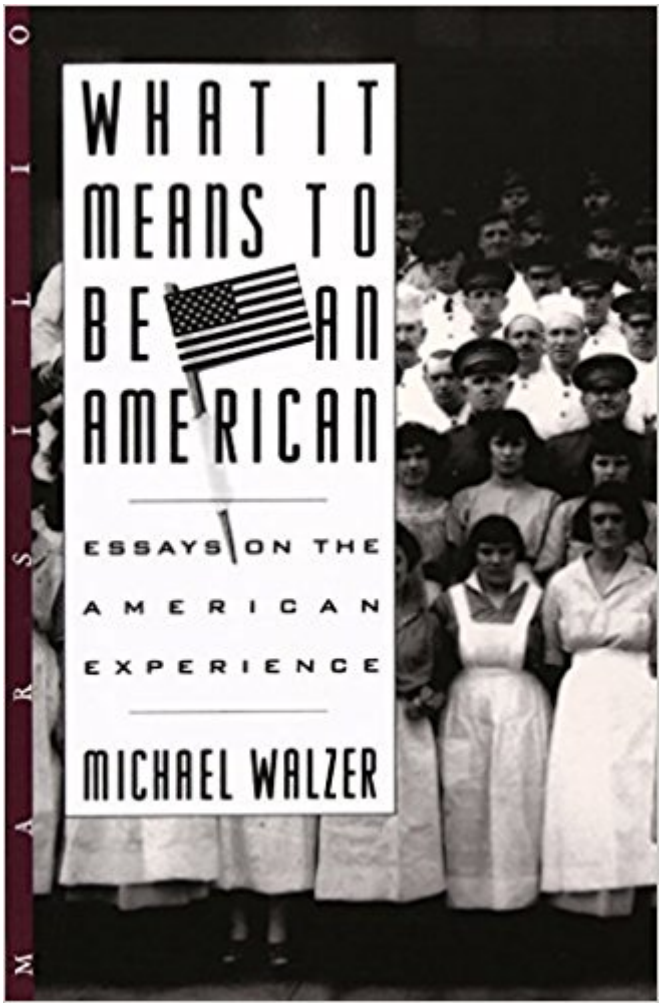
Ebook Directory
the best source of ebook

The book was found

What It Means To Be An American



PDF
Adobe
DOWNLOAD EBOOK

Synopsis

"Condensed to bumper-sticker pith, "What It Means to Be an American" asks everyone to "Honk If You Hate Us-Against-Them Thinking". Offering a fine antidote to exclusionist tripe about 'Americanism, ' Walzer grabs Pat Buchanan by the hyphens and doesn't let go".--"The Philadelphia Inquirer". Lightning Print On Demand Title

Book Information

Paperback: 136 pages

Publisher: Marsilio Publishers (April 1, 1996)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1568860250

ISBN-13: 978-1568860251

Product Dimensions: 5.5 x 0.3 x 8.5 inches

Shipping Weight: 7 ounces

Average Customer Review: 5.0 out of 5 stars 3 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #1,440,890 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #14 inÃ Â Books > Reference > Writing, Research & Publishing Guides > Publishing & Books > Bibliographies & Indexes > Politics #138 inÃ Â Books > Reference > Writing, Research & Publishing Guides > Publishing & Books > Bibliographies & Indexes > History #710 inÃ Â Books > Politics & Social Sciences > Politics & Government > Political Science > Reference

Customer Reviews

Political scientist Walzer examines the politics of difference in American life, arguing in support of a balance between plurality and unity. Copyright 1996 Reed Business Information, Inc.

At a time when divisiveness has become almost fashionable in American society, noted political scientist Michael Walzer's What It Means to be an American offers a clear and pragmatic explanation of the politics of difference, shedding light on what is needed for us to coexist in a society as uniquely heterogeneous as that of the United States of America. -- Midwest Book Review --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Useful and well thought out set of essays

great book

This book is pithy and clear. Walzer's America is dynamic. The fluidity of the national conscience is grounded in America's most prominent and politically salient feature: we are immigrants. Walzer writes, "the political culture of the country as a whole was English and Protestant, but this culture was never firmly established either in the symbols or the substance of law and policy" (pg. 9). National unity is difficult to achieve and will "probably always be tumultuous" (pg. 12).Walzer provides a "brief checklist" on how to reassert the "twinned American values of a singular citizenship and a radically pluralist civil society" (pg. 17). This checklist is in six points: (1) remember we are a "society of immigrants" when we discuss our national conscience; (2) "Strengthen our public schools;" (3) Recognize the civic quality "parochial associations;" (4) "maintain the neutrality of the state" because (for example) "the United States cannot be a Christian republic in the way that Iran is an Islamic republic;" (5) "Create a more participatory politics;" (6) Although "silliness" and "nastiness" inevitably accompany democratic politics these features should be marginalized. (For these 6 points see pgs. 17-19).After that introduction, Walzer presents four essays that I will summarize below:WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE AN "AMERICAN"?"If the manyness of America is cultural, its oneness is political, and it may be the case that men and women who are free from non-American cultures will commit themselves more fully to the American political system. Maybe cultural anonymity is the best possible grounding for American politics" (pg. 29). Walzer thinks that the Great Seal of the USA, E pluribus unum "From many, one," is misleading because the uniqueness of America is that we do not know what that one is, we are immigrants, we are "Hyphenated Americans" (e.g. Italian-Americans, African-Americans, etc; see pgs. 36-40). Even today, "America is still a radically unfinished society" (pg. 48). Patriotism is largely unique in America because unlike the "Old World" where loyalty is to the patrie or the fatherland (or motherland), in America loyalty is often evoked by referring to traditions and standards that were developed from our immigrant-histories. Thus Walzer says beautifully, "Americans have no inwardness of their own; they look inward only by looking backward" (pg. 26).PLURALISM: A POLITCAL PERSPECTIVEHere, Walzer's discussion of the relationship between the public and private life of an American is more detailed. "Americans are communal in their private affairs, individualist in their politics. Civil society is a collection of groups; the state is an organization of individual citizens" (pg. 67). Again attacking the Great Seal, "Not only From many, one, but also Within one, many" (pg. 62). Within that latter notion, Walzer describes how the function of "ethnic self-assertion" has given rise to healthy pluralism: (1) by "the defense of ethnicity against cultural naturalization;" (2) the "celebration of this or that identity;" (3) to "build and sustain the reborn community" through

government’s institutional mechanisms (pgs. 62-68).CIVILITY & CIVIC VIRTUE IN CONTEMPORARY AMERICAWe expect citizens to both be tolerant and understand its virtue. "This is probably as close as we can come to that `friendship’ which Aristotle thought should characterize relations among members of the same political community" (pg. 89-90). Aristotle once said that (to paraphrase) where justice is we need friendship and where friendship is we will not need justice (see the Nicomachean Ethics). Walzer knows that Aristotelian friendship is "only possible" for the polis. Friendship does not enlarge when the polis enlarges to the cosmopolis. Instead, a feature of friendship, tolerance, is needed. It becomes, "a crucial form of civility" (pg. 90). "Politics is a school of loyalty, through which we make the republic our moral possession and come to regard it with a kind of reverence. And election day is the republic’s most important celebration" (pg. 100).CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHTS AND THE SHAPE OF CIVIL SOCIETYWalzer interprets the document of our "civic religion as "The Two Texts" which are the "Constitution itself" and the Bill of Rights coupled with the subsequent amendments "that are now read in terms of rights theory" (pg. 105). These two texts are quite different; they are "dissimilar in style, opposite to one another as political programs, [yet] intimately joined in practice" (pg. 105; my brackets). Walzer focuses this essay largely on how the notion of rights have developed. "In the last several decades...the Constitution’s second text [rights theory amendments] has come fully into its own. Instead of a set of restraints on the operation of the state machine, the Bill of Rights is more and more taken to describe the purpose of the machine. Once it was said that the government must not violate individual rights as it goes about its business. Now it is said that the chief business of government is to realize individual rights. Rights these days are less things to have -and therefore ought to have right now" (pgs. 111-112).

Download to continue reading...

What It Means to Be an American Hamilton’s Curse: How Jefferson’s Arch Enemy Betrayed the American Revolution--and What It Means for Americans Today What It Means to Be a Hawkeye: Kirk Ferentz and Iowa’s Greatest Players Landmark: The Inside Story of America’s New Health-Care Law—The Affordable Care Act—and What It Means for Us All (Publicaffairs Reports) Clean Eats: Over 200 Delicious Recipes to Reset Your Body’s Natural Balance and Discover What It Means to Be Truly Healthy Quicksand: What It Means to Be a Human Being Taking God at His Word: Why the Bible Is Knowable, Necessary, and Enough, and What That Means for You and Me Amelia Bedelia Chapter Book #1: Amelia Bedelia Means Business Sex at Dawn: How We Mate, Why We Stray, and What It Means for Modern Relationships The Elephant and the Dragon: The Rise of India and China and What It Means for All of Us Malcolm X: By Any

Means Necessary Back Before Dark: Sometimes rescuing a friend from the darkness means going in after him. (A Code of Silence Novel) Back Before Dark: Sometimes rescuing a friend from darkness ... means going in after them (A Code of Silence Novel) Jambo Means Hello: Swahili Alphabet Book (Picture Puffin Books) The Most Human Human: What Talking with Computers Teaches Us About What It Means to Be Alive The Secret Life of Fat: The Science Behind the Body's Least Understood Organ and What It Means for You Psalm 91: Real-Life Stories of God's Shield of Protection And What This Psalm Means for You & Those You Love What We Say in the USA and What It Really Means!: English Idioms, Expressions and Sayings She Means Business: Turn Your Ideas into Reality and Become a Wildly Successful Entrepreneur This Means War: A Strategic Prayer Journal

Contact Us

DMCA

Privacy

FAQ & Help