

# LAUSCHE FRANK J.

1975



FRANK J. LAUSCHE

**LAUSCHE, FRANK J (JOHN)** (lou'shē)

Nov. 14, 1895- Governor of Ohio

Address: b. State House, Columbus, Ohio

While casting their votes for the Republican candidates for President and Senator in the 1944 elections, the people of Ohio chose as their governor a Democrat, Frank J. Lausche, who was to hold that office for one term. Running on the Democratic ticket, although organizing his own campaign (without the aid of the party machine), it was the second time Lausche won election in a year of Republican victories. In 1943 he had been re-elected as mayor of Cleveland, in the midst of a landslide of Republican victories throughout the country.

The son of immigrants from Slovenia, now part of Yugoslavia, who came to the United States in 1885, Frank John Lausche was born in Cleveland on November 14, 1895. His father, Louis Lausche, worked in the steel mills to support a family of ten children. At the age of thirteen (his father and older brother having died), Frank became the mainstay of his widowed mother, Frances (Milavec) Lausche. To help care for the family he got a job lighting street lamps, for which he was paid two dollars a week. In course of time he was able to find work as a court interpreter; it was at this job that he first became interested in the law. In those days, however, law was not Lausche's primary interest. After starring as third baseman on the city's baseball lots, he made his mark as a professional baseball player in Lawrence, Massachusetts, and Duluth, Minnesota. With his earnings he helped to send two brothers and a sister through college, and he attended the Central Institute in Cleveland in 1915-16. A batting slump put an end to his ball-playing career with Duluth just before the entry of the United States into World War I. In 1918 Frank joined the Army, from which he emerged at the end of the war as a second lieutenant. Upon returning to civilian life, he received an offer to play with Atlanta in the Southern League, but doubts as to what the future might hold for a baseball player made him decide to become a lawyer instead.

néprész, öngentén  
magyarbarát  
politikus.

(szlovén eredetű)

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After receiving his LL.B. in 1920 from the John Marshall School of Law, of which he is now a trustee (he received his LL.M. in 1936), he went to work for the law firm of Locher, Green, and Woods. Cyrus W. Locher, the late United States Senator, helped him to become one of Cleveland's best trial lawyers and encouraged him to enter politics. Lausche then joined the Democratic Party, and in 1922 he ran for the State legislature, but was not elected. Two years later he was a candidate for the State senate; once more he was defeated.

Not until 1932, when he was appointed to fill a vacancy on Cleveland's municipal bench, did he enter public office. The following year he was elected to the same post from among ten candidates, and in 1937 he was elected to the Cuyahoga County Court of Common Pleas. As judge, Lausche won much acclaim but also made some enemies. He accepted the labor cases other judges were apparently afraid to handle because of the antagonism which decisions in such cases were likely to arouse among the electorate. In the Crosby Restaurant Case, Lausche handed down a decision which alienated him from certain A.F. of L. unions. The employees of the Crosby Restaurant were not union members and made no attempt to unionize; however, the Hotel and Restaurant Alliance of the A.F. of L. wanted to organize the restaurant and picketed it. Declaring that "there was no legitimate trade dispute and that picketing by 'strangers' was unlawful," Lausche handed down an injunction against the union. (This ruling, at first upheld by the United States Supreme Court, has since been reversed.)

Lausche's work as a judge was not limited to making decisions on the bench. In the fall of 1940 he took the initiative in closing three large gambling houses in the metropolitan section of Cleveland. When county officials were uncooperative and the gambling operators were mysteriously warned, he organized a special

police squad, which caught the gamblers red-handed. Such action won him much public attention, and he was asked to run for mayor. Resigning from his \$12,000-a-year position in the Court of Common Pleas, a position which he might have kept for life, he accepted and was elected in 1941 by a 61 per cent majority.

In his campaign speeches Lausche promised such improvements as better sanitation and transportation, lower taxes, and city beautification. But with the attack on Pearl Harbor one month after he took office, the mayor found that he had more vital tasks to perform. He faced numerous problems in organizing Cleveland to help fight a war. More than half the city's population of nine hundred thousand were foreign-born or first or second generation Americans, and their loyalties were divided; also, they were of many different nationalities. The majority of the people were employed in industry at low wages, and strikes were frequent. In addition to these problems were those caused by discrimination against Negroes, with the consequent danger of riots.

Avowing a principle of being "on the level with everybody" and working "always for the good of the whole, never for any special group," Lausche was able to steer clear of trouble. Before the proposal came from Washington, he organized the Mayor's War Production Committee, consisting of the representatives of management, of labor, and of the mayor himself. Its purpose was not to settle strikes but to persuade the strikers to return to work while the disputes were being resolved by the proper authorities. By convincing the workers that their contribution to winning the war was just as important as the soldiers', the committee usually succeeded in getting the strikers back to work after twenty-four hours. Racial problems were solved by another special committee which the mayor set up. Still another special committee was organized to deal with transportation problems. And a fourth committee, the Mayor's Health Committee, which took measures to improve the war worker's health, was established; the plan was so effective that it was advocated as a model for other cities in the United States. By increasing the number of playgrounds from forty-eight to sixty-four and by adding more men and women to the police force, Lausche tried to combat juvenile delinquency. His successful efforts in fighting the black market won him praise from the Office of Price Administration.

In 1943, with a campaign promise to the effect that he would make every effort to be "a wholesome influence," Lausche was re-elected to serve until 1944, by a 71 per cent majority. (In this election, the total number of votes cast was at an all-time low.) Such a political victory was achieved under conditions which most politicians considered unfavorable. Lausche's relations with the Democratic County chairman were distinctly cool. He therefore organized his own campaign, and at the same time announced that none of those campaigning for him could expect any reward. Just before election day he risked his chances of winning by vetoing a pay increase for city building employees. The measure would have made their





pay equal to that of workers in the private building industry, a provision Lausche maintained was not necessary since city building employees' work was not seasonal. This stand increased the antagonism which his decision in the Crosby Restaurant Case had already aroused among A.F. of L. unions. On the other hand, he was backed by the CIO as well as by other diverse groups. His support of a Negro candidate for judge, because he felt that an able Negro should be on the bench, rallied the Negroes of Cleveland to his side. (The candidate, incidentally, was not elected.) Lausche also received support from big business, from the Bar Association, and from some Republicans.

The record which the Cleveland mayor established as a vote getter attracted the attention of national Democratic leaders, who, it has been said, saw his value to the party as Governor of Ohio. Nevertheless, when he contested for that office, Lausche again waged his campaign independent of party help: it was run by friends at a cost of about \$25,000, the largest contribution, \$1,000, coming from Marshall Field's. At a time when the campaign committee was running out of money for stamps, a news story brought in small contributions from the public. (For the days Lausche campaigned he returned his salary as mayor to the city treasury.) Lausche's popularity was so great that Thomas Dewey, Republican candidate for president, hesitated to speak in Ohio; the reason given was that it would have been necessary for him to endorse the Republican candidate for Governor, and that, Dewey felt, would have cost him votes in Ohio. (Many of those who voted for Dewey cast their votes for Lausche.) Lausche's election as Governor in 1944 represented a victory over tradition. It was the first time a Catholic and a son of immigrants had been elected to the Governor's office in Ohio. When Lausche took office January 8, 1945, he outlined his four principles of administration for Raymond Moley, who devoted a *Perspective in Newsweek* to the new Governor of Ohio: "First, law and order. Second, economy. Third, equality of treatment among conflicting economic groups. Fourth, the development of unity between city and rural interests."

Lausche ordered no general dismissal of Republicans from office after he was inaugurated as Governor, retaining a Republican in the important position of director of finance. He opposed a bill to raise the Governor's salary, which is less than the \$15,000 he received as mayor. The Governor was almost as hard on other State employees—he vetoed a bill which would have made pay increases for them retroactive because "it smacked of pork." As Governor, Lausche also continued his efforts toward winning the war. In June 1945 he directed the Ohio Selective Service to induct strikers at the Goodyear Plant in Akron into the armed forces. Protests came from C. V. Wheeler, local president of the CIO United Rubber Workers at Akron. The Governor further antagonized labor on Lincoln's Birthday in 1946 when he did not receive a "bill of grievance" asking for unemployment benefits for strikers. (He had told

their leader in advance, however, that he would not be in his office that day.) With the CIO strikers were war veterans who asked for a soldiers' bonus and for low-cost housing for veterans; a thousand strong, the workers and the ex-servicemen marched two blocks to the State House. The result was that the Governor was branded as unfriendly to labor and veterans.

In the November 1946 elections Lausche's personal popularity could not deflect the wave of Republican votes that swept Ohio. The Democratic Governor lost to Thomas J. Herbert by a narrow plurality of thirty-eight thousand votes. Shortly before the election it seemed as if the incumbent Governor would be re-elected, but a shift of sentiment, supposedly attributable to dissatisfaction with post-war conditions in the State, caused Lausche's defeat. His successor was to take office in January 1947.

Although his office has brought him chiefly into municipal and State affairs, Lausche has taken a stand on both national and international issues. An interventionist long before Pearl Harbor, he believes in the necessity for a world organization "able to deal decisively with those nations which harbor ambitions for world domination." As an honorary member of the Committee of Catholics for Human Rights, he has come out in favor of "retributive justice for war criminals." In the national issue of free enterprise versus government control, it is reported that he stands for free enterprise with a limited amount of government control.

Lausche, who was awarded the honorary degree of Doctor of Laws by Kenyon College (Gambier, Ohio) in 1945, is a member of the Cleveland Bar Association as well as of the Cuyahoga Bar Association; he is also a member of Delta Theta Phi and of the City Club in Cleveland. In 1928 he was married to Jane O. Sheal, an interior decorator and designer, who is described as "pretty, always smartly dressed, and quietly clever"; they have no children. Before coming to live in the Governor's Mansion, they had a small home next to a Chinese laundry in an unfashionable section of Cleveland, where they lived quietly. Tall, rather handsome, and bushy haired, the Governor retains a figure befitting a former baseball player. His early love for baseball has been replaced with an interest in golf, but he still plays the violin in the small orchestra of which the other members are five of his brothers and sisters. Lausche is described by admirers as a "man of great strength, character, and firmness"; and by critics as one who "takes himself pretty seriously and hasn't much sense of humor." When he is faced with a particularly knotty problem he turns to poetry for "new strength": he shuts the door of his office, silences the telephone, and reads Shakespeare, Burns, and Keats.

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