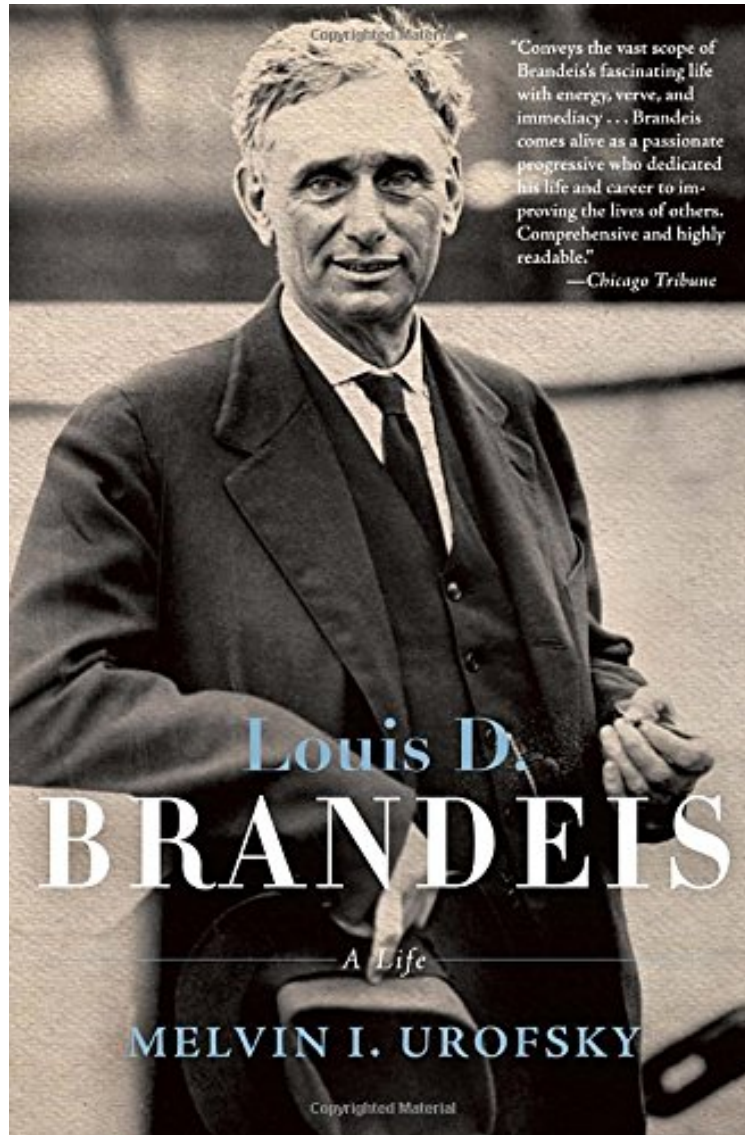


[Free pdf] Louis D. Brandeis: A Life

Louis D. Brandeis: A Life

Melvin I. Urofsky

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Melvin I. Urofsky : Louis D. Brandeis: A Life before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Louis D. Brandeis: A Life:

46 of 46 people found the following review helpful. A Magnificent Biography of Justice BrandeisBy Ronald H. ClarkThis new biography of Justice Louis D. Brandeis (1856-1941) is the most extensive study we have of the Justice. It runs over 900 pages including extensive notes. Who better to undertake such a task than Professor Urofsky, who has edited 7 volumes of Brandeis letters, written several prior book-length studies of the Justice, and authored numerous

articles discussing his activities. While there are a number of earlier biographies of the Justice, including the classic by Alpheus Mason ("Brandeis: A Free Man's Life" [1946]), this is by far the most extensive and thorough look we are likely to have of Brandeis and his life. The author does a nice job of balancing LDB's professional activities with his private life. Urofsky came to know the Justice's two daughters (now deceased) while working on the letters volumes with David Levy, and they shared family photographs and recollections of their father and mother with him. He also has had extensive contact with the surviving Brandeis grandchildren, at least one of whom like Urofsky is involved in the work of the Supreme Court Historical Society here in Washington. Urofsky focuses on several topics not extensively covered in the earlier biographies. First, the Justice's wife, Alice, much as Holmes' wife and Frankfurter's spouse, suffered from period of mental exhaustion which required treatment including hospitalization on occasion, although her condition improved substantially over time. Their relationship is essential to understanding the world in which LDB lived, and Urofsky's discussion puts this situation into proper context. The second area where Urofsky departs from previous biographies is his exhaustive discussion of LDB's Zionist activities. He is well qualified to address this aspect of LDB's life since he has written a history of American Zionism. Urofsky is nothing if not thorough, but I sometimes wondered if quite so much of this very long biography (I would estimate 15%-20%) needed to be devoted to LDB's Zionist activities. Other biographers have discussed his Zionist leadership, but in far less space; on the other hand, they did not have Urofsky's intimate knowledge of the history of American Zionism and Brandeis' role. There is no question that Zionism became a major, or the major, interest of LDB beginning in 1912 and continuing for the remainder of his life. So the attention Urofsky devotes to this aspect of the Justice's life is certainly merited. He has convinced me that you can't fully understand LDB without an awareness of this aspect of his life. While Urofsky is respectful of Brandeis, he recognizes some of the LDB's shortcomings as well. Was LDB perhaps "cold, haughty, disdainful"? He certainly had no sense of humor and was somewhat distant. Urofsky also questions Brandeis' own view that he had an internal ethical sense which would foreclose him from ever acting inappropriately, hence he could advise Presidents, subsidize Frankfurter's political activities, and act as "counsel to the situation" in a dispute on behalf of all parties. In short, this is quite a well "balanced" biography not hagiography. One of the most valuable aspects of the book is found in the 142 pages of endnotes--a treasure chest of research for those interested in probing further into the life of this fascinating Justice. The photographic research is also outstanding and adds to the impact of the text. The book is comprehensive--covering LDB from his early years in Kentucky through building his law practice, his period as the "People's Attorney," working with Woodrow Wilson, his tough confirmation battle, his 23 years on the Supreme Court, his leadership of American Zionism, and his warm family relationships. A most complete study of this most complex of individuals.

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. The Most Brilliant Legal Scholar of the 20th Century Comes to Life and Puts Business Practices and Failures Into Perspective. By ewinning

While most of the reviewers praise the author, Urofsky, one must remember that this is the life of Louis Brandeis, and it is that life which is so absolutely fascinating! As one who taught management courses for 35 years and had an employee-management relations consulting firm for 40 (now retired), all of those issues and cases which began in the early 1900s and later became part and parcel of management practices were touched by the enormous mind of Louis D. Brandeis. He was a man for his times and beyond. He embraced "Scientific Management" before Frederick W. Taylor's lectures were in print (1911, compiled by Taylor's students). Though Scientific Management had its faults, it was the basis for social revolution in industry/business. Brandeis was a man of and for his times, but his times spanned decades, and he understood how the country was being shaped. My take on the book will be different from almost all others, and is a very personal one. My father studied this and Brandeis' work in 1927 at NYU. Without knowing it, I started teaching both in 1966, and NOW I find the basis for how business (and politics) was conducted in the 20th Century. What a revelation! And what a mind Louis Brandeis had! He foretold the collapse of "banking" sixty years prior, and of the political shenanigans almost a hundred years prior. What a person he was, able to become what he became and how he still made time for his wife and children and with what must be considered a fortune, how he lived a rather subdued life in his spare time is a marvel. I think he may have been the greatest 20th Century legal mind and thinkers, brought to life by Urofsky. I wish - having come from Boston - that I had known so much more about his papers when I was growing up. On the other hand, my own papers and thoughts would have paled by comparison, and I would have known it. What Einstein was to physics, Brandeis was to law and social order. That the law firm that Brandeis started in 1890 still exists today (125 years later) in Boston as Nutter McClennen Fish is truly remarkable. Few have left such a legacy. Certainly no president has.

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. A moral man

By ilprofessore This unusual biography documents the life of a remarkable man who preferred to stay behind the scenes until his brilliance brought him to the attention of the press and Woodrow Wilson who, against much opposition, appointed him to the Supreme Court. He began as a lawyer serving a select group of clients in the Boston area--a job in which he began his lifetime search for "the facts," without which he claimed no case can be honestly settled for the good of all. His talent was not so much as a muckraker but as a visionary who saw that the attorney's role was not only to represent the cause of one client--often one in the wrong--but to study and understand the cause of both parties in litigation, and to find a solution based on facts that would in some way please all. In that he was an unique voice for civility and sanity. He saw himself as a counsel rather than an opponent, and thus was able to cause

change if areas of conflict in civic life that seemed on the surface impossible to reconcile. He judged right and wrong from on high, and from a firm settle of ethical principles he had learned as a young man, a Jew in alien corn. To Brandeis the interests of all the citizens of the state and the nation were his prime concern. Not what was best for one special interest, but what was best for all. A deeply moral man who served his country most honorably. Not many of those around anymore!

As a young lawyer in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Louis Brandeis, born into a family of reformers who came to the United States to escape European anti-Semitism, established the way modern law is practiced. He was an early champion of the right to privacy and pioneer the idea of pro bono work by attorneys. Brandeis invented savings bank life insurance in Massachusetts and was a driving force in the development of the Clayton Antitrust Act, the Federal Reserve Act, and the law establishing the Federal Trade Commission. Brandeis witnessed and suffered from the anti-Semitism rampant in the United States in the early twentieth century, and with the outbreak of World War I, became at age fifty-eight the head of the American Zionist movement. During the brutal six-month congressional confirmation battle that ensued when Woodrow Wilson nominated him to the Supreme Court in 1916, Brandeis was described as a disturbing element in any gentlemen's club. But once on the Court, he became one of its most influential members, developing the modern jurisprudence of free speech and the doctrine of a constitutionally protected right to privacy and suggesting what became known as the doctrine of incorporation, by which the Bill of Rights came to apply to the states. In this award-winning biography, Melvin Urofsky gives us a panoramic view of Brandeis's unprecedented impact on American society and law.

"Will likely stand as the definitive Brandeis biography for many years." The Boston Globe Utterly fascinating . . . Urofsky's remarkable book has innumerable passages that amaze . . . [It] captures the sweep and the details of that life with what has to be called devotion . . . his achievement is remarkable. Anthony Lewis, The New York Times A commendably exhaustive work. The New Yorker Melvin Urofsky's lapidary new biography is a rich study of a remarkable life. The Economist "Conveys the vast scope of Brandeis's fascinating life with energy, verve and immediacy. . . Brandeis comes alive as a passionate progressive who dedicated his life and career to improving the lives of others. Comprehensive and highly readable." Chicago Tribune "[A] monumental, authoritative and appreciative biography of the man Franklin D. Roosevelt called 'Isaiah' . . . [Urofsky] demonstrates, deploying a Brandeisian array of factual material, why Brandeis still matters, nearly 70 years after his death." Alan M. Dershowitz, New York Times Book "A comprehensive biography of an American legal giant. . . likely to become the standard biography. . . An authoritative, impressive assessment of a man whose legal reasoning continues to influence our republic." Kirkus (starred) About the Author MELVIN I. UROFSKY is professor of law and public policy and a professor emeritus of history at Virginia Commonwealth University. From The Washington Post From The Washington Post's Book World/washingtonpost.com ed by Dennis Drabelle drabelle@washpost.com Louis Brandeis is revered as a Supreme Court justice who, dissenting on his own and with Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes Jr., greatly increased Americans' sensitivity to individual liberties. Brandeis is also, of course, the namesake of Brandeis University. But as Melvin I. Urofsky reminds us in this strapping biography, even before going on the High Court in 1916, Brandeis had lent his name to something durable: the Brandeis brief. A brief is lawyers' terminology for a document that sets out the main points favoring one side of a case. Brandeis's innovation was to realize that as the world became more complex, a good lawyer couldn't be content with just citing and interpreting relevant laws and precedents but should also introduce the facts of life -- drawn from economics, sociology, psychology and other disciplines -- that have a bearing on the issues. As Urofsky points out, "the brief filed by the NAACP in the original segregation case, *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954), is very short on legal precedent -- because very little existed -- but replete with materials related to the harm done by segregation to the minds and hearts of black children." Although Brandeis was dead by the time *Brown* was decided, the Brandeis quotation with which Urofsky closes the book seems particularly apt to the case: "My faith in time is great." Copyright 2009, The Washington Post. All Rights Reserved.