

# Free essay on analysing edmund burkes 1775 speech on conciliation with america

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## **Analysing Edmund Burke's 1775 Speech on Conciliation with America**

Edmund Burke was an Irish political leader well known for his support of the American war of independence (Simms, 2007). He openly advocated the American colonies' struggle for independence from the government of King George III and the representatives appointed by it (Simms, 2007). According to Burke, the British treatment of the American colonies was unfair, and the expectation that the Americans would not retaliate or resent the British was illogical (Simms, 2007). He believed this to be especially true as the Americans were originally British people, so their sentiments would be in tune with ideas of democracy and freedom (Simms, 2007). He did not favour the thought that a civil war could be instigated because of the British oppression of the American colonies (Simms, 2007). His 1775 speech in the House of Commons expressing his political opinion on this matter is a historically significant piece of political literature because of its practicality, support for peace, and humanity. In 1775, the state of affairs between Great Britain and the American colonies, which would eventually become the United States of America, were fraught with tension (Simms, 2007). Edmund Burke delivered his speech with the intension of easing these tensions and establishing peace, as he believed that the Americans were English (Simms, 2007). Moreover, he attempted to incite the English people into suppressing the war against America by reminding them a German descendent king was initiating a war among the English people (Simms, 2007).

His speech was a petition to the politicians, intellectuals, and the common British people that enduring peace is far more important than establishing authority. He expressed the difficulty of explicating the importance of righteousness and peace in a nation such the Great Britain, which in that era was enormous in size, owing to the number of colonies it commanded, and in the scale of development (Wiersema, 2010, para. 1). He, however, considered it his moral obligation to remind the nation of its duty (Wiersema, 2010, para. 1).

In the speech, he philosophically spoke of the importance of peace, which should be maintained not by autocratic treatment or be forced by the norms of political diplomacy (Wiersema, 2010, para. 2). His ideas of peace in the era when war and gaining control over lands and nations was considered essential seem way beyond his times. He stressed on the importance of transparency in government proceedings, and advocated that peace should come to people as a natural state of life (Wiersema, 2010, para. 2).

He believed that the American colonies should not be provoked into realizing the power of their civil rights because of England's power over them, and that England could never conquer over the Americans with this approach (Wiersema, 2010, para. 3). In fact, could have a better relationship and even control over the colonies by employing a peaceful approach (Wiersema, 2010, para. 3). He reminded the English people that the Americans were Englishmen at heart, and thus, they have the same sense of freedom (democracy) as the British people, and by waging a war, Britain was making enemies with friends (Wiersema, 2010, para. 3). He emphasized on the

eventual ill effects of practicing slavery, and said that, irrespective of the origin of slavery, it makes the people lose their humanity and dignity (Wiersema, 2010, para. 3). He believed that the commercial interests of England could be best achieved by maintaining a peaceful and friendly relationship with England (Wiersema, 2010, para. 3). He implored the people to remember that it was not the financial or political supremacy of the country, but “ the spirit” of the “ English communion” and “ English constitution” that gave it power (Wiersema, 2010, para. 3).

It is praiseworthy that he seemed to rouse the people of England with libertarian thought, which were not only novel for that period but also could threaten his political career. He said that people should not live in the notion that taxation, votes, defence power, and other such political and social systems ensured the stability of a nation (Wiersema, 2010, para. 4). The true reasons for stability were the people’s faith in the government (Wiersema, 2010, para. 4). He realized that his words could seem disrespectful or even inane to political powers, and asked the people to remember that the greatest minds in history has taught the world the very same philosophy (Wiersema, 2010, para. 4). He requested that “ magnanimity in politics” be forsaken for true wisdom, and that the public proceedings on America be halted by reckoning the teachings of the Church: *Sursum corda* or “ lift up your hearts”, which here means that people should listen to their hearts (Wiersema, 2010, para. 4) (Dictionary of the Christian Church, 1997). He reminded the English people that as human beings, they had to heed to the fact that there was a “ higher calling”, and so they should respect the

sentiments and situation of the American colonies (Wiersema, 2010, para. 4). He was of the opinion that the past ruler of England had sacrificed these ideals in order to make the nation a world power (Wiersema, 2010, para. 4). Finally, he said that the English should be avaricious and should reconcile to the idea of an American nation and be satisfied with the revenues it derived from the colonies (Wiersema, 2010, para. 4).

## References

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