

The Diplomatic Career of Jeronimo Nunes da Costa: an Episode in Dutch-Portuguese Relations of the Seventeenth Century*

JONATHAN I. ISRAEL

The merchant and diplomatic agent Jeronimo Nunes da Costa, one of the most prominent figures of the Amsterdam Portuguese Jewish community of the later seventeenth century, has been referred to in passing in a good many books¹. Renowned for his wealth, the prestige he enjoyed among non-Jews (the Stadholder William III is said to have stayed in his house for three days during one of his later visits to Amsterdam²), and his handsome donations to the Amsterdam Portuguese Synagogue, his name figured constantly in Dutch Jewish community life and synagogue politics for over half a century. His opulent residence on the Nieuwe Herengracht, then called the Joden Herengracht, in Amsterdam, testified both to the seigneurial grandeur of his life-style and his pretensions to leadership among the Portuguese Jewish 'nation' as the community was known in Holland. Over a period of decades, he was one, if not the most important, of all Dutch traders with Portugal and its colonies. He also traded quite extensively with Curaçao and, via Curaçao, with the neighbouring Spanish American mainland. His innumerable dealings in salt from Setúbal, sugar from Brazil and São Thomé, Algarve figs, Brazil tobacco, diamonds, grain, timber, silver, slaves, arms and munitions were unrivalled in scale or diversity among Dutch Jews of his day. But besides his prominence in commerce

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1. In particular, see Isaac da Costa, *Noble Families among the Sephardic Jews*, B. Brewster and C. Roth, ed. (London, 1936) 151 f; J.S. da Silva Rosa, *Geschiedenis der Portugeesche joden te Amsterdam, 1593-1925* (Amsterdam, 1925) 100-101; H. Kellenbenz, *Sephardim an der unteren Elbe* (Wiesbaden, 1958) 167-169, 352-363; W.Chr. Pieterse, *Daniel Levi de Barrios als geschiedschrijver van de Portugees-Israelietische gemeente te Amsterdam* (Amsterdam, 1968) 75, 76, 89; Daniel M. Swetschinski, 'The Portuguese Jewish Merchants of Seventeenth-Century Amsterdam: a Social Profile' (Unpublished Ph.d. thesis Brandeis University, 1979) chapter iii, section v.

2. David Franco Mendes, 'Memorias', *Studia Rosenthaliana*, IX, ii (July 1975) 95.

and Jewish community life, Jeronimo also spent considerable periods at The Hague immersed in diplomacy, acting as an important intermediary in Dutch-Portuguese relations. It is this latter aspect of his remarkable career which provides the subject matter of this present article.

Jeronimo Nunes da Costa, or Moseh Curiel, as he was known in the synagogue, was born at Florence, in the Grand Duchy of Tuscany, in May 1620 and was the eldest son of Duarte Nunes da Costa (Jacob Curiel), a Lisbon New Christian merchant who fled from the Inquisition in Portugal in or around 1609. After some years first in Madrid and then at Florence, Jeronimo's father moved to Amsterdam where his brother, Jeronimo's uncle, Lopo Ramires (David Curiel) had for some years been a leading figure in the Jewish community. But he stayed only five or six years before moving on, in 1626, to Hamburg. From then until 1640, Duarte imported to Hamburg a good deal of Brazil sugar and other goods from Lisbon and also became involved in the international munitions trade. Among other things, he shipped Danish gunpowder, via Dover, to the Spanish Netherlands. Following the secession of Portugal from the Spanish Monarchy, in December 1640, Duarte emerged as the most active and vocal champion of the Portuguese cause among the Portuguese Jewish diaspora in northern Europe. He shipped munitions and naval stores to Lisbon and played a notable part in the attempts to secure the release of Dom Duarte, younger brother of João IV, the new king of Portugal, who had been seized whilst serving in the wars in Germany by the Habsburg Emperor, at the instigation of the latter's cousin, Philip IV of Spain³. For his contributions to Portugal's struggle for independence from Spain, Duarte Nunes da Costa was made a knight of the Portuguese royal household, in 1641⁴, and named 'Agent of Portugal' at Hamburg in 1644.

While Duarte's other sons remained with him at Hamburg, he sent his eldest, Jeronimo, at the age of twenty-two, early in 1642, to Amsterdam where he was to remain for the rest of his long life. This he did at the request of João IV's ministers who were keen to reinforce the small group of Portuguese representatives who were then in Holland⁵. This is why, many years later, in 1664, the English king, Charles II, was apprised by the Portuguese ambassador in London that

3. For further details about Duarte and Lopo Ramires, see my forthcoming book on the history of the Curiel family, 'The Curiels. An Ibero-Dutch Patrician Family in the Old World and New, 1492-1980'.

4. According to Jeronimo's letter of appointment as Portuguese Agent in the Dutch Provinces, Duarte was ennobled by João IV as a *cavaleiro fidalgo* on 14 June 1641, British Library (hereafter BL) MS Add. 46912, fos. 11r-v.

5. Biblioteca Nacional. Lisbon (BNL) MS 661, caixa 14, fos. 89v-90: J. Nunes da Costa to Vidigueira, Amsterdam, 19 september 1644.

Jeronimo Nunes da Costa who is, and has been these twenty yeares Agent for the king my master, in Amsterdam, for providing him with munition for war and all necessaryes for shipping, as well for his royall navy, as allsoe for that belonging to the Brasill Company; is the only person that acts these and such like businesses, for which end the king my master sent for him from Hamburg to reside at Amsterdam⁶.

The ambassador's object in stressing that Jeronimo had been asked to settle in Holland by the Portuguese was to secure immunity for his cargoes from seizure by the English in the event of a second Anglo-Dutch war. But the point is indeed crucial to understanding Jeronimo's pattern of loyalties. His Jewish loyalties were clear. Like his father, who was an important figure in synagogue affairs in Hamburg and beyond, Jeronimo always devoted a good deal of time and energy to Jewish community matters and, on occasion, took initiatives on behalf of his people at diplomatic level as in 1682 when he wrote to Louis XIV, pleading on behalf of the Jews of Martinique who were then under threat of expulsion by the French crown⁷. But, at least in the early part of his career, he showed little or no sense of obligation to the Dutch Republic and steadfastly refused to consider himself a Dutch subject. He insisted in his communications with the States General and States of Holland that he was an accredited representative of the Portuguese crown and that he owed allegiance to Portugal alone. Only in later years, as the hopes that he and his father had placed in the willingness and ability of the restored Portuguese monarchy to ameliorate the lot of the Portuguese New Christians faded, did he develop an increasing rapport with Dutch leaders and perform significant services on behalf of the Republic.

Initially, in the years 1642-1645, Jeronimo operated in Amsterdam on behalf of Portuguese diplomats and of his father, and trading on his own account, without holding any official title or position⁸. But he made himself increasingly useful not only to the Portuguese ambassador to The Hague, Francisco de Sousa Coutinho, but to Portuguese diplomats at Paris, London and at the Westphalian peace congresses, at Münster and Osnabrück. A service particularly valued by Sousa Coutinho in the early and mid-1640s was his procuring of news and information from Portugal's arch-enemy, Spain, by means of his fellow Jews at Amsterdam, several of whom specialized in clandestine trade, often via Bayonne, with a country from which Dutch ships and merchants were still officially

6. Public Record Office, London (PRO) SP 89/6, fo. 200: petition dated 28 December 1664.

7. Abraham Cahen, 'Les juifs de la Martinique au XVIIe siècle', *Revue des études juives*, II (1981) 106.

8. BNL, MS 661, caixa 14. no. 64: J. Nunes da Costa to Vidigueira, Amsterdam, 22 August 1644; Swetschinski, 'Portuguese Jewish Merchants', I, 228.

excluded⁹. He was appointed Agent of the Portuguese crown, not only in Amsterdam but in Holland and all the Dutch provinces, in May 1645. The implication, in much of the existing secondary literature which refers to Jeronimo's career, that his official activities were limited to Amsterdam is indeed entirely misleading.

By 1645, Jeronimo was in regular contact with the Portuguese ambassador in Paris, the conde de Vidigueira (later the marquês de Niza) who was serving as Portugal's senior diplomat in northern Europe, co-ordinating his country's efforts in France, England, the Netherlands and Germany. Jeronimo provided much information about the Dutch West India Company (in which he and his father were substantial investors) and its forces and operations in Brazil and West Africa¹⁰, about the Dutch-Spanish negotiations then in progress, and about numerous other matters of interest to the Portuguese. He acted as the main clearing-house for Portuguese diplomatic correspondence passing from Lisbon, Paris, and London to and from the Portuguese delegations at the Westphalian congresses. He did also provide some financial services for Portuguese diplomats but his role in this sphere was very limited during the 1640s when his uncle, Lopo Ramires, acted as Portugal's main Amsterdam banker. One of Jeronimo's principal tasks was to obtain maximum publicity in Dutch news-sheets and pamphlets for Portuguese successes against Spain and he was regularly sent the details of Portuguese land and sea victories from Lisbon for this purpose¹¹.

After his appointment as Agent, Jeronimo also regularly sent dispatches direct to João IV's ministers in Lisbon. In 1646, for instance, the number of his reports to the Portuguese government, crammed with diplomatic and Dutch political and colonial news, was easily comparable with the quantities dispatched by his full-time professional colleagues¹². To fully grasp the significance of Jeronimo's early role, one must bear in mind that not only was Holland then the diplomatic

9. Pleased with some news procured by Jeronimo from Madrid, Sousa Coutinho reported to Lisbon in July 1643 that 'with him and his father it matters much to His Majesty that there should be the good correspondence which their services merit and, were it not for the fact that they are Jews, I do not know how His Majesty could repay what he owes them', *Correspondência diplomática de Francisco de Sousa Coutinho durante a sua embaixada em Holanda*, E. Prestage, e.a., ed. (3 vols.; Coimbra-Lisbon, 1920-1955) I, 14, 179.

10. See, for instance, B(iblioteca da) Ajuda 49-x-24, fo. 339: J. Nunes da Costa, to L. Pereira de Castro, Amsterdam, 20 October 1645; Biblioteca Publica de Evora (BPE) CVI-211: Niza to J. Nunes da Costa, Paris, 4 September 1648, thanking him for papers concerning the Portuguese reconquest of São Thomé; *Correspondência Sousa Coutinho*, II, 265-266.

11. BPE CVI-2-1, fos. 150-151: Vidigueira to J. Nunes da Costa, Paris, 27 August 1644; and Affonso VI, 'Carta de padrão', *Anais da Academia Portuguesa*, 2nd ser. VIII (1958) 120-121.

12. *Cartas de el-rei D. João IV ao conde de Vidigueira (Marquês de Niza) embaixador em Franca*, P.M. Laranjo Coelho, ed. (2 vols.; Lisbon, 1940-1942) II, 5-40.

nerve-centre of Europe and the principal source of news from Asia, Africa and Brazil but that what was happening in Holland was of crucial importance to a newly reborn Portuguese state fighting for its survival not only against Spain but against the colonial ambitions of the Dutch East and West India Companies. News supplied by Jeronimo about Dutch activity in Brazil was especially vital, for it was in 1645 that began the revolt of the Portuguese planters in the Dutch zone of Brazil which ended the fragile cease-fire which had held since July 1642 and initiated the last phase of the Dutch-Portuguese struggle for possession of the area. While both sides were anxious to avoid a full-scale war, relations between the Republic and Portugal were increasingly embittered from 1645 onwards. Having appointed him his Agent in the United Provinces, João IV further expressed his appreciation of Jeronimo's role as a supplier of Dutch news, by elevating him to the rank of 'knight and nobleman (*cavaleiro fidalgo*) of my house'¹³, the same honour which he had previously conferred upon his father. In general, there is little to distinguish Jeronimo's dispatches from the usual type of diplomatic reports of the day, though Sousa Coutinho did note that in one letter he named the Island of St. Helena simply as Helena, remarking that he is such a religious Jew that if he called it 'Saint' he would be failing in his obligations¹⁴.

As Dutch-Portuguese relations progressively deteriorated under the strain of the bitter contest for Brazil and West Africa, Jeronimo became more deeply involved in activity inimical to Dutch interests. King João IV himself expressed his pleasure at information supplied by Jeronimo through Niza concerning the weakness of the Dutch garrison of the West African island of São Thomé¹⁵, information which was possibly of material assistance to the Portuguese in recovering the island from the Dutch, following their reconquest of Angola, in August 1648. In May 1649, Sousa Coutinho received from Lisbon the terms of the Dutch surrender in Angola. When the States General angrily refused to acknowledge the humiliating capitulation, the ambassador sent the document to Jeronimo who circulated copies in Amsterdam and arranged for their publication¹⁶. Jeronimo's standing in the Portuguese diplomatic service in the later 1640s clearly rested on his growing prestige among royal officials in Lisbon and with the marquês de Niza, ambassador at Paris, rather than on his

13. BL MS 46912, fos. 11r-v.

14. *Correspondência Sousa Coutinho*, I, 318.

15. João IV to Niza, Lisbon, 8 July 1647 in *Cartas de el-rei D. João IV*, II, 119.

16. *Correspondência Sousa Coutinho*, III, 244-245.

relationship with Sousa Coutinho, Portuguese ambassador at The Hague, with whom, in fact, he was on increasingly bad terms¹⁷.

A notable feature of Jeronimo's activity on behalf of Portugal in the late 1640s was his collaboration with the great Portuguese Jesuit preacher, missionary and diplomat, António Vieira. Vieira was a man close to the ear of João IV and of considerable importance in the events of his reign. Although little is known about Vieira's first visit to Holland (April-July 1646), it is clear that he was handling secret business on behalf of the king which involved close contact with Jeronimo, and other Amsterdam Jews, and with the Portuguese crypto-Jews of Rouen. In a letter written to these Portuguese New Christians of Rouen from The Hague, of 20 April 1646, Vieira states that the schemes which he had been endeavouring to persuade the king to adopt would undoubtedly be strengthened now that he had been in direct contact with the Rouen community¹⁸. Vieira was referring to his famous project for the restraining of the Inquisition in Portugal and its colonies on the part of João IV as part of a new relationship between the crown and the Portuguese Jewish diaspora, intended to enable the king to harness Jewish capital and resources behind the struggle for Brazil and Africa, and behind Portugal's fight for survival as an independent state. In particular, Vieira's plan for a joint-stock Brazil Company to take over commerce with Brazil in which Jewish and New Christian capital would be immune from confiscation by the Inquisition, though conceived of some years before, was only far enough advanced to be adopted by João IV after Vieira's return from Holland, in 1646¹⁹. This was just the sort of measure that Jeronimo and his father had longed to see from João IV who had, in fact, already taken some initial hesitant steps towards curbing the virulence of the Portuguese Inquisition²⁰ and Jeronimo and Duarte would certainly have promised Vieira their enthusiastic support. When the Brazil Company, which was to play a not inconsiderable part in clinching Portuguese success in the fight for Brazil, was finally set up, in 1649, both Jeronimo and Duarte Nunes da Costa were extremely active in procuring the necessary ships, naval stores, munitions and additional support. In return

17. Late in 1647, Jeronimo and Sousa Coutinho were sharply at variance in their assessments of the chances of an early dispatch of Dutch reinforcements to Brazil and the ambassador accused Jeronimo of deliberately trying to mislead the king's ministers, *Correspondência Sousa Coutinho*, II, 265-266; he also grumbled over what he considered Jeronimo's shortcomings in the sphere of financial services.

18. António Vieira S.J., *Obras Escolhidas*, António Sérgio and Hernâni Cidade, ed. (12 vols.; Lisbon, 1951) I, 87-89.

19. See C.R. Boxer, 'Padre Antonio Vieira S.J. and the Institution of the Brazil Company in 1649', *Hispanic American Historical Review*, XXIX (1949) 474-497.

20. *Instruções inéditas de D. Luis da Cunha a Marco António de Azevedo Coutinho*, Pedro de Azevedo, ed. (Coimbra, 1929) 75-76.

Jeronimo and his father were respectively appointed the Company's Amsterdam and Hamburg representatives²¹.

During his second stay in Holland, in 1647-1648, António Vieira was again in close contact with Jeronimo Nunes da Costa²². On this occasion, the Jesuit's mission was to purchase on behalf of the king newly-built frigates, fast, light, and constructed to the latest design. Although in the end most of the ships and munitions that Vieira was seeking were purchased in Hamburg and Lübeck by Duarte Nunes da Costa and Jeronimo's younger brothers, Manoel and Jorge Nunes da Costa (Selomoh and David Curiel), Jeronimo worked closely with Vieira constantly advising and assisting him. Jeronimo and his uncle, Lopo Ramires, did also purchase at least one frigate on behalf of Vieira, the *Fortuna*, which they bought from the Amsterdam merchant and ship-dealer, Jeremiah van Collen²³.

An amusing anecdote pertains to this period of Jeronimo's life. Throughout his career there were occasions when he found himself introducing Christian notables to the Synagogue and to Judaism. Indeed, Jewish leaders of the age of mercantilism regularly sought not only to convince influential non-Jews of the usefulness of Jewish skills and resources but consciously strove to improve the image of the Jewish faith among Christians. For the first time since the rise of Christianity to supremacy, a stream of rulers, noblemen, and ecclesiastics visited the synagogues and witnessed Jewish services and rituals, especially in Venice and Amsterdam. Vieira was one of numerous notables escorted to the Amsterdam Portuguese synagogue by Jeronimo Nunes da Costa. During the sermon, however, Vieira was so angered by certain words of the rabbi that he loudly interrupted the proceedings. The situation demanded all of Jeronimo's famed tact. He dragged the Jesuit out 'not without some violence' and reportedly calmed him with the following observation:

a man as eminent as yourself will either persuade or be persuaded; if you persuade us, it will be a bad day for the synagogue and should you be convinced, for the King of Portugal, so I judge it best that we avoid the issue²⁴.

Until 1651, Jeronimo continued to act for Portugal in an auxiliary capacity, essentially as an assistant of Sousa Coutinho. He supplied valuable reports. He

21. H. Kellenbenz, 'Phasen des hanseatischen-nordeuropäischen Südamerikahandels', *Hansische Geschichtsblätter*, LXXVIII (1966) 98-99; Swetschinski, 'Portuguese Jewish Merchants', i, 234.

22. *Cartas do Padre António Vieira*, J. Lúcio d'Azevedo, ed. (3 vols.; Coimbra, 1925-1928) I, 162-164.

23. Virginia Rau, 'O Padre António Vieira e a Fragata Fortuna', *Studia*, II (1958) 98-102.

24. *Memorias inéditas de Fr. João de S. Joseph* (s.a.) 160-161.

advanced sums for the repatriation of a considerable number of Portuguese soldiers and seamen brought back by the Dutch from the Indies east and west, feeding them until shipping space was available and then paying their passage back to Portugal²⁵. In 1650, advancing a substantial sum to the king, he shipped a sizeable consignment of urgently needed arms and munitions back to Portugal²⁶. Sousa Coutinho's transfer to Paris was followed, later in 1651, by the short extraordinary embassy of Antonio de Sousa de Macedo who was likewise assisted in various ways by Jeronimo, though on one occasion, Sousa de Macedo was much angered by Jeronimo's refusal to advance him 500 *cruzados* which he required to bribe an unnamed Gelderland delegate to the States General²⁷. On Sousa de Macedo's departure, Dutch-Portuguese relations were near to a total break, the Dutch refusing to admit another ambassador from João IV until they were offered some satisfaction for their complaints over Brazil and West Africa. Several times during 1651, the States General discussed going to war with Portugal and blockading Lisbon.

In principle, João IV was anxious to mollify the Dutch, for he did not consider himself strong enough to fight Spain and the Republic simultaneously. At this stage he was still willing to partition Brazil and to repeat his assurances that no official help was being given to the rebels in the Dutch zone. However, the outbreak of the first Anglo-Dutch War in 1652 prevented the Republic from taking action against Portugal for the time being and emboldened the Portuguese monarch to take advantage of the opportunity and risk a full-scale offensive to finally dislodge the Dutch from the north-east of Brazil. The main Dutch stronghold, Recife, fell to the Portuguese forces in January 1654. But the collapse of the Dutch colony was closely followed by the treaty of Westminster which freed the Dutch from their English entanglement, enabling the States General once again to consider action against Portugal. At this critical juncture, Jeronimo Nunes da Costa was effectively Portuguese *chargé d'affaires* in the Republic and it fell to him to negotiate vital matters of state at the highest level not only in The Hague, with members of the States General's special committee for Portuguese affairs, and in Amsterdam, but in other Dutch towns. Some months after the fall of Recife, in the summer of 1654, when Antonio da Silva de Sousa, Portuguese envoy at Stockholm, visited Hamburg, he received instructions from the king to

25. There are a number of references to this in Sousa Coutinho's letters, see also the 'Carta de padrão', *Anais*, 2nd ser. VIII, 121.

26. *Ibidem*, 121; BPE CVL 2-1/123: J. Nunes da Costa to C. Soares de Abreu, Amsterdam, 3 November 1649.

27. Algemeen Rijksarchief, The Hague (ARH) SG 7011-1: De Chapelle to States General, The Hague, 28 August 1653.

proceed directly to Amsterdam and speak with Jeronimo Nunes about the prospects of an accommodation with the Dutch and whether or not they will forget what has happened in Brazil, and about obtaining the peace and understanding between this realm and that nation which I desire, and, in particular, you will discover whether they will now receive an ambassador from me²⁸.

The initial response from The Hague was negative, but Jeronimo continued with his soundings and sending secret reports to Lisbon. On 20 April 1655, the Council of State in Lisbon discussed a dispatch from Jeronimo of 30 March in which he advised that in the aftermath of the Dutch defeats by England, despite disagreement among the provinces, 'that the States General was inclined to negotiate peace and that it seemed unlikely that they would make war this year'²⁹. Jeronimo appraised João IV's ministers that he was about to travel to Utrecht and the Overijssel towns to work at persuading more city magistrates to reconcile themselves to the permanent loss of Brazil. Three days later, the Council debated further reports from Jeronimo. He recounted that he had again talked with the 'Count of Nassau' who 'promised him to work vigorously on our behalf and find out for certain whether the States General will now receive an ambassador from Portugal'³⁰. Jeronimo reiterated his previous assessment that the Dutch could be swayed to abandon Brazil without further conflict, assuring the king that negotiation was now possible. He even ventured to advise the king that Antonio de Sousa de Macedo was the man to send. Additionally, he suggested that the king write to the 'Conde de Nassau' thanking him for his assistance. On this occasion, as on numerous others, the Council expressed warm appreciation of Jeronimo's services. And several times subsequently, as on 16 December 1655, the Council returned to considering Jeronimo's assessments of the balance of views among the Dutch towns and provinces³¹.

At the same time, Jeronimo's dispatches during the 1650s were the sole regular source of information available to Portuguese ministers as to the intentions and

28. João IV to Silva de Sousa, 17 July 1654 in *Um diplomata português da Restauração - António da Silva de Sousa* (Lisbon, 1940) 24; in the early eighteenth century, the Portuguese Protestant writer, Oliveira, a friend of Jeronimo's youngest son, Alvaro Nunes da Costa, wrote that 'lorsque les ambassadeurs de Portugal se retirerent de la Haya à cause des différens qui survinrent entres les deux puissances ...ce juy y resta seul chargé des plus grandes negociations de cette couronne. Il s'en acquitta avec honneur...'.
29. Bibliotheca dos Duques de Cadaval (Muge) (BDC) k-VIII-6b, 'Memórias do Conselho de Estado' fo. 86v.
30. BDC k-VIII-6b, fo. 91v.; the 'Count of Nassau' referred to here is presumably Willem Frederik, Stadholder of Friesland, a province which was traditionally cool towards the interests of the West India Company and firmly opposed going to war with Portugal over Brazil; Jeronimo would have talked with him at his town-house in The Hague.
31. BDC k-VIII-6b, fo. 260v: session of Conselho de Estado, 16 December 1655.

activities of the Dutch colonial companies. Besides being a major investor, Jeronimo clearly followed colonial affairs, including the movements in commodity prices, very closely. Thus his advices were essential subject matter for the *Conselho Ultramarino*, responsible for colonial affairs, as well as for the Council of State and the Brazil Company. In June 1655, for example, Jeronimo remitted details of Dutch and English reinforcements being sent out to the Far East which caused the *Conselho Ultramarino* to urge João IV to dispatch additional Portuguese forces to India and Ceylon³², the latter having been a focus of bitter Dutch-Portuguese rivalry since the 1630s. Apparently, Jeronimo regularly sent to Lisbon details as to the number, tonnage, and cargoes both of outgoing and incoming Dutch East India fleets³³.

As the Republic was in so many ways central to their concerns in this period, the king's ministers were anxious that Portuguese diplomats in other parts of northern Europe should also receive regular reports from Jeronimo. In effect, Dutch ambassadors needed the most recent news from The Hague and Amsterdam. Thus when a new Portuguese ambassador, Francisco Mello Torres, was sent to London, in 1657, there were five other Portuguese representatives in northern Europe with whom he was instructed to maintain regular correspondance. Of these, two were Jeronimo and Duarte Nunes da Costa, royal Agents at Amsterdam and Hamburg³⁴. Mello Torres, who frequently asked Jeronimo and his relatives to obtain books and other items for him in Holland, was generally highly appreciative of both father and son and several times praised them in his reports to Lisbon as also Jeronimo's cousin, Duarte Rodrigues Lamego, a prosperous Rouen crypto-Jew who forwarded Portuguese diplomats, as well as his Dutch and Hamburg relatives, information from the French court.

The indecision over Portuguese affairs that prevailed at The Hague during 1655-1656 could not last. The heavy setbacks suffered at Portuguese hands were indeed the greatest humiliation and most costly failure that the Republic ever endured during the Golden Age. In fact, there was rather greater support both in Amsterdam, where opinion was split, and in Holland generally, for a war against Portugal than is usually recognized. Only Friesland (and, we may take it, Willem Frederik, its Stadholder) was solidly against. Zeeland, Gelderland,

32. Arquivo Histórico Ultramarino, Lisbon (AHU) India ex. 23. doc. 63: proceedings of the *Conselho*, 9 June 1655.

33. Filmoteca Ultramarina Portuguesa, Lisbon (FUP), 'Livro das Monções 22B, fo. 354: dispatches of J. Nunes da Costa, 10 August and 22 September 1651.

34. T. Schedel de Castello Branco, *Vida de Francisco Mello Torres, conde da Ponte, marquês de Sande, soldado e diplomata da Restauração* (1620-1667) (Lisbon, 1971) 289-290, 302; Duarte Rodrigues Lamego was a son of Sarah, younger sister of Duarte Nunes da Costa.

and Groningen were ardent for war. In September 1657, ten months after the death of João IV a powerful fleet under the Baron van Obdam was sent against Lisbon, over the objections of Friesland alone, bearing diplomatic envoys and an ultimatum for the Portuguese Queen-Regent, Dona Luisa. The Dutch demanded outright the restitution of the lost territories in Brazil. The Portuguese rejected the ultimatum and war was declared. There ensued the sporadic maritime conflict of 1657-1661, a war which had seriously disruptive effects on Dutch trade, though it enabled the East India Company to complete its conquest of Ceylon. On the outbreak of war, the Pensionary of Holland, Johan de Witt, the dominant figure in Dutch politics, had 'Hijeronijmo Nunes da Costa' whom he described as being 'in charge of the affairs of the Queen of Portugal here' placed under surveillance and had at least part of his correspondance intercepted³⁵.

The adverse impact of the war on trade, notably the loss of high-grade Setúbal salt vital to the Dutch herring fleets, inevitably widened the division of opinion over the struggle in Holland. Consequently, in the summer of 1658, the States General deliberated whether to retreat from its previous uncompromising stand and agree to admit a Portuguese envoy. Four provinces – Zeeland, Gelderland, Utrecht, and Groningen – still refused to contemplate peace without the restitution of territory in Brazil, but Friesland, Overijssel, and all-important Holland were now eager to negotiate. This was also Johan de Witt's position. The split generated a furious political battle into which Jeronimo hurled himself with his customary zeal and persuasiveness. He travelled many times to The Hague and, on occasion, to see city magistrates outside Holland, striving to influence as many regents as possible in favour of receiving an envoy from Lisbon³⁶. He also developed a harmonious relationship with the French ambassador, Jacques Auguste de Thou, who was under instructions from Mazarin to sustain Portugal as a means of weakening Spain³⁷. Active on the other side was the Spanish ambassador to The Hague, Don Esteban de Gamarra, who strove to drum up support for the Dutch war-party being dertermined to prolong the Dutch-Portuguese conflict as long as possible in the interests of Spain.

Finally, much to the indignation of Gamarra³⁸ and the assemblies of at least

35. ARH SH 2648: J. de Witt to Obdam, 16 November 1657; H.H. Rowen, *John de Witt, Grand Pensionary of Holland, 1625-1672* (Princeton, N.J., 1978) 292.

36. 'Carta de Padrão, *Anais*, 2nd ser. VIII, 121; Oliveira, *Discours pathétique*, 67-68.

37. According to Oliveira, 'Monsieur de Thou... n'avoit jamais connu, disoit-il, un homme comparable à ce juif, soit par sa bonne foi, soit par le nombre des grandes qualités qui'il réunissoit dans sa personne', *Discours pathétique*, 67.

38. 'Cet évènement', reports Oliveira, 'mortifia beaucoup Mr. Gamarra, et il dit publiquement qu'il ne comprénoit point comment les Etats pouvoient se resoudre à favoriser un juif jusqu' à ce point là.

three provinces, the States General did vote to admit a Portuguese envoy. The personage chosen for this crucial mission by the Queen-Regent's ministers was a high noble, Fernando Telles de Faro who, in the event, proved a lamentable choice. He was required to show his secret instructions to Jeronimo and work with him as well as with his embassy secretary, Luis Alvares Ribeiro, in negotiating with the Dutch. But Jeronimo was soon baffled by the ambassador's tardiness in getting down to essentials, despite his repeatedly reminding him of the urgency of this 'so necessary peace'³⁹. In fact, Telles de Faro had entered into secret, treasonable, liaison with the Spanish ambassador, Gamarra, and was deliberately spinning out the proceedings in the interests of Spain. Apparently, De Thou, whose spies had some inkling of what was afoot, warned Alvares Ribeiro and Jeronimo who was back in Amsterdam. They were nevertheless stunned when, on 28 May 1659, on the excuse of travelling to Amsterdam for some 'amorous diversion', Telles de Faro fled with the embassy's papers and cash and placed himself under Gamarra's protection⁴⁰.

Telles de Faro's dramatic defection was a calamity for Portugal and the Dutch peace-party alike. It was also a personal affront to Jeronimo in whose debt the ambassador was to the tune of f4,000 for a diamond necklace and a comparable amount in loans⁴¹. The affair caused a sensation throughout the diplomatic circles of Europe. The culprit was subsequently tried in his absence, in Lisbon, and sentenced to be strangled as well as burned in effigy before the public. His residences were declared forfeit and demolished and the ground on which they stood sown with salt.

Amidst this crisis, Jeronimo was at once summoned back to The Hague where in effect he promptly took matters in hand. His greater knowledge of the foreign diplomats, Dutch politicians and the way things were done in The Hague, not to mention the Dutch language, meant that Alvares Ribeiro merely followed his lead. After a two-hour conference with De Thou, Jeronimo decided to submit a joint representation to the States General, together with Alvares Ribeiro, with behind-the-scenes support from the French embassy, requesting recognition and diplomatic protection for the secretary and himself as accredited negotiators on

39. Arquivo Nacional da Torre do Tombo, Lisbon (ANTT) Ms. da Graça, 2 L, 'Corresp. Luis Alvares Ribeiro', fo. 14: J. Nunes da Costa to Queen-Regent, 3 June 1659.

40. L. van Aitzema, *Historie of verhael van saken van staet en oorlogh, in ende ontrent de Vereenigde Nederlanden* (14 vols.; The Hague, 1667-1671) IX, 660, 662-663, 667; E.C. Molsbergen, *Frankrijk en de Republiek der Vereenigde Nederlanden, 1648-1662* (Rotterdam, 1902) 183-184; C. van de Haar, *De diplomatieke betrekkingen tussen de Republiek en Portugal, 1640-1661* (Groningen, 1961) 163; Castello Branco, *Vida de Francisco Mello Torres*, 314-316.

41. *Ibidem*.

behalf of Portugal in place of Telles de Faro⁴². This petition was duly submitted on 7 June 1659⁴³. De Witt dealt with the inevitable objections from some of the provinces with his usual dexterity and, despite the fact that this was a highly unorthodox procedure, the States General voted ten days later, on 17 June, to acknowledge the 'Agent d'Acosta', as the Dutch called him, and Alvares Ribeiro, as joint negotiators even though they lacked any kind of authorisation from Lisbon for assuming this role⁴⁴. Jeronimo also advanced the cash that was needed until more funds could arrive from Lisbon.

During the next months, Jeronimo was almost continuously in The Hague. He had numerous meetings with De Thou and with the English resident, as well as with members of the States General's special committee for Portuguese affairs, especially Pieter de Groot who was one of De Witt's principal confidants and who collaborated closely with the two Portuguese representatives⁴⁵. From these discussions emerged the outline of a draft treaty between the Republic and Portugal, the twenty-five agreed provisional articles of which De Witt outlined to the States of Holland on 19 October⁴⁶. Holland's Pensionary, like De Thou and Jeronimo, was probably anxious for rapid progress owing to recent developments in the Franco-Spanish peace talks which led to the successful conclusion of the treaty of the Pyrenees in November 1659. The ending of the long war between France and Spain was likely to mean some diminution in French pressure on the Dutch to settle with Portugal. Under the provisional terms agreed in The Hague, in October, Portugal would restore former Dutch territory neither in Brazil nor Africa, but would compensate the Dutch government and the West India Company with an indemnity of 4 million *cruzados*. Equally, if not more important, the Dutch were also to receive the same advantageous commercial privileges in Portugal which the English had enjoyed since 1654.

The Portuguese ambassador chosen to replace Telles de Faro, the Conde de Miranda, arrived in the Republic late in November and had his first audience with the States General on 12 December 1659. There was still a lot of hard bargaining to be done, not to mention the opposition of four Dutch provinces to be overcome. At this time, there was much excited discussion among the merchants of Amsterdam over the Brazil and West Africa trades⁴⁷. While the States of Holland accepted trade concessions with Portugal itself on the same

42. ANTT Ms. da Graça, 2L, 'Corresp. Luis Alvares Ribeiro', fo. 14.

43. *Ibidem*, fo. 16v.

44. ANTT Ms. da Graça, 2L, 'Corresp. Luis Alvares Ribeiro', fos. 8-11.

45. *Ibidem*, fo. 55: Alvares Ribeiro to Mello Torres, 22 August 1659.

46. *Resolutien Staten van Holland*, 19, 20 October 1659; De Haar, *Diplomatieke betrekkingen*, 165.

47. ANTT Ms. da Graça, 3L, fo. 43: Miranda to Mello Torres, 27 February 1660.

basis as that previously conceded to England, there was strong pressure for special privileges over and above anything possessed by the English as regarded the Brazil and Guinea trades. The Dutch negotiators demanded the right to sail direct to and from Brazil, Angola, and São Thomé by-passing the royal customs house in Lisbon. Miranda and Jeronimo, who acted as his interpreter and principal aid, countered with the argument that direct navigation would totally subvert the traditional rights of supervision of colonial trade by the Portuguese crown and breach the Brazil Company's monopoly of wine, flour, cod, and olive oil exports to Brazil⁴⁸. There were a series of meetings between Jeronimo and Pieter de Groot in which they hammered at these and related points and argued over the form of the Portuguese indemnity as well as over the price to be agreed for Setúbal salt⁴⁹.

If the early months of 1660 were devoted to hard bargaining between the Dutch and Portuguese negotiators, the Dutch were eventually forced to settle for privileges similar to those possessed by the English and the substantial 4 million *cruzado* (f 8 million) indemnity. From the summer of 1660, the focus of attention increasingly shifted to the major political battle that De Witt now had on hand to force the terms through the provincial assemblies and the States General. Once again, Jeronimo took to visiting provincial centres, seeking to persuade city magistrates of the merits of the proposed treaty. He also strove his hardest to sway opinion among the by no means uninfluential Portuguese Jewish community of Amsterdam which accounted for a considerable slice of Dutch trade with the Portuguese-speaking lands. As Miranda noted in March 1660, many of the Jews, especially those expelled from Recife, in 1654, were actively supporting the West India Company in opposing the draft treaty⁵⁰. The collapse of Dutch Brazil had undoubtedly been a calamity for Amsterdam Jewry and the issue must have caused Jeronimo endless heart-searching and agonizing discussion. It is unlikely that he was ever keen on the prospect of Portuguese conquest of Dutch Brazil. We may be sure that he much preferred João IV's stated policy in the 1640s of keeping peace with the Republic, recognizing the Dutch zone of Brazil, and disclaiming any links with the planter rebels in that zone. It may also be that there was some truth in Sousa Coutinho's charge, back in 1647, that Jeronimo had deliberately sought to mislead João IV over the strength of Dutch reinforcements for Brazil⁵¹. In any case, in 1660-1661,

48. *Ibidem*, fos. 38-46: Miranda to Mello Torres, 13 and 27 February and 4 March 1660.

49. *Ibidem*, fos. 18, 20.

50. *Ibidem*, fo. 46: Miranda to Mello Torres, 4 March 1660.

51. *Correspondência Sousa Coutinho*, II, 265-266; On João IV's policy of not helping the rebels in Dutch Brazil, see Joaquin Veríssimo Serrão, *História de Portugal V. A Restauração e a monarquia absoluta (1640-1750)* (Lisbon, 1980) 112-113, 122.

Jeronimo concentrated on trying to convince his co-religionists that there was no hope of retrieving what was lost in Brazil and that what mattered now was to buttress Amsterdam's role in Portuguese commerce and forestall English ambitions to dominate trade with Portugal and its colonies.

Gamarra who was still seeking to prevent a lasting Dutch-Portuguese agreement reported to Madrid, in January 1661, on both aspects of Jeronimo's publicity campaign. Noting that Miranda had sent his secretary to Zeeland to bribe the burgomasters of Flushing, he continued

Geronimo Nunez da Costa, Agent of the Tyrant, has been negotiating hard in the city of Utrecht and here [in Holland] has won over two Jews, one called Abraham de Azevedo who came here as a deputy from Brazil before it was lost, to seek aid, a man much interested in the Company, and the other Abraham Balverde who was also a delegate and, though both men did all they could in past years to persuade government leaders here and the directors of the Company to refuse any settlement without restitution of the territories, now they go urging one and all that they should accept the offers of the Tyrant, for otherwise they will lose everything⁵².

But even as De Witt and his allies made headway on the home front, at least in Holland, and in Utrecht and Groningen, the two provinces most prone to be dislodged from opposition to the treaty⁵³, a new factor arose which appreciably complicated the situation. Once securely restored to the throne of England, Charles II took to instilling new vigour into what had already been the English policy on Dutch-Portuguese relations, though somewhat muted since the death of Oliver Cromwell, in 1658, namely to encourage the Dutch to acquiesce in the loss of Brazil while simultaneously seeking to prevent the States General obtaining commercial concessions as generous as those possessed by the English⁵⁴. 'I can say no more of the business of Portugal', declared the English minister, Clarendon, at this time, 'than that the king our master must never endure that the Hollanders should enjoy equal privileges with him in point of trade'⁵⁵. And while there was some disagreement at the Portuguese court as between the faction which leaned heavily towards England and another more inclined to appease the Dutch, on balance Affonso VI's government gave priority to cultivating close relations with Charles II. The Anglo-Portuguese alliance of

52. Archivo General de Simancas, libros de la Haya XLIII, fo. 4: Gamarra to Philip IV, The Hague, 10 January 1661.

53. BL MS Egerton 2537, fo. 349: Sir George Downing to Nicholas, 24 June 1661.

54. *Brieven aan Johan de Witt*, R. Fruin and N. Japikse, ed. (2 vols.; Amsterdam, 1919-1922) II, 42; Van de Haar, *Diplomatieke betrekkingen*, 177; C.R. Boxer, *The Dutch in Brazil, 1624-1654* (2nd ed.; Hamden, Conn., 1973) 252-253.

55. *Ibidem*, 252.

1654 was, indeed, renewed and updated in 1661 and it was at this time that the preparations were on hand for the marriage of Affonso's sister, Catherine of Braganza, to the English monarch.

Accordingly, whilst Miranda came under heavy pressure in The Hague from Charles II's somewhat aggressive and vociferously anti-Dutch ambassador extraordinary to the Republic, Sir George Downing, not to concede advantageous commercial privileges to the Dutch, he also received instructions from Lisbon to prevaricate for as long as he could. The undeniable fact was that the pro-English party were in the ascendant at Lisbon. At this crucial point, it is evident that Jeronimo Nunes da Costa began to follow his own policy which diverged significantly from that of Miranda. For an Amsterdam merchant trading primarily with the Portuguese lands, a Dutch-Portuguese treaty which failed to provide a commercial framework at least as beneficial as that already possessed by the English would have been as disastrous as a failure to sign a treaty at all. Thus, Jeronimo took to interpreting Portugal's interests in his own way assigning priority to restoring Dutch-Portuguese relations. During the spring and summer of 1661, Jeronimo had a series of talks with Pieter de Groot and other members of the States General's special committee, detailing the contradictory pressures on King Affonso, on Miranda, and on other Portuguese ministers and, in effect, advised the Dutch leadership as to how to deal with his own superior, Miranda, and with the English pressure. Assuring De Groot that De Witt would achieve nothing at this juncture by attempting further persuasion in Lisbon or London, he argued that heavy counter-pressure alone would achieve what was desired and that the States General should now confront Miranda with an ultimatum⁵⁶. Jeronimo was thus an accomplice of the Dutch leadership in the issuing of the States General's ultimatum of 31 July 1661, demanding that the ambassador either sign the draft treaty, assuring the Dutch commercial privileges equal to those of the English, within ten days, or else leave the country pending a resumption of full hostilities⁵⁷. The gamble paid off. Miranda promptly ceased his prevarication and signed the treaty, to the fury of Downing, on 6 August.

The next step was to secure ratification on both sides while at the same time clearing the air on a number of still outstanding points. In one of their last audiences before Miranda departed for Lisbon to present the draft treaty to the

56. De Groot to De Witt, 9 July 1661 in *Brieven aan Johan de Witt*, 42-44.

57. *Brieven geschreven ende gewisselt tusschen den Heer Johan de Witt... ende de Gevolmagtigden van den Staedt der Vereenighde Nederlanden* (7 vols.; The Hague, 1723-1727) I, 410, 413-414; Abraham de Wicquefort, *Histoire des Provinces-Unies des Pais-Bas, depuis le parfait établissement de cet état par la paix de Munster* (4 vols.; Amsterdam, 1861-1874) III, 70-71; Van de Haar, *Diplomatieke betrekkingen*, 178; Boxer, *The Dutch in Brazil*, 253.

king, the States General presented the ambassador with a golden chain worth *f* 6,000 and the 'Agent d'Acosta' who, as usual, was at his side, acting as his aid and interpreter, with another worth *f* 800⁵⁸. The two provinces which had refused to sign the treaty, Zeeland and Gelderland, angrily protested at this presentation of chains. Miranda's confidence in Jeronimo appears to have been unimpaired by the episode of the ultimatum. Before leaving for Portugal, the ambassador presented two petitions to the States General concerning Jeronimo, testifying to his 'dilligence et zèlle ...specialement en tout ce qui dependoit à la conclusion de la paix entre sa Magesté et Mrs. les Estats' and asserting that during his absence Jeronimo Nunes da Costa alone was authorised to represent the Portuguese crown in dealings with the Dutch leadership and to discuss matters pertaining to the peace treaty⁵⁹.

During Miranda's absence in Portugal, Jeronimo did indeed continue to spend most of his time in The Hague and remained active diplomatically. In particular, he continued seeing De Groot and discoursing to the Dutch leadership on the split at the Portuguese court between the pro-English and pro-Dutch factions, headed respectively by Mello Torres 'who had been in England' and the Conde de Soure, as well as other intricacies of Portuguese relations with England and the Republic⁶⁰. Again it emerges that Jeronimo was in some degree pursuing his own policy, or one particular Portuguese policy, which did not accord with the preponderant mood in Lisbon at the time. Whether or not this policy was in the best interests of Portugal, his conduct was certainly advantageous to Amsterdam, Dutch Jewry and to himself personally.

Miranda returned to Holland in December 1661 but without yet having had the treaty ratified by Affonso who was determined not to offend the English monarch. Portuguese ratification followed only in May 1662 when Charles, in one of the steps that he took to defuse the mounting tension between England and the Republic over a whole range of commercial, colonial, and fishery issues, withdrew his opposition to Affonso's signing the treaty. In part, this English move was intended to prevent the Dutch seizing more Portuguese territory in Asia. However, there now followed months of further delay before the treaty was in turn ratified by the States General. Besides the continued opposition of Zeeland and Gelderland, Groningen now withdrew its previous approval while a furious new Dutch-Portuguese dispute broke out over Cochin, on the Malabar coast of south-west India, seized by East India Company forces from the Portuguese in January 1663. Once again, Jeronimo assiduously aided Miranda

58. Aitzema, *Historie*, X, 109-110.

59. ARH SG 7011-11: Miranda to States General, 23 and 26 August 1661.

60. *Brieven aan Johan de Witt*, 46.

both in petitioning the States General and in interceding with numerous Dutch regents.

Publication of the Dutch-Portuguese peace treaty of 1661 took place at Lisbon and The Hague in March and April 1663. The Portuguese monarch formally thanked Jeronimo for his very considerable part in the making of this treaty and, in recognition of his services, granted him a royal pension of 700 *cruzados* yearly⁶¹. Certainly, it was one of the most important treaties for both the Dutch and the Portuguese of the seventeenth century, for the agreement put an end to more than sixty years of bitter colonial conflict and established the specific framework of peaceful relations which was to prevail well into the next century. The new Dutch-Portuguese relationship that arose was assuredly weighted, at least in the economic sphere, heavily in favour of the Dutch, and, on this ground, has been sharply criticized by some modern Portuguese historians⁶². The treaty recognized and confirmed an economic dominance over the Portuguese empire which Holland now shared with the English. Payment of the f8 million indemnity took far longer in practice than the sixteen years envisaged in the treaty and continued far into the eighteenth century. Meanwhile, Dutch merchants and ships resumed a key role both in the trade of Portugal itself and that of West Africa and Brazil.

But the treaty was not yet quite firmly rooted. Dutch complaints over excessive tardiness in indemnity payments, and Portuguese insistence on the restitution of Cochin, led to a fresh deterioration in relations in 1665-1667. The diversion of Dutch attention during the second Anglo-Dutch war encouraged the Portuguese to go further than they would have otherwise have dared. But when the States General ended its second conflict with England with the signing of the treaty of Breda, in July 1667, there was talk of a new war with Portugal. To defuse this crisis, Francisco de Mello Manuel da Camara was sent from Portugal to The Hague as ambassador extraordinary⁶³. During 1667-1669, Jeronimo acted as his chief aid and interpreter much as he had previously done for Miranda. In July 1669, a supplementary agreement was signed by which the Portuguese reconciled themselves to the loss of Cochin and fixed a precise schedule of tax-exempt salt consignments to be shipped from Setúbal to Holland. Jeronimo had long been a major importer of Setúbal salt and, being an expert on the subject, it is natural that he was the person who handled the details of the salt talks on behalf of

61. 'Carta de padrão', *Anais*, 2nd ser. VIII, 121.

62. See, for instance, Virginia Rau, *Os holandeses e a exportação do sal de Setúbal nos fins do século XVII* (Coimbra, 1950) 12.

63. Rau, *Os holandeses*, 10; E. Prestage, *The Diplomatic Relations of Portugal with France, England and Holland from 1640 to 1668* (Watford, 1925) 235-237.

Portugal as he did in the subsequent periodic Dutch-Portuguese conferences at The Hague over salt. It was agreed in July 1669 that tax-exempt salt should be shipped from Portugal to Holland at the rate of 85.000 *moyos* yearly for twenty years, a rate that presupposed the use of approximately 130 ships each year. Problems arose later because the actual rate of shipments during the 1670s and 1680s fell far short of this. In 1678, for instance, only 43.283 *moyos* and, in 1680, 45.476 *moyos* were shipped⁶⁴. Jeronimo had the continuing task of collating the figures and reviewing the position periodically with Dutch officials as, for instance, in the autumn of 1675 and in July 1679⁶⁵.

From 1669, Dutch-Portuguese relations can be said to have remained on a stable footing, without any major points of dissension. In the years 1663-1667, between the missions of Miranda and Manuel da Camara, the Portuguese crown retained a resident at The Hague, Diogo Lopes de Ulhoa, in addition to Jeronimo, as Agent in the United Provinces, at Amsterdam. But peace between Portugal and the Republic and the end of the Portugal's long struggle for independence from Spain, in 1668, removed the need for a full-time professional envoy at The Hague. From 1669, as far as Portugal was concerned, Holland ceased to be a major focus of diplomatic activity. Accordingly, except for one or two temporary envoys, Jeronimo Nunes da Costa served during the later half of his diplomatic career as sole representative of the Portuguese crown in the United Provinces and its permanent *chargé d'affaires*, though there was no change in his relatively lowly title of Agent. This, of course, immensely enhanced his personal and social prestige and meant that from now on he tended to appear before the States of Holland and States General on his own rather than at the side of a diplomatic superior.

Even so, there was till some question as to precise status. In 1667, there took place a significant shift in power in Lisbon whereby Affonso VI's brother, Dom Pedro, took over the reins of government. Among his other policies, Pedro encouraged, now that Portugal was secure, a much more harshly anti-New Christian and anti-Jewish attitude in official circles than had been feasible previously. The Inquisition, curbed by João IV, was restored to the full power and influence which it had enjoyed under the Spanish régime. These developments must in some measure have alienated Jeronimo's feelings from the Portuguese cause and given rise to some reconsideration in Lisbon as to whether

64. ARH SG 7015-1: J. Wolfson to States General, Lisbon 31 July 1685; Jeronimo was also entrusted with authorising and issuing the passes to Dutch skippers sailing to Setúbal for salt, ARH SG 7013-11: C. Barlaeus to States General, Lisbon, 28 March 1673.

65. ARH SG 7014-1: J. Nunes da Costa to States General, The Hague, 7 October and 7 December 1675; ARH SG 7014-11: J. Nunes da Costa to States General, The Hague, 10 July 1679.

he was still suitable to represent the crown in the United Provinces. We may surmise that it was his unrivalled knowledge of Dutch affairs which led to his being retained. Dom Pedro, who had taken the title Prince-Regent, eventually confirmed Jeronimo's position as Agent, in August 1668, and wrote to the States General asking that he be acknowledged in that role as representative of the Portuguese crown within the seven provinces⁶⁶. In December 1668, Jeronimo also submitted a request to the States of Holland on the basis of Dom Pedro's patent, asking to be confirmed in his position as Portuguese Agent in Holland⁶⁷. The States of Holland did so but under the proviso that 'he shall not thereby be exempt from the obligations of citizenship and obedience with respect to payment of all ordinary and extraordinary taxes'.

This restriction on his diplomatic status clearly involved a good deal financially as Jeronimo was by this time one of the four or five wealthiest members of the Amsterdam Jewish community. He had always insisted that he was not a Dutch subject but a minister of the crown of Portugal and during the course of the next few years he repeatedly sought to persuade the States General to recognize this, claiming that 'hy soude mogen werden getraceert als andere ministers van uytheemsche princen die onder de gehoorsaemheyte van desen staet niet gebooren zijn'⁶⁸. After the fall of De Witt and the change of régime in the Republic, Dom Pedro again confirmed Jeronimo's appointment as 'sijn Agent alhier' and, on 6 May 1673, the States General once again recognized him as such, still stipulating that he was a subject and liable to all taxes⁶⁹. To this, Jeronimo replied a few days later repeating that he was not a native of the Republic,

qui'il ne se soit retiré en ce pais que depuis les dernières revolutions de Portugal, et que pendant le séjour qu'il y a fait, il n'y a point acquis de biens ny mesmes le droit de bourgeoisie de la ville d'Amsterdam⁷⁰.

The States General referred this appeal to the States of Holland which delegated a committee to peruse Jeronimo's position and status. Some months later, Holland and the States General rejected his suit, confirming their earlier pronouncement. At this, Jeronimo submitted yet another petition further

66. ARH SG 7013-I: J. Nunes da Costa to States General, The Hague, 5, 25 and 28 November 1668.

67. *Resolutien Staten van Holland*, 15 December 1668: 'Is ter vergaderinge gelesen seecker memoriael van Jeronimus Nunes da Costa, houdende dat hy by den Heere Prince van Portugael ordre hadde bekomen omme in qualiteyt van Agent van dat koninghrijck in dese Provincie te continueren'.

68. ARH SG 7013-II: J. Nunes da Costa to States General, The Hague, 22 January 1671.

69. *Resolutien Staten van Holland*, 12 August 1673.

70. ARH SG 7013-II: J. Nunes da Costa to States General, The Hague, 15 May 1673.

amplifying his argument as why he should not be considered a Dutch subject⁷¹. Remarkably enough, on this occasion the same committee to which the States of Holland had delegated the matter before now reversed its previous finding and proposed that Jeronimo should be exempted from extraordinary taxes not, however, on the ground that he was not a Dutch subject, but specifically out of recognition for his exceptional services to the state. Following this advice, the States of Holland resolved

dat den voorschreven Jeronimo Nunes da Costa, om de goede diensten die hy soo geduyrende de onderhandelinge met Portugael als andersints aen den staet heeft ghedaen, van alle extraordinaris lasten en impositien die by haer Ed. Groot Mog. albereyts zijn ofte noch in 't toekomende souden mogen werden geintroduceert, vry ende exempt sal wesen⁷².

It is this exemption of 1673 which explains why Jeronimo's name is omitted from the list of Amsterdam Portuguese Jews assessed for the 200th penny levy in 1674⁷³.

Although Jeronimo Nunes da Costa was no longer involved in what might be termed major matters of state after 1669, it would be wrong to suppose that his role as Agent of Portugal after that date was merely decorative or honorary. He still had a number of important functions. One of these was as the official supplier of arms and naval munitions from Holland to the Portuguese lands. A substantial part of the stores used to equip the Brazil fleets, the Portuguese royal navy, the dockyards of Lisbon, Porto, Madeira, and the Azores were furnished by Jeronimo. Whilst Portugal had remained at war with Spain, he was in the habit of covering these shipments with false papers using the Dutch alias 'Nicholas Joris' and usually specifying Cadiz as the destination. This was to minimize the risk of having his cargoes seized *en route* by Spanish privateers⁷⁴. On the eve of the second Anglo-Dutch War, the Portuguese ambassador in London requested Charles II that 'all such goods as shall come under the name of Nicholas Joris shall goe free as belonging to Jeronimo Nunes da Costa', attaching a list of five ships chartered by Jeronimo which 'are going now out of

71. *Resolutien Staten van Holland*, 12 August, 26 September and 26 October 1673.

72. *Ibidem*, 22 December 1673.

73. A.M. Vaz Dias, 'Over den vermogentoestand der Amsterdamsche Joden in de 17e en 18e eeuw', *Tijdschrift voor Geschiedenis*, LI (1936) 170.

74. Gamarra refers in a letter of August 1663 to a Dutch ship, loaded with naval munitions and carrying papers for Cadiz, which was intercepted by a Basque privateer, on which were found letters showing that the consignment was really being shipped to Lisbon by 'Geronimo Nunes da Costa, Jewish merchant of Amsterdam and adherent of the Rebel', AGS Libros, de La Haya, XLVII, fo. 68: Gamarra to Philip IV, 31 August 1663.

Holland to Portugal upon the account of His Majestie', loaded with anchors, masts, ropes and grain⁷⁵. It is true that after 1668 there is likely to have been a considerable falling off in this type of traffic between Holland and Portugal, but right until the end of his long life Jeronimo periodically requested permission from the States General for large consignments of munitions. In 1674, he asked permission for a cargo of gunpowder, sail canvas and ropes for the Portuguese navy⁷⁶. In August 1689, he requested permission to export 100,000lb of gunpowder for the Portuguese forces and, in August 1691, for 80,000lb of gun and musket fuses for the royal arsenals⁷⁷.

Although the era of confrontation in the Indies was over, the Portuguese crown still took some interest in the affairs of the Dutch colonial companies and there was, of course, in certain regions, notably Guinea, India, and the South China Sea, a good deal of continuing peaceful interaction between the Dutch and Portuguese. Accordingly, Jeronimo was intermittently involved in some extremely wide-ranging deliberations. During 1682, for instance, he had several discussions with East India Company directors in Amsterdam about the severely depressed state of trade at Macão which was affected by upheavals in neighbouring China⁷⁸. The directors proposed a deal between the Company and the Portuguese with the latter handing over Macão to the Dutch in exchange for Cochin. In reporting to Lisbon, Jeronimo explained that the difficulties the Dutch were then experiencing in southern India were saddling the Company with mounting garrison costs in Cochin. In the same dispatch, Jeronimo also discussed the continuing dispute between Portugal and Denmark over a Danish base on the Guinea coast which the Portuguese had seized in 1679⁷⁹. Jeronimo mentions that he was in touch with correspondents in Copenhagen and following the steps being taken by the Royal Danish Africa Company and the Danish crown to recover the fortress.

As was usual with the diplomatic dispatches of the time, much of what Jeronimo reported to Lisbon concerned movements of armies and fleets in different parts of Europe. At times, though, he also offered analysis. A good

75. PRO SP 89/6, fo. 200: petition dated 28 December 1664. Jeronimo had been using the cover 'Nicholas Joris' since well before 1650, see PRO HCA 30495, prize claim of 31 December 1650 submitted by Nicholas Joris alias J. Nunes da Costa.

76. ARH SG 7014-I: J. Nunes da Costa to States General, The Hague, 11 April and 19 June 1674.

77. ARH SG 7015-II: J. Nunes da Costa to States General, The Hague, 20 August 1689 and 29 August 1691.

78. FUP 'Livro das monções' no. 47 34/41: J. Nunes da Costa to Dr. Manoel Pereira, Amsterdam, 12 December 1682.

79. This was the fortress of Christiansborg betrayed by its governor to the Portuguese, see K. Larsen, *De Danske i Guinea* (Copenhagen, 1918) 25-26, 28.

example is the long dispatch that he sent to the Conde de Castelmelhor, in February 1689, during the opening stages of the Nine Years War (1689-1698)⁸⁰. Having previously sent a copy of the Anglo-Dutch treaty of alliance against France to Lisbon, he discoursed at length on the overall strategic situation, detailing the disposition of forces in Flanders, pointing out that the French naval arsenals at Brest and Toulon were poorly stocked and would remain so as the Dutch were in a position to block off a large part of the supply and since it was probable that Sweden would co-operate with the Republic. He expressed confidence that the combined Dutch and English fleets would prevent any significant French assistance from reaching James, pretender to the English throne, in Ireland.

A crowning episode in Jeronimo's long career as Agent of Portugal in the United Provinces were the events surrounding Pedro II's second marriage in 1687. Having dispatched to Lisbon a magnificent silver dining service which he had had made in Holland for the royal wedding table, Jeronimo arranged for the passage, via Holland, of Pedro's envoy sent to Heidelberg to collect the bride, Maria Sophia of Neuburg, daughter of the Elector Palatine⁸¹. With the envoy, Jeronimo sent coaches, gifts, and 'forty handsome horses' which he had shipped to Amsterdam from Hamburg for the purpose. When the queen-to-be approached the Republic, Jeronimo sent his sons to Düsseldorf to escort her for the rest of her journey and accompanied her to The Hague where he arranged everything, including several receptions and a famous fire-work display, in grand style. Later when the wedding took place, in Lisbon, he organised further festivities in The Hague and subsequently published, in Catholic Brussels, a handsomely produced poetic celebration of the event, the *Triumpho Lusitano*, couched in the extravagant Baroque verses of the time⁸².

Jeronimo's activities as Agent of Portugal in the Dutch Republic plainly involved him in a huge commitment of time and energy. At certain periods, notably in the years 1658-1663, he spent months on end at The Hague immersed in diplomatic activity away from his family and business. And yet, though it is equally clear that he gave a great deal of time, especially after 1666, to the synagogue and Jewish community affairs, he continued to be extremely active as a merchant. His agency work brought him the repeated thanks of three

80. BNL MS. caixa 208, no. 45: J. Nunes da Costa to Conde de Castelmelhor, Amsterdam, 26 February 1689.

81. ARH SG 7015-I: J. Nunes da Costa to States General, The Hague, 21 September 1686 and 11 April 1687.

82. Manuel de Leon, *Triumpho Lusitano, Applausos festivos* (Brussels, 1688), the work is dedicated to Jeronimo; see also M. Kayserling, *Biblioteca Española-Portuguesa-Judaica* (Strasbourg, 1890) 57.

Portuguese monarchs, noble rank and both a modest salary and his pension of 700 *cruzados* yearly. But the real rewards for his diplomatic efforts were much greater. His own business was furthered and enhanced in all manner of ways by his official connection with the Portuguese crown. Not the least of these was that as Amsterdam factor of the Brazil Company he had a favoured position in the sugar trade and eventually virtually monopolized the sale of Brazil-wood in Holland. Certainly, his agency post also enhanced Jeronimo's standing in Dutch and Jewish society and was a prime factor in his election as one of the two permanent representatives of the Amsterdam Portuguese Jewish community delegated to negotiate with the city magistrates and other Dutch authorities⁸³. In this way, and also internationally, as in the case of his intercession on behalf of the Jews of Martinique, he can be said to have placed his diplomatic status at the disposal of his own people.

On the death, in 1697, of this noteworthy personality of the Dutch Golden Age, a man who began by working for Portugal against Dutch interests but later came to be publicly honoured by the States of Holland and States General for his services to the Republic, his title as Agent of Portugal in the United Provinces passed to his eldest surviving son, Alexandre Nunes da Costa (Selomoh Curiel) and, on his death, in 1712, to Jeronimo's youngest son, Alvaro Nunes da Costa (Nathan Curiel). Oddly enough, on Alvaro's death, in 1738, his heir, a nephew, was refused the title by the Portuguese government of the day on the grounds that he was a 'Jew'⁸⁴.

83. Daniel Levi de Barrios, 'Gobierno Politico Judayco', *Triumpho del Gobierno Popular* (Amsterdam, 1684) 4; W.Ch. Pieterse, *Daniel Levi de Barrios als geschiedschrijver van de Portugees-Israelietische gemeente te Amsterdam in zijn 'Triumpho del Gobierno Popular'* (Amsterdam, 1968) 89; I.S. and S.A. Emmanuel, *History of the Jews of the Netherlands Antilles* (2 vols.; Cincinnati, 1970) I, 76.

84. D. Luis da Cunha, *Obras Inéditas do grande exemplar da sciencia do estado*, I (Lisbon, 1821): 'mas S. Magestade não quiz confirmar este emprego a seu neto, por ser judeo, como se seu pai e avos fossem christãos'.

Mr. H.P.G. Quack: de ongebroken kracht van de illusie*

R. DE RUIG

Utopian thought is dominated by a 'rage for order'. A strong utopian impulse is to save the world from as much of its confusion and disorder as possible. Utopia is a dream of order. Its background is the nightmare of history.

(Uit: George Kateb, ed., *Utopia* (New York, 1971) 8).

INLEIDING

Mr. H.P.G. Quack (1834-1917), die voor het nageslacht vooral de auteur van het zesdelige *De socialisten. Personen en stelsels* is gebleven, leidde een bestaan dat door arbeid en studie werd beheerst. In maatschappelijk opzicht was hij een geslaagd man. De laatste jaren van zijn leven bracht hij te zamen met zijn echtgenote door in een statig pand aan de Keizersgracht dat door Lodewijk van Deyszel om zijn strenge klassieke soberheid werd geroemd:

het huispersoneel bestond uit enkele 'hoog-deftige' meiden die in hun uiterlijk een compacte samenstelling van alle dienstboden deugden toonden en een huisknecht in kuitbroek die om zijn vakmanschap vermaard was¹.

Deze welstand was het resultaat van arbeid in Neerlands produktiefactoren, zoals Quack de ondernemingen waaraan hij verbonden was, aanduidde; maar een 'captain of industry' zonder meer is hij nooit geweest.

In zijn vrije tijd heeft hij gedurende een periode van ruim dertig jaar meegeerkt aan het tijdschrift *De Gids*. Van zijn hand verschenen vier bundels essays die zich veelal bewogen op het grensgebied van literatuur en sociale wetenschappen en ten slotte was hij bij het geletterde publiek vooral bekend als de schrijver van *De socialisten*. Dit was geschreven, aldus Quack in zijn autobiografie waarvan de eerste druk in 1913 verscheen, ter opwekking van de hogere standen: 'Het gemeenschaps-idee moest de bladen doortrillen' (238) en de onverschilligheid van de burgerij doorbreken. Ter voorbereiding van wat hij als zijn levenswerk beschouwde, heeft hij zelfs een enkele maal 'de handel in dienst gesteld van het socialisme'²: een deel van het salaris van f 30.000,— dat hij als secretaris van de

* Citaten zonder bronvermelding stammen uit H.P.G. Quack, *Herinneringen uit de levensjaren van mr. H.P.G. Quack, 1834-1917* (2e dr.; Amsterdam, 1915). De pagina-aanduiding staat tussen haakjes achter het citaat.

1. L. van Deyszel, 'Herinneringen', *Nieuwe Gids*, I (1941) 285.

2. J. Saks, *Socialistische opstellen* (2 dln.; Rotterdam, 1918) I, 165.