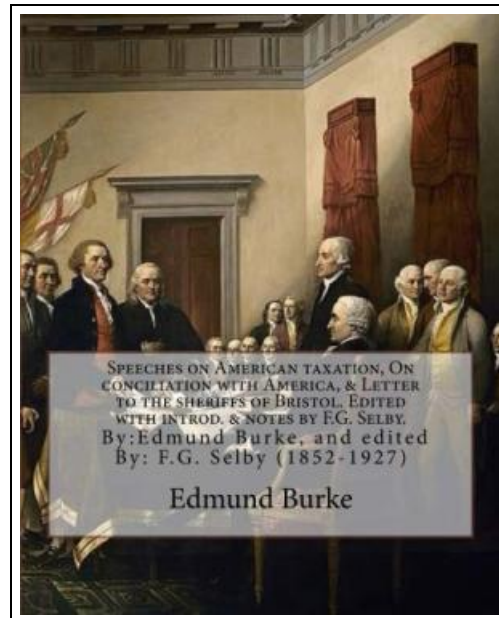


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On American Taxation was a speech given by Edmund Burke in the British House of Commons on April 19, 1774, advocating the full repeal of the Townshend Revenue Act of 1767. Parliament had previously repealed five of the six duties of this revenue tax on the American colonies, but the tax on tea remained. The speech was given during the debates on the Coercive Acts, when Rose Fuller proposed that the Townshend duty on tea be repealed to decrease resistance to the new acts. Burke's speech was in support of this motion. According to historian Robert Middlekauff, The speech is memorable for its wit and its brilliant reconstruction of the government's dismal efforts to bring order into colonial affairs without the advantage of a coherent policy. Edmund Burke was a British member of Parliament who by the 1770s had become an important part of the opposition. The Stamp Act was passed the same year he was first elected to Parliament, and this and ensuing revenue acts had generated significant resistance among American colonists. In general terms, Burke argued throughout these years that the resistance was a consequence of the inflexibility of British policy towards its colonies. His arguments were the ideas of an eminently practical man. Burke was more concerned with the actual functioning of government than with theory or history. By the spring of 1774, Burke had come to believe that affairs between Britain and the colonies were reaching an important moment. He did not believe that a break was imminent, but knew the situation was serious. When a debate was held in Parliament related to a motion to repeal the Tea Act, he took the opportunity to...



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