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**J A M A I C A.**  
(SLAVE TRADE.)

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RETURN to an Address to HIS MAJESTY, dated 9 August 1832;—for

Copy of DISPATCH, dated 10th December 1774, from the Earl of *Dartmouth* to Sir *Basil Keith*, Governor of *Jamaica*, with MEMORIALS from *London*, *Bristol*, and *Liverpool*, on the subject of an Act passed by the Assembly of *Jamaica* in that year, imposing a DUTY on each SLAVE IMPORTED :—also, the foregoing MEMORIALS;

REPORT of the Board of Trade upon the subject of the foregoing Act;

Additional DISPATCH or INSTRUCTION, dated 3d March 1775, to Sir *Basil Keith*;

LETTER, dated 12th June 1775, from Sir *Basil Keith* to the Earl of *Dartmouth*;

LETTER, dated 6th November 1775, from Sir *Basil Keith* to the Earl of *Dartmouth*;

INSTRUCTIONS to the Governors of the *West India* Colonies, requiring them to withhold their Assent to any ACT imposing additional DUTIES on the IMPORTATION of NEGROES.

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Colonial Department,  
Downing-street,  
15 August 1832. }

R. W. HAY.

(Mr. Burge.)

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*Ordered, by The House of Commons, to be Printed,*  
16 August 1832.

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SCHEDULE.

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- N° 1.—EXTRACT of a Dispatch from the Earl of *Dartmouth* to Sir *Basil Keith*, dated Whitehall, 10th December 1774, enclosing Memorials of the Merchants of London, Bristol, and Liverpool - - - - - p. 3
- N° 2.—REPORT of the Board of Trade upon the Additional Duty Act, dated Whitehall, 19th December 1774 - - - - - p. 5
- N° 3.—EXTRACT of a Dispatch from the Earl of *Dartmouth* to Sir *Basil Keith*, dated Whitehall, 3d March 1775, enclosing Instructions to the Governor, directing him to withhold his Assent to any Act imposing additional Duties on Importation of Negroes - - - - - p. 6
- N° 4.—COPY of a Dispatch from Sir *Basil Keith* to the Earl of *Dartmouth*, dated Jamaica, 12th June 1775 - - - - - p. 7
- N° 5.—EXTRACT of a Dispatch from Sir *Basil Keith* to the Earl of *Dartmouth*, dated Jamaica, 6th November 1775 - - - - - p. 9
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J A M A I C A.  
(SLAVE TRADE)

No. 1.

EXTRACT of a DISPATCH from the Earl of *Dartmouth* to Sir *Basil Keith*, dated Whitehall, 10th December 1774.

“ THE inclosed copies of Memorials from the Cities of London, Bristol, and Liverpool, complaining of the Act passed in the late Session in Jamaica, for laying a Duty of 40*s.* per head upon Negroes imported into that Island, will inform you of the alarm that Act has given to the Merchants concerned in that branch of commerce; they are to be heard upon it at the Board of Trade in a few days; and unless the Agent, who has notice to attend, can suggest better reasons in support of the Act than at present occur to me, I think it is a measure that must be condemned; and that you may at least expect an Instruction from the King, restraining you from giving your assent to any Act of the like kind for the future.”

TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE THE LORDS COMMISSIONERS OF  
TRADE AND PLANTATION.

The Humble Petition of the Merchants of the City of *London* who are Traders to *Africa*, whose Names are hereunto subscribed;

Sheweth,

THAT Your Petitioners are largely concerned in the African Trade from this Port; and as for several years the Trade has been greatly extended and increased, from this as well as other Ports, to the coast of Africa, the great quantity of British manufactured Goods, as well as India, which are annually exported in this Trade, have become an object of great national importance to the commercial interests of this Kingdom.

That from the nature of the Trade throughout, the adventurers in it must be subject to many and great risks, which no human foresight can avoid, and by which his property returns to him often greatly diminished; they therefore hope for the interposition of Your Lordships in behalf of the general interests of the Trade, and that no sanction may be given to any measures that may distress it, and thereby discourage and damp the spirit of those who risk their fortunes in so hazardous a business.

That for many years the importation of Negroes into the Island of Jamaica only has (by an Act of Assembly of that Island) been subject to a duty of One Pound Ten Shillings per head, of which Twenty Shillings was paid by the purchaser and Ten Shillings by the African merchant.

That beside the duty of Thirty Shillings per head, the Assembly aforesaid, immediately upon arrival of the present Governor, Sir Basil Keith, which was about the month of January 1774, passed an Act, which subjected the future importation of Negroes into that Island to a further duty of Forty Shillings per head, the whole of which is payable by Your Petitioners.

That by the before-mentioned Acts the African merchant pays upon every Negro that he sells in Jamaica Fifty Shillings, which Your Petitioners, with great submission to Your Lordships, consider as a very great hardship; and having no previous notice of the intention of this Act, every cargo of Negroes that was destined for that Island has paid the Duty aforesaid since the commencement thereof; they therefore think the mode of laying on the duty, as well as the duty itself, exceedingly unjust, and unfavourable to the interests of the African Trade; for if the Tax imposed by the Assembly aforesaid had amounted to a prohibition, such cargoes as were destined for sale at Jamaica, for want of proper notice of its commencement, must have fallen a sacrifice to the injustice of this Act.

Your Petitioners therefore humbly pray, that Your Lordships may take the premises into consideration, that you will order the repayment of the new Duty to such of them as may have paid the same; and they flatter themselves Your Lordships will see the laying on of the additional Duty to be so repugnant to the interests of the African Trade, that His Majesty's assent may not only be withheld from it, but that such instructions will be given upon this occasion to the different Governors of His Majesty's Plantations, that no additional Duties whatsoever may be imposed in future without a suspending clause that it shall not be in force until it has received His Majesty's assent, or that reasonable notice shall be given thereof in Great Britain, that Your Petitioners may have sufficient time to alter the destination of their ships, if they shall think proper so to do. And Your Petitioners shall ever pray, &c.

*John Coghlan,*  
*James Tweed,*  
*Henry Pool,*  
*Thom<sup>s</sup> Harrison,*  
*Peter Bostock,*  
*Malcolm M<sup>r</sup> Neil,*  
*Sam<sup>l</sup> Bainbridge,*

*Jn<sup>o</sup> Schoobred,*  
*Gilbert Ross,*  
*Ja<sup>s</sup> Mill,*  
*W<sup>m</sup> John Camden,*  
*George Burton,*  
*Ja<sup>s</sup> Bradley,*  
*James Mather.*

## PAPERS RELATING TO SLAVE TRADE

TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE THE LORDS COMMISSIONERS FOR  
TRADE AND PLANTATIONS.

The Memorial of the Committee of the Company of Merchants trading to *Africa*.

Sheweth,

THAT some of the principal African Merchants of the City of London have applied to Your Memorialists, representing that an Act of Assembly was passed in the Island of Jamaica, in the month of January last, by which an additional duty of Forty Shillings per head is laid upon all Slaves imported into and sold in that Island, and that this Duty is such a tax as the African Trade is totally unable to bear; they therefore request Your Memorialists, as guardians of the African Trade, to make an application to Your Lordships in their behalf.

That Your Memorialists, in compliance with their request, beg leave thus to represent their case to Your Lordships; and further, to pray, that Your Lordships' Report on the said Act may be suspended, as they understand the Merchants of Bristol and Liverpool, as well as those of London, intend to make application on this subject.

By Order of the Committee,

(signed)

*Rich<sup>d</sup> Camplin, Secy.*

TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE THE LORDS COMMISSIONERS OF  
TRADE AND PLANTATIONS.

The Memorial of the Master Wardens and Commonalty of the Society of Merchants Venturers of the City of *Bristol*, under their Common Seal;

Sheweth,

THAT the Trade to Africa is of great importance to the welfare of this Nation, and deserving of great regard and attention, as it not only takes off great quantities of the Produce and Manufactures of this Kingdom, as well as of India, but supplies the Islands in the West Indies with such Slaves as are absolutely necessary to the cultivation of the Lands there, and without whose labour the lands would be of no value.

That the said Trade to Africa is very hazardous in its nature, and the adventurers therein frequently sustain heavy losses.

That for many years past a Duty has been paid, in the Island of Jamaica, of Thirty Shillings a head on all Negroes imported; notwithstanding which, a further Duty was, by an Act of the Assembly in Jamaica, imposed, about the 25th of January last, of Forty Shillings a head, to take place the 8th of February.

That by the last mentioned imposition, Merchants, who without any knowledge of such additional Duty had ordered their Ships to proceed to Jamaica, have been considerable sufferers.

That it is highly necessary and strictly equitable that in all cases where any additional Duty is laid on the importation of any goods or merchandise into any Island, ample notice thereof should be given to the English Merchant, that he may give proper directions touching the destination of his Ships, and have an opportunity of opposing the law at home, if he shall find it necessary.

Whereof Your Memorialists pray Your Lordships to interpose Your advice, that the said Act may not receive the Royal Assent; and that orders may be issued to the several Governors of His Majesty's Plantations, not to pass any law to take place before sufficient notice be given thereof in England; and that the several Sums already paid in the Island of Jamaica for the afore-mentioned additional Duty, may be returned to the persons respectively who paid the same.

And Your Memorialists will ever pray, &c.

November 17, 1774.

TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE THE EARL OF DARTMOUTH, ONE OF HIS  
MAJESTY'S PRINCIPAL SECRETARIES OF STATE, &c. &c. &c.

The MEMORIAL of the Merchants in *Liverpool*, Traders to *Africa*, whose Names are hereunto subscribed;

Sheweth,

THAT the Trade to Africa, by which the Plantations in America are supplied with Negro Slaves, has been for a long series of years, and still continues to be, very extensively carried on from this Port, to the great emolument of the Kingdom, promotion of navigation and commerce, and increase of His Majesty's Revenues.

That this Trade is from its nature peculiarly subject to *uncommon* risques, by which the property of the adventurers is rendered precarious, and their profits uncertain.

That

## IN THE ISLAND OF JAMAICA.

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That any discouraging restrictions might endanger the loss of so important an article of commerce, which has therefore ever met with the utmost protection and encouragement from the Supreme Legislature of these Kingdoms.

That the Assembly of Jamaica have in the course of this present year 1774 imposed a duty of 40s. per head, payable wholly by the importer, upon all Negroes imported into that Island; which imposition will often amount to £.1,000. or upwards upon a single ship's cargo, exclusive of a duty of 10 s. per head formerly and still paid by Your Memorialists.

That the Island of Jamaica being to leeward of all the other British Settlements in America, the African ships, when once arrived there, are obliged to land and sell their Negroes, under every disadvantage and imposition that may accrue, being by the winds and currents effectually excluded from all other markets.

That Your Memorialists have therefore no other means of redress but from the interposition of Your Lordship, by whom all matters of commerce are thoroughly understood, impartially considered, and adjusted with the utmost equity and wisdom. Through Your representations, they hope that this Act of the Jamaica Assembly will not pass into a durable law, by receiving the Royal Assent; that a repayment of this new Duty will be made to such of them as have already paid the same, and that the Trade of Great Britain will not be oppressed and destroyed by the present or any future partial American Taxations.

<i>John Sparling,</i>	<i>W<sup>m</sup> Higginson,</i>
<i>Hugh Pringle,</i>	<i>Tho<sup>s</sup> Smith,</i>
<i>Tho<sup>s</sup> Wycliffe,</i>	<i>James Carruthers,</i>
<i>John Hodgson,</i>	<i>Richard Milford,</i>
<i>John Copland,</i>	<i>Benj. Heywood,</i>
<i>Jo<sup>s</sup> Taylor,</i>	<i>George Hutton,</i>
<i>Tho<sup>s</sup> Hodgson,</i>	<i>Pat<sup>h</sup> Black,</i>
<i>Wilt<sup>m</sup> Wallace,</i>	<i>Tho<sup>s</sup> Rumbold,</i>
<i>W<sup>m</sup> Crosbie, jun.</i>	<i>Geo. Venables,</i>
<i>Rich<sup>d</sup> Savage,</i>	<i>John Dobson,</i>
<i>W<sup>m</sup> Yames,</i>	<i>Ar. Heywood,</i>
<i>Tho<sup>s</sup> Haniforth,</i>	<i>Hen. Rawlinson,</i>
<i>Clayton Can,</i>	<i>Tho<sup>s</sup> Falkner,</i>
<i>W<sup>m</sup> Boats,</i>	<i>Jos. Brooks, jun.</i>
<i>Tho<sup>s</sup> Spencer Dunn,</i>	<i>Gill Slater,</i>
<i>Joseph Dalton,</i>	<i>Tho<sup>s</sup> Toxcroft,</i>
<i>Alex<sup>r</sup> Nottingham,</i>	<i>W<sup>m</sup> Gregson.</i>
<i>John White,</i>	

## No. 2.

## TO THE KING'S MOST EXCELLENT MAJESTY.

May it please Your MAJESTY,

THE Merchants of London, Bristol, and Liverpool, engaged in the Slave Trade carried on from Africa to Your Majesty's Islands and Colonies in America, having presented Memorials to us, complaining of the prejudice they have sustained from a law passed in the Island of Jamaica in February last, imposing a Duty (in addition to those already subsisting) of 40 s. per head upon Slaves imported into that Island payable by the importer, We thought it our duty to take the said Law into our immediate consideration; and having been attended by several of the Merchants, and also by Mr. Fuller, Agent for the Island of Jamaica, and heard what they had to offer upon the subject; We humbly beg leave to represent to Your Majesty,

That it is alleged by the Merchants, that this Law is not only unjustifiable in its principle, as it prejudicially affects the commerce of this Kingdom; but, by being made to take effect without any previous notice, it has had its operation upon many valuable cargoes of Negroes, purchased and in some instances contracted to be sold upon a speculation of the Duties as they stood before this addition; and that this hardship is the greater, from the situation of the island, which lying furthest to leeward of all Your Majesty's possessions in the West Indies, vessels arriving there are cut off from any other port, where they might have found a more advantageous market. They further allege, that this additional Duty is such a burthen, having already amounted to upwards of 15,000 *l.* upon twenty-six cargoes, that without Your Majesty's interposition for their relief, they can no longer, with any hope of gain, carry on the Slave Trade to that Island.

In answer to these allegations, it has been alleged by the Agent, that the Legislature of the Island of Jamaica have an unquestionable right to judge of the ways and means of raising Supplies for the Public Service of that Island; that the public exigency there required an additional supply, and that in the present state of their funds there were no other means of providing for that exigency; that, as it is the invariable practice of the Assembly to make all their supplies annual, the inconvenience complained of by the Merchants from want of notice, was unavoidable; and that in fact the burden of the Duty must fall upon the consumer, and not upon the importer, who doubtless has been paid an advanced price for his Slaves in proportion to the advance of the Duty.

Such, may it please Your Majesty, are the arguments urged for and against the Law in question; and we submit them to Your Majesty, offering at the same time our humble opinion, that those stated by the Agent do not in any degree justify the Act; that the legislative authority of the Assemblies in Your Majesty's Colonies in America, in point of taxation, does not extend beyond the imposing taxes and duties upon the inhabitants of those Colonies; that all laws enacted by such legislatures, that operate to the imposition of duties upon ships and goods of the Merchants of this Kingdom, or to prejudice or obstruct its commerce, are not warranted by the Constitution; that the argument urged by the Agent to support this Law, on the ground of the Duty being ultimately paid by the consumer, is controvertible even as a general argument, but certainly does not apply in this case, in which the Duty is expressly made payable by the importer, and not by the purchaser; and that, upon the whole, the Act in question is improper, as well upon its general principle, as from the manner in which it has been passed.

Upon these grounds, we should have humbly recommended the disallowance of it; but as it is enacted to continue in force only for one year, and will consequently be expired before Your Majesty's Order can reach the Island, such a measure would, we conceive, be nugatory and inexpedient; and therefore we crave leave humbly to advise, that Your Majesty's Governor should be instructed not to give his assent for the future to any Law for increasing the Duties upon Slaves imported, as those Duties stood before the Law now complained of was passed; at the same time we do not mean to convey an opinion that even the duties as they then stood, which were in part payable by the importer, are not liable to objection; they certainly do in some degree militate against the principle above stated, with regard to the limited power of dependent legislatures in the Colonies; but as the Merchants have declared themselves satisfied, provided there is no increase of Duty, we do not at present advise any further measure than what is above proposed.

Which is most humbly submitted.

(signed)

*Dartmouth.*

*W. Joliffe,*

*Soame Jenyns.*

*Whitshed Keene.*

Whitehall, }  
December 19, 1774. }

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### No. 3.

EXTRACT of a DISPATCH from the Earl of *Dartmouth* to Sir *Basil Keith*, dated Whitehall, 3d March 1775.

“ I now send you, by His Majesty's command, an Instruction, forbidding you, upon pain of removal from your Government, to assent to any Law for any alteration in the mode or increase in the quantum of the Duties on Negroes imported, as those Duties stood antecedent to the passing of the additional Duty Act in February 1774.

“ At the same time I am to acquaint you, that the alarm taken by the Merchants of this Kingdom on account of that Act, has been greatly increased, and fresh complaints of a very urgent nature have been made by them, from their having received advice, not only that such additional Duty has been continued for another year, by an Act passed in November last, but that propositions have been adopted for laying the Slave Trade under still further restrictions, and subjecting it to impositions that will have the effect of an entire prohibition.”

ADDITIONAL

## IN THE ISLAND OF JAMAICA.

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G. R.

ADDITIONAL INSTRUCTION to Our trusty and well-beloved Sir *Basil Keith*, Knight, Our Captain-General and Governor-in-Chief in and over Our Island of Jamaica, and the Territories depending thereon, in America. Given at Our Court at St. James's, the Twenty-eighth day of February 1775, in the Fifteenth year of Our reign.

WHEREAS, notwithstanding the Instructions which have been repeatedly given by Us and by Our Royal Predecessors to the Governors for the time being of Our Island of Jamaica, forbidding them to assent to or pass Acts for imposing Duties upon Negroes imported into that Island, payable by the importer, such Acts have nevertheless been from time to time enacted and passed into laws, in open violation of the said Instructions: And whereas it hath been represented unto Us, that the Duties imposed by the said Acts upon Negro Slaves imported have of late been considerably augmented, to the injury and oppression of the Merchants of this Kingdom, and the obstruction of its commerce; It is therefore Our express will and pleasure that you do not, upon any pretence whatever, and upon pain of being removed from your Government, give your assent to any Act or Acts by which the Duties and Impositions upon Slaves imported into the Island of Jamaica, as the said Duties stood before the Thirteenth day of February 1774, shall be in any respect augmented or increased, or any alteration made in the proportion of such Duties, which by the provisions of such Laws was made payable by the importers of such Slaves.

G. R.

## No. 4.

COPY of a DISPATCH from Sir *Basil Keith* to the Earl of *Dartmouth*, dated Jamaica, 12th June 1775.

MY LORD,

Jamaica, 12th June 1775.

I AM honoured with your Letter of the 3d of March, informing me that you had laid my Dispatch before the King, together with the additional Instruction which His Majesty commanded your Lordship to send me for my future conduct, in regard to the Duties on Negroes imported into this Island.

It is with the deepest concern and affliction that I find myself under the displeasure of my Sovereign and his Ministers; and I can with great truth assure your Lordship, that the idea alone of having failed in my duty, makes a heavier impression upon my mind than any other consequence that may fall upon myself for my misconduct.

I trust, before this can reach your Lordship, that the reference I made to the defence of the Additional Duty Bill by the Agent of this Island before the Board, and the reasons I humbly offered for my conduct in my Letter, will in great measure exculpate me; it will at least prove to your Lordship, that if I have not kept within the very letter of my Instructions, that I have not gone out of the spirit of them, and that my error is from a mistake in judgment only; being induced to pass this Bill in the fullest belief I was serving His Majesty in the very best and most acceptable manner, in making his service and the ease and conveniency of his subjects in Jamaica go hand in hand.

As it is a duty I owe both your Lordship and myself to enter at large into the motives for my conduct, I will not apologize for taking up your time.

Upon my arrival here, I found a great number of the Assembly, and of the people of property and consequence, under the greatest alarm and apprehension, from the vast increase of Negroes, already out of all prudent or safe proportion to the white inhabitants, who I am sorry to see are decreasing; at the same time, it was found that the great credit it offered by the Guinea factors to the purchaser of Slaves, *a bait which few or no Planters can withstand*, had already brought on a general scene of distress, likely to last long, and bring on the worst consequences to the community; and it was actually spoke of as an act of necessity, to restrain, by any means in their power, the growth of this evil; and upon the principle that they were at liberty to tax themselves, it was suggested to frame a Bill, with a tax upon the purchaser, that might in effect operate as a prohibition; that South Carolina had from time to time taken this method to restore its credit and secure its safety; of which circumstance I was informed by a member of the House, formerly a member of the Assembly of that Province. In short, my Lord, I had every



reason to fear, if I rejected the Bill in the mode offered, by which I still humbly insist the tax falls ultimately upon the purchaser, that I should have another sent up of the nature I mention, or have, at that late and very inconvenient time of the year, fallen into many difficulties to raise the supplies. And it is highly necessary for me to beg your Lordship's observance, that I had by far a greater sum of money to raise than usual, owing to several reasons; the regiments had been lately completed, and they had brought more women and children, especially the American battalion, than the former ones; a new law had passed for to keep constant parish patrolling parties, to take up runaway Slaves, &c. to provide for which from 15,000*l.* to 20,000*l.* was wanting; the deficiency of the light money called in was to be made up; more money was voted for roads this year than had been customary, as none had been granted the year before; a house and pen was to be purchased for the commanding sea officer, &c.

It is true that the additional Duty is continued for another year; but, my Lord, I with great deference submit, whether this ought to be looked upon as an aggravation of my misconduct, being, in fact, the necessary consequence of it; for, as the necessity of the public made me first assent to the tax, so I had every reason to pass the Bill again, seeing on one hand the trade increasing and the sales quicker than ever, carried the satisfactory and positive proof that the British Merchant was not eventually hurt by it; on the other hand, I was entirely ignorant of any complaint on the part of the African Merchants, or the displeasure of your Lordship and the Board; and I solemnly declare that the first complaint I heard of the Bill was by your Lordship's information; so that I remained in a firm opinion that it was one of the most eligible modes to raise the supplies.

At the same time, I can in no shape allow the African Merchants have any just or reasonable grounds for the complaint they have made against the Additional Duty Bill, since their factors here have raised the price of the Slaves in at least the full proportion of the tax; and I appeal to their *general sales of cargoes*, before and since the Law took place, for proof of my assertion; and I must beg your Lordship further to observe, these factors here never made any stir about the Bill, further than privately complaining that they were obliged to advance the Duties; resting satisfied that they would be well reimbursed by their advanced charge upon the purchaser. It was in December, not November, that the Bill was renewed; and I conceive that it was my duty to pass it so soon as I possibly could, as the provision for subsisting His Majesty's troops was made by it. As for the clause in that Bill laying the Slave Trade under further restrictions, it was drawn up and inserted by one of their own factors, a member of the Assembly. The reasons that are given are, I think, very cogent, and for which I refer your Lordship to the Bill; at the same time they provide for the internal safety of the Island, they give a twelvemonth's notice to the African Merchant to guide himself accordingly, and to apprise him of the sentiments of this Colony in regard to aged Negroes.

I have searched through the offices here, and they bear me testimony (and I hope your Lordship's office will likewise) that the Laws, Journals and Minutes of the Council and Assembly have been transmitted since my time as regular *at least* as in any time before; and that it has never been customary to send them partially, but all together.

The Petition of the Assembly is indeed, my Lord, a very extraordinary one, and should never have passed through my hands, could I have with propriety refused it; but it is extremely unlucky for the majority of the representatives of this country, if I have failed in my endeavours to explain thoroughly in what manner and at what time it was carried through the House, hoping to have convinced your Lordship that it was by no means to be understood as the sense of a fair majority of the Assembly of this Island; the House being composed of 43 members, of which number 26 only were present when the Petition passed, and the Speaker, Sir Charles Price, was officially obliged to sign it, contrary to his own sentiments and opinion. I must confess that I have very ill expressed myself in the antecedent paragraph of my Letter; but in truth I mean to inform your Lordship that every thing relative to the King's service and the public welfare within the Island, has passed very much to the satisfaction and greatly to the honour and credit of the other branches of the Legislature.

I have, &c.

(signed)

*Basil Keith.*

## IN THE ISLAND OF JAMAICA.

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TO THE HONOURABLE THE COMMITTEE OF CORRESPONDENCE, JAMAICA.

Honourable Gentlemen,

London, 24th December 1774.

INCLOSED I have the honour to send you Copies of the Memorial of the African Company, of the Petition of the Merchants of London trading to Africa, of the Memorial of the Merchants in Liverpool trading to Africa, and of the Memorial of the Bristol Merchants trading thither, all presented to the Board of Trade against the Act of Assembly passed in this year, laying an additional Duty of 40s. currency per head on all Negroes imported, to be paid by the Importer, and repaid upon exportation. Their Lordships were pleased, with their usual candour, to send me Copies of the said Memorials and Petitions eight or ten days before they were taken into consideration at their Board, in order that I might be prepared to defend the Act.

It would take up too much of your time to enter minutely into the debate upon this subject; and as you must of course be perfectly acquainted with the merits of the question, it would answer no purpose. What I chiefly insisted upon was, that the whole weight of the Tax fell upon the Planters and not upon the Importers, and that it was laid upon the Importers (as almost all the taxes in Great Britain were) instancing in numbers of them only for the sake of collecting them with the greater ease and certainty; that the additional 40s. being repaid on exportation, little or no injury was done to the Importer; that true it was that an additional Tax, though drawn back upon exportation, must be attended with some embarrassment to the Importers, but that was all they had to complain of, as it was manifest that the Tax fell ultimately upon the consumer; that the complaint of great risks and the precariousness of the Trade were not well founded, as those might be insured, and were insured every day, except, as was alleged, mortality; that Negroes were of all other importations most necessary in Jamaica, and that you would not, for your own sakes, tax them till all other taxes failed; that the Planters had an undoubted right of laying a tax on themselves for their own Negroes after they had purchased them, as being part of their own property, but, it was contended, they had not whilst in the hands of the importer; when, therefore, does the critical moment commence, that from being untaxable they become taxable? impossible to ascertain it; that the Merchants ought to pay a portion of the Tax, if it was possible to make them do it, for the benefit they receive from the forts and fortifications, the quays and wharfs, and military system of the Island, which altogether fall very heavy upon the inhabitants and proprietors; that from the profits of the Trade (which was strongly contested by the African Merchants present) they can afford to pay it; that the assertions that the profits of the Trade were uncertain, and that Jamaica was the last market, could not be supported; that it was doubtful whether it was true policy to supply the Spaniards or French with Slaves; that the Merchants ought to have notice of such taxes, was impossible; that the money bills were annual; that one Assembly could not tell what the other would do; that if one Assembly made a promise, it could not be certain that another would perform it, as no previous Assembly could bind a following one.

These are the chief arguments I made use of in support of the Act, but I apprehend with very little effect, as I have long found it immoveably determined at the Honourable Board to prevent, as far as in them lies, any articles of British commerce from being taxed in the course of trade by any other legislative body than the Parliament of Great Britain. Having formerly laid before you more particularly the sentiments of the Board upon this subject, (which, from what passed at this time, I have great reason to think continue the same) I submit the whole to your serious consideration; and if the necessities of the Island should be such as to require again a tax so objectionable on the part of Great Britain, I most earnestly beg you would give me your instructions upon it, in order that I may not be left to my own imperfect and ineffectual reasoning upon so important a subject.

I have, &amp;c.

(signed) *Stephen Fuller.*

## No. 5.

EXTRACT of a DISPATCH from Sir *Basil Keith* to the Earl of *Dartmouth*; dated Jamaica, 6th November 1775.

“UPON the first meeting of the Council, which was so soon as possible after I received the Royal Disallowance of the Additional Duty Act upon Negroes, I laid it before them, as also the Report of the Board of Trade upon it, when they were entered and recorded in the usual form.”

J A M A I C A .  
(SLAVE TRADE.)

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Copy of a DISPATCH from the Earl of Dartmouth  
to Sir Basil Keith, Governor of Jamaica, with  
Memorials, on the subject of an Act passed by the  
Assembly of Jamaica in 1774, imposing a DUTY  
on SLAVES IMPORTED.

(Mr. Burye.)

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Ordered, by The House of Commons, to be Printed,  
16 August 1834.

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738.