The revolution of 1795 in the Republic of the Seven United Provinces and the European war affected the events and status of the Dutch colonies. The island of Curacao, the most important of the Netherlands Antilles, was no exception and experienced a series of internal changes and finally even a change in colonial masters when it was conquered by Great Britain in 1800 and again in 1807. One of the most dramatic internal episodes occurred in September 1799 when the colonial government of Curacao expelled a French citizen, Jean-Baptiste Tierce, for his alleged participation in a conspiracy and plot against the authorities. After his expulsion, Tierce's ordeal was not over since he was incarcerated in the Batavian Republic where he had hoped to obtain justice. While the events of Tierce's arrest and expulsion are well known, his imprisonment in the Netherlands and its diplomatic repercussions have not been given any attention. This article will attempt to present an account of Tierce's experiences in the Batavian Republic in 1800 and 1801.

Curacao had been a Dutch colony since 1634 and like other European colonies in the West Indies relied heavily on the institution of slavery to sustain its economy. In 1789 the number of slaves was 12,804 as opposed to 3964 whites and 2776 free colored. On the island also lived a large number of other Europeans besides the Dutch such as some 400 French citizens. Partly as a result of the impact of the French Revolution and the slave revolt in French Santo Domingo an insurrection among the slaves occurred in August 1795. It failed, however, and the leaders were executed.

News of the flight of Stadholder William V reached Curacao on May 16, 1795, but the old colonial government remained in office much to the chagrin of the Patriotic elements. On August 10, 1796, it became known that the stadholderate had been abolished, and, therefore, no one would henceforth be bound by the oath of loyalty. The officials swore their allegiance to the Batavian regime, and a new director ad interim, Jan Jacob Beaujon, was appointed while Johann R. Lauffer became the commander of the national guard. Soon Beaujon and Lauffer disagreed over such matters as defense, and the former was forced to resign in December 1796 to be replaced by his rival.
Lauffer was born in Switzerland and had come to Curacao as a soldier in 1776. He earned the respect of many of the local inhabitants and sided with the advocates of change although he was not a radical. His task was not simple since he not only had to watch the enemy, the British, but also his allies, the French, who were perhaps more of a threat to the island. The French Republic had dispatched many agents to the Caribbean some of whom were most anxious to establish a French regime in Curacao. With the growing chaos in Santo Domingo the number of French refugees increased, and Lauffer realized that they might pose a potential threat to his administration.

Among the well established French citizens in Curacao was Jean-Baptiste Tierce. He was born in Le Havre in 1754 and came to the island in 1784. In the course of time Tierce accumulated 'a small fortune and credit.' He was widely respected in the business world and by others and played an important role in his local Catholic Church where he served as *eerste kerkmeester*. He also assisted in the suppression of the slave revolt in 1795 and he supported the Patriots. He and others demanded in September and December 1796 to place Captain First Class, Albert Kikkert, and Lauffer in charge of the defense of the island since Beaujon seemed not aggressive enough to prepare the island for a possible outside attack. He also attacked Rear-Admiral Wiertsz even accusing him of treasonable conduct since the latter had allegedly once agreed to surrender Willemstad to the British. Wiertsz was furious over the accusation and complained to the colonial council 'how slanderous, how dishonorable, how grievous' a certain Tierce had dared to accuse him.

On July 3, 1796, Tierce was appointed to fulfill the French consular function relative to the sale of prizes on the island of Curacao. On September 10, 1798, he was appointed *receveur* of French prizes which entitled him to keep 5% of the receipts. His consular activities were terminated in April 1798, and in June 1799 Tierce was replaced as *receveur* by General Urbain Devaux. A few months later Tierce was imprisoned and deported for participation in a plot against the colonial government.

Why Tierce became the principal ringleader of this cabal against Lauffer’s administration is not clear. He had once been an active supporter of the director and even supported his appointment. Lauffer alleged once that Tierce had since 1796 thwarted the