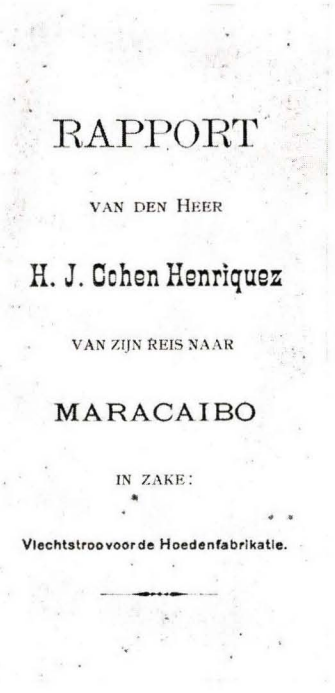
1885.

172. TITLE PAGE, PAMPHLET ON THE SIR MOSES MONTEFIORE CENTENARY, 1885



173. HAIM J. COHEN HENRIQUEZ, PROMOTER OF THE STRAW HAT PLAITING INDUSTRY, WITH WORKERS, ABOUT 1914

174. HAIM J. COHEN HENRIQUEZ, 1868-1942



RAPPORT

VAN DEN HEER

H. J. Cohen Henriquez

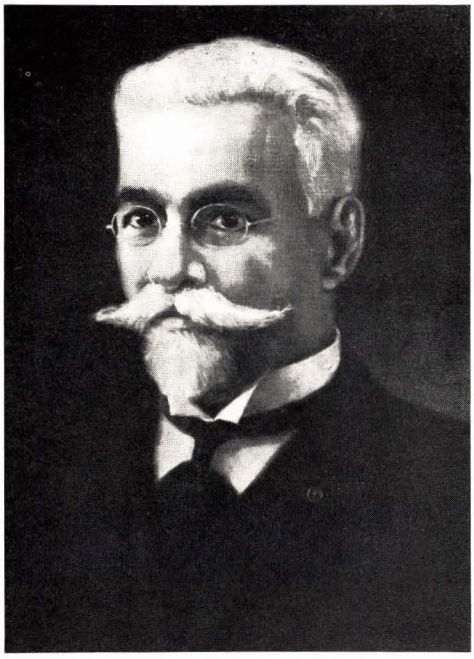
VAN ZIJN REIS NAAR

MARACAIBO

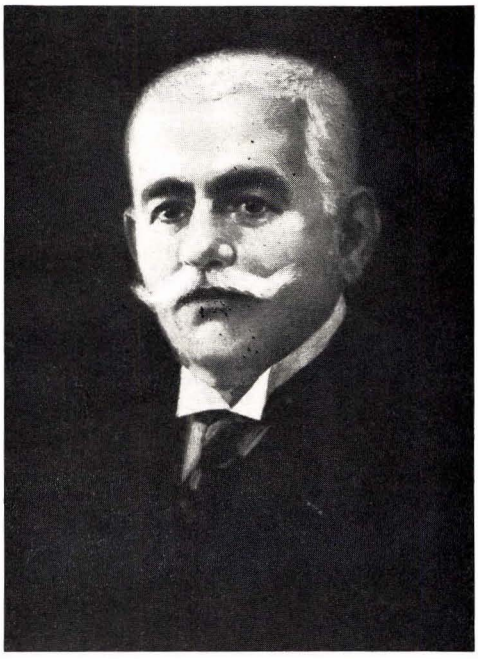
IN ZAKE:

Vlechtstroovoor de Hoedenfabrikatie.

175. TITLE PAGE, THE HENRIQUEZ REPORT ON HIS TRIP TO MARACAIBO, 1910



176. ELIAS S. L. MADURO OF MADURO & SONS, 1850-1911, MAJOR COMMANDANT AND PHILANTHROPIST



177. MORDECHAY S. L. MADURO OF MADURO & SONS, 1851-1918, PRESIDENT OF COLONIAL COUNCIL

178. SALOMON M. L. MADURO OF MADURO & SONS, 1881-1938, MEMBER OF GOVERNMENT COUNCIL

179. DAVID MORDECHAY L. MADURO, 1887-1954, DUTCH CONSUL IN CUBA FOR MANY YEARS

Very often he had to resort to a loan, providing as collateral either his real estate, his slaves or his seagoing vessels. Sometimes he received credit solely on his ability and integrity. Since the Jewish religion forbids Jews to lend their coreligionists money at interest, the Curaçoan Jew would regularly apply to certain wealthy Protestants or to the rich fund of the Protestant Church. Sometimes the Curaçoan Jew who lent money to his coreligionist would, as late as 1820, issue certain documents legalizing such operations from a religious standpoint. His interest rate varied from three to twelve percent.[38]

Generally the Curaçoan Jew of the 18th century did not engage in the loan business. Just three Jewish moneylenders are found: Mordechay Alvares Correa, Moses Penso, and the firm of Manuel da Costa Gomez & Bros. The Community Chest, and much later the Jewish Orphans Fund (Cámara de Orfaos), used to lend money to non-Jews against good mortgages at six and seven percent interest.

It was only in 1818 that Moise Cardoze formed an association with Abraham Salom Delvalle, Abraham Senior and the non-Jew Anton A. Beutner to lend money on sound mortgages. In 1822 Salomon Salom Delvalle presented a plan to Governor Cantz'laar for the foundation of a loan bank in Curaçao.[39] It was not accepted.

Several public-spirited Jewish financiers took the initiative in banding together with prominent non-Jews to establish a number of banking institutions that eventually proved of immense value to the public. These were the

1. Curaçaosche Bank or Government Bank founded in 1828, whose president or director, quite often a Jew, had the authority to countersign the Curaçao banknotes.
2. Spaar- en Beleenbank or Savings and Loan Bank founded in 1849-50.
3. Curaçaosche Hypotheekbank or Mortgage Bank founded in 1875.

Among the large Jewish financiers of the second half of the 19th century one encounters the Jesurun and Senior families, Jacob de Jeosuah Naar (1853) and the firm of Elias Penso e Hijos. By the beginning of the 20th century we find the following cashing checks and handling banking transactions: S.E.L. Maduro & Sons; Edwards, Henriquez & Co.; Morris E. Curiel, and Correa Hermanos (illus. 176-183).

[38] The interest charged depended on the solvency of the borrower and the risk involved. The Curaçao Notarial Acts of old and recent times give these rates: 3% (1855, III, no. 23), 9% (1850, I, no. 54) and 12% on money lent to free Negroes where the risk was great.

[39] OAC 239, no. 397.

In 1901 S.E.L. Maduro & Sons applied for a government permit to open a bank, but were unsuccessful. They finally obtained it on December 21, 1916. The firm then merged with Correa Hermanos to open as Maduro's Bank, with a capital of NAf. 1,000,000, divided into 10,000 shares of NAf. 100 each.[40]

Thanks to the skill and amiability of its directors and administrators, this bank quickly gained the confidence of the public.

On July 1, 1927, Morris E. Curiel & Sons founded Curiel's Bank with a capital of NAf. 500,000. This bank merged with Maduro's Bank on January 2, 1932, and became known as Maduro & Curiel's Bank. The new bank had a capital of NAf. 6,000,000, of which NAf. 1,500,000 was paid up (the latter sum increased to NAf. 6,000,000 in 1968; the Reserve Fund being NAf. 6,500,000).

Maduro & Curiel's Bank is the bank of the Curaçao merchant and the man in the street. It enjoys an enviable reputation. "In the economic development of Curaçao, Maduro & Curiel's Bank has taken a preponderant position," wrote a non-Jewish economist[41] of Curaçao. When Sephardic Jews from the Middle East and Jews of Eastern Europe settled in Curaçao in the 1920s with very little resources, it was Maduro & Curiel's Bank managing director J. A. Correa, and later I. H. Capriles, who gave them credit. Thanks to the bank's assistance, today those once modest merchants hold a very important place in the island's commerce.

One is deeply impressed by the unusually informal atmosphere permeating

[40] As an item of historical interest, the following list of the founding members with their stock ownership is reproduced from the *Curaçaosche Courant* of Dec. 29, 1916:

1- Mordechay Salomon Levy Maduro	1,200 shares
2- Salomon Mordechay Levy Maduro	1,200 shares
3- Salomon Elias Levy Maduro	1,200 shares
4- Eleazar Henriquez Levy Maduro	1,200 shares
5- Mordechay Mozes Montefiore Levy Maduro	1,200 shares
6- David Mordechay Levy Maduro	1,200 shares
7- Salomon Abraham Levy Maduro	100 shares
8- Joshua Mozes Levy Maduro [pro forma]	100 shares
9- Abraham Efraim Levy Maduro	100 shares
10- Joseph Alvares Correa	2,500 shares
	10,000 shares

The same issue of this newspaper carries an announcement of the S.E.L. Maduro & Sons-Correa Hermanos merger and their preparedness to accept money at 3%, 4% and 1½% for small depositor, management and regular account, respectively.

[41] P. Th. Spencer Krafft, "Bankwezen," *Oranje en de zes Caraïbische Parelen*, p. 250.

Maduro's Bank, as it is known in Curaçao. Here one sees, with particular delight, directors and large shareholders working at their typewriters side by side with their employees without any of the pretensions or the large and costly apparatus encountered in most banks. What is most stirring is the mutual trust prevailing between employees and the bank's clients. It is not unusual to see a busy depositor, unable to wait his turn in line, give the bank teller his money packets (sometimes containing as much as NAf. 3,000) and leave without a receipt. No watchman or police force guards the bank. In the light of the confidence that Maduro's Bank enjoys, its prodigious rate of expansion[42] comes as no surprise.

In 1936 Maduro & Curiel's Bank and John G. Eman opened the Aruba Bank with a capital of NAf. 2,000,000. Of this amount NAf. 1,000,000 was paid up. Maduro & Curiel's Bank sold their half interest in the Aruba Bank in July, 1962. Since then they have operated a branch office in Aruba, pending the establishment of a new bank with the Nederlandse Overzee Bank N.V., Amsterdam, with a paid-up capital of NAf. 2,000,000. They also have subsidiaries in Bonaire and St. Martin.[43]

The firm of Edwards, Henriquez & Co. (founded in 1856) opened a bank in 1932. This bank too does well and enjoys public confidence. Together with some Arubians the firm established the Aruba Commercial Bank (Edwards, Henriquez & Co. holding a majority of the stock). See illus. 108, 135, 238.

Indeed, Curaçao owes her remarkable commercial development, among other factors, to the credit extended by the banks to her merchants.

COINAGE OF MONEY

About the last quarter of the 19th century Curaçao experienced a shortage of small money. The government tried to remedy the situation by authorizing three business firms to mint a small coin worth two and one-half cents of the florin. The coin put out by the two Jewish firms in 1874 bore the inscription "1 Stuiver" on one side, and the respective firm's initials on the other: "J × C°" for Jesurun & Co., or "J.J.N." for Jacob Jeosuah Naar. These

[42] Here are some figures in Netherlands Antillian florins showing this bank's development:

Year	Reserve Fund	Deposits	Active Total	
1917	10,000	1,145,331	2,427,684	Maduro's Bank
1937	1,500,000	10,810,089.73	13,810,089.73	Maduro & Curiel's Bk.
1947	2,000,000	31,601,751.68	36,601,751.68	ditto
1960	5,000,000	46,591,521	57,591,521	ditto
1968	6,500,000	81,477,156.15	93,977,156.15	ditto

[43] Communication of the Director, Maduro & Curiel's Bank.

monies were withdrawn from circulation in November and December, 1875, respectively. Shortly afterward, in January, 1876, Naar put in circulation a coin worth one cent of the florin "to avoid forgery"[44] (illus. 168). It was recalled in 1885. Following the example of several non-Jewish merchants, S.E.L. Maduro & Sons issued paper money notes in 1893 (with government authorization) in denominations of 25c, 50c, 1.00 and 2.50 florins. These were withdrawn from circulation in 1901[45] (illus. 167).

PUBLIC LOTTERY

On November 30, 1797, the Island Council licensed the financier Pierre Brion and Jacob Stuylingh to found a public lottery under the direction of Aron Ricardo. Before starting operations Ricardo had to take an oath before the governor. Suffice to say he managed the business very ably. Three issues were launched. The fourth and last was never realized, for death overtook Brion on March 12, 1799.[46] Ricardo then petitioned the Island Council to appoint a commission for the purpose of controlling the books and dissolving the lottery. The Council delegated this task to three of its councilmen.[47] So ended Curaçao's first public lottery run by a Jew.

Besides Ricardo, there were a few other Jews who took up this pursuit. From 1817 to 1821 Isaac Cardoze[48] ran a public lottery that yielded the government a tidy profit. Salomon Salom Delvalle took it over in 1822, but found it a constant struggle. Moses Cohen Henriquez and Jacob de Jeosuah Naar obtained a permit in 1832 to carry on a lottery. For this they had to pay the Colonial Treasury a certain tax.[49] Two years later Naar was unable to dispose of his tickets. In 1834 the Jewish community was officially authorized to launch a lottery in favor of its poor. Jacob J. Naar and Eliao Curiel furnished the government the guaranties for this undertaking.[50] In 1849 Daniel da Costa Gomez opened a lottery[51] with S.E.L. Maduro as guarantor.[52] The

[44] *CC*, Dec. 24, 1875.

[45] Hoyer, *WIG*, 1936-37, p. 186; Johan Hartog, *The Story of the Maduros*, p. 156.

[46] Admiral Brion's father, the richest Catholic of his time. It took three days (March 8-11, 1803) to prepare the inventory of his huge estate, containing many mortgages in his favor, objects of gold and silver, cash, etc. (OAC 1012, no. 99). His relations with the Jews, and especially with Daniel Lopez Penha, were good.

[47] OAC 143, no. 5, Aug. 27, 1799; Jan. 6, 1801. It was called *Lands Loterij*.

[48] *CC*, Jan. 3, 1818.

[49] *CC*, Dec. 15, 1832.

[50] CEOE, act no. 144, June 12, 1834.

[51] *CC*, July 7, 1849.

[52] CGA, Not. Acts, 1848, II, no. 46.

Jewish community organized another lottery in 1855 in favor of the Jewish Welfare Society. They issued 1,600 tickets at 2.50 florins each and offered 55 prizes with a total value of 3,000 florins.[53] In 1870 Isaac Osorio Jr. obtained a permit to conduct a lottery.[54] Evidently not many people were attracted to this type of business.

REAL ESTATE CONSTRUCTION

Various old records of the Dutch West India Company and of Curaçao clearly show that year after year the Jews built homes in many parts of Punda or the heart of the city, and later in Otrabanda, Pietermaai and Scharloo. They did not engage in the actual building. That was done by the slaves — and later the freed Negroes — under the direction of Dutch non-Jewish builders or engineers. The Jews took the role of important dealers in building materials, of expert land surveyors, real estate appraisers, and large investors. They built homes for rent or sale.

The success of their building ventures depended primarily on the political climate of the neighboring countries, particularly Venezuela, as well as economic conditions at home. When emigrants from Venezuela and elsewhere flocked to Curaçao, the price of homes soared. Conversely, in times of business crises when many residents would leave Curaçao (as in 1931), home values plummeted. There was more activity in the building industry after 1868 when foreigners were allowed to acquire real estate.[55]

A Jewish company, as already observed (pages 365-66), enlarged the center of the city in 1861. Seven years later Jacob J. Naar built the island's first fruit and vegetable market. Curaçoans welcomed its inauguration on March 1, 1869, with much enthusiasm, for it filled a great need.

The hotel industry during the 19th century was almost entirely under Jewish ownership or management, e.g., the hotels Concordi, Oranje, Esperanza, Del Comercio, Internacional, Sasso, Capriles, Washington, etc. The Hotel Americano (no longer the prominent establishment it once was) and El Curaçao were built with liberal Jewish participation. Social or literary gatherings were frequently held in these hotels at a time when Curaçao had a limited number of clubs and theaters.

[53] MIA, College of Parnassim, 1854-1856, meeting of July 10, 1855.
[54] *CC*, Sept. 24, 1870.
[55] Government Publication, June 18-22, 1868, no. 7; *KV*, 1868.

TRANSPORTATION

Although distances in the center of town are not great, the intense heat does not permit traveling by foot. The Curaçao Streetcar Company[56] was the answer to the problem. It was founded in 1886 ostensibly on the initiative of Abraham Salas. It started with a capital of 23,750 florins, divided into 190 shares having a face value of 125 florins. One hundred sixty-four shares belonged to Jews whose largest stockholders were Abraham Salas, 40 shares; David Leon, 27; Haim Abinun de Lima, 16; Isaac de Mordechay de Marchena, 13; Jacob de Sola and Moses Capriles, 10 each. Of course, the streetcar was horsedrawn and ran on rails. In 1911 it gave way to the motor-powered tramcar. It started from the Palace of Justice, continued to Pietermaai, crossed over Scharloo and returned to the Palace.[57] This street line was in operation for over twenty years and is still spoken of by several elderly people.

SOCIAL LIFE, MASONIC LODGES, CLUBS

Like their Newport coreligionists, the Curaçoan Jews took up Freemasonry.[58] They probably founded their lodge about 1743 when Daniel Cohen Peixotto, a Freemason, settled among them. By 1756 Freemasonry was so popular among the Jews that Jeosuah Henriquez Jr. named one of his boats the *Vrij Metzelaar* — Freemason. A document of 1774 refers to a "Jewish Lodge" in Curaçao.[59] The Jews were partly responsible for founding the Masonic lodges Igualdad and Acacia, the former in 1855 and the latter in 1874. The Acacia was reorganized in 1919. See illustrations 100-104.

Gregarious as they were, the Jews soon joined or established fraternal clubs. Among those still in existence are the Gezelligheid founded in 1871, and the Curaçao in 1903. The Ashkenazim organized Club Union in 1932; most of their members are Jewish settlers of the 1920s and thereafter.

CLUB ENTRE NOUS

In 1895 Rebecca Cohen Henriquez (1864-1935), daughter of the Attorney General Dr. Sol Cohen Henriquez, founded Club Entre Nous with fourteen women: Angela Baiz, Lelia Capriles, Leonor Capriles, Raquel Capriles, Habita M. Chumaceiro, Elmire Cohen Henriquez, Rachel Cohen Henriquez,

[56] A few months later it was known as the Curaçoan Society of Transportation by Horse.

[57] CGA, Not. Acts, Notary Schotborgh, documents nos. 3303, 3464. Manuel Correa was the company's president and Jacob de Solas its secretary.

[58] *PAJHS* 19:37; 27:264; Emmanuel, *Precious Stones*, pp. 26, 397, 427.

[59] OAC 913, no. 47, Feb. 21, 1774.

Rebecca Alvares Correa, Henriette de Leao Laguna, Anna Gravenhorst (Protestant), Rosabelle Penso, Sarah Penso, Julieta Pinedo, and Nettie van Lier.[60] This was a benevolent society which had also set for itself the goal of converting some land in Fo'i Poorta into a Park. The club raised most of its funds by giving magnificent theatrical presentations (illus. 185). With energy rarely encountered in a woman, Miss Henriquez finally succeeded in building Wilhelmina Park in 1899. It was formally dedicated in 1901 and named for the Queen. In 1933 Club Entre Nous[61] took the initiative in erecting the majestic statue of Queen Wilhelmina that graces this park. The Netherlands Government bestowed a medal on Miss Henriquez in recognition of her services. The Curaçao Government paid homage to her and Club Entre Nous by setting up a marble plaque in the park with this legend:

Wilhelmina Park
Opgericht Door De Damesvereeniging
"Club Entre Nous"
op Initiatief Van
Mej. Rebecca Cohen Henriquez
Den 31 Augustus 1899[62]

This is the only plaque honoring a Jew that has been put up by the government in a public place[63] (illus. 185-190).

In addition to its activities, Club Entre Nous used to distribute food packages to needy families of all races and creeds on the eve of Queen Wilhelmina's birthday. When this great, generous lady and friend of Israel ascended the throne in 1898, Club Entre Nous dedicated the following verse in French to her as a token of the devotion and admiration of the Jewish women:

60 Communication of the late Jossy M. L. Maduro.

61 See Emilio Lopez Henriquez's *Añoranzas de una Vida Meritoria* (Amsterdam, 1937) for complete details on Rebecca Henriquez and the activities of Club Entre Nous in connection with Wilhelmina Park and the monument erected in honor of Queen Wilhelmina.

62 "Wilhelmina Park founded by the women's society 'Club Entre Nous' on the initiative of Miss Rebecca Cohen Henriquez, August 31, 1899."

63 Curaçao is very deficient in statues, commemorative plaques and monuments in honor of its great men. In our opinion, the government could name several streets for certain Jewish families who distinguished themselves in promoting the general welfare of Curaçao. For example, Spinoza (his sister reposes in Curaçao), Jesurun, Senior, Cohen Henriquez and Penso. When the firm of S.E.L. Maduro celebrated its centenary, the government very fittingly named, in its honor, a street in the business center of the city [*L.*] *Madurostraat*. This was in special recognition of the fact that the founder of the firm headed the company which had enlarged the business section of the town in 1861 (pp. 365-66).

Les jeunes dames du Club "Entre Nous,"
Voulant se rendre bien digne de vous,
Uniront au nom de Dieu votre nom,
Et voilà désormais leur religion.[64]

THE NAAR THEATER

Interest in the theater among Portuguese Jews goes far back. In Amsterdam this attachment was so strong that they took the liberty of presenting a play on Shabu'oth, 1624, in the synagogue. It was the famous *Dialogo dos Montes*[65] by the poet Rehuel Jesurun (a.k.a. Paulo de Pina). In 1775 when Portuguese Jews in Paramaribo were denied admittance into the Dutch theater founded by non-Jews, they opened a far superior one of their own.[66]

In Curaçao Jewish amateurs presented theatrical pieces, often in French, since the beginning of the 19th century, and possibly earlier. In 1821 a group of nine Jewish amateurs[67] petitioned Governor Cantz'laar for leave to present the comedy, "L'on fait ce qu'on peut et non pas ce qu'on veut." Their petition was granted. Sometimes the Jewish artists used the theater to lampoon a personage hostile to Jewry. For example, their presentation of an original dialogue, "The diplomatist in a fury," directed against the anti-Jewish John E. Young,[68] U.S.A. Consul in 1854.

Jacob Jeosuah Naar tried to instill a love for the drama among the Jewish youth. In 1850 he founded the Sociedad Dramática de Aficionados — Dramatic Society of Amateurs — with himself as president; Jeudah Abinun de Lima, treasurer; Abraham Jesurun, secretary; Dr. Anjel J. Jesurun, director. They made their debut with Victor Hugo's *Lucrezia Borgia*, and Naar, Jesurun and Miss Capriles played their roles exceptionally well. Several plays subsequently offered met with great success.[69] These performances were attended by the governor and other island dignitaries.

The Dramatic Society of Amateurs usually held their plays in Pietermaai at

[64] From a pamphlet printed by Club Entre Nous on Queen Wilhelmina's coronation in 1898. Various pamphlets, programs of festivals and theater performances in our possession attest to the active participation of the Jews in celebrating the Queen's accession to the throne (illus. 128).

[65] Amsterdam, 1767.

[66] S. Kalff, *WIG*, 1925-26, pp. 524-25.

[67] The actors were A. D. Meza, Isaac Cardozo, M[oses]. Ricardo, D[avid]. Cardoze, Abraham Henriquez, Moses C. Henriquez, Isaac Cardoze, Isaac Henriquez and A. Senior (OAC 294, no. 24, March 20, 1821).

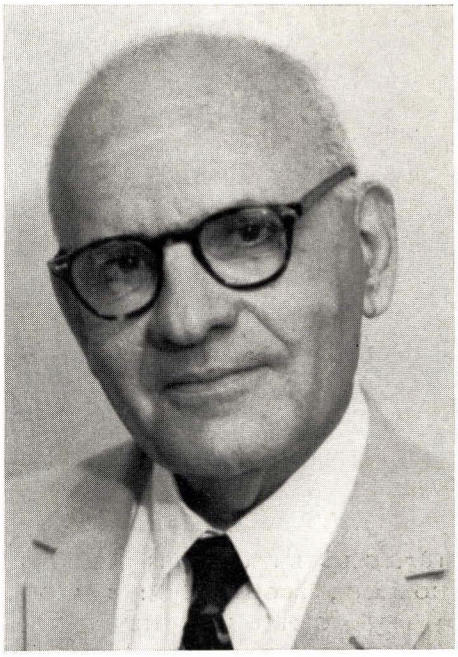
[68] See above, pp. 366-67.

[69] *CC*, July 7 and Aug. 11, 1860; Jan. 21, Feb. 9, 16, 23, and March 2, 9, 1861.

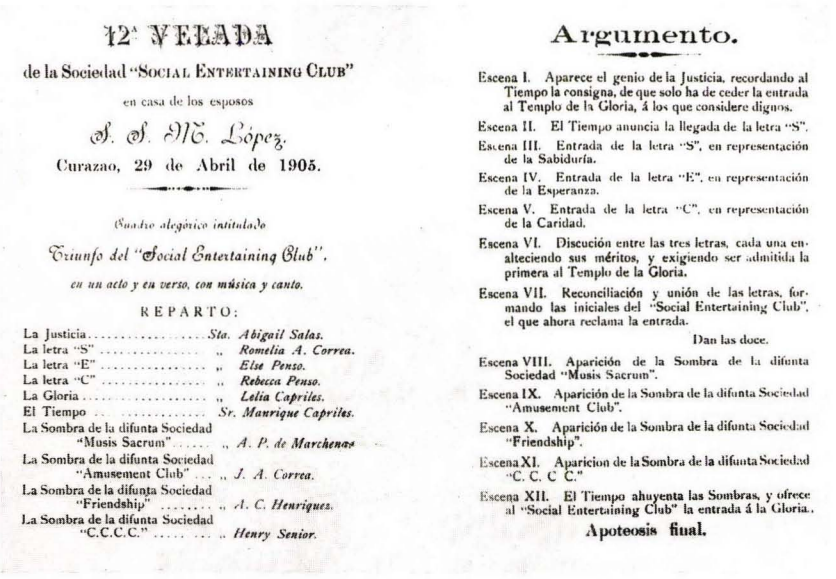
180. MORRIS ELIAS CURIEL, 1863-1929, MEMBER OF THE GOVERNMENT COUNCIL

181. EDWIN SOL SENIOR, 1873-1957, MEMBER OF THE COLONIAL COUNCIL

182. JOSEPH ALVARES CORREA, 1881-1967, BANKER AND MEMBER OF GOVERNMENT COUNCIL



183. SALOMON A. L. MADURO OF MADURO & SONS, 1891-1967, MEMBER OF COLONIAL COUNCIL



12ª VELADA

de la Sociedad "SOCIAL ENTERTAINING CLUB"

en casa de los esposos

S. S. M. López.

Curazao, 29 de Abril de 1905.

Cuadro alegórico intitulado

Triunfo del "Social Entertaining Club",

en un acto y en verso, con música y canto.

REPARTO:

La Justicia	Sta.	*Abigail Salas.*
La letra "S"	„	*Romelia A. Correa.*
La letra "E"	„	*Else Penso.*
La letra "C"	„	*Rebecca Penso.*
La Gloria	„	*Lelia Capriles.*
El Tiempo	Sr.	*Manrique Capriles.*
La Sombra de la difunta Sociedad "Musis Sacrum"	„	*A. P. de Marchena.*
La Sombra de la difunta Sociedad "Amusement Club"	„	*J. A. Correa.*
La Sombra de la difunta Sociedad "Friendship"	„	*A. C. Henriquez.*
La Sombra de la difunta Sociedad "C.C.C.C."	„	*Henry Senior.*

Argumento.

Escena I. Aparece el genio de la Justicia, recordando al Tiempo la consigna, de que solo ha de ceder la entrada al Templo de la Gloria, á los que considere dignos.

Escena II. El Tiempo anuncia la llegada de la letra "S".

Escena III. Entrada de la letra "S", en representación de la Sabiduría.

Escena IV. Entrada de la letra "E", en representación de la Esperanza.

Escena V. Entrada de la letra "C", en representación de la Caridad.

Escena VI. Discución entre las tres letras, cada una enalteciendo sus méritos, y exigiendo ser admitida la primera al Templo de la Gloria.

Escena VII. Reconciliación y unión de las letras, formando las iniciales del "Social Entertaining Club", el que ahora reclama la entrada.

Dan las doce.

Escena VIII. Aparición de la Sombra de la difunta Sociedad "Musis Sacrum".

Escena IX. Aparición de la Sombra de la difunta Sociedad "Amusement Club".

Escena X. Aparición de la Sombra de la difunta Sociedad "Friendship".

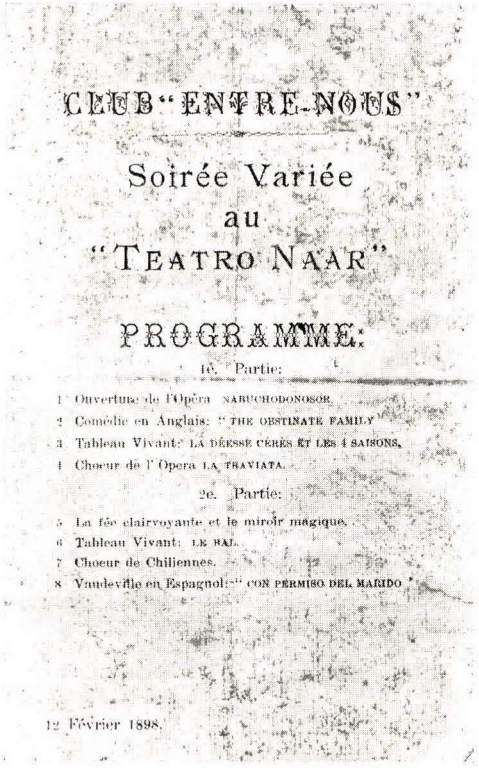
Escena XI. Aparicion de la Sombra de la difunta Sociedad "C. C. C. C."

Escena XII. El Tiempo ahuyenta las Sombras, y ofrece al "Social Entertaining Club" la entrada á la Gloria.

Apoteosis final.

184. AN EVENING PERFORMANCE OF THE SOCIAL ENTERTAINING CLUB HELD AT THE SILVANIO S. M. LOPEZ RESIDENCE, 1905

185. CLUB ENTRE NOUS MEMBERS REPRESENTING THE ELEVEN PROVINCES OF HOLLAND, ABOUT 1898: 1 LEONOR CAPRILES, 2 REBECCA ALVARES CORREA, 3 LELIA CAPRILES, 4 HENRIETTE DE LEAO LAGUNA, 5 †ANNETJE FELDTMAN, 6 ROSABELLE PENSO, 7 NETTIE VAN LIER, 8 †ANNA GRAVENHORST, 9 RACHEL COHEN HENRIQUEZ, 10 ESTHER DE LEAO LAGUNA, 11 ELMIRE COHEN HENRIQUEZ



CLUB "ENTRE-NOUS"

Soirée Variée
au
"TEATRO NAAR"

PROGRAMME.

1e. Partie:

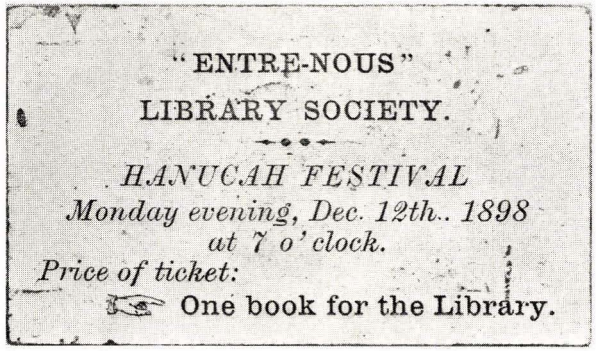
1 Ouverture de l'Opéra NABUCHODONOSOR.
2 Comédie en Anglais: "THE OBSTINATE FAMILY"
3 Tableau Vivant: LA DÉESSE CÉRÈS ET LES 4 SAISONS.
4 Chœur de l'Opera LA TRAVIATA.

2e. Partie:

5 La fée clairvoyante et le miroir magique.
6 Tableau Vivant: LE BAL.
7 Chœur de Chiliennes.
8 Vaudeville en Espagnol: "CON PERMISO DEL MARIDO."

12 Février 1898.

186. PROGRAM, PRESENTATION BY CLUB ENTRE NOUS AT THE NAAR THEATER, 1898



"ENTRE-NOUS"
LIBRARY SOCIETY.

HANUCAH FESTIVAL
Monday evening, Dec. 12th.. 1898
at 7 o' clock.
Price of ticket:
One book for the Library.

187. CLUB ENTRE NOUS LIBRARY SOCIETY, TICKET TO HANUKKAH FESTIVAL, 1898

188. PLAQUE IN HONOR OF CLUB ENTRE NOUS AND REBECCA C. HENRIQUEZ, WILHELMINA PARK, 1899

189. REBECCA C. HENRIQUEZ, 1864-1935, PRESIDENT OF CLUB ENTRE NOUS WHICH FOUNDED WILHELMINA PARK

190. LELIA CAPRILES, 1865-1943, A STAR OF CLUB ENTRE NOUS

191. SARAH JESURUN HENRIQUEZ, 1862-1938, WIFE OF ELIAS S. L. MADURO

192. ELIAS S. L. MADURO'S SONS: SALOMON, PIANO; MONTEFIORE, CELLO; CHARLES, VIOLIN, 1898

Naar's home, later transformed into a regular theater and inaugurated on August 27, 1871. Two plays were given that day: *La Gracia de Dios* (by the well-known Venezuelan playwright Manuel Bermudez Avila) and *Mis Colaboradores*. The amateurs Liana Penso, Rachel Naar de C. Henriquez, Haim Senior, Aaron and Daniel Capriles gave outstanding performances.[70] Years later these plays were acted with distinction by Henriette de L. Laguna, Nettie van Lier, Angela Baiz, Raquel and Lelia Capriles, Arturo Marchena, Henry Senior, Manrique and Laqui (Heraclio) Capriles.

Naar's theater was *the* theater of Curaçao. It was there that famous actors and artists from abroad would display their artistry and talent. The hurricane of 1877 demolished the playhouse. It was rebuilt in 1890 by Herman Cohen Henriquez, son-in-law of the founder (illus. 223).

These amateur dramatic societies generally were short-lived, e.g., Musis Sacrum, Amusement Club, Friendship, C.C.C.C., Harmonie, Nereida, and Social Entertaining Club[71] (illus. 184).

In 1915 the Curaçaosche Schouwburg Maatschappij (80% of whose stock was Jewish-owned) built the Stadsschouwburg Theater on the same site of the Naar Theater.[72] The theater was later known as the Roxy. A Curaçoan Catholic[73] justifiably laments that the Roxy was not called Naar Theater in homage to the pioneer of Curaçao's theater movement. It is only proper that the government name a street for Naar, and thus pay tribute to a citizen who promoted the theater in Curaçao.

MUSIC

While they produced good music teachers[74] and cultivated music,[75] especially in song and the dance, the Jews of Curaçao did not attain the stature of their Catholic and Protestant fellow citizens in the realm of music. Manuel S. L. Maduro is encountered in 1898 as conductor of the Orfeo Orchestra

[70] John de Pool, *ibid.*, pp. 88-89.

[71] According to the April 29, 1905, theater program of the Social Entertaining Club. There is no explanation for what the initials C. C. C. C. stand. Regarding Harmonie and Nereida, see Emilio Lopez Henriquez, "Síntomas Etnológicos Curazoleños," *Geschiedkundige Opstellen aan den Heer W. M. Hoyer* (Curaçao [1943]), p. 82.

[72] The capital stock of the company consisted of 572 shares valued at 60,000 florins (CGA, Register of Business Houses, 1915).

[73] John de Pool, *ibid.*, pp. 89, 136, 137, 142.

[74] Among the Jewish music teachers were Ribca Abenatar who taught girls especially, and Andries Charlonis.

[75] The inventory of the dowry given by Abraham de Meza to his daughter Abigail on her marriage to Salomon P. Brandao in 1838 lists a "strong piano" (CEOE 778, no. 12).

made up principally of Jewish musicians. Among the composers we find Abraham M. Capriles in 1888; later, Benjamin Namias de Crasto and Charles L. Maduro (1884-1947). The last-named artist came from a musical family — his mother Sarah H. L. Maduro composed a number of songs. Maduro had the distinction of having his "Rapsodia Española" played in Carnegie Hall (by the Russian pianist Tatiana de Sanzéwitch). A prolific songwriter, he composed "Welcome Home" (dedicated to his mother), "Curaçao," "Tropic Gardens," "La Colombiana," "In Old Granada," "On the Lake," "Little Cinderella," "Princesa Triste," "Filigrana," "Helene," "Melodie Creole," and "Little Flower of Love." Some of these songs are still played in Curaçao and abroad.[76] A true lover of his art, Charles Maduro took care to provide a fund in his will for the development of music in Curaçao (illus. 191, 307).

From time to time several amateurs composed religious music for the synagogue choir on some especially important event in the Jewish community.

PAPIAMENTO

The white and colored population of Curaçao, Aruba and Bonaire — Catholic, Protestant and Jewish — speak a dialect made up of Portuguese, Spanish, Dutch, French, African and English. It is called Papiamento. Portuguese is the dominant element,[77] and this is largely due to the influence of the Portuguese Jews[78] who spoke, preached in the synagogue and wrote their epitaphs in that tongue (illus. 78, 274).

The Hebrew element in Papiamento is negligible. Nevertheless, there are several expressions of Hebrew origin, as the following list shows:

Beshimantob. From the Hebrew *Bessiman tob*, with good augury. Curaçoans use this term for someone who has concluded or liquidated a matter in a radical manner.

Beth Haim ta spok. From the Hebrew *Beth Haim* or *Beth Hahaim* for cemetery; the African *ta* meaning is or are; and *spok*, a corruption of the Dutch for "spooking" or haunting. Meaning, "The ghosts of the Jewish cemetery are stalking." This is said of a hungry person.

[76] R. Boskaljon, "Het Muziek Leven," *Oranje en de zes Caraïbische Parelen*, p. 361; *idem*, *Curaçaosche Dansmuziek* (Amsterdam, 1949), pp. 15, 23.

[77] According to the great specialist in Papiamento, Prof. D. Rodolfo Lenz, *El Papiamento, la lengua criolla de Curaçao* (Santiago de Chile, 1928). Compare Father M. D. Latour, "Het Papiamento," *Oranje en de zes Caraïbische Parelen*, p. 77.

[78] Father Euwens, in a study published in the *Amigoe di Curaçao*, stressed the strong influence of the Curaçoan Jews on Papiamento.

Bo ta un Parnas. *Bo*, probably a corruption of the Portuguese *Vos*, for you; *ta*, African for are; *un*, the Spanish for a; the Hebrew *Parnas*, director of a Jewish community. The phrase signifies a stubborn person.

Lantabel. From *lanta*, a corruption of the Spanish *alevantar*, to get up; and the Hebrew *abel*, grief. This refers to someone who has completed his first week of mourning.

Mal Panim. From the Spanish *mal* for bad, and the Hebrew *panim* for face. This denotes someone with a bad aspect.

Panim beganab. In place of the Hebrew *panim shel ganab*, meaning a dishonest face.

Talbit talha col amesh maptim.[79] Probably a corruption of the Hebrew *maharikh tarha col hamesh maftir*. This referred to a person who kept repeating the same story.

Hokhma. The Ashkenazi equivalent of *Hohom*, referring to the airs of importance a person gives himself.

Kidusin. From the Hebrew *kiddushin*, marriage. Curaçoan Jews call the wedding band *kidusin*.

Several words recalling the Ladino of the Sephardic Jews of the Balkans have been encountered. The Curaçoan said:

Meldar. In place of *leer*, to read.

Darsar. From the Hebrew *derush*, to deliver a sermon.

Su Mala. From the Spanish *su* for his, and the Hebrew *ma'ala*, highness; meaning the Chief Rabbi.

It is deeply hoped that Curaçoan intellectuals will insist on using the natural Spanish spelling of words and not Hollandize them. For instance, to write the word as *cunucu* rather than the Dutch version *koenoekoe*.

PHILANTHROPY

In one of his numerous campaigns for aid to Europe, Herbert Hoover declared:

> I have frequently had cause to comment upon the extraordinary generosity and liberality of the American Jews in their charitable contributions. Indeed, their voluntary contributions exceeded that of any other American group.[80]

This generosity is characteristic not only of the American Jews, but of Jews the world over. The Jews of Curaçao have also distinguished themselves in

[79] This text was given to me by the late Jossy M. L. Maduro.

[80] Cited by Ada Sterling, *The Jew and Civilization* (New York, 1924), p. 124.

philanthropy. In an earlier chapter it was shown that they contributed relatively large amounts for *Terra Santa*, for other Jewish communities, for Curaçao, for the flood victims of Holland, and so forth.

Wealthy Jews of Curaçao invariably leave a certain amount in their wills for the higher education of their youth and for the welfare of the island's poor and underprivileged of all races and creeds. When the philanthropist Elias S. L. Maduro died in 1911, his family and friends created the E.S.L. Maduro Trust Fund. His friends contributed 2,500 florins and his widow and children 5,500 florins. Thanks to the large legacies bequeathed to this fund by various members of the Maduro family, the principal has soared to NAf. 421,021.58. The interest derived from this fund is distributed annually on April 26 (the death anniversary of Elias S. L. Maduro) to Curaçao's churches, synagogues, Masonic lodges, hospitals, and the needy. In 1964 the interest amounted to NAf. 19,287.14.

Grace Alvares Correa (widow of Jacob Elias Penso), following her husband's wishes, left valuable real estate to the government for the benefit of the poor.[81]

Jacob Cardoze (d. 1921) bequeathed to the Mikvé Israel community a fund of 15,000 florins. The interest earned on the principal is to be used for paying the tuition of two or three Jewish boys.

Joseph Mendes Monsanto (d. 1938) bequeathed a considerable amount for Curaçao's poor and for the schools of the Alliance Israélite Universelle, Paris.[82]

Juliette Pinedo (d. 1939) left bequests of 1,000 florins each to the two Jewish communities, and 1,000 florins to be divided equally between the Catholic and Protestant communities. She bequeathed the remainder of her estate to the two Jewish communities for the purpose of setting up the Gabriel, Herman and Juliette Pinedo Fund (currently valued at NAf. 38,000). The interest realized is to be used to send Jewish students to study in Holland.

Morris Cardoze (d. 1946), after leaving several legacies to relatives and servants, bequeathed half of the remainder of his estate to the Mikvé Israel community, and the other half equally between the Protestant and Catholic churches of Curaçao. His estate was valued at NAf. 250,000 (illus. 246).

The late Jossy M. L. Maduro donated 100,000 florins for the erection of Madurodam at The Hague, its income going to the Netherlands Students Sanatorium at Laren in northern Holland.

Miss Hannah de Casseres (d. 1955) left the Mikvé Israel community NAf. 10,000. The interest on this fund is to be distributed by the community to the needy of Curaçao.

[81] *KV*, 1913.

[82] Emmanuel, *Precious Stones*, p. 475.

JEWISH CONTRIBUTION TO THE GENERAL DEVELOPMENT OF CURAÇAO

The Jewish collectivity has always responded generously to local humanitarian causes. And this thas been especially true in the construction of various institutions of Curaçao, e.g., the Catholic Hospital in 1855, the Home for the Protestant Aged[83] in 1870, and the Non-Sectarian Sanatorium in 1914. During World War II the Portuguese Jews and Ashkenazic Jews contributed liberally toward the upkeep of the Sanoc Fund in behalf of Dutch war victims. For this cause the Mikvé Israel community donated 5,000 florins from its welfare fund, the *Alivio del Pobre*.

Generally the Jews have given their support to all the welfare societies on the island. This magnanimity has contributed toward consolidating the good relations existing between Curaçao's Jews and non-Jews.

ISLAND ADMINISTRATION

COLONIAL COUNCIL

It was only in 1844 that the Jews made their entry into the Colonial Council. This was well before the Catholics who still had no representation in 1850. This body, in conjunction with the Netherlands Government, would decide upon the general administration of Curaçao and the other islands of the Netherlands Antilles group. The councillors were named by the Crown. From the time they made their entry, the Jewish legislators distinguished themselves by their devotion to Curaçao and Holland. The following Jews served their colony and crown in the Colonial Council: Abraham Haim Senior, 1844; Jacob Senior, 1855; Benjamin Jesurun Jr. and Salomon E. Levy Maduro in 1866; Abraham Jesurun Danielzoon, 1867; Dr. Sol Cohen Henriquez, 1871, and later as president of the Council for a time; Elias S. Levy Maduro, 1880; Abraham Jesurun Danielzoon, reappointed in 1881; Mordechay Cohen Henriquez, 1889; Abraham Jesurun Danielzoon, again in 1893; Mordy S. Levy Maduro, 1894, and as president from 1904 to 1916; Manuel Penso Curiel, 1896; Morris E. Curiel, 1901; Mordechay Cohen Henriquez, 1902; Edwin Senior, 1905; Edward Salomon Lansberg, 1905, and as president from 1925 to 1932; Dr. Haim Abraham de Casseres, 1905; Haim M. Penso, 1910; Elias M. Penso, 1912-1926; Salomon M. Levy Maduro, 1918;[84] Jossy Cohen Henriquez, 1927, and as president, 1933-36; David Alvares Correa, 1930; Salomon A. Senior, 1930; Jossy Moses Levy Maduro, 1931; Salomon Abraham Levy Maduro, 1933; David Abraham Capriles, 1933 (illus. 107, 133, 137, 152, 176-178, 183, 235, 280, 295).

[83] *CC*, May 14, 1870.

[84] In 1918 five of the thirteen members of the Colonial Council were Jews: E. S. Lansberg, Dr. A. H. de Casseres, E. Senior, S. L. Maduro, and E. M. Penso.

After the adoption of new regulations for the Colony of Curaçao and the granting of limited suffrage to the population in 1937, this 13-member Colonial Council, of whom four were Jews, was dissolved on March 31, 1938.

THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL (STATEN)

During the general elections of December 20, 1937, Isaac Haim Capriles was elected to the "Staten" of Curaçao. Shortly afterward the governor appointed Salomon A. Senior (1938-42) to this legislative chamber as one of five councillors reserved for the Crown. In view of the fact that the Jews and Protestants did not take part in the elections of November 17, 1941, the governor reappointed Senior. On his retirement in 1944, Senior was replaced by Norman Mendes Chumaceiro. In the elections of 1946 and 1949, the brothers Philip and Ernest Cohen Henriquez were elected to this Council by the National Party.

THE GOVERNMENT COUNCIL (RAAD VAN BESTUUR)

This Council was a five-member body with the governor of the colony as its president. The following Jews served in it: Benjamin Jesurun Jr., 1867-85; Dr. Sol Cohen Henriquez, 1885-1906; Mordechay Cohen Henriquez, 1909-19; Morris E. Curiel, 1919-28; Julius Lopez Penha, provisionally in 1920, and again in 1924; Salomon M. Levy Maduro, 1929-38; Jossy Cohen Henriquez, 1932-43; Joseph Alvares Correa, 1944-51 (illus. 180, 182).

As a result of the new regulations enacted for the administration of Curaçao, the Staten elected a council of six to serve as ministers. They formed the Executive Committee of the Island Council (Landsbestuur or Regeringsraad). The following Jews held office: Isaac H. Capriles, Minister of Finance, August 21, 1948 to May 10, 1949; the engineer Dr. Percy Cohen Henriquez, Minister of Agriculture, Public Health, Water Supply, etc., July 14, 1949 to August 21, 1953; Cecil L. Delvalle, Minister of Economic Affairs, April 18, 1951 to February 18, 1952; René Moreno, Minister of Economic Affairs, May 12, 1954 to December 8, 1954.

ADVISORY COUNCIL (RAAD VAN ADVIES)

In 1963 Sol Alfred Senior and Henry da Costa Gomez were in this Council.

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Since the majority of Curaçao's merchants are Jews, they have been represented in the Chamber of Commerce since its foundation in 1884. For

many years its president was a Jew: Haim J. C. Henriquez.[85] Since 1963 the following Jews have been serving in this 9-man body: Charles G. Casseres (in 1966 as president), Cecil L. Delvalle, Lionel Capriles and Jochanan S. Taytelbaum.

THE NATIONAL GUARD

From its inception in 1796 this military corps, made up of the island's recruits, included some high-ranking Jewish officers. Three Jews attained the highest rank — Commander-in-Chief: Jacob Jeosuah Naar (d. 1877), Elias S. Levy Maduro, 1904-11; Abraham David Capriles, 1917-36.

During the history of this corps, there were at least three Jewish military auditors with the rank of captain: the attorneys Mordechay Ricardo, Dr. Sol Cohen Henriquez, and Edward I. van Lier (illus. 79, 107, 176, 293).

ATTORNEY GENERAL

As chief of police, the attorney general was second in rank to the governor. Dr. Sol C. Henriquez (d. 1908) was attorney general for many years. During Governor Van den Brandhof's absence from the island in 1890, Attorney General Henriquez served as acting governor. Dr. Isaac de Hisquiya Yohay, the present incumbent, has filled this office for a long time.

AIDE-DE-CAMP

Four Jews are encountered among the governor's aides-de-camp with the rank of first or second lieutenant: Salomon E. L. Maduro, 1910; Julius Lopez Penha Jr., 1911; Isaac Haim Capriles, 1918-23; and Ivan Lansberg, 1942-48. During his tenure, Mr. Capriles accompanied Governor Helfrich to Caracas (April 7-21, 1921) to sign a treaty of friendship between Holland and Venezuela (illus. 296, 297, 306).

JEWS IN THE CONSULAR SERVICE

The Sephardic Jew has a rich background in diplomacy. He first served the Arabian caliphs; later, the kings of Spain and the sultans of Morocco and Turkey. Don Joseph Nassi was one of the great diplomats of the Ottoman Empire in the 16th century. Spain and Portugal entrusted their interests to the descendants of those whom they had expelled.

[85] For his activity in the Chamber of Commerce, see Haim J. C. Henriquez, *Beknopt Oversicht van de toenaamste Werkzamheden van de Kamer van Koophandel en Nijverheid op Curaçao, 1884-1940* [Curaçao, 1941?], 16 pp.

Curaçoan Jews have represented various governments in Curaçao — including the United States of America — ever since the first half of the 19th century. Sometimes a consulship would pass from father to son as in the Jesurun family which represented Great Britain from 1857 to 1920. As Jacob Jesurun, the last member of the family, left no direct descendants, the consulship went first to Joseph Alvares Correa and later to the Maduro family which held it up to a few years ago. The Maduro family has represented the Republic of France for very many years. Of the 32 countries now having consulates in Curaçao, 19 are represented by Curaçoan Jews. Israel has an honorary consul. (See illustrations 134, 136, 179, 223, 244, 253, 305.)

Ever since the 19th century Holland has entrusted Curaçoan Jews to represent her as consuls or vice consuls in different ports of the Antilles, Central America, Colombia, Venezuela and other South American countries.

The Jewish consuls have employed their good offices to strengthen the bonds of friendship and foster better commercial relations between the countries they represent and Curaçao or between Holland and the countries neighboring Curaçao (page 415).

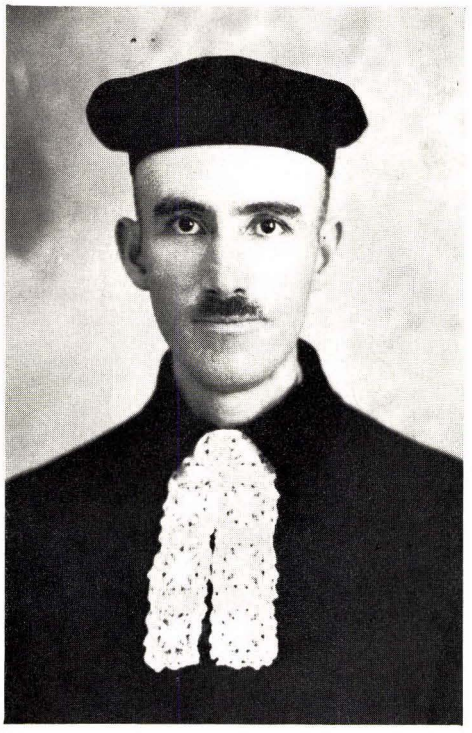
Such has been the manifold Jewish contribution to the development of Curaçao. The Curaçoan Jew has ardently defended the interests of the island as his very own. He has fought energetically to improve the lot of the colored people and the poor (e.g., Abraham M. Chumaceiro, Dr. David R. Capriles and Haim J. C. Henriquez, to mention three). All these efforts directed to the progress and welfare of his country can be considered a well-merited tribute he has paid a wise and liberal government that from the time of the Dutch West India Company appreciated and protected him as a trustworthy, loyal citizen.

193. HAZZAN DAVID ISAAC QUERIDO, 1868-1918

194. BARUCH DAVID DUQUE, CANTOR AND PREACHER FROM 1923 TO 1936

194A. BENJAMIN SALOM DELVALLE, 1811-1876, HONORARY HAZZAN

194B. JUDITH DE JACOB DE CASTRO, WIFE OF BENJAMIN S. DELVALLE, M. 1833. SEE P. 340



195. THE AUTHOR AS HAHAM OF CURAÇAO, 1936

PROGRAMA

DE UNA

VELADA

ARTISTICA Y LITERARIA

ORGANIZADA POR LOS DISCIPULOS DE LAS CLASES DE RELIGION DE LA COMUNIDAD

"MIKVE-ISRAEL"

BAJO LA DIRECCION DEL RABINO

Dr. I. S. EMMANUEL

EL JUEVES 28 DE ABRIL DE 1938

A LAS 8.30 P. M. EN EL TEATRO

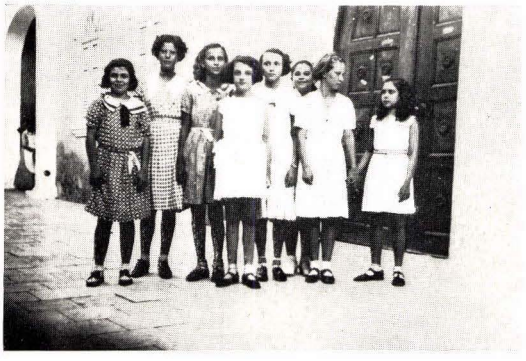
ROXY

CURACAO, A. H.

Véase indicaciones en la página 16.

Tip. Electrica. Curaçao.

196. PROGRAM, PERFORMANCE GIVEN BY THE AUTHOR'S RELIGIOUS SCHOOL PUPILS, CURAÇAO, 1938

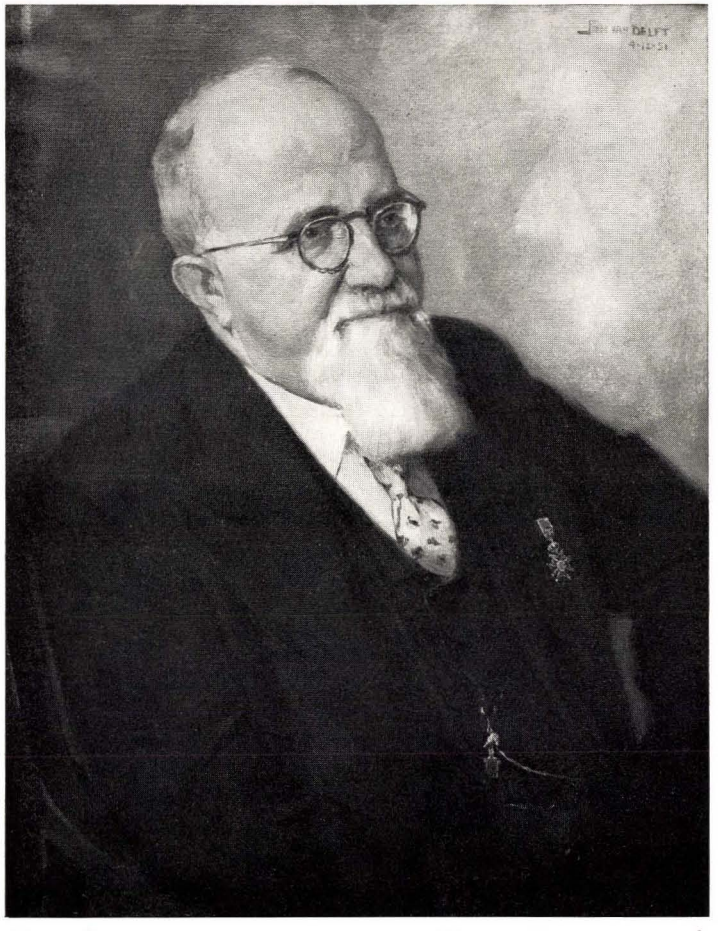


197. HEBREW SCHOOL CLASS UNDER RABBI EMMANUEL, CURAÇAO, 1936

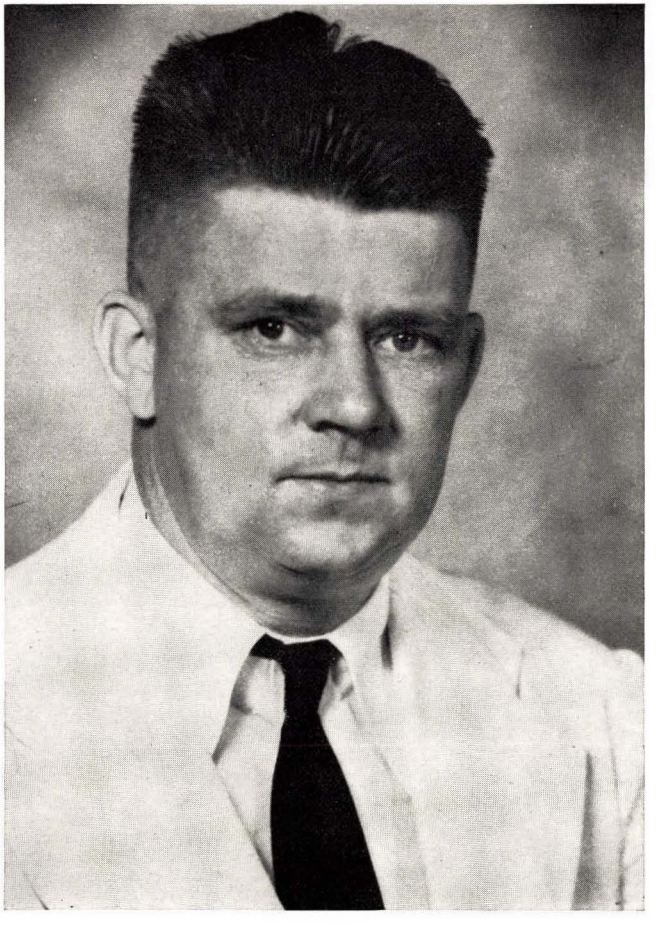
198. HEBREW SCHOOL CLASS UNDER RABBI EMMANUEL, CURAÇAO, 1936

199. THE AUTHOR ON HIS INSTALLATION AS CHIEF RABBI OF THE SEPHARDIC CONGREGATION BENE HERZL, RIO DE JANEIRO, MAY, 1950 (SEATED NEAR SALVADOR ESPERANÇA, PRESIDENT)

200. JOSEPH SPRINTZAK, PRESIDENT OF THE ISRAELI PARLIAMENT, CENTER, RECEIVED BY THE JEWISH COMMUNITIES OF RIO DE JANEIRO, 1950. FROM LEFT TO RIGHT FIRST ROW, SALVADOR ESPERANÇA, THE AUTHOR, SPRINTZAK, JACOB SCHNEIDER, TOFIC NIGRI



201. † DR. WYBO J. GOSLINGA, 1893-1964, MEḤASSIDÉ UMOTH HA'OLAM, SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS, NETHERLANDS ANTILLES



202. † JAN POLMAN, 1908-1950, ENGINEER WHO DESIGNED, PRO DEO, THE PLAN OF THE OLD JEWISH CEMETERY, CURAÇAO

CHAPTER XXIV

CONTEMPORARY PERIOD
1904-1965

FIFTEEN MONTHS before Hazzan Chumaceiro passed on, the community engaged Cantor David de Isaac Querido although his certificates did not meet the full requirements of the communal statutes. He arrived in July, 1904, with excellent recommendations from the Amsterdam rabbinate and the Paramaribo community where he had served as cantor. He was born in Amsterdam on October 15, 1868. God-fearing and religious, Querido tried in the beginning to hold religious services in the synagogue at least on Monday, Thursday, Friday night and Saturday. The community still observed the two days of Rosh Hashanah and Shabu'oth, as well as the second and last two days of Passover and Tabernacles. But they had already forgotten that the *ketubah* is a document that compels a husband to maintain certain conditions in favor of his wife and must be signed by him only. When he wrote to the parnassim, and rightly so, that Jewish Law does not require a bride to sign the *ketubah*, they replied: "An extra signature does not invalidate a document."[1] Before his remarriage in 1911, he asked for and obtained their permission to use a traditional *ketubah* which would not be signed by his bride.

In addition to his communal duties Querido served for several years as president of Curaçao's Education Council for Poor and Orphaned Children. (This council was made up of a representative from each of the three faiths.)[2] Poor health in 1910 forced him to step aside temporarily in favor of Isaac de David Sasso.[3] He went on leave to Holland in 1911 and remained there until 1914. During his absence services were conducted by three laymen: Haim Senior, Moises de David de Castro and Mortimer de Samuel Alvares Correa.[4] Querido died in Curaçao four years later on February 5, 1918.[5]

Haim Senior again took charge of the religious services until the arrival of Cantor Mayer Haim Battan, a native of Jerusalem. He was engaged on a

[1] MIA, Consejo de la Sinagoga, Libro de Minutas, meeting of Jan. 9, 1908.

[2] Querido for the Jews, Father A. Euwens for the Catholics and M.H.J. Bosch Loenen for the Protestants (*KV*, 1914).

[3] MIA, Ket., XI, no. 71.

[4] *Ibid.*, XII, nos. 1-6.

[5] See Emmanuel, *Precious Stones*, p. 473 and illus. 193.

temporary basis in August, 1918, but was not installed until the first day of Passover, 1919. He resigned in February, 1920, was re-engaged in September, 1921, and served until September 14, 1922,[6] when he was finally forced to relinquish his post.[7] During his ministry the Simḥath Torah service was held on the last day of Tabernacles as was customary.

The vacancy was filled a year later by Baruch de David Duque, a former cantor of the Portuguese community of Hamburg. He arrived in Curaçao on September 4, 1923. Duque was overliberal. During his cantorship the Simḥath Torah Service, once so enthusiastically celebrated in Curaçao, was completely eliminated; the reading of the Torah for Bridegrooms of the Law was held on the Saturday following Sukkot without the seven circuits customarily made with the Scrolls of the Law. He eliminated the observance of the second day and last day of Passover and Tabernacles, the second day of Shabu'oth and even the second day of Rosh Hashanah which has always been celebrated in Israel. These radical changes were obviously made without having been put to the members or the parnassim for a vote; nothing could be found in the records about them. He replaced the beautiful *Pesaḥ Seder* by having the *Haggadah* read in the synagogue courtyard and then giving the assemblage a little *maẓa* and wine as a souvenir. Burials, especially those in the Old Cemetery, were held on Saturday late in the afternoon while the sun was still riding high. During his tenure the *sheḥita* was abolished in 1932, and the organ was introduced in the Yom Kippur services contrary to the formal decision taken by Haham Chumaceiro and the parnassim of his day. Duque was the first to issue a religious divorce (*get*) typewritten in Dutch with a sprinkling of Hebrew. His excuse: "When their [the communal directors'] will must be done, the Law may be abrogated."[8] He did not have the necessary courage and energy to combat the religious indifference then manifesting itself in the community which was paying him almost 3,000 florins yearly in addition to his government salary.

During his ministry the community celebrated the bicentennial of the synagogue on Wednesday night, April 20, 1932 (Passover, 5692). The service was impressive. Participants included the Governor, Catholic and Protestant prelates, military and naval officials. Duque distinguished himself with his fine tenor voice. The synagogue choir sang several religious melodies composed for the event by Mordechay Capriles, Charles and Manuel S. L. Maduro.

[6] According to an account in manuscript.

[7] Forty years after his resignation, Battan still remained bitter over his experiences in Curaçao (letters to the author, 1962-63). He has been serving as voluntary cantor during the High Holy Days in the lower level synagogue of New York's Shearith Israel.

[8] A pun on verse 126 of Psalm 119; MIA, Ket., XII, no. 9.

Most outstanding of all was the friendship pact then signed between the Mikvé Israel and the Reform community which had officially participated in the service. In the name of the community the president, S.A.L. Maduro, cabled Queen Wilhelmina a message of the love and loyalty which the Jews of Curaçao have always held for the House of Orange. The Queen cabled her thanks and congratulations the same day. The committee in charge of the celebration received numerous felicitations and some forty cables. Father A. Euwens, a friend of the Jews, for this occasion published two studies relating to the history of the Jewish community. As customary in such circumstances, the Netherlands Government decorated the president S.A.L. Maduro with the order of Knight of Orange-Nassau, and the elderly sexton David Haim Lopez Penha[9] with the silver medal of the House of Orange-Nassau (illus. 127, 183, 194).

ECONOMIC CONDITION OF THE COMMUNITY 1920-1963

The budget was planned so that the capital would increase a little each year. The *legados* and the excellent administration of the community made this possible. From 1920 to 1930 the community averaged annual receipts of 18,867 florins and disbursements of 16,672 florins. Outside of 1924 when there was a deficit of 1,424 florins, receipts generally exceeded expenditures. A part of the income was derived from the rental of community houses. As this source of income gave the directors much work and trouble with the tenants, they converted the sum of 137,500 florins into stocks and U.S. Government Bonds. The depression and the subsequent devaluation of the dollar in 1933 caused the community to sustain a loss of 58,688 florins. In 1952 they built near the synagogue an office building which yields a goodly income. Toward the end of 1962, before the merger of the two communities, the Mikvé Israel had a capital fund of NAf. 350,000, more or less; receipts of NAf. 46,000, and disbursements of NAf. 44,000. In the same period Temple Emanu-El had a capital fund of NAf. 92,320, receipts of NAf. 16,000, and disbursements of NAf. 14,000. The rabbis of both communities received their salary from the island government and a contribution from the communities.

[9] Son of the Sexton Eliezer, grandson of the Assessor Ribbi Moses, great-grandson of the Dayyan Ribbi Daniel Lopez Penha, he served as sexton for fifty years. He had a painful incident with Duque who, though rebuked by the parnassim for it and rightly so, ignored their disapproval. He died in 1942 at the age of 82 years.

THE AUTHOR IN CURAÇAO

Those who write their own biographies are often accused of being subjective. It is indeed most trying to have to speak of oneself, and the author would have preferred to avoid this. But since he has the privilege of being part of this account, he has no alternative but to proceed.

Isaac S. Emmanuel was born in Salonika, Greece, the son of Rabbi Samuel. After graduating from the Rabbinical Seminary of Salonika where he studied under Bension Uziel,[10] then Chief Rabbi of Salonika, he served for three years as preacher in a large synagogue of that city. The Jewish community then sent him for further study to the Breslau Jewish Theological Seminary. He studied simultaneously for two semesters at the Hochschule für die Wissenschaft des Judentums of Berlin — then under the direction of the eminent Professor Ismar Elbogen — and in the University of Berlin where he passed the examinations in Oriental languages. After his second ordination as rabbi, this time from the Breslau Jewish Theological Seminary, he continued graduate studies at the University of Lausanne. There he was awarded the degree of Licencié and later of Doctor in Social Sciences. His doctoral thesis —*Histoire de l'Industrie des Tissus des Israélites de Salonique* (Thonon, 1935) — dealt with the textile industry of the Jews of his natal city.

He started publishing articles on the history of the Jews of Salonika from his early Breslau days. In 1936 he published:

1. The first volume of an epigraphic work in Hebrew — *Guedolé Saloniki Ledorotam* (The Great Jews of Salonika) [Tel Aviv, 352 pp.] — consisting of five hundred annotated epitaphs accompanied by biographical notes.
2. The first volume of *Histoire des Israélites de Salonique, 140 B.C.E. to 1660* (Thonon-Paris, 320 pp.).

Just as he was submitting the last pages for printing he received the invitation to go to Curaçao as rabbi on a provisional basis.

Through his works on the Jewish history of Salonika he had some notion of the Jewish families of Curaçao. Like a missionary, he tried fulfilling his duty by injecting a feeling for Jewish life into a community long religiously neglected. Convinced as he was that only a good Jewish education could save the future generation, he dedicated all his time to this purpose. He introduced courses in Jewish history in the Government School to Ashkenazi and Sephardi children alike, conducted a course in Hebrew in the vestry

[10] See his letter of May 20, 1936, to the author, published in Emmanuel, *Histoire des Israélites de Salonique*, p. 7.

of the synagogue, delivered a series of lectures on Jewish subjects on the adult level, and presented several theatrical pieces on Jewish themes of his own composition that were geared to the tastes and sensibilities of an especially liberal public. But he was confronted with tremendous difficulties.

It will be remembered that after Haham Chumaceiro's departure in 1868 the rabbinate was occupied by cantors or laymen of good will. The only officiant among them who fought in behalf of the Jewish youth was J.H.M. Chumaceiro (pages 403-405), and he was obliged to tender his resignation, also because of the obstacles encountered in his work. From 1904 to 1936 there was no leader strong enough to foster Jewish education. Therefore, it is not surprising that the author's zeal was very often misconstrued.

Three weeks after his arrival the author was amazed to be called to officiate at a funeral on Saturday afternoon before nightfall. Hard as he tried, he could not dissuade the Mahamad from following this practice. Naturally it was most painful for him to keep the funeral procession waiting for almost an hour until the appearance of the first stars. That happened on the death of one of Curaçao's most prominent Jews. The deceased's family was highly displeased to have the Governor, the heads of the Catholic and Protestant churches and military authorities kept waiting until nightfall. He tried to explain, without success, that a burial on Saturday afternoon was religiously forbidden, especially where a public act was involved and the community was by its statutes "orthodox." To prove his point he reminded them that the Mahamad did not permit a gentile contractor to have even his non-Jewish laborers work on Saturdays or Jewish holidays on the building or repair of property belonging to the community.

The next hurdle was the question of terminating Yom Kippur. This had been arbitrarily fixed at 5:40 p.m. whether or not the fast day fell on September 14 or October 14. The discontent with their new rabbi was particularly keen among three parnassim. After a thirteen-year precedent of an obliging *ministro*, they could not adjust themselves to the reality that the community was not yet so reformed that a conscientious rabbi, while disposed to adapt himself to a special situation (the synagogue being ultraconservative by statute[11] with an ultra-liberal membership), could not create dangerous precedents. His honest and courageous attitude evoked the admiration of two prominent Protestants in the government.[12]

These differences between rabbi and parnassim gradually worsened. As in

[11] The Jews of the Mikvé Israel have observed the "Blessing of the Moon" at the close of Yom Kippur as is done in very orthodox synagogues.

[12] Letters in the author's possession.

the case of former cantors or teachers (Cordova, Lopez da Fonseca, Maduro, Corcos, Baruch, Levy and Battan) who found it impossible to remain in their post,[13] he too found peace of mind by resigning. He left the community on July 1, 1939, however with an indemnity and honorable mention for his services as rabbi of a community he has always esteemed for its illustrious past.

Even before his resignation he had received an offer to return to Greece to write a work on the Jewish history of the Balkans in collaboration with Professor Samuel Krauss of Vienna. World War II kept him in Curaçao where the Dutch Government, through the initiative of the late Dr. W. J. Goslinga, head of public instruction, engaged him as Chief Librarian of the Government Library. During that employment he published in 1942 and 1945 two catalogues of the books in that library. He also set up a bookbindery, for which he received honorable mention in the Staten or the island's Legislative Council.

In 1946 he was called to service as rabbi of the Sephardic community of Panama. He remained there until August, 1948, only to return to Curaçao to continue with his research of different archives on the island. From May, 1950, to October, 1953, he served as spiritual leader of the Sephardic community of Rio de Janeiro. Convinced by this time that an exhaustive investigation of the Curaçao records on Holland would give him the thorough documentation he craved for his work on Curaçao, he left with his wife for the Netherlands. The result was *Precious Stones of the Jews of Curaçao* (Assen-New York, 1957), 585 pp., published by the late Dr. W. J. Goslinga (president of the Curaçao Scientific Society) in conjunction with the Mikvé Israel. Five years later the Ben Zvi Institute of the University of Jerusalem published his *Maẓavoth Saloniki* in two volumes. This work consists of some 1,900 epitaphs with annotations and biographies of rabbis and eminent men of Salonika reposing in the Jewish cemetery of Salonika since destroyed by the Nazis. Since *Precious Stones* was well received by scholars in the Jewish world, the parnassim of the Mikvé Israel and Temple Emanu-El, before the merger, decided to publish the present work.

If on the one hand the author regretted his resignation for no longer being able to carry on his program at the Mikvé Israel, on the other hand he has had the moral satisfaction of not having contributed to the decline of this once illustrious community (illus. 195-200).

[13] For one reason or another Haham Pardo (in 1683) and Haham Chumaceiro (in 1868) were also obliged to resign.

Jewish communities in a large measure owe their vitality to their spiritual heads. The Mikvé Israel was fortunate in having had devoted rabbis in the 17th and 18th centuries who, through their spirit of sacrifice, knew how to shape generations that were truly Jewish. Haham Chumaceiro fought vigorously for the preservation of the religious tradition in the community — a tradition which for want of a rabbi deteriorated rapidly after his departure. Despite this sad experience, the community again took on a cantor, a person who, unlike a demanding, conscientious rabbi, would carry out all their wishes.

Isaac de Samuel Jessurun Cardozo, who was born in Amsterdam on May 11, 1905, took office the first day of Rosh Hashanah, 1939, the day he arrived in Curaçao. Several weeks later he was put to the test. At the request of a member of the community, he granted a *get*,[14] a document of his own composition. It was typewritten partly in Hebrew and partly in Dutch, without the slightest regard for religious prescriptions. He eliminated the Hosha'na Rabbah service and demonstrated an indulgence toward burials on Saturday afternoon before nightfall.[15] He taught the youth of his community, but did not devote much time to them. He also gave lessons to the Ashkenazic youth at their Moria Hebrew School after school hours, for which he was paid extra.

During his incumbency the Mikvé Israel celebrated its tercentenary in 1954. (It should have taken place in 1951.) Before his definitive departure on April 29, 1956, and during his vacations, Cardozo was replaced by his brother David, a lawyer by profession. He too granted the *get* without taking into consideration any of the laws governing it. After David passed away in May, 1960, Rabbi Moshe Amine was engaged. He was born in Jerusalem on February 15, 1919. Before his arrival on June 19, 1960, he taught a Sephardic community in Brooklyn and served as rabbi of Temple Menorah Kahal Joseph at Redondo Beach, California. In January, 1963, a friend of his told him that because of the possibility of a merger between the communities Mikvé Israel and Temple Emanu-El, his contract would not be renewed. Rabbi Amine resigned at the expiration of his contract and left. Months before then Rabbi Simeon Maslin of the Reform Congregation was asked by the boards of both congregations to work on the merger. At his suggestion, they agreed to adopt Reconstructionism as its basis. In taking this step a sad end was put to the 314-year-old Sephardic rite of the Mikvé Israel Synagogue, the oldest in the Americas.

Rabbi Maslin unfortunately did not have sufficient feeling for Sephardic

[14] MIA, Ket. XII, no. 43. Later on Cardozo granted five similar divorces.

[15] See *La Prensa*, Curaçao, Saturday, July 6, 1940.

Jewish history. The young rabbi should have counselled and convinced the Portuguese Jews of Curaçao not to break with the wonderful past of their synagogue. He should have sought some means of preserving the Sephardic rite. History will tell if the presence of Maslin in Curaçao was profitable or injurious to this once glorious congregation.

From 1964 on Rabbi Maslin was assisted by Cantor Norman P. Swerling. Both left in 1967: Rabbi Maslin in February to accept the call of Reform rabbi in Chicago; Cantor Swerling in August to become cantor of a Reform congregation in Rye, N. Y. Rabbi Leo Michel Abrami took over in April, 1967. Born in Paris, he received his B.S. at the University of Geneva, was ordained at the Hebrew Union College, Cincinnati, and for a time served as Reform rabbi in Guatemala and as youth director in a Conservative congregation in Norwood, Mass.

ARRIVAL OF THE ASHKENAZIM

The number of Jews of Ashkenazic origin who settled in Curaçao prior to 1926 was exceptionally small. From time to time we encounter in the government or Mikvé Israel records a few soldiers or policemen, an isolated physician or lawyer, merchant or traveler. Their number never reached ten adult men at any one time.

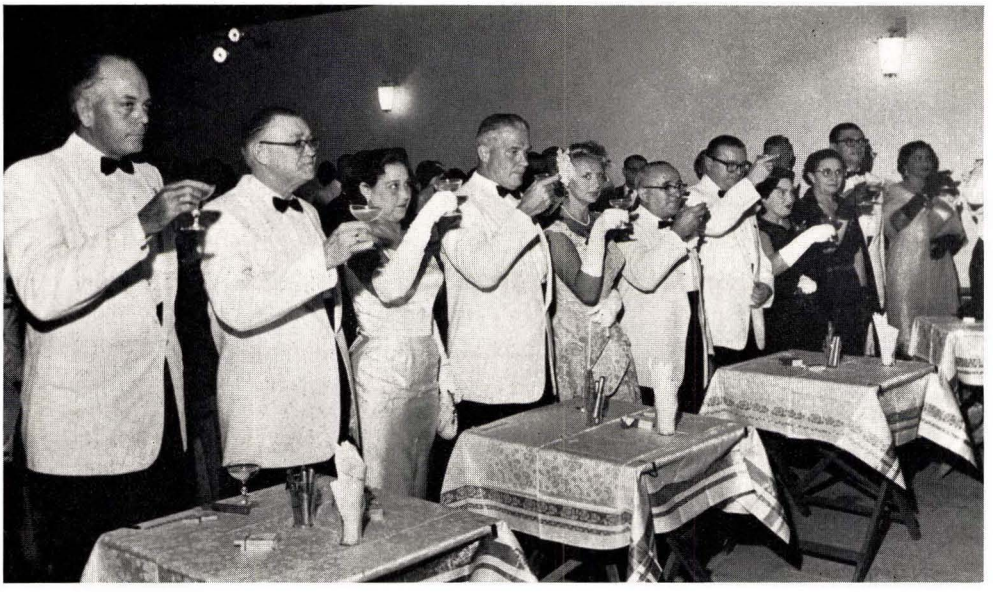
As an aftermath of World War I several Ashkenazim, mostly from Roumania, settled in Curaçao after 1926. The majority arrived without resources and could not face the economic depression which hit Curaçao in 1929. Some moved to other countries on the American Continent or returned to Europe. The few who remained toiled very hard to earn their living, mainly as peddlers. As soon as they were able to save some money, they opened modest stores and brought their relatives (brothers, brothers-in-law, cousins) from Europe. Thanks to their ability, thrift and industry, as well as the credit facilities extended to them by several Curaçao Jewish firms and Maduro & Curiel's Bank, they succeeded in creating a first-class economic position for themselves. During the past thirty years they have contributed greatly to the development of the island's economy. They have built imposing buildings in the business district and exclusive shops, e.g., that of Spritzer & Fuhrmann, and others, which attract tourists as well as buyers from the Caribbean and Venezuela. Some of these firms maintain branches in New York and Panama. The Ashkenazic community now numbers some one hundred families.[16]

[16] This number does not include the Sephardim of Europe or some Ashkenazim of Holland although they are members of Club Union.

203. ASHKENAZIC SYNAGOGUE SHAAREI TZEDEK, CURAÇAO, 1959

204. DEDICATION, ASHKENAZIC SYNAGOGUE SHAAREI TZEDEK, CURAÇAO, 1959. FROM LEFT TO RIGHT, LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR M. P. GORSIRA, HAIM S. KISILEVITCH, CANTOR NATHAN SCHACHTER, ABRAM WIZNITZER

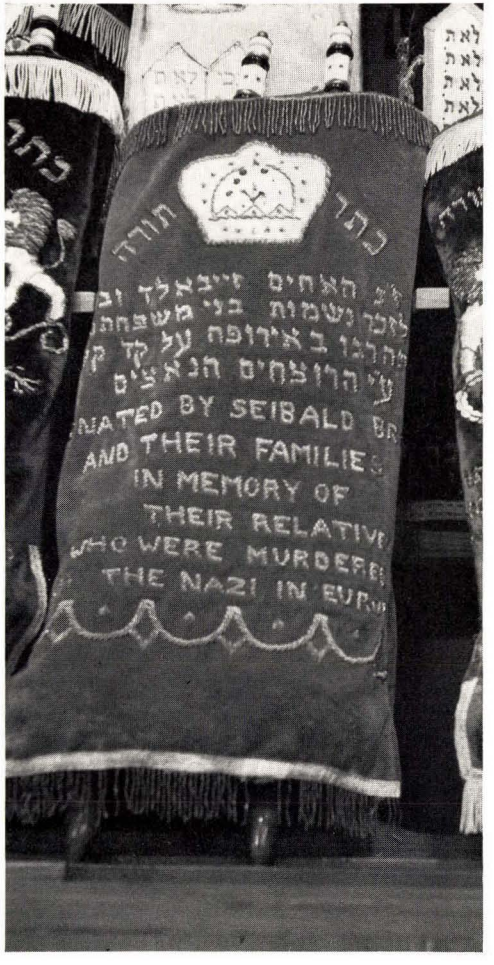
205. DEDICATION, ASHKENAZIC SYNAGOGUE SHAAREI TZEDEK, CURAÇAO, 1959



206. DEDICATION, SYNAGOGUE SHAAREI TZEDEK, SOCIAL HALL. FROM LEFT TO RIGHT, M. P. GORSIRA, CHRISTIAAN WINKEL AZ., MRS. EFRAIM JONCKHEER, GOVERNOR A. B. SPEEKENBRINK, MRS. JACOBO FRUCHTER, JAN GROISMAN, DR. EFRAIM JONCKHEER, MRS. JAN GROISMAN, MRS. JUANCHO YRRAUSQUIN, JUANCHO YRRAUSQUIN, UNIDENTIFIED LADY

207. GEORGE J. L. MADURO (B. CURAÇAO, 1916--D. DACHAU, 1945), NAZI VICTIM,
ארץ אל תכסי דמם

208. MORDECHAY HAIM GANDELMAN (B. 1919), RABBINICAL STUDENT IN AMSTERDAM FROM CURAÇAO, NAZI VICTIM, ארץ אל תכסי דמם



209. TORAH CLOTH DONATED TO SYNAGOGUE SHAAREI TZEDEK, CURAÇAO, IN MEMORY OF THE SEIBALD FAMILY VICTIMS OF THE NAZIS

Desiring to continue in the Ashkenazic rite, the newcomers rented a house in Scharloo in 1930 which they used as a synagogue on Saturdays and holidays until 1949. It had no legal status and was administered gratuitously by one Pesah Brycka until his departure for Israel. Meanwhile one of their number, Yankel Schmukler, improvised as cantor and ritual slaughterer of fowl.

Like several groups of immigrants who settled in Central and South America, the Ashkenazim in Curaçao organized themselves not as a Jewish community, but as a Jewish center. They founded their center in 1932 and called it Club Union. Its administrators studied all questions related to the Ashkenazim of Curaçao and transients.

The colony grew rapidly with the arrival of relatives from Europe after World War II. In 1949 they bought a house on Scharlooweg which they used as a Jewish center. A few years later they bought the house adjoining it and transformed it into a synagogue seating 188. Both properties, with improvements, furniture, and so forth, cost them about $100,000. Under the presidency of Jan Groisman the group organized itself as the Ashkenazi Jewish Community Shaarei Tzedek (Gates of Justice).

Their relations with the Mikvé Israel community, and now with the merged Mikvé Israel-Emanuel community, have been excellent. The Mikvé Israel allowed them to use the Jewish burial grounds under the same conditions governing their own members. The author, as rabbi, performed the funeral services for the Ashkenazim without charge, and accepted their children in his religious classes, also without charge. He helped them with their problems with much devotion. In an emergency he would fill in for their sick, elderly *shoḥet* (of fowl) and urge them to pay the fee to the poor man.

The Mikvé Israel, like the mother community of Amsterdam, could not accept the Ashkenazim as members of their congregation lest at some future election an Ashkenazic majority might change over to the Ashkenazic rite. A few years later, however, the Mikvé Israel did offer them full membership provided that they would not seek election as parnas for ten years. This condition was not acceptable to the Ashkenazim; only a few decided to join. Now that Congregations Mikvé Israel and Emanu-El have merged and accepted the Ashkenazic Reconstructionist-Reform ritual, the problem of Ashkenazic or Sephardic rite no longer exists. There is no question that the members of Congregation Shaarei Tzedek will remain faithful to their ancestral rite and not adopt the Reconstructionist-Reform rite.

As their colony expanded, the Ashkenazim held Hebrew classes for their children after school hours. They called their Hebrew School Moria and employed Cantor Cardozo of the Mikvé Israel as teacher. At the same time

their youth was organized as Club Maccabi, a sporting club. For a short time it published the *Shomer Hanohar* (Guardian of the Youth), a monthly mimeographed sheet in Dutch.

The Ashkenazim were deeply grateful to the Netherlands and Curaçao Governments for the hospitality extended to them. During the War they served voluntarily, alongside the other citizens, in the Civil Guard and in the Air-raid Defense Corps. They also contributed generously to the Sanoc Fund in behalf of the Dutch war victims. After the war most of them obtained Dutch-Curaçao citizenship. They now make part of the Board of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

While they fulfilled their duty to the Netherlands and Curaçao Governments, they also identified themselves with every Jewish and Israeli endeavor. During the war they did much to help the many Jewish refugees who stopped over. Despite the relatively vast outlay of funds for the purchase and rebuilding of their center and synagogue, they have contributed generously to *yeshiboth*, the State of Israel, Jewish culture, and the like. Rarely does a *shaliaḥ* who visits Curaçao leave empty-handed. The same holds true for Jewish artists from South America whom they have received at their center.

In February, 1954, a few months after *Shoḥet* Schmukler died (October, 1953), the Ashkenazim engaged Nathan Schachter as spiritual leader, cantor, ritual slaughterer and teacher over the protests of Cantor Cardozo of Mikvé Israel. A native of Roumania, Schachter reorganized the religious school. He had the honor of consecrating Synagogue Shaarei Tzedek on February 18, 1959. This ceremony was attended by Governor A. B. Speekenbrink, the prime minister, cabinet members and heads of political organizations and of religious communities as well. The governor greeted the members of the Ashkenazic community warmly and asserted that "such communities are certainly a blessing for my land wherever they may be found." This impressive dedication gave the Ashkenazic Jews much prestige. The Mikvé Israel on this occasion offered a silver Ḥanukkah lamp for the new synagogue.

Hazzan Schachter left in 1960. The new community then engaged Haim Abramovic of Israel (May 5, 1961 to February, 1964). He did remarkably well with his pupils. The leaders of the Shaarei Tzedek nevertheless felt that they needed a more qualified person and soon found a pretext to send him away before his contract was up.[17] On February 7, 1964, they took on Rabbi Hirsch Zelkovic as their spiritual leader, cantor, ritual slaughterer,

[17] The author, who was visiting Curaçao at the time, was shocked at the methods employed to dismiss Abramovic. This deplorable custom of finding the slightest excuse to break their contracts with cantors or rabbis is becoming firmly rooted in communities of the Americas.

circumciser and teacher. Born in Poland in 1920, he studied at the *yeshiboth* of Zamrof and Warsaw where he was ordained. He continued studying at a *yeshibah* in New York and was ordained as rabbi for the second time. In 1962 and 1964 he served as general secretary of the Conference of Rabbis and Orthodox Communities of Latin America.[18] For reasons unknown to the author, Zelkovic left on November 30, 1964, to accept a rabbinate in Guatemala.

Congregation Shaarei Tzedek remained without a rabbi almost three years before engaging Rabbi Menachem Mendel Fitterman (September, 1967). A graduate of Lodz and Warsaw *yeshiboth*, he was well acquainted with talmudic and rabbinic literature, and held a doctorate in biochemistry also. In addition to his duties, he edited the congregation's bi-monthly: *Bulletin of the Community Shaarei Tzedek*. For reasons unknown to the author, he left.

It is fervently hoped that Congregation Shaarei Tzedek will speedily engage an able, God-fearing American rabbi to whom they will give their full support. An American rabbi with a solid traditional and secular background would be able to draw the Ashkenazic youth to him. And this is vital, for in the youth the future of Curaçao Jewry rests. May the Ashkenazic community with their God-fearing rabbi, whoever he may be, be able to stem the assimilationist trend that has so dangerously taken hold of Curaçao's old families! (See illustrations 203-206, 208-209.)

THE JEWISH COMMUNITY DURING WORLD WAR II

When the Jews were expelled from Spain and Portugal, the great Ottoman Empire to the South, and later Holland to the North, received the fugitives with open arms. No such asylum was granted to the European Jews during the Nazi Terror. Turkey and Spain who could have saved the Balkan Jews, their former loyal subjects, refused to accept them.[19] England who could have opened Palestine to them barred their rescue.[20]

Holland, in keeping with her ancient, noble tradition, received the Jewish refugees from the moment the Nazis got in power.[21] The Dutch

[18] For fuller biographic details, see the *Forward*, New York, Aug. 14, 1964.

[19] Spain nevertheless made it possible for many Jews of France to cross over into her land.

[20] "The decision of the Colonial Office to bar all further immigration into Palestine . . . leaves Germany in the role of the exterminator of the Jews and Britain of the Power barring their rescue" (Pierre van Paassen, *The Forgotten Ally* [New York, 1943], pp. 315-16). Arthur D. Morse, *While Six Million Died* (New York, 1968), pp. 308-9.

[21] See Ismar Elbogen, *A Century of Jewish Life* (Philadelphia, 1946), p. 461, on Queen Wilhelmina's negotiations with Kemal Pasha in behalf of the Palestinian Jews, and pp. 547, 667, regarding Dutch hospitality toward the Jews.

Government in exile was willing to accept the German proposition and pay a ransom for the salvation of Dutch Jewry, but the British opposed this. In 1941 when several American states refused to admit eighty-five Jewish refugees[22] into their ports, the Dutch Government opened Curaçao to them in November, 1941. The Joint Distribution Committee of New York, represented in Curaçao by the late Milton H. L. Maduro, obligated itself to pay the expenses of their stay on the island. A committee representing the three Jewish communities was organized to make life easier for the displaced people and to aid those who were bound for other South American ports. This committee also took steps to liberate the 23 German and Austrian Jews interned on the island of Bonaire.[23] Of the 302 refugees interned at Gibraltar Camp in Jamaica, B.W.I., 92 were accepted by the Curaçao Government and employed in various governmental services. The American Jewish soldiers stationed in Curaçao were not neglected. Families, particularly among the Ashkenazim (the Wiznitzers and others), accepted them fraternally into their homes. Curaçao Jewry truly carried out her duty toward all who needed her aid.

The incredible news of the German slaughter of the Jewish masses roused the Curaçoan people to hold at their Roxy Theater a demonstration of sympathy for the victims and protest against the Nazi atrocities. Speakers included Governor P. Kasteel, heads of the Catholic and Protestant churches, and the late Dr. W. J. Goslinga, inspector of public instruction. Dutch Curaçao and her subjects thus made common cause with the Jews and once more distinguished themselves through their humanitarian actions toward Jewry (illus. 201).

The Jews of Curaçao lost two young men in the Nazi holocaust — a Sephardi and an Ashkenazi.

George J. L. Maduro, born in Curaçao in 1916, to the late Jossy M. L. Maduro and Rebecca D. L. Maduro, was then taking up law at the University of Leyden. A second lieutenant in the Hussars (Cavalry) Reserves, he was called to the Dutch Army when the Germans invaded Holland on May 10, 1940. He distinguished himself during the battle between the mighty German forces and the small but courageous Dutch Army. As captain of a group of young soldiers, he successfully launched the assault on the villa of Leeuwenburg (Dorrepaal) behind the Vliet Canal near the Dutch town of Rijswijk. In spite of the German fire, he heroically took the

[22] At least three of them died in Curaçao. See Emmanuel, *Precious Stones*, no. 201, pp. 478-79.

[23] Religious services for the High Holy Days were organized for them in Bonaire. The author had the privilege to officiate there in 1942.

villa and was the first to enter it. After the Dutch capitulation, he was taken prisoner. He tried to flee to Spain in 1943 and from there go to London to join the Netherlands forces in Britain, but was betrayed to the Gestapo. He was interned first at Saarbrucken and later at Dachau where he died of spotted fever on February 9, 1945.

In 1946 George L. Maduro was posthumously awarded the Knight's Cross, Fourth Class, of the Military Order of King William I. It is the most distinguished decoration awarded to a Jew of Curaçao. Queen Wilhelmina wrote to his parents: "It is with pride that I shall remember his deeds." In memory of their only son, his parents gave 100,000 florins for the creation of Madurodam, a miniature town at The Hague. This big tourist attraction realizes an annual revenue of some 100,000 florins, which is used to maintain the Netherlands Students Sanatorium at Laren in Northern Holland. The George Maduro profile heads a tablet at the entrance of Madurodam. Another tablet appears on the wall of Maduro & Sons facing Ruyterplein in Curaçao (illus. 311). The Curaçao Government named a street in his honor.[24]

The second victim was Mordechay,[25] the son of the late Haim Gandelman. He was born in Roumania in 1919 and migrated to Curaçao with his parents about 1930. Mordechay's father, who was fond of Jewish culture, sent him to a *yeshibah* in Amsterdam, thanks to the Mikvé Israel which contributed part of the monthly tuition. When the Germans overran Holland, Mordechay was deported and perished in a Nazi extermination camp. The tyrant made no distinction between his victims, whether they were Jews from Poland or Salonika, Ashkenazim or Sephardim. For the sake of the millions exterminated by the Nazi horde, may men of good will ever strive to eradicate hatreds and establish everlasting peace! (See illus. 207-209.)

[24] According to letters received from the late Jossy M. L. Maduro; J. Hartog, *The Story of the Maduro's*, pp. 178-79.

[25] See illus. 208.

CHAPTER XXV

MERGER OF CONGREGATIONS MIKVE ISRAEL AND TEMPLE EMANU-EL

The Board of Trustees of the United Congregation Mikvé Israel-Emanuel, which is sponsoring the publication of this work, wish to make it clear that, although they have censored and amended the contents of this chapter, they do not share all the opinions expressed therein by the authors.*

RABBI AMINE was fully accepted and admired during the early months of his arrival. He published a weekly bulletin and tried his best to foster interest in communal activity. Like all his predecessors after Haham Chumaceiro, he also officiated as Mikvé Israel's cantor. Unfortunately his voice was not pleasant. He introduced English in the services, employing Dr. Pool's prayer book. Some were annoyed with his faulty English pronunciation and sermon delivery. He eliminated all the preliminary psalms and rushed through the Torah reading so that the morning services would be over in seventy-five minutes. Nevertheless, he did not always have a *minyan* at his services. Temple Emanu-El celebrated services only on Friday evening. The officers of both congregations therefore considered merging to remedy the situation.

In January, 1963, barely four months after the Reform rabbi's arrival, the parnassim of the Mikvé Israel decided not to renew Rabbi Amine's contract. They thereby opened the way for the merger and the possibility of taking on the Reform rabbi as spiritual leader of a united congregation. Four months before his contract expired, Rabbi Amine was informed that he would not be re-engaged and that it would be more elegant of him to resign. Naturally this was upsetting news, for in addition to his annual government salary of 11,088 Antillian florins, Rabbi Amine received 6,000 florins from the Community Chest, or a total of about $9,000 yearly. He had no alternative but to resign. He left the island at the end of July, 1963.

PROPOSAL TO POSTPONE THE MERGER

As soon as Rabbi Amine resigned, the presidents of both congregations started working on a merger. The moment was not favorable for Congregation

* See above, *Censorship*, p. 8.

Mikvé Israel which needed a truly modern rabbi. I was in Curaçao when their president spoke to me about a possible merger and affiliation with the Jewish Reconstructionist Foundation. I advised him to postpone the union and meanwhile engage a Conservative, modern, married American rabbi who could neutralize the effect created by Curaçao's first truly American Reform rabbi. The majority of the Board nevertheless was resolved to go through with the merger, even at the sacrifice of the tradition of the synagogue. I sent a friendly letter urging the President to convoke a meeting of the parnassim of the Mikvé Israel and its Council of Elders so that I could explain why the Mikvé Israel could not legally and traditionally abandon the Sephardic rite. The idea of the affiliation with the Reconstructionists was entirely new for the Community Mikvé Israel. For none of the Mikvé Israel members knew a thing about it. In fact, one of the parnassim asked me to explain the ideology of Reconstructionism.

Since I was not given the opportunity of a hearing, I asked for leave to preach in the synagogue. This was granted on condition that I did not discuss the merger on a Reform basis. During the Community's existence powerful parnassim often tried to censor their rabbi's sermons. Generally the rabbis would not be stifled. Haham Mendes de Sola spoke out fearlessly. Rabbi Cordova, one of the most erudite rabbis of the Antilles, was dismissed for a sermon not to the liking of all the parnassim. Haham Da Fonseca defied the parnassim frequently. Haham Chumaceiro and his son Joseph were outspoken. As their rabbi, I too had an incident with one of the members who took exception to a sermon. These brave rabbis and preachers of the Mikvé Israel proclaimed the word of God from the pulpit, as they saw it, regardless of who might be sitting in the balustrade or *Banca de Parnassim*. The authority to preach and express his opinion from the pulpit is the God-given privilege of the honest Haham or rabbi and no parnas or *guevir* may deprive him of it. I was therefore obliged to follow the example of my rabbi predecessors and apologize for not being able to keep the conditions imposed. I had to show that the Community would be making a grave mistake to adopt Reform. Of course the Sephardim from the Orient and the Ashkenazim in attendance agreed with me, but of the Portuguese Jews only a few approved. The late Jossy M. L. Maduro understood my stand for historical rather than ideological reasons. The parnassim misinterpreted my sermon as being anti-merger. I have always advocated the union of the congregations and so expressed myself in my *Precious Stones*, pages 43, 463.

Circumstances did not help the Mikvé Israel. The parnassim invited Professor Louis Finkelstein, Chancellor of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America, bastion of Conservative Judaism, to come to Curaçao to enlighten them,

but he could not come. Later they requested Dr. Solomon Gaon, Chief Rabbi of the Spanish-Portuguese Jews of London and New York, to stop at Curaçao during his visit to the Americas. They wanted to discuss with him the future of their community, but he too was unable to come. Three months later Dr. David de Sola Pool, Chief Rabbi emeritus of the Sephardic Jews of the United States of America, stopped over on his way to New York. I was there at the time and entreated him to remain for a few days longer. At my request the parnassim of the Mikvé Israel were willing to pay for his stay in order to consult him and have him clarify all those problems and ideologies. Ill and weary from his long journey, Dr. Pool could not delay his departure. Meanwhile, the board of the Mikvé Israel invited Rabbi and Mrs. Ira Eisenstein, President of the Reconstructionist Foundation of America and son-in-law of Rabbi Mordecai M. Kaplan, father of Reconstructionism. He graciously obliged and soon arrived in April, 1963. He held several conferences with the parnassim of the Mikvé Israel and one with the officers of both congregations to set forth the theory of Reconstructionism and to discuss a basis for a merger of the Communities.

The Jews of Mikvé Israel accepted Reconstructionism without further investigation. As Sephardic Jews they should have consulted, in writing, either Dr. Pool of New York or Dr. Gaon of London. Both men, recognized as progressive scholars and moderates in religious matters, would have been able to set forth the irrelevancies of Reconstructionism and convince the Mikvé Israel of the obligation to retain their ancestral rite. In fact, article 124 of the Mikvé Israel bylaws of 1833 (Curaçao, 1833, p. 34) states: "No Rite or Liturgy other than the Dutch Portuguese Jewish Rite shall be introduced into the Synagogue." Article 138 of the communal bylaws of 1849 is even more explicit: ". . . No prayer book other than that recognized by the Portuguese Jewish Community of Amsterdam shall be used."[1] A regulation of the Mikvé Israel made in 1886 and still operative in 1963 permitted changes in the religious services only as follows:

> No reform whatsoever may be made in the established uses and customs of the community relative to the synagogal and religious ceremonies, until the consent of . . . and approval of the Chief Rabbi or minister have been obtained. In the absence of a religious authority in the community, the Synagogue Council shall submit the [proposed] reforms to the Council of Elders . . . and shall name three

[1] This regulation was drawn up by a commission comprised of liberals and moderates: Abraham Haim Senior, Jacob Abraham Jesurun, Isaac Rodriguez Miranda Jr., Jeosuah Naar and Benjamin Jesurun Jr. (Archives on the High Commission for Israelitic Affairs in Holland kept at the State Archives at The Hague).

> *orthodox*[2] rabbis, national [Dutch] or foreign, to determine whether or not such are in conflict with religious laws.[3]

The fathers of today's Jews of the Mikvé Israel feared that a future generation might try to change the Sephardic rite. Therefore they went so far as to stipulate in the communal regulations, still in vigor in 1963, that a member who adopted a rite different from that of the synagogue would lose his membership.[4]

The regents of Mikvé Israel failed to consult Rabbi Amine who of course protested against such changes. They also claimed that they were adhering to the letter of the text of Article 91 of the community bylaws, consulting only the Reform Hazzan Norman P. Swerling, who in July of 1964 had been officially appointed as Minister of the Congregation.

Obviously the regents of Mikvé Israel should not have consulted a Minister with a Reform training, but should have endeavored to obtain the opinion of a truly Orthodox Rabbi. Therefore the writer does not believe in the legality of the merger. The members of the Mikvé Israel did not realize that by embracing Reconstructionism and adopting its prayer book they would finish with their ancestral traditional Sephardic rite and violate their communal statutes. They did not realize that they would be acting against the wishes of the founding fathers and the numerous Portuguese Jewish testators who had bequeathed monies to the synagogue on condition that the uses and customs of their synagogue would be perpetuated. (Thanks to those bequests of past generations the Mikvé Israel was and has been able to sustain itself.)[5]

At this point it becomes necessary to recall that in the ninety-eight years of its existence Congregation Emanu-El never had a truly Reform rabbi at its helm on a permanent basis. Rabbi Jacob Mendes de Solla and the Reverend Moise L. Laguna[6] were Sephardic Jews who loved the Mikvé Israel Synagogue. De Solla, author of a Jewish history book, had a deep feeling for the history of his people and respected the historic tradition of Synagogue Mikvé Israel. This sentiment made for harmonious relations between both congregations. The arrival of the Ashkenazic Reform rabbi Simeon J. Maslin (Masovetsky)

[2] The emphasis is ours.

[3] *Reglamento de la Comunidad Neerlando Portuguesa Israelítica Mikvé Israel de Curazao* (Curazao, 1896), artículo 91, p. 19.

[4] *Ibid.*, art. 70, p. 2. For more details, see appendix 1, pp. 615-17.

[5] A conservative estimate of all the bequests made to the Mikvé Israel synagogue in money and houses would be 700,000 gold florins; donations made to it from its inception, 1,200,000 florins. The object of these offerings was to keep up the synagogue and uphold its Sephardic rite and uses.

[6] Above, pp. 390-91.

with his liberal views on the one hand, and the lack of Orthodox leadership on the part of the Mikvé Israel members on the other hand, were chiefly responsible for the merger under conditions unfavorable for the Mikvé Israel community.

CONDITIONS OF THE MERGER

After several meetings between prominent members of both congregations, the merger was agreed upon the following main conditions:

1. The new congregation shall be called "United Netherlands Portuguese Congregation Mikvé Israel-Emanuel."
2. The merged congregation shall join the "Reconstructionist Federation" and the "World Union for Progressive Judaism." Temple Emanu-El shall withdraw its membership in the "Union of American Hebrew Congregations."
3. The first rabbi shall be Rabbi Simeon J. Maslin. The Reform congregation asked for and obtained assurance that 1) subsequent rabbis would be selected in consultation with the leaders of the two patron organizations — the Jewish Reconstructionist Foundation and the World Union for Progressive Judaism; 2) for a considerable number of years, all matters of ritual would be decided upon by an equal representation of former members of Congregation Mikvé Israel and Temple Emanu-El, in consultation with the rabbi, although the former Reform membership comprises only about 30% of the total membership. This article was amended in the new regulations to provide that during the first eight years the rabbi or cantor would be chosen not by a majority of the united membership, but by a majority of the members of each community, after consultation with the JRF and WUPJ (Transitional Provisions A-3). The purpose of these provisions is to guarantee the former Reform minority that the conditions of the merger would not be changed for a period of eight years.
4. All conversions to Judaism effected by the rabbis of the respective congregations are to be recognized.
5. The Reconstructionist prayer book shall be used, however, including elements of the Sephardic rite so long as these do not conflict with Reconstructionist principles.
6. The women may sit among the men and vice versa.
7. The worshipers must wear head-covering. The wearing of the *Taleth* is optional, but compulsory for a man called to the Torah.

8. The Hashcabah (memorial) service shall be maintained without mentioning the legacies left to the synagogue. A committee shall be appointed to study the removal from the Hashcaboth list of the names of those testators without surviving descendants.
9. As customary with Ashkenazic Jews, everyone called to the Torah shall receive a blessing whether or not he makes an offering to the synagogue.[7] Donors may not announce the amount offered.
10. All the Holy Days and Jewish Festivals shall be observed for one day only with the possible exception of Rosh Hashanah if attendance warrants a second day.
11. The Torah shall be read following the triennial cycle.
12. The women shall be counted in the religious quorum or *minyan*.

On June 24, 1963, the members of each congregation voted separately on the conditions of the merger. The smaller Reform group made little opposition since these provisions were acceptable to their liberal way of thinking. Of Mikvé Israel's 52 voters, ten voted against the merger. With the exception of the first part of No. 7 above, each of these conditions represents far-reaching concessions on the part of the Mikvé Israel. The merger became *de facto* on August 16, 1963, and *de jure* after November 9, 1964.

That day the respective communities voted on the new communal regulations. The Mikvé Israel community voted first and the Emanu-El community several hours later. Since the new statutes of the congregation Mikvé Israel were acceptable to the membership of Emanu-El, the latter voted to join the Mikvé Israel under the new name of Mikvé Israel-Emanuel. By voting in this fashion each community retained the right to have in its service a rabbi or cantor whose salary would be paid by the government.

Let us analyze the provisions of the merger.

1. Since the foundation of the Reform Community in 1864 recalls a painful period of Curaçoan Jewry,[8] the name Emanuel could have been dropped.
2. The Jewish Reconstructionist Foundation, in spite of its 26 years of arduous and persevering work, has not been able to recruit more than 25,000-28,000 followers among the 5,600,000 Jews in the United States of America. Even people familiar with its ideologies have difficulty in comprehending Reconstructionism. Their assertions are

[7] In Sephardic synagogues the blessing is given only to those persons who donate for a charitable cause.

[8] Emmanuel, *Precious Stones*, pp. 462-63; above, pp. 370-86; various letters of the late Jossy M. L. Maduro to the author.

irrelevant. And this is well demonstrated by Dr. Eliezer Berkovits,[9] distinguished Jewish thinker and scholar, author of seven important books. While on the one hand they maintain certain traditional elements, on the other hand they reject some of the fundamental principles of Judaism. We have the right to ask ourselves, how then could some 320 Portuguese Jews born in Curaçao consent to affiliate themselves with this movement and automatically reject some of the principles of Judaism which for centuries before had been held sacred.

The case of the Mikvé Israel is paradoxical. On the one hand they have joined the JRF which retains in some degree elements of the traditional code, like the two-day celebration of festivals and so forth. On the other hand they have agreed to join the World Union for Progressive Judaism which rejects the traditional code. And lastly, they wished to retain vestiges of the Sephardic rite. The whole question proves how perplexed and unguided the Jews of Curaçao were, and particularly those of the Mikvé Israel. Before the merger, the Temple Emanu-El group were members of the WUPJ and the Union of American Hebrew Congregations. They considered it a big concession to renounce their membership in the UAHC. In return they insisted that the united congregation should join the World Union for Progressive Judaism. In voting for this affiliation most of the members of the Mikvé Israel did not know that they were voting for affiliation with an association consisting mostly of Reform congregations.[10] Actually the WUPJ is the parent body of Reform and Liberal Judaism,[11] whose largest constituency is the UAHC. The Jews of Curaçao as Portuguese Jews, should have affiliated themselves with the Sephardic Union of America.

3. This article buried forever the 314 years of Sephardic customs practiced in the oldest Jewish community of the Americas. The Mikvé Israel should have taken on a Conservative rabbi, preferably of Sephardic rite, as called for in the bylaws, or a rabbi familiar with Sephardic uses and customs.

[9] "Reconstructionist Theology, A Critical Evaluation," *Tradition*, vol. 2, no. 1, 1959. Dr. Berkovits says, among other things: "Reconstructionism is not aware of its inconsistencies. It has no appreciation of the logical implications of its own position . . . The attempt of Reconstructionism to re-interpret Judaism by dissociating the universal significance of Jewish ideals from their source in the One God, the Creator, must be considered a complete failure . . . All the more is it to be regretted that the Reconstructionist endeavor 'to wed religion to science' has to be considered such a dismal failure" (pp. 28, 34, 42 of the reprinted edition, New York [1959]).

[10] One of Curaçao's intellectuals, the late Jossy M. L. Maduro, was not aware that the WUPJ is the parent body of Liberal and Reform congregations (according to his letter to the author).

[11] *The New York Times*, August 11, 1963.

4. No comment.
5. Eminent sages and specialists of Jewish ritual like Leopold Zunz, my late revered Professor Ismar Elbogen, and many others praised the Sephardic rite. The Ashkenazic Jews, specifically The Rabbinical Council of America, were so pleased with Dr. Pool's English translation of the Sephardic prayer book formerly used in Curaçao, that they engaged him to translate their Sabbath and festival ritual (New York, 1960). How then could the Portuguese Jews of the Mikvé Israel adopt the Ashkenazic rite of the Reconstructionists with its unacceptable additions and eliminations in preference to the elegant, lucid Sephardic ritual so zealously guarded by their fathers? When the Jews of Curaçao were solicited to contribute toward the construction of synagogues in America having a combined Ashkenazic membership, they made it a condition for the beneficiary synagogue to continue the Sephardic rite forever.[12] Thus the Shearith Israel of New York, the Mikvé Israel of Philadelphia and the Shearith Israel of Montreal, in spite of the large majority of Ashkenazic members, have conserved the Sephardic rite *intact* purposely to perpetuate the historic tradition and thus prove that they really are the three oldest Jewish communities of North America. The Mikvé Israel of Curaçao had a 95% membership of full-blooded Sephardis in 1963. Several of them are direct descendants of the pioneers of 1659.

The Sephardic communities of the Americas have a right to expect of their oldest community in the Western Hemisphere to be what it claims to be, a community of Sephardic or Portuguese Jews, and that carries the obligation to maintain the Sephardic rite integrally. What the Mikvé Israel community of Curaçao now follows is the Reconstructionist prayer book. The only concession the Mikvé Israel made was to pray according to Sephardic rite certain verses customarily sung when removing the Torah, and so forth. The Sephardic rabbis in Spain, while trying to reconcile reason with tradition, nevertheless recognized the supernatural element in the Jewish religion. They considered Israel as the Chosen People. All this they proudly manifested in their eloquent liturgical poems which the Sephardim have prayed for hundreds of years, generation after generation. Since Reconstructionism rejects the Revelation, rejects the supernatural element in the Jewish religion and does not recognize the Jews as the Chosen People, Sephardic ritual then contradicts the principles of Reconstructionism and the very statutes of the United Community. Therefore the Sephardic rite can no longer be acceptable.

[12] David de Sola Pool, *The Mill Street Synagogue* (New York, 1930), p. 49; above, pp. 130-31.

The Jewish tradition, which also is the Sephardic tradition, and Reconstructionism are irreconcilable and immiscible.[13] At the last moments of life a Sephardic Jew who is still in possession of his senses prays the *Moda'ah* or confession, in Ladino. (Abraham Mendes Chumaceiro, who died in 1902, was one of the last Curaçoan Jews to pray this confession in Hebrew.) This confession includes Maimonides' thirteen principles of faith, the recognition of the Revelation, the firm, constant belief that the Jewish religion is a supernatural religion and that our Law is unchanging. The Jew of Curaçao followed these values from cradle to grave and kept the Sephardic uses and customs of his ancestors.

Indeed, the United Community could have easily followed Dr. Pool's prayer book, and introduced as much English as they wished to employ.

6. By introducing mixed seating the members of the Mikvé Israel have thrown out the sacred aura of the Synagogue. Surely the women could have been assigned a choice section in the synagogue, not partitioned off but set apart from the men.
7. The fact that members may pray without a prayer shawl proves once more that the merger was effected with a certain caprice. Those who recall the uniformity which always prevailed in the synagogue of Curaçao deeply lament this discrimination manifested among their fold. A Reform rabbi with many years of service in the Reform movement who had served as rabbi of the Portuguese Jewish community in Panama styled this situation a "tragedy." The tragedy lies in the lack of Orthodox leadership on the part of the Mikvé Israel and the uncompromising attitude of the Reform community's leaders. The Jews of Curaçao did not need these affiliations and innovations. When Rabbi Isaac M. Wise, pillar of the Reform movement in America, visited the Portuguese synagogue in Philadelphia in 1864 incognito, he was entranced by its decorum. He attested that the service itself offered some grand and elevating points. He emphasized their custom of saying the prayer for the government in English[14] and concluded: "The members of those [Portuguese] congregations, ignorant of the awful confusion in the old synagogues of Germany and Poland, of course could not imagine the first

[13] See Robert Gordis, *Judaism for the Modern Age* (New York, 1955), pp. 168-72, why the Reconstructionist approach to Judaism is unacceptable.

[14] The custom of saying a prayer for the Government originated in the 17th century in the Portuguese Jewish community of Amsterdam and was adopted by all of her daughter communities in Europe and America.

cause of our Reform endeavors."[15] In other words, those Portuguese congregations did not need Reform.

8. For many generations it has been customary to include in the memorial prayers the legacies bequeathed or the services rendered by the deceased to the synagogue.[16] The elimination of that part of the ritual removes a chapter of American Jewish history. The members of the Mikvé Israel had no earthly right to strike out the names of deceased testators having no surviving descendants. They thereby broke faith with the many saintly dead reposing in the Old Cemetery. The bequests had been made for perpetual memorial services to be said throughout the existence of the synagogue. Many of those who had left legacies — some of great value — already at death had no survivors, but they were confident that the synagogue would respect their memory. The Jews of Curaçao must not forsake those souls. May the regents emulate the example of their glorious ancestors of 1818. That year when the Neve Salom synagogue of Otrabanda was closed, the parnassim of the Mikvé Israel, as directors of both synagogues, did not have the courage to eliminate the memorial prayers recited in the Neve Salom synagogue. They added those names to their list even though the bequests to the Neve Salom had been modest (see above, page 282).
9. Since its foundation the Mikvé Israel followed the example of the Amsterdam community of donating in honor of friends and relatives on joyous or sad occasions.[17] Families liked to hear how much was offered in their honor, and they reciprocated. This system made for friendlier relations among the members. Another instance of a beautiful custom discarded!
10. While the Reconstructionists observe the second days of the festivals, the United Community will observe the first day only.
11. Most of the Scrolls of the Law in the synagogue were donated by devout members with the idea that their Sepher Torah would be read integrally once yearly. The decision to read the Torah once triennially is a violation of the departed donors' wishes and of the Sephardic rite.
12. As the women now make part of the religious quorum or *minyan*, the men will not feel compelled to attend the synagogue regularly since the services can be conducted without them. The oldest synagogue of the Americas thereby runs the risk of being transformed from *Ohel Yahacob* to *Ohel Rahel* or a House of Worship for Women.

[15] Jacob Rader Marcus, *Memoirs of American Jews, 1775-1865*, vol. III (Philadelphia, 1956), pp. 20-22.

[16] Emmanuel, *Precious Stones*, pp. 94-95.

[17] Regarding these donations see Emmanuel, "El Portugués en la Sinagoga Mikvé Israel de Curaçao," *Ozar Yehudé Sefarad*, vol. I (Jerusalem, 1959), pp. XXVII-XXIX.

In addition to these strange innovations, changes were introduced in one or another service forbidden by Sephardic ritual. For example, the memorial service (*Hashcabah*), conducted for over 300 years only on Saturday morning, now takes place also on Friday night. The *Hashcabah* for women is eliminated and their names are cited together with the men. Even this combined *Hashcabah* is only a token from the original text used in Curaçao since 1651. Contrary to the Sephardic ritual, an *El Malé Raḥamim* (not *Hashcabah*) is said in the mourning house before the burial. The burial service is a combination of Reconstructionist, Ashkenazic, Sephardic rituals, and so on.

Most of these points were brought to the attention of the parnassim of the Mikvé Israel in various letters by the author, but were not considered. The merger of the communities was desirable and devoutly wished for by the author (*Precious Stones*, pp. 43, 463). It was ill-timed for the Mikvé Israel. Enjoying double the membership of Temple Emanu-El and owning sizable assets, the Mikvé Israel should not have surrendered the sacred traditions of their forefathers. Indeed, they should have reached a reasonable understanding with the leaders of Temple Emanu-El. They should have stressed that the tradition of the synagogue also was the tradition of the Reform members' ancestors and deserved their respect too. Temple Emanu-El's leaders should have been satisfied with Congregation Mikvé Israel's modernizations: the organ, the mixed chorus, and the observance of only one holy day or feast day when the second day does not fall on the Sabbath. The parnassim of the Mikvé Israel should not have allowed the historical character of the prayers to disappear. They should have insisted on conserving the Sephardic rite intact as the communal bylaws dictate. The Mikvé Israel should have resolved to bring over a young, married American Conservative rabbi. In that manner they would have continued to carry out the wishes of the various testators and conserve the traditional rite. (See above, page 382; app. 1, pages 615-17.) To the departed souls Reform is Reform in whatever guise it assumes — whether it installs itself in the holy synagogue of Mikvé Israel, or whether their descendants adopt Reform. Lamentably, the members of the Mikvé Israel lacked the necessary Orthodox leadership to resist Reform. They were not fully enlightened on the drastic step they were taking and did not take into account article 91 of their communal bylaws which enjoins them to consult three Orthodox rabbis before accepting similar reforms or affiliations in conflict with the Mosaic Law. They voted for the merger without having an idea of the deep consequences to the traditions of their Sephardic Judaism.

EVALUATION OF THE BYLAWS OF THE UNITED COMMUNITY

We believe the following analysis will make for a better understanding of the provisions of the United Community bylaws.

Art. IV. Any Jew may become a member of the United Community after approval by the Board and Council of Elders. Because of the elevated number of mixed marriages, it is provided that where any doubt exists as to the religion of the candidate for membership, his being a Jew or Jewess shall be left to the discretion of the rabbi of the community and, in his absence, by a rabbi of as much as possible the same tendencies, i.e., Reconstructionist. Often a Reform rabbi does not insist even on the circumcision of the neophyte.

Art. X/4. The Board, after consulting with the Council of Elders, may appoint religious officiants after having consulted the JRF and the WUPJ.

Art. XI. The Board shall invite the rabbi to attend the meetings on the request of at least two officers. Similarly they shall invite him to attend the meetings of the Council of Elders at the request of only two councillors (Art. XXXIII/d). Throughout their glorious history the parnassim of Amsterdam never called to their meetings even the illustrious Saul Morteira, Menasseh ben Israel, Isaac Aboab, and so on. In the conflict of 1746-50 (Chapter IX) the parnassim of Amsterdam advised their colleagues of Curaçao not to call Haham De Sola to the meetings except in case of great need.[18] Since then the Haham — not even the influential Haham Chumaceiro — did not attend the meetings. Even before the schism of 1864 the parnassim wrote Haham Chumaceiro that his power was limited. If the rabbi's advice was essential, the decision to call him to the meeting was not taken by two members, but by a majority of the Board.

Art. XXXV. Burial in the cemeteries of the United Community is open to "b) possible non-Jewish husbands or spouses and the legitimate non-Jewish children of members registered in the Community Records." This article regrettably encourages mixed marriages and the rearing of children outside of the Jewish faith. The bylaws of the Sephardic Community of Cincinnati, Ohio, avoids similar complications at death by automatically dropping from membership any Jew or Jewess marrying outside of the faith unless the Christian partner immediately becomes converted to Judaism and his or her children are absolutely brought up as Jews. That is the least that the Jews of Curaçao could have done.

Art. XXXIX. Neither the Board nor the Council of Elders shall make changes in the ritual before taking the following steps: 1) Holding a meeting of the Board and the rabbi. 2) The board shall convoke a joint meeting with the

[18] See above, pp. 207-208.

Council of Elders, in the presence of the rabbi, and shall decide whether or not to present the proposed changes to the members. In the event of an affirmative vote, the members shall be informed of the proposed changes by circular with an explanatory note if necessary. At least two weeks later the members shall be called to a meeting *ad hoc* in the presence of the rabbi. The members may ask questions and offer objections to the proposed changes. There shall be no voting at this meeting. The proposed change shall be put to a vote at least two weeks later, and shall be adopted if not less than sixty votes are cast and 75% of them are in favor of the change. The object of this procedure is to discourage any changes in the present ritual.

Temporary Provisions, A-3. During the first eight years after this Constitution has become valid, the decisions mentioned in Article XXXIX[19] can only then be taken, and the selection and appointment of religious leaders can only then be made, if a majority of each of the groups[20] mentioned in the preceding paragraph vote their approval of same. In this manner the former members of the Mikvé Israel will, during the first eight years, not be able to select a rabbi of their choice. It is understood that the rabbi would be appointed after the JRF and WUPJ have been consulted.

These bylaws make it clear that the former members of the Mikvé Israel, in spite of representing two-thirds of the membership of the United Community, have made it exceedingly difficult for themselves to revert to the traditional Sephardic rite.

Will this merger, in the form it was done, keep the Portuguese Jews of Curaçao from disappearing?

In spite of the millions of dollars it has spent in the past 150 years to propagate its ideas throughout the four corners of the earth, including Japan, the Reform Movement[21] has failed to achieve its goal. An eminent leader of theirs, Professor Julian Morgenstern, for many years director of the Hebrew Union College of Cincinnati, asserted:

> Despite the splendid organization, the achievements of Reform Judaism during the last generation . . . have not been considerable . . . And we must confess that in the solution of the Sabbath question, of the problem of religious education, the development of a more positive religious spirit in our homes, the democratization of the synagog . . . we have made less progress than we had expected.[22]

[19] Article XXXIX concerns the changing of the ritual.

[20] The groups mentioned in the preceding paragraph are the former membership of Congregation Mikvé Israel and the former membership of Congregation Emanu-El.

[21] We do not discuss Reconstructionism since its assertions are irrelevant.

[22] Julian Morgenstern, "The Achievement of Reform Judaism," *Yearbook of the Central Conference of American Reform Rabbis*, vol. 34, 1925, p. 278.

Although the situation has improved since 1924 when Professor Morgenstern wrote his survey, the questions mentioned remain in the same stage. Beryl D. Cohon, a Reform rabbi, in 1949 said: "Reform has sacrificed the historically distinctive in Judaism for the glitter of the world; it has converted Judaism into mere theology and Jewry into a narrow sect."[23] Dr. Jacob J. Petuchowski, professor of Rabbinics and Jewish Theology at the Hebrew Union College, Cincinnati, charged in one of his lectures that the Sabbath "has virtually disappeared in many Reform Jewish circles."[24] Reform Rabbi Leon Jick, scholar and spiritual leader of the Free Synagogue of Westchester, Mt. Vernon, N. Y., at a symposium on "The Ferment in Contemporary Theology" sponsored by the Reform movement, took to task the Reform concept of religion by some Reform leaders and rabbis. He lamented that "those who are often in the Temple office, rarely [are] in the sanctuary, never in the library. At our worship services, quiet prevails. It is the quiet not of reverence but of deep sleep."[25] On the other hand, a well known leader of American Reform Jewry, Rabbi Dr. Solomon B. Freehof, recognized the importance of Orthodox Judaism in an address delivered to the Synagogue Council of America on December 2, 1962.[26]

The tragedy of the Curaçoan Jews consists in the fact that since World War II one out of every two of their marriages is mixed.[27] With few exceptions their children are lost to Judaism. It is well to bear in mind that there are Reform rabbis in America who solemnize a mixed marriage in their temples after the church wedding.[28]

Thanks to the fact that the government continues to pay the salaries of two titular rabbis, one for each community as prior to the merger,[29] the United Congregation, in addition to its Reform rabbi, may have in its service a Reform cantor and teacher.

There is reason to doubt the ultimate success of the merger, as it was done.

[23] Beryl D. Cohon, "Conservative and Reconstructionist Judaism as seen by a Reform Rabbi," *Reform Judaism* (Cincinnati, 1949), pp. 121-22.

[24] *Jewish Press*, Brooklyn, N.Y., Nov. 5, 1965, p. 27.

[25] *Ibid.*, July 1, 1966, pp. 25, 27.

[26] Dr. Freehof in appreciation of the talmudic and *responsa* learning of the Orthodox element in Judaism (p. 5 of his address).

[27] The author has a list of these marriages registered in Curaçao. The late Jossy M. L. Maduro sent him a list of the mixed marriages of Curaçoan Jews now living in Curaçao who married abroad.

[28] See *The Cincinnati Enquirer* of August 4, 1964, reporting a mixed marriage solemnized first in church and afterwards by the Reform rabbi at Rockdale Temple in Cincinnati.

[29] When the two Protestant communities of Curaçao merged in 1825, the Colonial Government respected the salaries of both dominies. A similar recognition of the acquired rights of the Congregations was again granted in 1959 on the occasion of the merger of the Protestant churches of Curaçao.

Why did the members of the Mikvé Israel surrender the sacred tradition of their synagogue?

Until forty years ago the elegant Jewish society of Curaçao would not accept within its fold the few Jews wedded to Gentiles. Those couples were therefore forced to settle in Central or South America. During the past thirty years not one Curaçoan Jewish family has been untouched by mixed marriage.[30] We must now seriously ask ourselves whether the merger will be able to reverse this deplorable trend.

This yielding on Mikvé Israel's part will unfortunately accelerate the disappearance of Portuguese Jewry from Curaçao, and this is the opinion of two Jewish journalists who have visited Curaçao recently.[31] The late Jossy M. L. Maduro, although exceptionally liberal in religious matters, did not believe that the merger would save Curaçao's Portuguese Jews from extinction.

HOW THE PORTUGUESE JEWS CAN SURVIVE

How then can the Portuguese Jews of Curaçao survive? Those on in years feel that Portuguese Jewry is doomed. Though deeply pained at the thought, none of them has had the courage to turn the tide, the mixed marriage, and seek to root it out. The bylaws of the United Community not only do not remedy the situation, but actually recognize the legality of mixed marriages! I believe that if the Sephardic Jews do not want to disappear, each and every Curaçoan Jew and Jewess must resolve firmly to adopt the following plan:

1. To marry only Jews. Statistics in the United States of America show that most divorces result among mixed marriages, and those also include marriages between Catholics and Protestants.
2. To circumcise their sons, to administer the religious bath to children of mixed marriages and to rear them as Jews.
3. To separate themselves from the Reconstructionist Foundation and the World Union for Progressive Judaism,[32] especially since the members of the Mikvé Israel joined the latter without proper Orthodox guidance.
4. To require their rabbi and cantor to revert to traditional Judaism in all its aspects and so set a good example to their flock. If they refuse to comply, then to engage a Conservative American rabbi.

[30] Almost all the parnassim of the Mikvé Israel of 1963-64 had a mixed marriage in their family.

[31] For example, the daily *Forward* of New York City, August 15, 1964.

[32] I admire the leaders of the Reform movement for their splendid organization. I respect their learning. Their library and American Jewish Archives in Cincinnati are the pride, not only of Reform Judaism, but of every Jewish scholar — Orthodox, Conservative or Reform. Nevertheless, I am firmly convinced that the Sephardic Jews of Curaçao do not need these affiliations. I hope they will respect the memory of their forefathers and continue the 314 years of their Sephardic tradition.

5. To restore the Sephardic rite employed before the merger.
6. To give the synagogue the saintly character it conserved for the 233 years of its existence and to eliminate mixed seating.
7. To establish with the Ashkenazim a Jewish Center, to fraternize with them, to raise the barriers which separate the Jews of Curaçao in their social life, to invite the Ashkenazim to their homes and to accept their invitations.
8. To establish a Jewish Youth Center for all the Jewish youth, Sephardic and Ashkenazic, and together organize sporting events, dances, theatrical performances, excursions and trips to other Jewish youth groups in Central and South America.
9. To form a sisterhood of the Ashkenazic and Portuguese Jewish women whose chief aim would be to make each home a Jewish sanctuary, and to bring up their children in the Jewish tradition.[33]
10. To encourage close collaboration between the rabbis of the Sephardic and Ashkenazic communities.
11. To establish a Jewish day school up to the fifth or sixth grade where Hebrew and Jewish history can be taught in conjunction with secular subjects.
12. To establish scholarships for several young people to study at universities abroad, i.e., in Holland, the United States of America and Israel,[34] in order to raise the fast-declining cultural level of the Jewish community.

A program of this type, executed with the sincere cooperation of the family heads, the rabbis, the cantor and of every Jew, can assure the survival of the Portuguese Jews of Curaçao whose brilliant past has been unfolded. With faith in God, with faith in their own power, and with the sincere will to work closely with their friends — the fast-growing, God-fearing Ashkenazic community of Curaçao — they will again attain the prominence enjoyed in the 18th century among the American Jewish communities. Then they will truly merit the title: "Crown of the islands, Mother City of all the American Isles, Hope of Israel."

[33] During my visit to Curaçao in 1963 it was thrilling to hear the young sons of two Ashkenazic friends of mine recite the Kiddush in their homes, and also to observe a teen-age boy (prepared by the former Hazzan and teacher Haim Abramovic) conduct the entire Friday night service in their synagogue.

[34] The merged communities have two funds — the Jacob Cardoze Fund and the Gabriel, Herman and Juliette Pinedo Fund — whose earnings are applied toward the tuition of young Curaçoan Jews wishing to study in Curaçao or abroad (see p. 484).

CHAPTER XXVI

JEWS IN OTHER ISLANDS OF THE DUTCH WEST INDIES

ST. EUSTATIUS

ALREADY IN THE SECOND PART of the 17th century we find Jews in St. Eustatius. Abraham Israel Henriquez met one David Seraiva there in 1660.[1] Most probably Jews of Curaçao visited the island during the 17th century. There we encounter Daniel and Aron Cohen Henriquez in 1703; Mozes Lopes Henriquez and Isaac Pinheiro in 1705; Juda Obediente and Salomo Nunes Netto in 1711.[2] These Jews suffered much with the other islanders from the plundering of November 25, 1709. That day 250 rovers poured out of four ships from Martinique, raided the island, seized some 320 slaves, merchandise and whatever they could carry, and burnt down the church.[3] A few Jews drifted back to Curaçao because of the sharp decline in trade following the Cassard siege (pages 104-110) and Curaçao Governor Jonathan van Beuningen's lack of means to provide for its rehabilitation.[4] Several Jews later returned, for St. Eustatius was "rich in opportunities,"[5] and enjoyed an enviable geographic position surrounded as it was by the English, French and Spanish islands. Isaac Hisquiau Habillo was one of these "returnees." His orphan daughter is listed in the "Dotar" Register of the Portuguese Jewish Community of Amsterdam as a "resident of St. Eustatius" in 1719.[6] Isaac Naftali of New York was doing business in St. Eustatius in 1720;[7] David Dovale of Curaçao went to St. Eustatius and back in 1722. That year, of a total population of 1,204 inhabitants, St. Eustatius counted

1 GAA 2209, Not. Lock, Sept. 16, 1660.

2 WICA 201, p. 589; GAA 4205, p. 521; L. Knappert, "Een Heksen-proces op St. Martin A.D. 1711," *WIG*, 1928-29, pp. 241-264 (about the Jews, pp. 255-56 according to WICA, St. Eustatius, port. 2, p. 414).

3 WICA 203, pp. 281, 436-439v.

4 WICA 206, p. 137v.

5 According to a report Chevalier Durepaire sent to the States of Holland and West Friesland in 1714 (Resolutien, Staten van Holland en West Friesland, meeting of July 19, 1714).

6 PJCAA, Dotar, Termos D, 5479-5480.

7 OAC 797, no. 203.

21 Jews — six men, four women, five boys and six girls — with their sixteen slaves.[8]

At the request of the Amsterdam parnassim, the Directors of the West India Company wrote on September 18, 1730, to Everard Raecx, Commander of St. Eustatius, to grant the Jews of the island the same rights enjoyed by the Christians, and freedom of religion and commerce as well:

> . . . we deeply desire and [by this] order and command that the residents of their Nation (i.e., of the same Nation as the Amsterdam parnassim) and all future settlers [of said Nation] be granted freedom of religion and trade and that no difference whatsoever be shown between Christians and those of the aforementioned Nation; further, that they are to be treated in the same manner [as the Christians] and are to be given no cause for justifiable complaints. At the same time, we recommend that you maintain law and justice on the island without partiality and without the least connivance, in the hope that this island, with the blessing of Almighty God, may gradually become more prosperous.[9]

A copy of this letter was not sent to the Amsterdam parnassim until April 12, 1731.[10]

By 1730 the small group of Jewish settlers had their own cemetery which Fenger describes in *The Cruise of Diablesse*.[11] Like their Curaçao coreligionists, the Jews of St. Eustatius were exempted from Saturday guard duty since 1730. Some of the Jews apparently did not always live in the best of harmony. This unhappy situation required frequent intervention by Governor Raecx in 1731 to maintain peace.

By 1737 their number had swelled to the point where it was decided to found a community and build a synagogue. They wrote to the Amsterdam parnassim for and obtained the necessary building permit. Governor Isaac Faesch, who was then in office, on the demand of the Company directors, designated a place where "the exercise of their [Jewish] religious duties

[8] Knappert, "Geschiedenis van de Nederlandsche Bovenwindsche eilanden," *WIG*, 1929-30, p. 518, referring to WICA, St. Eustatius, port. 2, fols. 651r-652v.

[9] PJCAA, Copiador de Cartas, 1728-1737, toward the end; Knappert, *ibid.*, p. 538, referring to WICA 473, fol. 340. The letter was originally signed by Nicolaes Sautijn and Jan van Loon (WICA 473, p. 182); the copy sent to the Amsterdam parnassim was made by Jan de la Bassecour, WIC secretary.

[10] The secretary of the Portuguese community of Amsterdam made this notation in Portuguese on the back of the letter: "1730 Extract of the letter of recommendation granted by the Messrs. 'Bewintheberr' of the West [India] Company in favor of our Nation who live in St. E[u]statius, No. 16" (PJCAA, *ibid.*)

[11] Frederic Abilgaard Fenger, *The Cruise of Diablesse* (New York, 1926), p. 261, cited by Knappert, *ibid.*

would not molest those of the Gentiles."[12] Salomon de Leon thereupon approached the Curaçao parnassim for a contribution. The response was gratifying, for the Jews of Curaçao gave generously during a synagogue appeal conducted for the purpose.[13] The Amsterdam parnassim graciously furnished a Scroll of the Law with all its ornaments[14] to this community which called itself *Honen Dalim* — Gracious to the Needy.

In 1742 during the War of the Austrian Succession, France declared war on Holland. She loosed her ships near St. Eustatius and presented a constant threat to the islanders. Many residents fled with their slaves to Curaçao.[15] The Jewish community also left, but not before virtually emptying their synagogue of its contents. They took along its various objects, ornaments, furnishings, lamps, sconces, candlesticks, a candlesnuffer, and so forth. Prominent among these were two Holy Scrolls of the Law with their assorted mantles and bands, silver and wooden *rimmonim*, a *shofar*, three silver pointers, a spice box, several silken and cotton coverings for the *tebah*, ornaments for Tish'ah be-Ab — even the Holy Ark with its drapes. All this their representatives Philip Benjamin and Sarah de la Motta deposited with the Mikvé Israel for safekeeping. The situation in St. Eustatius evidently improved by the summer of 1744, for the parnassim of Mikvé Israel then shipped these items to Congregation Honen Dalim[16]

The Jews of St. Eustatius would generally turn to the Curaçao community for whatever assistance was required. In 1750 and again in 1752 they sent a defective Scroll of the Law to Curaçao for repair. The correction involved obviously could not be tackled, for they subsequently appealed to the Amsterdam parnassim who replaced it with another scroll. Again in 1770 the Honen Dalim sent some Scrolls of the Law to Curaçao for correction.[17] In 1758 when they needed a hazzan, they naturally applied to Curaçao to engage one for them.[18]

The Jews of St. Eustatius were a heterogeneous group made up of Sephardis and Ashkenazis from various countries of Europe (Bohemia, England, France, Germany, Holland, etc.) and from the Americas (Curaçao, Jamaica, New

12 Knappert, *ibid.*, referring to WICA 474, fol. 341.

13 MC and MS, 18 Tebet, 5498.

14 PJCAA, Libro de termos das Entregas, 5489-5516, p. 151; see appendix 24F.

15 WICA 591, p. 274v.

16 MIA, Libro do Tezoreiro, 23 Tamus and 7 Ab, 5504. The Curaçao community paid freight charges of seven pesos for the return of these items.

17 MIA, loose papers, letter of parnas Samuel Hoheb Jr. of St. Eustatius to the Curaçao parnassim, July 3, 1770 (courtesy of the late J.M.L. Maduro). See illus. 263.

18 MS, 28 Menaguem, 5518.

York, Rhode Island, St. Christopher, Surinam, etc.).[19] Not always did they live harmoniously. In 1760 the Ashkenazis had great differences with the Sephardis or Portuguese. The latter, represented by Abraham Rodrigues Henriquez, Samuel Hoheb and Abraham Mendes, urged the Amsterdam parnassim to have the Company intervene in their behalf. In effect, Isaac de Joseph de Meza and Jacob de Aron Suasso, deputees of the Portuguese Nation before the Government of Holland, addressed themselves to the Company directors. As a result, the Company dispatched a letter on December 19, 1760, to Commander Jan de Windt of St. Eustatius and his Council, ordering them to try to pacify the Jews and to see that the *hascamoth* were followed.[20] De Windt named a commission made up of members of both groups to draft new *hascamoth*.[21]

During this period the Jews of St. Eustatius incurred heavy expenses in repairing their synagogue and cemetery. Their parnassim Isaac Diaz Delgado and Samuel Hoheb Jr. applied to the Curaçao community for funds and were helped very generously.[22]

The community kept growing and prospering. It counted among its richest members Philip Waag[23] and Joseph Buzaglo de Paz. The latter left a huge fortune when he died on May 17, 1761: 131 shares of stock in the "Fontain de Paris," accounts receivable of 41,000 florins due him from the Danish Crown, a very large amount due him from Great Britain for ammunitions he had supplied; also, two ships with their cargoes valued at 90,000 florins.[24] One of these vessels, anchored at Martinique at the time of his death, was requisitioned by the French governor of the island. Is it surprising that Buzaglo's epitaph reads: "Envey'd to the Grave"?[25] See illus. 292.

The Jews of St. Eustatius gave liberally to appeals of the Amsterdam parnassim for funds to emissaries from the Holy Land and other communities.

[19] OA of Sint Eustatius, nos. 245-46; appendix 24, B and C.

[20] PJCAA, Resoluçoems dos Sres do MM, 5511-5527, meetings of 19 Kislev and 14 Tebet, 5521; Correspondencia, letter of March 27, 1760, of the St. Eustatius parnassim to those of Amsterdam.

[21] Knappert, *WIG*, 1929, pp. 518, 538, referring to WICA 475, fol. 342.

[22] MS, 13 Menagem, 5521.

[23] When he died in 1762, he left his widow Esther Benjamin a sizable fortune (see app. 16, French Santo Domingo). The Waag family maintained itself in St. Eustatius until 1843 (app. 24D, no. 20).

[24] PJCAA, bundle and correspondence with Hoheb and Mendes of St. Eustatius as executors and administrators of the estate.

[25] See app. 24D, no. 3. His will of May 15, 1761, made in St. Eustatius, left 300 pesos for his relatives in Jerusalem; 50 pesos for his *hashcabah*, and 25 pesos for the poor of the Dutch Protestant Church in St. Eustatius. He named Samuel Hoheb and Abraham de Jacob Mendes as his executors. He was survived by his widow, a son in Barbary, and his brother Abraham in St. Eustatius.

Through their dynamic leader Samuel Hoheb,[26] who was regarded as the island's pillar of Judaism, they managed to raise 210 florins in 1774 for the mission of Ribbi Samuel aCohen, emissary from Hebron (page 161). In 1775 they sent 110 florins for the community of Smyrna.[27]

The hurricane of August 31, 1772, levelled the synagogue and a number of the houses of this flourishing community to the ground. The parnassim Salomon de Leon, David R. Furtado, Samuel Hoheb Jr., Judah Benjamin, Jeosuah de Moseh Levy Maduro Peixotto, and Samson Mears, the treasurer, wasted no time in addressing themselves to the Jewish communities of Amsterdam, Curaçao and New York for assistance to rebuild their synagogue.[28] New York came forth with $80; Amsterdam,[29] 500 florins and an apology for their inability to give more. The Curaçao community manifested a keen interest in the building operations. On November 16, 1772, the parnassim Furtado and Benjamin and treasurer Mears informed their Curaçao colleagues that the synagogue was almost finished and that it was costing them 5,500 pesos.[30] This was a relatively steep sum for the small number of Jews then living in St. Eustatius. While the building was going up, services were conducted in the widow Hana Benjamin de Leon's home. Upon its completion, they engaged Ribbi Ezekiel as hazzan, a man recommended by the New York community. (See illus. 210, 211, 289.)

The Amsterdam parnassim were always ready to lend their support to the Honen Dalim congregation. When a new governor was nominated for the island, they would make it a point to write or visit him for the purpose of recommending their coreligionists of St. Eustatius. So they did in 1776 on the appointment of Johannes de Graaf and again in 1789 on the appointment of P. A. Godin.[31]

Relations between the Jews and the government authorities of St. Eustatius were generally good. On two occasions in 1777 Governor De Graaf abused his power toward two Jews. But, then, he did not treat the Gentiles any better! The Jews avoided taking part in any matter involving the government. Like their Jewish contemporaries in Curaçao they shied from government

[26] Moshe Piza, "Shirath Moshe," ms. at the Ets Haim Library, no. 46.

[27] PJCAA, Copiador de Cartas, letter of Sept. 13, 1774, of the Amsterdam parnassim to Livorno; of Sept. 13, 1774, and June 29, 1775, to St. Eustatius.

[28] *PAJHS* 11:150-51.

[29] PJCAA, Resoluçoems, 5527-5533, meeting of 17 Kislev, 5533; Copiador de Cartas, letter of Dec. 24, 1772, to St. Eustatius.

[30] Original St. Eustatius letter sent by the late J. M. L. Maduro to the author.

[31] PJCAA, Copiador de Cartas, 1773-1784, letter of Sept. 6, 1776, to De Graaf; *ibid.*, 1784-1799, letter of Feb. 13, 1789, to Godin.

service. The only exception apparently was Daniel Nunez Henriquez[32] who died in 1795 about 64 years of age. He served as clerk to the Government Secretary and as translator from Spanish and Portuguese into Dutch.

The brisk trade St. Eustatius conducted with the North American colonists attracted many foreign merchant settlers. They presented serious competition. Finally in December, 1779, twenty-two local businessmen and shippers of St. Eustatius lodged a complaint with the Company. They asked for the imposition of higher taxes and duties on outsiders. Although there were many Jewish merchants, only three Jews signed the petition:[33] D. Jesurun, D. Spinoza Catella & Son, and Imanuel Cortissoz.

ADMIRAL RODNEY BRINGS RUIN TO THE JEWS

On December 19, 1780, Great Britain declared war on the Republic of Holland. Several weeks later, on January 27, 1781, Admiral George B. Rodney, commander of the fleet in the Leeward Islands, received orders to attack St. Eustatius. This coincided with his own wishes. Eagerly he grasped the opportunity to take vengeance on the government and the people of St. Eustatius for supporting the American colonists. He could not forgive Governor Johannes de Graaf for firing an eleven-gun salute to the brigantine *Andrew Doria* on November 16, 1776, in recognition of the American flag. The merchants of St. Eustatius — and these included many Englishmen — had been supplying the American revolutionists with contraband. The Jews, with their excellent connections in the Caribbean and in North America, took an active part in this commerce which was legal for a neutral country like Holland.

Determined to wipe out this trade and the traders, Admiral Rodney and General John Vaughan seized St. Eustatius on February 3, 1781, with a squadron of fifteen ships of the line, three frigates, and three bomb-ketches with 3,000 soldiers on board. Unaware that Holland and Great Britain were at war, St. Eustatius offered no resistance.

Two days later Rodney demanded a list of all the merchants and their nationality. On February 6 he asked for an inventory of all their merchandise and silverware. A week later he ordered all the Jews to appear at the weigh house for deportation, without their wives and children — of course, only after having stripped them of all their moneys. Rodney had his soldiers go so far as to rip the linings of the garments for any hidden money. And so it

[32] OA, Sint Eustatius, no. 246, June 9, 1795; appendix 24C.

[33] Information given by the late J.M.L. Maduro.

was that 200 gold johannes were found on the old man Samuel Hoheb, a native of Amsterdam who had been on the island for twenty-five years. So also were 900 johannes discovered on the Jew Pollock. A former Rhode Islander, he had been banished from North America for importing tea against the orders of the colonists. He had lost a brother and a brother-in-law in Rhode Island. He settled in St. Eustatius to earn his living and to rear the children of his dead brother. Ironically, in Rhode Island he was victimized for upholding the English cause and in St. Eustatius for being, in the eyes of the English admiral, an enemy of England. Two other Jews — George and Vertram — suffered from Rodney's outrages and arbitrary confiscations. Rodney extorted a total of 8,000 pounds in cash from some 250 Jews.

Robbed of all their money and valuables, thirty Jews were taken aboard the *Schrewsbury* to St. Kitts (St. Christopher) where they were well treated by the assembly of that island.[34] The other Jews were shipped to Antigua. The women, children and the destitute men remained in St. Eustatius in the most abject misery. On February 16, these wretched few addressed a touching letter[35] to Rodney and Vaughan whom they entreated not to bring sadness and misery upon them, upon the helpless women and innocent children.

A year later Samuel Hoheb petitioned the English parliament for indemnification for the hardships and losses he sustained in the seizure of St. Eustatius. Parliament refused, in principle, to consider his plea. The Secretary of War observed that if it were acted upon, "there would be no end of applications" because Rodney's victims were legion. They finally agreed to "order the Attorney and Solicitor-General to carry on a suit for him gratis" and that the "Attorney General should be ordered to prosecute, who had so shamefully robbed a respectable merchant."[36]

Lord Edmund Burke stands out among the statesmen and members of parliament who defended the cause of the Jews and Gentiles of St. Eustatius and of Hoheb. He vehemently attacked Rodney and Vaughan for what they

[34] The merchants of St. Christopher suffered greatly by the confiscation at St. Eustatius. They presented several strong remonstrances to the English commander-in-chief, protesting the seizures (*Annual Register*, vol. 24, 1782, pp. 105-106).

[35] See appendix 24A for the letter. The Hamelberg Collection, 120 B 2, contains two printed pages, numbered 627-629, which were apparently torn from a book on the deliberations of the English parliament. These pages show that General Vaughan restored the houses and land to the Jews. Such was their joy that the Jews delivered an "address . . . from their synagogue expressive of their happiness at being under the mild government of George III." Rodney read this "address" in parliament. There is strong reason to doubt its sincerity, for governors in the Caribbean usually extracted declarations in their favor from their victims under duress.

[36] *The Parliamentary History of England from the earliest period to the year 1803*, vol. XXII (London, 1814), p. 1023.

had done. His remarkable defense of their victims is worthy of reproduction, and here it is:

> This island was different from all others . . . a magazine for all the nations of the earth. It had no fortifications for its defence; no garrison . . . Its inhabitants were a mixed body of all nations and climates . . . The Dutch commander yielded up the dominion . . . A general confiscation of all the property found upon the island . . . without regard to friend or foe . . . and a sentence of general beggary pronounced in one moment upon a whole people. A cruelty unheard of in Europe for many years . . . The persecution was begun with the people, whom of all others it ought to be the care and the wish of human nations to protect, the Jews . . . the links of communication, in the mercantile chain . . . the conductors by which credit was transmitted through the world . . . a resolution was taken [by the British conquerors] to banish this unhappy people from the island. They suffered in common with the rest of the inhabitants, the loss of their merchandise, their bills, their houses, and their provisions; and after this they were ordered to quit the island, and only one day was given them for preparation; they petitioned, they remonstrated against so hard a sentence, but in vain; it was irrevocable. They asked to what part of the world they were to be transported? The answer was, that they should not be informed . . . they must prepare to depart the island the next day; and without their families . . . The next day they did appear to the number of 101, the whole that were upon the island.[37] They were confined in a weigh-house . . . strongly guarded; and orders were given that they should be stripped, and all the linings of their clothes ripped up, that every shilling of money which they might attempt to conceal and carry off should be discovered and taken from them. This order was carried into rigid execution, and money, to the amount of 8,000 (l) [pounds] was taken from these poor, miserable outcasts . . . thirty of them were embarked on board the Schrewsbury, and carried to St. Kitts. The rest, after being confined for three days unheard of, and unknown, were set at liberty to return to their families, that they might be melancholy spectators of the sale of their own property . . . One of these poor wretches had sewed up 200 Johannes in his coat . . . he was . . . turned from among the rest and set apart for punishment . . . Two more Jews had been detected also in breach of the order for delivering up all their money. Upon one of them were found 900 Johannes. This poor man's case was peculiarly severe, his name was Pollock. He had imported tea contrary to the command of the Americans, he was stripped of all he was worth, and driven out of the island; his brother shared in his misfortune, but did not survive them; his death increased the cares of the survivor, as he got an additional family, in his brother's children, to provide for. Another Jew married his sister; and both of them following the British army, had for their loyalty some

[37] This number probably represents the adult men to the exclusion of the women and children.

> lands given them, along with some other American refugees, on Long Island, by sir William Howe: they built a kind of a fort there to defend themselves; but it was soon after attacked and carried by the Americans; and not a man who defended it escaped either death or captivity; the Jew's brother-in-law fell during the attack; he survived; and had then the family of his deceased brother and brother-in-law, his mother and sister, to support; he settled in St. Eustatius, where he maintained his numerous family, and had made some money, when he and his family were once more ruined, by the commanders of a British force, to whose cause he was so attached; and in whose cause he had lost two brothers, and his property twice. Another Jew, named Vertram, was treated with as much severity, nor had the commanders any pretext from his profession, for confiscating his property; he sold no warlike or naval stores to the enemy . . . he was left a beggar. These cruelties were soon followed by others as dreadful.[38]

Burke asked that a motion be taken to condemn Rodney for his deed. "Two millions of pounds sterling, in money alone were taken possession of, besides more than a million in property,"[39] he said. Actually, Rodney had confiscated 175 seagoing vessels.[40] Thirty-four of these, laden with treasure, he shipped to England. In addition he realized some $15,000,000 on merchandise of the islanders sold at public auction. Just before his arrival a fleet of some thirty large ships, richly laden, sailed from St. Eustatius to Holland. Rodney dispatched two warships after them. The convoy was taken after a bitter combat.

The damage[41] done to the island — besides the total destruction of the government archives — is estimated at 48,000,000 florins. In spite of all this, parliament rejected Burke's plea, with 160 votes in favor and only 86 against Rodney. Years later Rodney was thanked by parliament for his services and elevated to the peerage as Baron Rodney.

His happiness over St. Eustatius was brief. On November 26, 1781, the Marquis de Bouille made a surprise attack and took the island. As far as he was able, this Frenchmen restored to every man his property. The Jews

[38] *The Parliamentary History*, etc., p. 218.

[39] Hamelberg Collection, 120 B 3.

[40] According to Curaçao Governor Rodier's declaration of Feb. 21, 1781 (OAC 208, no. 32).

[41] Handrik Gartman, *Engelsche Tieranny* (Amsteldam, MDCCLXXXI), pp. 97-98; *Nieuwe Nederlandsche Jaerboeken* (Amsteldam-Leiden, MDCCLXXXI); *Annual Register*, vol. 24 (London, 1782), pp. 102-6, 308-10, vol. 25, pp. 136-39; *History of the British Empire from the year 1765 to the end of 1783* by a "Society of Gentlemen," (Philadelphia, 1798), vol. 2, p. 72, cited by N. Taylor Phillips, *PAJHS*, 11:152-53; M. D. Teenstra, vol. 2, pp. 347, 353; *The Occident*, vol. XI, y. 5614, pp. 45-46; Cornelis de Jong, *Reis naar de Caribische Eilanden, 1780-1781* (Haarlem, 1807), p. 232; Philip H. Hiss, "Dutch West Indies, Curaçao & Surinam," article in B. Landheer's *The Netherlands* (Los Angeles, 1943); Royal Library, The Hague, pamphlet no. 19729.

returned to St. Eustatius. Their situation improved little by little. In 1784 the Treaty of Paris officially restored St. Eustatius to Holland.

The report sent by Commissioners Grovestins and Boey to the Prince of Orange-Nassau reveals that the Jewish community was well organized in 1790. It then was under the administration of David Abendanone (president), Isaac de David Parera (treasurer) and Benjamin Willcome and Abraham Abendanone as councillors. Judah Haim de Leon was treasurer of the sick fund; Jacob Robles, the reader, and Nathan Levy, the sexton. The community numbered 170 souls and had an annual budget of over 1,000 pesos, broken down as follows:

Reader's salary	p. 198.—
Sexton's ditto	99.—
Poor's maintainance	165.—
Passover Bread for the officers & poor & their maintainance for the 8 days	66.—
Candles & oil	275.—
Tabernacle Expenses	33.—
Paper, ink & quills	11.—
Cleaning Synagogue & negro hire	50.—
	p. 897.—

Besides Dispatches & Sea Store, for Sundry Strangers that arrives here & requireth it.

Besides Reparations for Synagogue & house of the Sexton & Doctor.

This report was signed and delivered to the commissioners by the treasurer of the community, Isaac de David Parera.[42] As income he listed "Capital on interest a[t] 10 per Ct. p. 1265.-"[43] This statement of account is incomplete. The debits do not include the salary of a ritual slaughterer, and the credits omit the donations which must have been considerable.

Reader Robles died in December, 1790. Shortly afterwards the parnassim turned to their Curaçao colleagues to engage a hazzan for them, preferably David, the son of the late Haham Meir aCohen. They were offering an annual salary of 198 pesos plus perquisites.[44]

From 1795 the Jewish population of St. Eustatius kept dwindling. Many left for other shores, principally St. Thomas. Between 1850 and 1924 there were no more than one or three Jews on the island at any one time. Today there are none.

[42] WICA 257; appendix 24E.

[43] The capital fund evidently was 12,650 pesos.

[44] Letter of Eliau de Pinna of St. Eustatius to the Curaçao parnassim, April 12, 1792 (original sent to the author by the late J.M.L. Maduro).

SABA

The small island of Saba, with an area of five square miles, is only a few miles off St. Eustatius and is part of the Windward Islands. This Dutch island is the one least visited by Jews. The highest number of Jews to live there was four in 1918, five in 1921 and three in 1924.[45]

ST. MARTIN

Like St. Eustatius and Saba, St. Martin (St. Maarten) is one of the Windward Islands group. Half of it belongs to the Netherlands and the other half to France. The southern part has been Dutch since 1648. The number of Jewish residents has always been insignificant. In 1735 we encounter Jacob Gomes with his four slaves, and the widow Silva with her son and daughter;[46] in 1778, Jacob Dias Delgado.

The Jewish population had grown so greatly by 1783 that plans were launched to found a community. The archives of the Portuguese Jewish Community of Amsterdam reveal that "the Parnassim of the Holy Congregation St. Martin" requested the Amsterdam parnassim in 1783 to approach the Company for authorization to form a congregation and draw up bylaws. The Amsterdam parnassim accordingly delegated their secretary Daniel Jesurun Lobo to discuss the subject[47] with the attorney for the Company. As usual, the Company directors gave their consent. The congregation apparently was short lived. Nevertheless, it had succeeded in building a synagogue. According to Marten Douwes Teenstra who visited St. Martin in 1828 and saw the ruins of this synagogue, it was situated "at the East end of the Achterstraat to the south." Here follows Teenstra's statement: "Of the former existence of a Synagogue at the East end of the Achterstraat to the part of the South, there remains nothing more than a heap of ruins covered with noxious weeds."[48]

Among the persons who then corresponded with the Amsterdam parnassim were David Israel Pereira and his sons Isaac and Moses. Samuel Sasso was born in St. Martin in 1805.[49] Moses German, of the Portuguese rite, died there in 1820.[50] During the last hundred years St. Martin's Jewish population

45 According to the *Koloniaal Verslag* of 1918, 1921 and 1924.

46 Hamelberg Collection, 120 B 3, which refers to WICA 326.

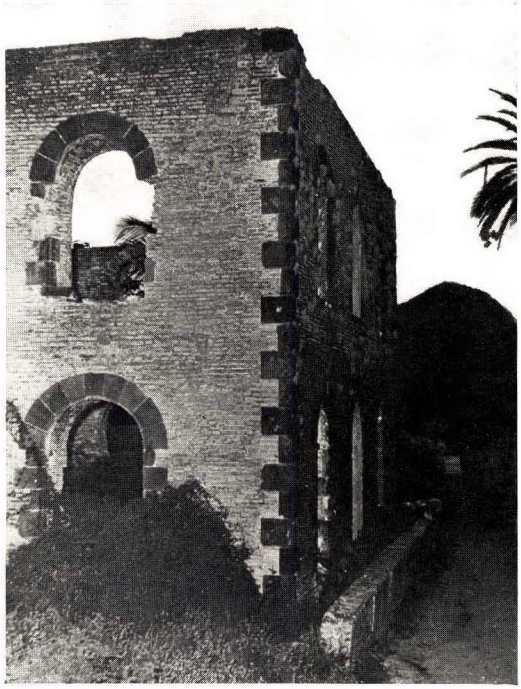
47 PJCAA, Rezolucoems dos Sres do Mahamad, 5539-5545, meeting of 21 Hesvan, 5544 (1783), p. 264; appendix 25.

48 M. D. Teenstra, *De Nederlandsche West-Indische Eilanden*, vol II (Amsterdam, 1837), p. 252.

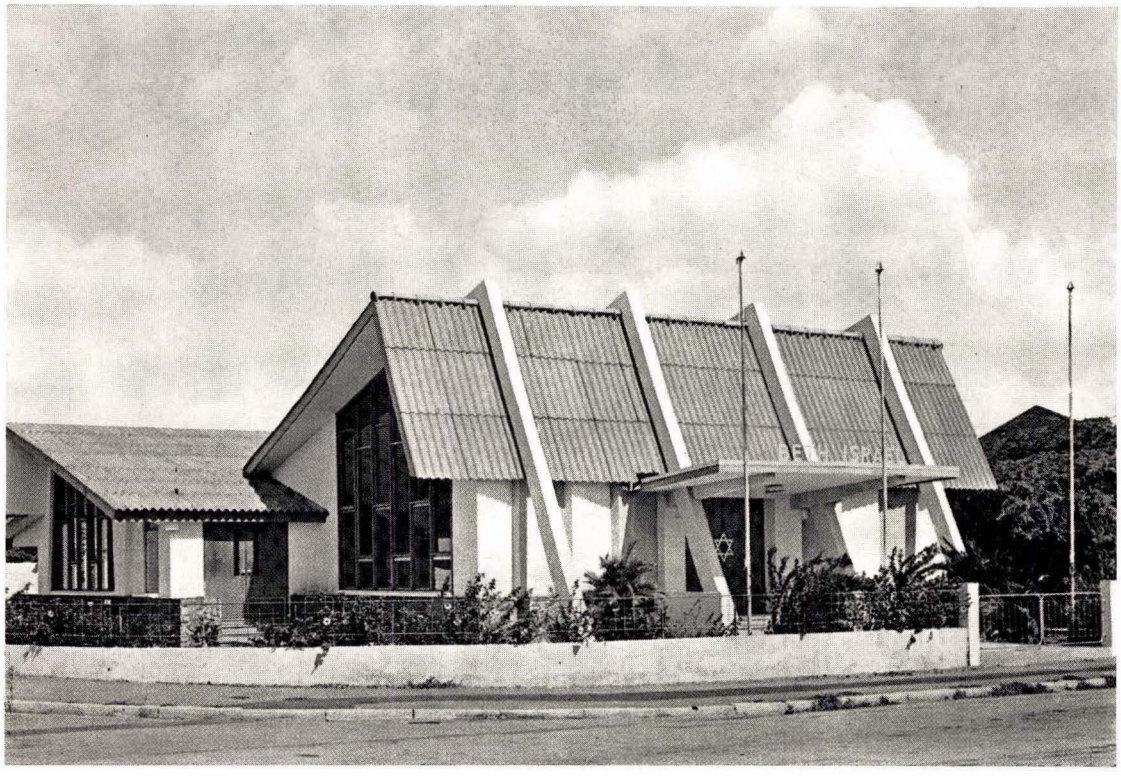
49 Margolinsky, no. 102.

50 PJCAA, bundle.

210. SYNAGOGUE RUINS, SOUTH WALL WITH STAIRS TO LADIES' GALLERY, ST. EUSTATIUS



211. SYNAGOGUE RUINS, EAST AND NORTH WALLS, ST. EUSTATIUS



212. SYNAGOGUE BETH ISRAEL, ARUBA, CONSECRATED IN 1962

has fluctuated between one and three residents. Today several Jewish business firms of Curaçao are represented in St. Martin — Maduro & Sons, Delvalle Hermanos & Co., David Karter, J. L. Penha & Sons, Prospero Baiz & Co., Spritzer & Fuhrmann, and Maduro & Curiel's Bank.

ARUBA

Aruba, the third largest Dutch island in the Caribbean, is just fifteen miles away from the Venezuelan Coast and about 35 miles from Curaçao. From time to time Curaçoan Jews visited Aruba to buy certain products from the *Commandeur* (the Dutch West India Company's representative) or to sell him prime necessities. As early as 1725 the Company viewed the island as a burden. In his letter of July 29, 1743, to the Company directors, Fiscal Van Schagen suggested their renting parcels of land in Aruba and Bonaire to private individuals.[51] Not until 1753 was the idea tried out in Aruba. Moses de Salomo Levy Maduro was the first Jew to apply for some farming land through his agent Moses de Chaves of Amsterdam. The Company authorized Governor Faesch to grant Maduro the land "de precario,"[52] under certain stiff conditions. He could not have cattle or sell the land to others or "in anywise" conduct a business. On June 17, 1754, Maduro swore to abide by these terms and to be loyal to the Commandeur of Aruba.[53] The land did not produce enough to maintain his family of six children. He therefore asked for and obtained permission to have goats.[54]

In 1764 one Jacob Levy Maduro signed a declaration in favor of his daughter Sara, who lived in Aruba with him and her husband Salomon de Moseh Levy Maduro.[55] One Simon Maduro, also known as Salomon de Isaac de Samuel Levy Maduro, resided there in 1765.[56] In 1777 Salomo de Moseh Levy Maduro sold salt to Aruba.[57] In 1800 Mordechay de Moseh Levy Maduro is found there in conflict with the law, and Isaac Suares married to Rachel de Abraham Levy Maduro.[58] The Maduros remained in Aruba until 1816, when we encounter Samuel Levy Maduro.

[51] WICA 209, p. 764.

[52] The Company's letter of Dec. 20, 1753, to Governor Faesch (WICA 475, pp. 112v, 127v; WICA 13, pp. 23-29).

[53] Hamelberg, pp. 195-96; *Documenten*, p. 106.

[54] OAC 18, May 21, 1754.

[55] OAC 927, no. 687.

[56] OAC 874, Nov. 29, 1765.

[57] OAC 955, no. 150. Seems to be indentical with S. M. L. Maduro of the year 1764.

[58] Hamelberg's collection referring to an old Curaçao record, Resolutien en Sententien for the years 1800-1801.

A few years after the land rental to Moses L. Maduro, Abraham Sasso, sexton of Curaçao's Mikvé Israel and then father of ten children, also applied for some land in Aruba. The Curaçao community requested the Amsterdam parnassim to intercede with the Company in his behalf, but were informed that this could not be done in matters of a private nature, especially since Sasso's request previously had been denied.[59]

Curaçoan Jews apparently began settling in Aruba on a firm basis about 1790, but never succeeded in organizing a regular congregation. Mordechay de Mordechay Henriquez established himself there about 1795 with several brothers as ship owners and property holders. Four others joined them in 1811: Isaac de Castro, D. Gomes Casseres, Samuel Lopes Dias and Samuel Idanha. The Marchenas, Pardos, Delvalles, Curiels and Pensos came a little later. In 1816 there were nineteen Jews in Aruba, among them: Isaac de Eliau Penso, who owned a house, a cow, eight goats, two horses and two donkeys; the Widow A. M. Castro, who owned a house, a garden and six goats; A. H. Henriquez and Rachel Maduro, each of whom had a house; Samuel Maduro, a house, garden and a donkey. Of fourteen sailing vessels registered in 1816, three belonged to Jews: two to Isaac Penso and one to Mordechay Henriquez.[60] In 1818 the Curaçao parnassim, with the governor's approval, appointed Benjamin de Mordechay Henriquez and Benjamin Suares in Aruba as representatives of the Cámara de Orfaos to take charge of local Jewish inheritance matters. They were replaced in 1834 by Jacob Moreno Henriquez, (established in Aruba since 1822) and by Joseph Jacob Henriquez,[61] and in 1857 by Jeosuah Jesurun Henriquez.

Between 1816 and 1826 the Jewish population fluctuated between nineteen and thirty-two souls, as follows: 1816, 19; 1820, 22 out of 158 white residents; 1821, 22; 1822, 28; 1823, 31 out of 169 white residents; 1824, 31; 1825, 32, and 1826, 31.[62]

In 1827 Benjamin Suares, Jacob Moreno Henriquez and Eliau Penso organized the firm of Eliau Penso & Co. Some of the Jews imported and exported donkeys and mules, paying a fee of six reales for each animal in either transaction.[63] Daniel Benveniste resided there in 1835.

[59] The Company's letter to Rodier, Nov. 14, 1768 (WICA 71, p. 211); PJCAA, Resoluçoems dos Sres do Mahamad, 5527-5533, meeting of 26 Elul, 5527.

[60] OAC 483, Oct. 28, 1811; Koloniën 3739, March 27, 1816. As there was no cemetery, Isaac Penso had to ship the remains of his wife Sarah (d. 1822) to Curaçao for burial (*Precious Stones*, p. 137, C 36).

[61] Koloniën 3617, Jan. 19, 1818; MIA, Minutas de Parnassim, meeting of Feb. 12, 1834.

[62] Fortman, "Bijdragen en Mededeelingen van het historisch Genootschap," *WIG*, vol. 51, p. 288; regarding the Jews in Aruba, see OAC 294, March 15, 1821.

[63] OAC 236, no. 254; Koloniën 3626, no. 32.

The Jews of Aruba, like many Curaçoan Jews established in other countries, would pay the *finta* or communal tax to Curaçao's Mikvé Israel. Among these Arubian taxpayers of 1855 we find David Isaac Pardo, paying 73 florins; Jacob A. Naar, 25.80; David Isaac Capriles Jr., 156. One of Aruba's distinguished persons, Capriles (1799-1883) served for several years as a member of the island's Court of Peace and went on a number of government missions. He was buried in the small cemetery founded by the Curaçoan Jews toward the end of 1837.[64]

In January, 1854, the Dutch Government gave Luis Joseph de Jongh of The Hague and his attorney David Abraham Jesurun of Curaçao a concession to exploit the gold mines of Aruba for a period of forty years.[65] During that period the following Jews purchased gold in Aruba: David Abraham Jesurun, 5,010 ozs.; Jacob Abraham Jesurun, 2,231¼ ozs.; Abraham Haim Senior, and Jacob Senior, 273½ ozs.; Elias Pereira Brandao, 194¼ ozs.; Joseph Pereira Brandao, 177¾ ozs.; Jacob Moreno, 106¾ ozs.; Moreno and Suares, 44½ ozs., and E. Morris Curiel, 12½ ozs.[66]

Aruba enjoyed its largest Jewish population between 1856 and 1870. In 1856 it had ten Jews; 1862, 11; 1863, 11; 1864, 15; 1865, 17; 1866, 17; 1867, 23; 1868, 21; 1869, 17; 1870, 18. Between 1871 and 1929 the Jewish population varied between one and five.[67]

In 1879 the Aruba Phosphate Mining Company was organized with a capital of 226,000 florins, divided into 113 shares of stock with a face value of 2,000 florins. Fifty-six of these belonged to Charles B. Sewell of London who had received the concession from the Dutch Government; 21 to Gentiles, and 36 to the following Jews: A. J. & A. Jesurun, Mordechay Henriquez Cadet, Elias Jesurun Henriquez, Abraham Salas, Isaac Salas, Jeudah Senior Jr., Salomon Senior, Jr., Jose Gomez Casseres, Moses Delvalle Henriquez, Abraham Delvalle Henriquez, Salomon Senior, Daniel Cohen Henriquez & Sons, Dr. David Ricardo Capriles, Moses de Castro, and Jacob Elias Penso.[68]

[64] On our first visit to Aruba in 1940 we found eleven tombs: three children's and eight adults', the oldest being that of Jael de Jacob Moreno, d. Nov. 9, 1857. Curaçoan Jews established in Aruba generally preferred to be buried in Curaçao. See appendix 26.

[65] CGA, Not. Acts, 1854, vol. III, no. 44; *CC*, March 4, 1854.

[66] The gold was between 19 and 21 carats. W. H. Hoyer, *A Brief Historical Description of Aruba* ([Curaçao], 1945), 8 pp.; Johan Hartog, *Aruba* (Aruba, 1953), pp. 147-48; *Reports on the Island of Aruba (Dutch) West Indies and its gold ores, with a general description of the Island* (London, 1872), 70 pp., plus a map of Aruba.

[67] According to the *Koloniaal Verslag* of those years. The *KV* apparently did not include some Jewish soldiers from Holland and one or another immigrant from Surinam residing in Aruba in 1924.

[68] *CC*, Dec. 20, 1878.

Later on several Jews bought part of the Sewell interest. Abraham Jesurun Dz. acted as the secretary from its inception until 1913 when Edwin Senior became controller. For many years this company provided work for numerous residents of Aruba. Today M. Curiel & Sons, Maduro & Sons, Marchena-Moron, Wimco; Edward, Henriquez & Co., Maduro & Curiel's Bank, and Spritzer & Furhrmann maintain large interests there.

NEW IMMIGRATION

Since 1924 there has been an influx of Jewish settlers from Holland and Surinam. The installation of the Lago Refinery in 1929 attracted many Jews from Poland, Roumania and others lands. If not the world's largest refinery, it certainly is one of the largest with an operating capacity of 500,000 barrels a day. Thanks to their industry and ability, these newcomers attained an outstanding economic position for themselves. During World War II many of them served in the Civil Defense Corps. They distinguished themselves by their hospitality and their generous contributions not only to the various Jewish appeals and institutions, but also to every Arubian non-Jewish fund or institution that called upon them.

The author was often called, as rabbi, to officiate on the Jewish High Holy Days. In 1942 they built their magnificent Aruba Country Club, and later erected a cemetery. During the first years of their installation, the new immigrants used the small cemetery founded by the Curaçoan Jews.

Although the Jewish community was officially organized in 1946, it was not until November 4, 1962, during S. L. Berlinski's presidency, that they dedicated the first Orthodox synagogue on the island. They called their small, beautiful synagogue (provided with a social hall) in Oranje Stad, Beth Israel — House of Israel. The Beth Israel was made possible by the devotion and good will of Aruba's 35 Jewish families (Aruba's total population is 58,000). The government authorities of Aruba and the representatives of Curaçao's three Jewish communities attended the dedication ceremonies. On this occasion the Mikvé Israel Community presented a silver pointer; the Reform Community Emanu-El, a silver *kiddush* cup. (See illus. 212.)

For some six years the community had at its service one A. Hoffman as cantor and teacher. After his departure, one of their number, Sam Wisniewicz, a businessman, performed the services *pro Deo* for several years. In February, 1969, the congregation engaged Philip Wolf as their cantor and teacher.

It is earnestly hoped that the Jews of Aruba will keep their ancestral rite intact and not let themselves be drawn into the currents of Curaçao Reform.

JEWS IN OTHER ISLANDS OF THE DUTCH WEST INDIES

BONAIRE

Bonaire, though the second largest island of the Dutch West Indies, did not attract the Jews. According to the historian Hamelberg,[69] Jan Delian* sought, while in Holland, a contract from the Dutch West India Company for the purchase of salt from Bonaire. From time to time during the 18th century several Curaçaon Jews went to fetch salt from Bonaire's numerous saltpans. In the 19th century a number of Jewish businessmen like the Seniors, Marchenas, Jesuruns, and others had interests in Bonaire. A few, especially the Jesuruns, suffered huge losses. Sometimes a Jewish overseer settled on the island to take charge of these enterprises. In 1874 we find such a person in Aron de Benjamin Henriquez. In 1878[70] one Jacob Jesurun imported certain building materials from Bonaire. The attorney Abraham M. Chumaceiro took a keen interest in the island's prosperity and in 1867 printed his *Het Island Bonaire* (The Hague, 1867).

Between 1850 and 1930 the Jewish population wavered between one and six souls. During World War II the Curaçao Government interned on Bonaire enemy aliens, including 23 Jews. The author was called there, as rabbi, to officiate during the High Holy Days of 1942. Recently one or another Curaçao Jewish firm has opened a branch in Bonaire. Now there are about four or five Jewish residents out of a total population of 6,200.

[69] Hamelberg, p. 45.
[70] *CC*, March 9, 1878.

* = Joao De Yllan.

ceived by the bridegroom, varying from 200 flrs. to over 500,000 flrs. New information is published about the Jews of St. Eustatius, Aruba and St. Martin as well as about forty localities in the Caribees and Mainland that once had a Jewish settlement.

This book, easy to read also for the general reader, is indispensable for every one interested in the Jewish history of the Americas and in the valuable contribution the Jews can give to their country, when living under a liberal government as that of Holland.

The two strongly bound volumes are copiously illustrated with 128 pages of 316 beautiful illustrations. The index of some 4,400 entries will greatly aid the busy reader in making profitable use of the HISTORY OF THE JEWS OF THE NETHERLANDS ANTILLES.

BOOKSELLERS

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