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FRANKLIN'S POLITICAL JOURNALISM IN ENGLAND.*

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It is now one hundred and sixty years since Benjamin Vaughan published in London the first collection of Franklin's writings to include political as well as scientific essays. It would be hard to imagine less likely circumstances for such an undertaking. The volume was compiled in the midst of the War of Independence. Franklin at the time was in Paris as the minister of the rebel Congress to the court of Louis XVI; in the past year his first great diplomatic triumph, the treaty of alliance, had brought France also into the war with Britain. Meanwhile, his editor was in England: a nominal enemy, but actually an ardent admirer and a friend of the American cause. Since 1777 a number of letters concerning the project had crossed the channel between author and editor. From Paris Franklin forwarded to the enemy capital in 1779 the "Addenda and Corrigenda" which gave special authority to the Vaughan edition. Vaughan reprinted not only Franklin's imperialist essays of 1754 to 1760, and certain of his anti-proprietary writings, but also—without apology to his English

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public—such caustic satires on the policies of Lord North's ministry as the "RULES by which a GREAT EMPIRE may be reduced to a SMALL ONE," and "An Edict by the King of Prussia." In his preface, indeed, Vaughan confidently asserted of the man whom some Englishmen called "Old Traitor Franklin," that "history lies in wait for him, and the judgment of mankind balances already in his favor." "No man," he declared, "ever made larger or bolder guesses than Dr. Franklin from like materials in politics and philosophy, which, after the scrutiny of events and of fact, have been more completely verified."

So far at least as concerns Franklin's reputation of a political writer on the causes of the American Revolution, the judgment of history to which Vaughan appealed rests even today largely upon the essays which he managed to assemble in the sturdy octavo volume of *Political, Miscellaneous, and Philosophical Pieces*. Later editors from William Temple Franklin to Albert Henry Smyth greatly extended the corpus of Franklin's writings in other directions, notably through the publication of the major part of his magnificent correspondence. But of his numerous political essays on the great cause between the colonies and the mother country, written during the busy years of his London agencies and printed contemporaneously in newspapers and periodicals in England and America, the last Franklin editor added only about a dozen items to those collected so long ago by the admirable Benjamin Vaughan.

Thus it has happened that while biographers and historians have tasted the quality of Franklin's political writing, they have never appreciated its scope during the very years of his maturity both as a man of letters and a politician. They have missed seeing how largely political journalism absorbed his energy at crucial moments. Unaware of the extent to which his writings were printed and reprinted in the English and also the American press, they have underestimated his influence upon political attitudes on both sides of the Atlantic.

The complaisance of modern editors with their fragmentary collections of the Franklin essays on politics is the more surprising in view of the fact that both author and editor were highly dissatisfied with what Franklin called the

“very incomplete” edition of 1779. Vaughan had repeatedly urged Franklin to send him certain texts; but quite often he had been disappointed. The difficulty was that the two main sources from which they might have been furnished were inaccessible to Franklin in Paris. On his departure for France he had left his personal file of papers in Pennsylvania, in the keeping of Joseph Galloway, now a Tory. For many years, also, William Franklin had received from his father, as Benjamin later recalled, “sometimes the Rough Drafts, and sometimes the printed Pieces I wrote in London”; but the last royal governor of New Jersey was at this time in patriot custody in America. “If I should ever recover the Pieces that were in the Hands of my Son,” Franklin wrote to Vaughan, “and those I left among my Papers in America, I think there may be enough to make three more such Volumes, of which a great part would be more interesting.” In 1784 Franklin sought to enlist the aid of his son, now in England, for an enlarged second edition of Vaughan, but the project fell through.

Franklin's own testimony that he had written many more essays in England than Vaughan had been able to assemble, seemed sufficient warrant, several years since, for undertaking a search for new Franklin essays in the London newspapers. This was pursued both in the so-called evening papers of the type of the *London Chronicle*, which had been casually but not thoroughly inspected before, and especially in the extant files of the London daily newspapers, never hitherto explored by any Franklin student. Difficulties were encountered: many issues have disappeared; and Franklin, in common with the other controversial writers of the age, had usually assumed the disguise of anonymity or pseudonymity.

Happily he left more clues than his great contemporary and fellow-contributor in the 1770's to the *Public Advertiser*, the mysterious Junius. Among the clues which proved useful are drafts and memoranda in the great manuscript collections, especially in the American Philosophical Society; allusions by Franklin himself, or by his correspondents; a helpful list which Franklin drew up in 1769 of those essays of his which Goddard had reprinted in the *Pennsylvania Chronicle*; contemporary identifications by his journalistic antagonists, some of which

hit the mark, though others went far astray; his use of characteristic pseudonyms; and those other signs of authorship supplied by internal evidence, which in the case of so frugal a writer as Franklin are often highly convincing. Suffice it to say that it has been possible to recover what is probably the major portion of Franklin's political journalism in England; that this amounts in bulk to nearly the "three more such Volumes"—on the scale of the 1779 edition—which Franklin predicted; and that it is hoped that this belated "second edition" of Vaughan may shortly appear. Meanwhile the friends of Franklin may be interested in a brief analysis of the character and significance of this restored body of Franklin's political journalism, with sidelights upon Franklin's relations to the press.

As an old-time newspaper proprietor, trained in the rough-and-tumble of colonial politics, it is not surprising that Franklin began to send in letters to the London papers at least as early as 1758, and that he continued to write on imperial politics all through the English period, even during the stormy final year of his London residence. Long before, in his "Apology for Printers," he had observed: "That the Business of Printing has chiefly to do with Men's Opinions; most things that are printed tending to promote some, or oppose others." Here is as neat a description of propaganda as one is likely to find—framed, moreover, by a master practitioner. It seems likely, indeed, that little in modern propaganda would surprise Franklin, except the name! The art, he understood, was an ancient if not always an honorable one: the eighteenth century had, as usual, introduced improvements. "To the haranguers of the populace among the ancients," he wrote in 1767, "succeed among the moderns your writers of political pamphlets and news-papers, and your coffee-house talkers." In 1782 he pointed out the great advantage of modern means of persuasion over ancient oratory: "The facility, with which the same truths may be repeatedly enforced by placing them daily in different lights in *news-papers*, which are everywhere read, gives a great chance of establishing them. And we now find, that it is not only right to strike while the iron is hot, but that it may be very practicable to heat it by continually striking."

To heat the iron in the controversies between colonies and mother country, Franklin himself had recourse both to pamphleteering and newspaper writing, and also to coffee-house oratory. Of his contributions in the latter sort, more important in forming opinion in eighteenth-century London than anything comparable today, little has survived. The recently reprinted dialogue on slavery of 1770 may well be what it purports to be, the dressed-up version of a coffee-house debate. But in any case Franklin was a more persuasive writer than talker. Two unidentified Franklin pamphlets, of 1766 and 1768, have been recovered, and there are traces of two others which were written but apparently not published. It was in the newspaper, however, that Franklin found his real forum in England.

A forum for debate the newspaper of the eighteenth century was intended to be. Especially was this true of London. There three great dailies circulated, and half-a-dozen so-called evening papers, printed thrice a week, which were carried by the post to Bath and Bristol and the provincial towns generally; they had, besides, their regular subscribers in America. In addition to news, usually stale, from the continent and the kingdom and even from the colonies, and advertising and literary notices—but as yet no editorials—a principal department comprised essays, largely controversial, on a wide range of political topics, in the form of letters to the printer, usually signed with a pseudonym. These contributed letters had an importance in the formulation of opinion far beyond that of letters from readers of today. It was the repeatedly asserted policy of the printers to open their columns without discrimination to writers on either side of any current debate; and in the best English papers, to a greater degree it would seem than in the colonial gazettes, this policy of impartiality was actually maintained. Henry S. Woodfall proudly described his daily, the *Public Advertiser*, as a "cockpit for Political Spurring." He strongly repudiated charges of partisanship, as in 1774, when one correspondent asked how he and his colleagues could justify to their consciences "the constantly printing Essays and Paragraphs, which accuse the Bostonians of Rebellion." Only a few weeks later, however, another writer—no doubt a ministerial

hack—denounced the prostitution of the English press, under the guise of impartiality, to the cause of American Rebellion! On still another occasion Woodfall gave the following answer to a complaint: "The Printer does *not* plead guilty to the Charge of *Partiality*.—If twenty Gentlemen write Letters to answer One JUNIUS, the Printer inserts these Letters as quick as possible." It is obvious, however, that some among the score of anti-Junius scribes must wait upon the convenience of the printer. It was certainly an advantage, then, for a writer on political questions to have personal relations with the proprietors or shareholders of the principal papers. Such relations Benjamin Franklin amply enjoyed. It is therefore not surprising that only rarely do his letters appear to have been excluded: that commonly they were printed very promptly; and that often they were given special prominence. His newspaper connections are not far to seek. A good friend and neighbor in Craven Street was the wine-merchant Caleb Whitefoorde, himself a writer for the papers and also one of the proprietors of the *Public Advertiser*. But it was probably through his long-time printer friend, William Strahan, that Franklin first established his close connections with the London press. Strahan was not only the principal stockholder of the tri-weekly *London Chronicle*, with a one-ninth interest; he had important shares also in the *Public Advertiser*, the *Public Ledger* (another daily), and *Lloyd's Evening Post*. To each of these, as also to the third daily, the *Gazetteer*, Franklin was a contributor. Thirty-three of his essays have been discovered in the *Public Advertiser*; thirty-two in the *London Chronicle*, and eighteen in the *Gazetteer*.

By modern standards the circulation of these papers was absurdly small. The *Public Advertiser* is said to have printed about 3,000 copies; the *Gazetteer* in 1769 got out 5,000. But they were certainly read much more widely than these figures would indicate, especially in the coffee-houses where they were also hotly debated. The public opinion which they helped to form was that of a minority, but of an influential minority in a country controlled by a minority ruling class. It was especially when Parliament was in session that political letter writers sharpened their quills, and among the rest

Benjamin Franklin. It is significant of his purposes that most of his essays were printed in the months of the parliamentary sessions or of impending elections. Thus some twenty-four of his political pieces were printed in January issues of four years: 1766, 1768, 1769, 1770.

When letters caught on they were given wider currency through reprinting from the dailies into the evening papers—which also, as in the case of the *London Chronicle*, printed some essays for the first time—and in such monthly periodicals as the *Gentleman's Magazine*. This frequently happened with Franklin's essays; and indeed most of the texts presented by his editors have unfortunately been taken from these imperfect reprintings, or else from incomplete manuscript drafts. On this side the Atlantic, colonial printers to fill out their sheets culled letters as well as old news from London papers and periodicals. Franklin fared especially well in the colonial gazettes, although it was rare that his authorship was asserted, and then sometimes incorrectly. The notable instance in which he was identified to American readers occurred in 1767. To offset malicious partisan attacks upon the agent's conduct in the affair of the Stamp Act, William Goddard reprinted in the *Pennsylvania Chronicle* a whole batch of Franklin essays from London papers. With his keen journalistic sense, and his wide connections among American printers, it is likely that Franklin himself saw to it that papers containing his essays came their way. Certainly it is true that most of his English writings were currently reprinted at least once and often many times in America; a thorough canvass would probably greatly extend the evidence. He wrote, then, for an audience both in England and America. And he wrote most often in the dual rôle of an Englishman and an American, seeking in the midst of bitter disputes to promote a more enlightened imperialism.

It was, however, as an imperial expansionist, and an advocate of royal government in Pennsylvania, that Franklin first addressed English newspaper readers in those years of his earlier agency which were also the climatic years of the Seven Years' War. His first contribution was probably the letter signed "A.B." in the *London Chronicle* for September 19, 1758, which was recognized as his by Cecilius Calvert:

a piece of anti-proprietary propaganda in line with the original purpose of his agency.

But most of his journalism between 1758 and 1761 turned toward broader issues of the empire at war. When a peace movement arose in England—prematurely as it seemed to this expansionist American who hoped for great continental acquisitions from the French in North America—he addressed to Mr. Chronicle a series of letters which were frankly war propaganda. As “CHEARFUL” he demonstrated in December how the supply of twelve millions for the next year might be raised not once but several times over, by the exercise of Poor Richard’s stock virtues of “industry and frugality.” And so might Britain avoid “a peace which shall be either *unsafe* or dishonourable to the nation.” As “A New Englandman” he turned aside in May, 1759, to defend the colonial soldiery against the slurs of British officers serving in America whose letters he had read with mounting indignation in the London papers. (From this time on the defense of the Americans became one of his self-appointed tasks in England: defense of their customs as well as their opinions, of their dietary even, as in his championing of American corn bread—a defense not so much against malignity, as against the dismaying ignorance of things American which he encountered in the mother country.) In November, 1759, he returned to his war propaganda to draw the portraits of those Englishmen who “wish for a peace with *France*, let the terms be ever so dishonourable, ever so disadvantageous . . . ;” as he did again in 1761, in the fictitious chapter “Of the Means of disposing the *Enemie* to Peace” which he alleged that he had drawn “from the famous Jesuit *Campanella’s* discourses address’d to the King of *Spain*.” Here he listed among the pacifists: “All those who be timorous by nature, amongst whom he reckoned men of learning that lead sedentarie lives, using little exercise of bodie, and thence obtaining but few and weake spirits.” In 1767, however, he reconsidered the case of the intellectuals when he found some of them clamoring for the use of force in America. He then wrote for the same *London Chronicle* (April 9, 1767) a curiously similar passage but to exactly the opposite effect:

It is remarkable that soldiers by profession, men truly and unquestionably brave, seldom advise war but in cases of extreme necessity. While mere rhetoricians, tongue-pads, and scribes, timid by nature, or from their little bodily exercise deficient in those spirits that give real courage, are ever bawling for war on the most trifling occasions, and seem the most blood-thirsty of mankind.

The climax of Franklin's political writing in the period of the first agency was, of course, the publication in April, 1760, of his famous Canada pamphlet, *The Interest of Great Britain*, arguing the case for a peace which should secure Canada and the trans-Appalachian West, rather than West Indian islands, for Great Britain. It is not so well known that Franklin had prepared the way for this pamphlet by printing in the *Chronicle* late in December, 1759, a letter signed "A.Z." which gave to certain arguments of the forthcoming tract a satirical turn.

When Franklin returned to England on his second Pennsylvania agency at the end of 1764, he returned to a land of many friendships and many useful connections—scientific, literary, and among others journalistic. Already he had his *entrée* to Strahan's *London Chronicle*. Soon he was contributing also to the daily papers, as the successive crises over the Stamp Act, the Townshend Acts, the Tea Act, and the rest gave occasion. During the second agency even more than during the first the anti-proprietary campaign took an insignificant place in his writings among the larger concerns of the colonies in the era of imperial reorganization.

Franklin's letters to the newspapers appeared over a bewildering variety of signatures. Smyth listed some eighteen pseudonyms, but the list can be extended to about forty. Franklin's practice was thus quite unlike that of Junius, who made one signature immortal; or that of his own uneasy and suspicious colleague from Virginia, Arthur Lee, who dreamed of a like immortality as Junius Americanus. Thus far there has turned up among the new materials only one considerable Franklin series of a definitely periodical character: The Colonist's Advocate papers, eleven in number, which appeared in the *Public Advertiser* between January 4 and March 2, 1770. They marked the climax of Franklin's drive in the press for the repeal of the Townshend duties. The partial

repeal by Parliament occurred March 5, and the series suddenly ended.

Better suited to Franklin's purposes in propaganda, as also to his temperament, was his more usual method of scattering a number of detached essays through the papers, over a variety of signatures, and in a great variety of modes. It would seem that he was deliberately seeking to create the impression that a numerous regiment of pro-American writers was in the field. If so, he was not altogether successful, for by 1774 ministerial paragraphers were tracing all such propaganda, sometimes quite erroneously, to what one of them called "Judas's office in Craven Street." Sometimes he chose to write in the character of an Englishman—several times over the actual signature of "A Briton." Franklin's methods reflect the *ad hoc* nature of much of his political writing in England. Most often the letters were answers to writers who, he conceived, had misstated American facts or misrepresented American views. "Angry reflections on the Americans" were pretty certain to draw his fire.

The winter of 1765-6 saw him at his busiest, by testimony of such intimates as Strahan and Dr. Fothergill. "He is forever with one Member of Parliament or other," wrote Strahan on January 11, describing his activities as a lobbyist for the repeal of the Stamp Act. "All this while too," Strahan continued, "he hath been throwing out Hints in the Public Papers, and giving Answers to such letters as have appeared in them, that required or deserved an Answer.—In this Manner is he now employed, and with very little Interruption, Night & Day." Strahan was not exaggerating. In the newspapers that winter Franklin had challenged each of the prominent Grenvillite writers in turn. To "Tom Hint" he had replied over his favorite signature of "F.B."; to "Pacificus" as "Pacificus Secundus"; to "Vindex Patriae" as "Homespun" or "N.N." Not a little of the fencing skill which he exhibited on the great occasion of his examination before the House of Commons in February may be traced to his practice in these preliminary bouts in the London press.

In later years Franklin continued to reply to current "misrepresentations," as he called them, of the Americans. Thus in March, 1767, he read in the *Gazetteer* a satirical paper

by some Grenvillite writer called "Right, Wrong, and Reasonable, according to American Ideas." In April he retorted in one of the most pungent of the newly discovered essays under this caption: "RIGHT, WRONG, and REASONABLE, with regard to America, according to the Ideas of the Gentle Shepherd, and the genuine meaning of the papers and pamphlets lately published by him and his associates." Though here he deliberately borrowed the form of discourse set by his antagonist, he managed greatly to improve upon it. This was unhappily not the fortune of Francis Bernard, former royal governor of Massachusetts, when he rashly attempted a reply in the same kind to one of the most brilliant of Franklin's political satires. At least Franklin himself had reason for believing that it was Bernard who wrote the "long labour'd, and special dull Answer" in the *Public Advertiser* to his own famous essay of September 11, 1773: "RULES by which a GREAT EMPIRE may be reduced to a SMALL ONE."

Franklin's political essays were timely, which is the essence of journalism; but his literary talent, and the wisdom which he managed to distill into even his slightest pieces, usually save them from being merely ephemeral. In his correspondence are passages which throw light on his careful timing of his press campaigns. Within ten days in April, 1767, he printed four considerable essays, three of them in two consecutive issues of the *London Chronicle*. In an unpublished letter to Joseph Galloway he confided the reasons for this special activity:

I have written several Papers to abate a little if possible the Animosity stir'd up against us, and flatter myself they may be attended with some Success. I have taken that Method to answer all the groundless Charges, and state aright all the mistaken Facts that I heard urged in the Debates at the House of Lords, tho' I durst not mention those Debates. I send you some of them. They have been reprinted here in several of the Newspapers.

Again in August, 1768, he wrote, once more to Galloway:

. . . a Party is now growing in our Favour, which I shall endeavour to increase and strengthen by every Effort of Tongue and Pen

From August to December, accordingly, he printed some ten essays; only half of which have been preserved in his collected writings.

Franklin's strong literary bent is revealed in the variety of forms which he employed in his political writings, as well as in the familiar felicities of his style. There are allegories, hoaxes, imaginary colloquies, the Socratic discourse, as well as straight-out argumentation. Some of these forms Franklin had practiced since his salad days in the Junto, and throughout his early writing for the Boston and Philadelphia papers. Elsewhere it has been shown that in a piece printed in 1770 Franklin was pretty surely recalling the method he had employed in the *Pennsylvania Gazette*, so far back as 1755, in his dialogue between X, Y, and Z in defense of the Pennsylvania militia act. For he began in very much the same form another dialogue, "A Conversation between an ENGLISHMAN, a SCOTCHMAN, and an AMERICAN, on the Subject of SLAVERY," which Woodfall printed in the *Public Advertiser*, January 30, 1770. (This capital piece is obviously "the dialogue on slavery" which Vaughan asked Franklin to send over from Paris for his 1779 edition, but which he failed to get.) Another item also recently recovered which likewise exhibits Franklin's craft as a writer is the set of three fables dedicated to Lord Hillsborough.

Although Franklin did not altogether escape the vice of hasty writing which appears in even the more leisurely journalism of the eighteenth century, the surviving drafts show that he was still a vigilant reviser. His letters reveal that he set great store by certain pieces, especially his satires of September, 1773, and for literary reasons among others. On the whole he preferred the "RULES by which a GREAT EMPIRE may be reduced to a SMALL ONE"—"as a composition for the quantity and variety of the matter contained, and a kind of spirited ending of each paragraph"—to the more spectacular hoaxing of "An Edict of the King of Prussia." It is a fact, possibly quite irrelevant, that an early draft of the favorite essay was jotted down on an invoice from Brown & Whitefoorde, Wine Merchants, for

- 6 bottles Sherry seal'd yellow Rose
- 6 D°. Port seal'd yellow Cock
- 4 D°. Claret seal'd yellow Star
- 2 D°. Mountain seal'd red Cypher.

In the next year Franklin even suggested that the sting of these essays had brought about his public disgrace in the Cockpit, and the loss of his crown office as joint-deputy post-master general for North America. The claim appears in a letter of February 19, 1774 which can safely be attributed to Franklin, although he concealed his authorship. It was published in the colonial press as a first defense of Franklin against the virulence of Wedderburn's attack. Written in the third person, the apologia points out:

When People give weak Reasons for Strong Resentment, one is apt to suspect they are not the true ones; so I fancy sometimes, that the Doctor's returning those Letters could not be the Foundation of all this Fury, and that possibly the Preface to the Boston Pamphlet, the Prussian Edict, and the Rules for diminishing a Great Empire, are suspected to be his, and yet not mentioned, lest the Attention of the Public should be more turned towards those pieces, which are thought to expose the late Measures too poignantly.

Franklin's work as propagandist-in-chief for the colonies in England was often, to be sure, of a routine sort. There were documents from America to insert in the London press: resolves of town meetings in Massachusetts, of merchants and mechanics in Philadelphia, letters from colonial correspondents to be abstracted. Usually Franklin wrote an adroit paragraph or so of introduction; he also wrote prefaces for several of those American tracts which he got reprinted in London. In the launching of still other pamphlets his part appears to have been that only of paymaster to the printer. Several such transactions are revealed by Strahan's ledgers and by Franklin's accounts, as agent, with Massachusetts Bay.

There is singularly little evidence of Franklin's collaboration with other political writers: in general he played a lone hand. Richard Jackson's supposed partnership in the writing of the Canada pamphlet of 1760 is now discredited, his share reduced to supplying of some materials for Franklin's use. Another aide was John Huske, member of Parliament for Malden, Essex, an American by birth who probably wrote an important anti-French pamphlet of 1755, *The Present State of North America*. Huske made himself useful to Franklin on at least two occasions. On Franklin's examination in 1766, by previous arrangement no doubt, he asked a

number of the "friendly" questions which enabled the agent to shine so brilliantly before the House of Commons. And in 1768 Huske was the "merchant friend" who furnished the tables of British trade with the northern colonies and the West Indies which Franklin as "F.B." displayed and discussed for the readers of the *London Chronicle*.

Even Franklin's astonishing fertility was strained at times by the pressure to keep the American case before ministers and members of Parliament, or at all events before the newspaper-reading politicians of the clubs and coffee-houses. In an emergency he did not hesitate to repeat himself. At the height of the campaign for the repeal of the Stamp Act he secured the publication in the *London Chronicle* of his letters to Governor Shirley, written as long ago as 1754, in which he had anticipated so many of the later American arguments against parliamentary taxation. In 1774, a year when Franklin's fortunes and those of America took a sad turn for the worse, the "RULES" of 1773 were reprinted in the *Gazetteer* from an "authenticated copy" furnished by "A Fidler," who was certainly Franklin. To be sure, he adopted a rather thin disguise:

Having lately had occasion to turn over some newspapers, published in the course of the last summer, in search of an advertisement, I accidentally stumbled upon a letter, containing many *excellent rules*, by which a *great empire* may be reduced to a *small one*.

As I apprehend this plan is at present under the consideration of the House of Commons, I think a re-publication of it, at this time, would not be improper. The rules appear to me to be admirably adapted to the end proposed; and tho' the experience which we have since gained may enable a *shrewd politician* to improve upon some of them, there are others perhaps which will serve to furnish *Lord North* with some ideas that possibly may not hitherto have occurred to him.

In 1774, also, the *Chronicle* reprinted Franklin's essay of 1768, usually called "The Causes of the American Discontents." But it was now printed without those deletions which had caused the author to complain in 1768 that the *Chronicle* editor had shown himself a Grenvillite. It is pretty clear, then, that it was Franklin who in 1774 furnished a true copy to the *Chronicle*. In December, 1774, Rivington brought out the restored essay as a pamphlet from his press in New York.

It was in the critical year of 1774 that there was also printed, apparently for the first time, the well-known "Answer" which Franklin had written back in 1769, to certain "Queries" on American affairs which Strahan had raised in a letter to his American friend. Meanwhile, however, this document had been widely circulated in manuscript copies, as had been the case earlier with Franklin's "Examination." One copy of the "Queries and Answer" Franklin had sent to his Boston correspondent, the Reverend Samuel Cooper, and it eventually found its way with other Franklin letters into the possession of George III. Strahan himself had sent other copies to David Hall and William Franklin. Still another, he said, had been put in the hands of the Duke of Grafton and "the other Chiefs of the Ministry." Perhaps because of Franklin's pessimistic conclusion, that "Mutual Recriminations will . . . go on to complete the separation" between colonies and mother country, Strahan had warned Hall that it would be "highly improper to publish it, or risk its getting into the papers." But in 1774, as now appears, Franklin procured its printing in the *Public Advertiser*, and a little later in the *Gazetteer*.

Franklin's frugality had occasionally an amusing aspect. Several times, when writing anonymously or pseudonymously, he quoted himself with words of praise which no doubt concealed a private chuckle. Thus in 1770 as "The Colonist's Advocate" he cited a famous passage from his own examination with this admiring comment:

For, what their Disposition, with Respect to the Mother-Country, was, before the Year 1763, is well known to the Publick, and justly described, in the following Words, by a Gentleman, who has done great Honour, and important Service to his Country by his Manly Defense of her Liberties.

Franklin practised another less obvious type of literary economy which throws light on his writing methods, and incidentally facilitates the search for the lost Frankliniana: the economy of ideas, of turns of exposition and argument, even of phraseology. Sometimes these echoes suggest that he was using certain well-thumbed notes and memoranda—notably one set of jottings which he seems to have prepared in advance of his examination in 1766. At other times it

would appear that his tenacious memory was drawing up old treasure from a well-stored mind. In the margin of the notes just mentioned was a stray jotting which read: "Germany the Mother Country of this Nation." Seven years later, in an essay which appeared in the *Public Advertiser*, March 16, 1773, Franklin expanded this note to refute the annoying assumption by many Englishmen that America was somehow their property. "Britain," he wrote, "was formerly the America of the Germans."

They came hither in their Ships; found the *Cream* of the Land possessed by a Parcel of Welsh Caribbs, whom they judged unworthy of it, and therefore drove them into the Mountains, and sat down in their Places. These Anglo-Saxons, our Ancestors, came *at their own Expence*, and therefore supposed that when they had secured the new Country, they held it of themselves, and of no other People under Heaven. Accordingly we do not find that their Mother Country, Germany, ever pretended to tax them; nor is it likely, if she had, that they would have paid it.

Here he dropped the theme for the time being. But he returned to it in the fall, to expand it further into the elaborate hoax of the "Edict of the King of Prussia." This famous essay Woodfall printed on the front page of the *Public Advertiser* (September 22, 1773) though he placed it under a Danzig date-line, with the editorial explanation: "The Subject of the following Article of FOREIGN INTELLIGENCE being exceedingly EXTRAORDINARY, is the Reason of its being separated from the usual Articles of *Foreign News*." In a note to Franklin he explained more candidly: had it "been printed as a Foreign Article I feared it would have been lost, or at least not so much attended to as it deserved."

Among the many types of argumentation which Franklin used, one which most directly reflects his shopkeeping background was his practise of "stating an account." For instance, in the *Public Advertiser*, January 17, 1769, he itemized such an account for "The Right Hon. G.G. Esq; and Co. . . . with the Stockholders of Great Britain." Or rather he stated two accounts: one of the great losses already incurred from the American troubles, another of the immensely greater losses to be expected "if the Rupture hitherto only apprehended shall take Place," and war ensue. He concluded:

"Thus stand the Accounts; yet this same G.G. the Root of all the Evil, sets up for an Economist."

Franklin set up for something of an economist himself; and many of his arguments in the English press were directed at British folly in driving good customers away from the shop. These arguments were addressed more especially to the British merchants and manufacturers. Indeed, from 1767-1774 Franklin shaped most of his propaganda to reinforce in that quarter the successive colonial movements of economic pressure through withdrawal of trade. There is evidence that Franklin himself had a good bit to do with encouraging these non-importation, non-consumption, and home-manufacturing movements in America, from the early days when Poor Richard in his almanac for 1765 turned his preaching of industry and frugality into a political channel, to the later days when it was widely believed that Franklin's advice had helped to shape the Association of the First Continental Congress. However that may be, in England he was the press agent for non-importation, picturing again and again the losses of English trade already incurred, and the future losses to be expected; and in 1770, when the great non-importation league was breaking up, skillfully covering the American retreat. To this kind of propaganda belongs what appears to be Franklin's last important essay in the English press. In the *Public Ledger* for November 19, 1774, before news had come to England of the final action of the Congress, there appeared a sensational letter signed "An American" and addressed "To the Merchants of England." It contained a startlingly accurate prediction of the forthcoming restrictive measures of the Congress, with dire prophecies of their effects on the economy of England, Ireland, and the West Indies. Thomas Hutchinson read it, and in a letter to Thomas Gage fixed on Josiah Quincy, Jr., who had reached London just two days before on a mysterious mission for the Boston radicals, as the author. But this striking manifesto is not all in the younger Quincy's manner, and very much in Franklin's. In his two-hour talk with Quincy on November 17 Franklin had had ample opportunity to learn what was afoot in the Philadelphia Congress. It would therefore appear that this important forgotten letter was Franklin's last despairing attempt

to turn the tide of British policy in America by underscoring the threat of economic pressure: his last attempt through propaganda to save from shipwreck the old British Empire.

Franklin's espousal of the tactics of economic pressure had meanwhile worked some modifications in his own conviction that the American people should remain so long as possible a farmer society. Economic retaliation—even at the price of a certain measure of industrialism—he preferred to violent measure of popular revolt, chiefly because he long believed that America needed no sudden revolution; that time and a rapidly multiplying population were shifting the balance of imperial power to the western hemisphere. His repeated denials in the English press that Americans were seeking independence, as their opponents charged, were sincerely made. Until very late in the quarrel Franklin himself remained an Anglo-American imperialist. But his imperialism was of a special sort, not to be understood by crown lawyers or even by English Whigs of the eighteenth century, though quite in the present-day temper of the British Commonwealth of Nations.

For fairly obvious reasons the search for Franklin's underlying constitutional views—his notions of the true character of the British Empire and of the basis and extent of American rights within the empire—should begin, not with his published political writings in England, nor even with his correspondence, but with the marginal comments which he wrote in his own copies of the controversial pamphlets of the period. These secret jottings reveal that as early as the winter of 1765-6 his private views ran to a claim of what would now be called dominion status, within an empire united by allegiance to a single crown but not by subordination to a single parliament. From 1768 on hints of these principles, even then in advance of most American opinion, began to appear in his letters and in such newspaper essays as the "American" and "Briton" papers of September-October, 1768.

On the whole, however, until very late in the controversy, Franklin conceived his rôle as that of the expounder in England of prevailing opinion in America—and even, to some degree, as the interpreter of British opinion to the colonies. Again and again the discourse in his essays follows such a pattern as

this: "But perhaps it may be some satisfaction to your Readers to know what ideas the Americans have on the subject. They say . . . [etc.]" And of the American views thus introduced: "I relate them merely in pursuance of the task I have impos'd on myself, to be an impartial historian of American facts and opinions." At the same time he urged on the English government the importance of reckoning with American opinion, however perverse or heretical it might seem in the longitude of Westminster: "It has been thought wisdom in Government exercising sovereignty over different kinds of people, to have some regard to prevailing and established opinions among the people to be governed, wherever such opinions might in their effects obstruct or promote publick measures."

Indeed, the major impression which remains after reading the whole body of the Franklin political essays, is not so much of the cleverness of his propaganda devices, or of the sting of his satires, clever and even devastating as these essays often were, but of the statesmanlike sense of responsibility which on the whole they exhibited. If he deliberately suppressed the discussion of fundamental constitutional issues, it was not because he was intellectually lazy. Nor was it merely because as a prudent politician he realized that these issues were alarming to the "friends of America" in England, and might even disturb his comfortable status as an absentee crown official for America. The very fact that in his own theory of the empire he had early reached radical views made him the more hesitant to swing the debate in the direction of constitutional theory. For he understood that the hardening logic of the American case was irreconcilable with principles just as firmly held in England. And so as Francis Lynn he deplored, in 1768, "the public discussion of Questions that had better never have been started." But for "those unnatural and churlish-hearted Men . . . who, needlessly, wickedly, and madly sowed the first seeds of Discontent between Britain and her Colonies," he wrote in 1770, "Peace and Harmony would have reigned between the different Parts of this mighty Empire from Age to Age, to the unspeakable and inestimable Advantage of both." In the passage that follows immediately after this nostalgic invocation of empire, he makes

sufficiently clear the kind of empire that could hold his affections and those of his fellow Americans:

Those men make a mighty Noise about the importance of keeping up our Authority over the Colonies. They govern and regulate too much. Like some unthinking Parents, who are every Moment exerting their Authority, in obliging their Children to make Bows, and interrupting the Course of their innocent Amusements, attending constantly to their own Prerogative, but forgetting the Tenderness due to their Offspring. The true Art of governing the Colonies lies in a Nut-Shell. It is only letting them alone. So long as they find their Account in our Protection, they will desire, and deserve it. This our Experience confirms. So long as they find their Advantage, upon the Whole, in carrying on a Commerce with us, preferably to other Countries, they will continue it. Nay, unless we compel them to the contrary by our unnatural Treatment of them, they will shew a Prejudice in our Favor. Whenever they find Circumstances changed to the contrary, taxing and dragooning will only widen the Breach, and frustrate what ought to be the Intention of both Countries, viz. mutual Strength, and mutual Advantage.