



DOCUMENTS RELATING TO THE HISTORY OF THE JEWS IN JAMAICA AND BARBADOS
IN THE TIME OF WILLIAM III

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DOCUMENTS RELATING TO THE HISTORY OF THE
JEWS IN JAMAICA AND BARBADOS IN
THE TIME OF WILLIAM III.

CONTRIBUTED BY FRANK CUNDALL, N. DARNELL DAVIS, AND
ALBERT M. FRIEDENBERG.

In September, 1913, Mr. N. Darnell Davis, C.M.G., a corresponding member of this Society, spent some time at Oxford, examining the records in the Bodleian Library. He there found the following fragment (MS. Rawl. D. 924, f. 431), entitled "An Appeal by King William to the Legislature of Jamaica, on behalf of the Jews" (*sic*). Mr. Davis wrote:

. . . . At the time of the French invasion of Jamaica in 1692, just after the great earthquake, the Jews behaved in a most public-spirited manner, which drew much sympathy towards them.¹

The Oxford MS., which is incomplete, reads as follows:

The Jews in Jamaicae having long since enjoyed the Libertyes to them granted by their Majestys' Letters patents of dinization and by other lawfull patents from the governours of that Island by w^{ch} they are allowed and entitled to bee shopkeepers and to sell by the Retayle, great many poore people of them having that onley way of Living to mantaine their familyes wth the heelp of others of their nation that are marchants there.

Now it hath hapened, that since the death of my Lord² late govern^r of the s^d Island, the Counsell there being assembled, some english march^{tes} and others, who are desirous to have the Jews deprived from their priviledges they enjoy as above, did to that purpose petition that Counsell, wherein the petition was att their Request soe earnestly admitted, that many members of the Counsell

¹ Letter to Albert M. Friedenberg, Corresponding Secretary, September 18, 1913.

² A blank follows this word in the MS.

did signe to it and have now sent it to their Majesteyes desiring confirmation and their Royall assent, w^{ch} proceedings, if their Majesteyes out of their Royall bounty, bee not pleased to stop and avoyd, it will bee the uter Ruine of soe many poore familiees, by whose meanes (although in such Low circumstances) the trade of that Island is very much promoted and augmented.

Acting upon a suggestion contained in Mr. Davis' letter, a copy of the foregoing document was sent to Mr. Frank Cundall, F. S. A., also a corresponding member of this Society, who is the Secretary of the Institute of Jamaica. He replied in a memorandum, dated October 29, 1913, printed below, and gave it as his opinion that the "petition concerning the Jews in Jamaica in the time of King William III.," as copied by Mr. Davis, is identical with the document No. 2418. i. in the Public Record Office, London, calendared on p. 691 of the volume cited by Mr. Cundall, which he describes. Thereupon, copies of all these documents were secured through the courtesy of Rev. S. Levy, M. A., a corresponding member. Mr. Cundall's memorandum and the three London documents are printed on the following pages:

It is obvious that the petition was written during the joint reign of William and Mary, 1689-94. The only peers who had been governors of Jamaica before then were Lord Windsor, Lord Vaughan, the Earl of Carlisle, the Duke of Albemarle and the Earl of Inchiquin.

It could not have been Lord Vaughan because he did not die until 1713: it could not have been the Duke of Albemarle, because he would not have been thus alluded to: it seems to me without doubt that it refers to the Earl of Inchiquin who died in 1691-2.

In the "Calendar of State Papers, Colonial Series, America and West Indies, 1689-1692," (1901) p. 593, occurs a letter, dated January 28, 1691/2, from the President and the Council of Jamaica to the Lords of Trade and Plantations in which it says:

Lord Inchiquin died on the 10th instant [*sic* 16th] and we have assumed the government The Jews eat us and our children out of all trade, the reasons for naturalising them not having been observed; for there has been no regard had to their settling and planting as the law intended and directed. We did not want them

at Port Royal, a place populous and strong without them; and though told that the whole country lay open to them they have made Port Royal their Goshen, and will do nothing but trade. When the Assembly tries to tax them more heavily than Christians, who are subject to Public duties from which they are exempt, they contrive to evade it by special favours. This is a great and growing evil and had we not warning from other Colonies we should see our streets filled and the ships hither crowded with them. This means taking our children's bread and giving it to Jews. We believe that it could be avoided by giving a little more confidence to the Council.

112

To the Queen^e Most Excellent Majesty.

The Humble peticoⁿ of Isaque Fernandez Diaz, Isaque Moses Baruk—Isaque Nunez Phineas Abarbanel Isaque Rodriguez de Sousa Aron Jacob Soarez Samuel de Cazerez Jacob David de Roblez Isaque Mendez Gutierrez, Jews Late of Jamaica Merchants Humbly sheweth

That whereas your peticoⁿers having inhabited for Severall years in your majesties Island of Jamaica and by that most terrible Earthquake which happened there on ye 7th of June Last have Lost all they had in the World humbly begg your majesties favour to be made free Denizons.

At the Court at Whitehall
Aug y^e 30th 1692

Her Ma^{ty} is graciously pleased to referr this Petition to the Right hon^{ble} the Lords of the Com^{tee} of Councill for Trade and Forreigne Plantations to consider thereof and Report what her Ma^{ty} may fitly doe therein whereupon her Ma^{ty} will declare her further pleasure.
Nottingham.

Moses Coutino With three or fower more others humbly prays the Right honourable the Lords of This Comeetee may Report favourably In their behalf to bee made free Denizons for the Plantations of their Majesties.⁴

⁴ "Calendar of State Papers, Colonial Series, America and West Indies, 1689-1692," No. 2418.

112 I

The Jews in Jamaica having long since Enjoyed in their way of Trade the Liberty to them granted by their Ma^{ties} Letters Patents of Denization under the Great Seal of England, and by other Lawfull Patents from the Govern^{rs} of that Island, by which they are allowed and Entitled to be shop Keepers and to sell by ye Retaile, a great many poor people of them, having that only way of Living to maintain their Families, with the help of others of their nation that are merchants there

Now it hath hapned that since the death of my Lord Incequin late Govern^r of the said Island, the Councill there being assembled, some English merchants and others that are desirous to have the Jews deprived of those Priviledges they enjoy as above, Did to that purpose Petition the said Councill, wherein the Petition was at their Request so earnestly admitted, that many members of the Councill have signed to itt, And have now sent it to their Ma^{ties} desireing confirmation, and their Royall assent Which proceedings If their Ma^{ties} out of their Royall Bounty be not pleased to stop and Avoyd, it will be the Utter Ruine of so many poor Families that live in that Island and by whose meanes (altho' in such low Circumstances) the Trade there is very much promoted and augmented.⁵

112 II

The Jews Plantations and houses in Jamaica and Barbados are as followeth

In Jamaica M^r Karbona as a plantation in Leganee (?) wh[ich] he has bought and paid for

M^r Solomon Gabay has a Plantation for many yeares in magitt Savana.

M^r Joseph Ridana as a Plantation in ye same place

M^r Solomon acton as a plantation in ye North Side in port Mary

M^r Abraham Gabay has a plantation in white hood

M^r Benjamen Corvalo as a plantation in ye same place

M^r Moses Jessurun Cardezo as 15 houses

M^r Joseph da Costa Alvaringa as 10 houses

M^r David Alvarez

M^r Jacob Mendez Gutierrez

M^r Jacob Detorez

⁵ *Ibid.*, No. 2418. 1. With this petition of the council concerning the Jews, the Rawlinson MS., *supra*, may be compared.

M^{rs} Sarrah Gabay
In Barbados whose names here have houses and plantations
 with severall others not here mentioned
M^{rs} Gratia de Meriado
M^r Joseph Mendez
M^r Abraham Baruk Heneriquez
M^r Luiz Diaz
M^r Roel Gideon
M^r Abraham Gomez
M^r Abraham Buino Demesquieta
M^r Fernandez Nunez
M^r Luiz Camartho.⁶

⁶ *Ibid.*, No. 2418. ii.