

A Man of Vision and Courage

A Selection from the many tributes paid to the memory of FRANK A. W. LUCAS, President of the International Union or Land-Value Taxation and Free Trade from 1955 until his death in April, and former South African Supreme Court Judge.

From a Sunday Times (Johannesburg) editorial.

THERE was one field in which he was outstanding. On great issues, where it was important that the voices of people should be heard, he was not afraid to speak up. In our view, this is one of the rarest qualities to be found in our country today. The men who speak out on great issues, and on important questions of principle, are few and far between. Those who could have done so prefer to remain silent, either because they can't be bothered, or they lack public spirit and a sense of responsibility, or because they simply lack courage. We cannot help feeling that this disastrous silence by many men who should have known better has contributed materially to the arrogance—and the success—of the self-willed men who today run affairs.

Frank Lucas was never afraid. We know of occasions on which well-known and influential citizens were invited to express their condemnation of a reprehensible public action. It was always important—and still is—that they should do so, for their views would obviously carry weight. But most of them, as a rule, shirked their duty. They would not, or dared not, speak out against the things they knew to be wrong. No one could ever say that of Frank Lucas. He appreciated, above all, his duties as a citizen and was fearless in discharging them. He was not merely the good citizen, but a great fighter, often in unpopular causes.

South Africa is the poorer by his death; but he will not have lived in vain if his example—of fearlessly fighting for what is right—is emulated by his fellow South Africans, particularly those in positions of power and influence.

THERE are none who doubted the courage and integrity of Judge F. A. W. Lucas in defending the most important idea known to any civilisation, i.e., Equal Justice Under Law. What a tragedy, now that his powerful voice is stilled.

Judge Lucas lived and loved life to the full. For him there was no compromise with fundamental justice. — J. Rupert Mason, President Emeritus, International Union, San Francisco.

I FEEL the death of Judge Lucas as a personal loss as well as a loss to our movement. To have such an accomplished and vigorous man as the titular head of the international Georgist movement—that alone would have been enough to comfort us. He would have served just by "being there" and doing nothing else. But Judge Lucas was not a man to do nothing! His constant work on behalf of land-value taxation and free trade served as a further inspiration and challenge to all of us. We

of the U.S.A. cherish warm recollections of Judge Lucas' tour of our country in 1955, after the St. Andrews Conference. We shall keenly miss him at the coming Hanover Conference. — Robert Clancy, Director, Henry George School of Social Science, New York.

IT was only necessary to be with Frank Lucas for a few minutes to appreciate his outstanding character. He was as great and as good as he looked. If ever a man "kept right on to the end of the road" he did. South Africa is enjoying the benefit now of his wisdom and sound political judgment by which he established the rating of land values there, another example of what one man can do. Those of us who had the privilege of working with him in the International Union were fortunate. — Ashley Mitchell, Joint Hon. Treasurer, International Union, Yorkshire.

IN MY opinion he was the one prominent man in South Africa of intelligence and honesty. Had he abandoned his principles of true economics and basic justice, he could have had a political reputation and a financial standing to be envied perhaps by the thoughtless and the ignorant. Instead he preferred to maintain his probity. It is therefore no exaggeration to say he died a martyr. His friends and his supporters will carry on the struggle to bring economic justice to its rightful place in public life, and this effort will perhaps be the best memorial to Frank Lucas.— Harry F. Levett, Evander, Natal.

From an editorial in The Star (Johannesburg).

IN A first leader, The Star compared and contrasted the life and work of Justice Lucas with that of another distinguished lawyer, Dr. Colin Steyn, who died a few hours after him. In part it read:

"Mr. Lucas made his mark originally as a young man in a constructive contribution to the great debate which preceded the establishment of Union; and this earned for him a key position in the framing of the organic Act of Union. His passion for social justice and his ardent faith in the teachings of Henry George, the apostle of land reform and the single tax, attracted him into the fold of the Labour Party, then a vigorous political force in South Africa.

"His share in the labour convulsions before and after the First World War formed a dramatic chapter in his life. It was fitting that he was destined to play an important part in laying the foundations of the legislative code which has helped, by and large, to keep the industrial peace in South Africa.

"Politically, too, Mr. Lucas came to realise that his earlier ideal of a united South Africa could be fulfilled

LAND & LIBERTY

JAMAICA

Exemptions and Graded Tax Rates Criticism by Leading Newspaper

THE amending legislation necessary before land-value taxation could be applied in Jamaica (in two parishes on April 1) had a comparatively smooth passage through both Houses of the Jamaican Parliament. Seven Bills, all introduced by Chief Minister Norman Manley, were required. The Bill to amend the Property Tax Law was the kingpin. The others were passed with little or no debate.

In a notable editorial the Daily Gleaner, March 16, fairly criticised the Government's proposals on the grounds that in one respect they were inequitable. To some extent the Gleaner's strictures ran parallel with those offered here last month.

The editorial expressed support in principle for land taxation on unimproved values "which is important as an incentive to development in any emergent country". But it believed that all that was needed was for the government to have taken the existing tax roll and to have substituted for each property a new value based on unimproved land. Then it should have applied such percentage change as would have been necessary to maintain the same total revenue as before. "Granted accurate valuations, any squeals from individual taxpayers could then have been safely ignored on the grounds that they had previously not been paying enough."

The government had confused the issue by introducing a concept entirely unrelated to the L.V.T. principle, namely, that owners of small properties should be exempt from national tax, and should pay parish rates only at nominal or special rates. "The larger landowners are now asked in one full swoop not only (1) to adjust valuations to unimproved basis; (2) to adjust to higher valuations resulting from appreciated land values; (3) to adopt valuations based on sale value instead of a proportion of sale; (4) to pick up any effect of simultaneous values at common principles throughout their parish and (5) to absorb the effect of any higher rate necessary to maintain a similar total of tax revenues; but, in addition, they are at the same time asked also to pay all of the property taxes which the smaller properties formerly paid.

"The effect of the first five points may be fair enough, however much the increase; but the simultaneous addition of the last point may result in grave inequity as well as being confusing and damaging to an otherwise sound proposal. It can be calculated, for instance, from the figures given that in the case of St. Catherine, 15 properties are to be asked to pay 68 per cent of the total property tax of the parish, although they represent together only 18 per cent of the unimproved land value of the parish. This suggests that there is not only a tax on unimproved values, but also a tax on being big, which may well operate as a disincentive rather than an encouragement to development.

"It is a pity that a proposal of genuine merit should be so weakened and confused by the injection of concepts not genuinely related to the real and proper objective . . ."

only by bringing together both sections of the European population on a basis of fair-dealing for the non-European. To the end his was a voice crying out for national unity as well as in protest against all manner of racial injustice."

The Star reported, April 24: The Bench, Bar and Side Bar assembled at the Rand Supreme Court today to pay a tribute to the memory of the late Mr. Justice Lucas. Mr. Justice Dowling, two Judges of Appeal and five other judges of the Transvaal Provincial Division were on the Bench.

"As a scholar in law, Mr. Justice Lucas achieved high distinction; in the sphere of politics he was dynamic, and in regard to labour relations he gave nation-wide service as chairman of the Wage Board," Mr. Justice Dowling said. The courts adjourned for 15 minutes.

In an Obituary, The Star noted these milestones in his life.

At the time of his death Mr. Lucas was a Judge of Appeal of the High Commission Territories. His public career started in 1909. He will be best remembered as the champion of the workers, for whom he obtained many wage and other benefits.

Frank Archibald William Lucas was born at Maritzburg in 1881. He was educated at St. Augustine's, Marist Brothers' College, Johannesburg, and the South African College, Cape Town. He went to Worcester College, Oxford, and the Middle Temple, London, where he read law. He was awarded the Gold Medal for evidence and procedure in criminal law.

After studying Dutch in Holland for a while, Mr. Lucas returned to the Union and was admitted to the Johannesburg Bar in 1906. But his interest went far beyond the law. As an ardent land reform advocate of the Henry George school of reform, he served on many bodies.

From 1909 to 1910 he was secretary to the Leasehold Townships Commission, later a member of the Small Holdings Commission, and also of the Transvaal Education Commission. As an arbitrator in a dispute between the Johannesburg City Council and its employees, Mr. Lucas made an award which still bears his name.

Mr. Lucas became chairman of the Wage Board when it was brought into being in 1925. This office he held for 10 years. He became an active member of the Labour Party under Colonel Creswell. From 1914 to 1917 he was leader of the party in the Provincial Council. In 1938 he fought election as a Farmers' and Workers' Party candidate in Parktown and in 1948 stood as an independent in the same constituency. He was unsuccessful on both occasions.

Mr. Lucas continued his legal practice while in politics and in 1924 took silk. He was responsible for the preparatory work which led to the formation of the Council of the Bar of South Africa and became its chairman from 1947 to 1949. In 1947 he became an acting judge in the Transvaal and was appointed permanently in 1949. He retired in 1951, later becoming an Appeal Judge of the High Commission Territories.

Mr. Lucas is survived by his widow, Mrs. Caroline Lucas and a daughter, Mrs. Henry Britten.