AMERICA WAKE UP, Broadcast No.33

INTERVIEW WITH MR. GEORGE GOEKEN

ANNOUNCER: AMERICA WAKE UP, in cooperation with the Daughters of the American Revolution, State of Illinois, presents Phyllis Schlafly.

MRS. SCHLAFLY: Our special guest today on AMERICA WAKE UP is a business man and taxpayer named Mr. George Goeken. I am introducing him to you today because he is one of the outstanding authorities in Illinois on the subject of Urban Renewal. Mr. Goeken, would you tell our listeners what we mean by the term Urban Renewal?

MR. GOEKEN: Urban Renewal, Mrs. Schlafly, is the government aid to local communities, the government program that will provide for subsidies and federal tax money to be used locally for the clearance of slums, and, or, the rehabilatation of an entire area. It is a tax financed project.

MRS. SCHLAFLY: Well, isn't it a good thing to clear our slums? Don't you approve of urban renewal?

MR. GOEKEN: Definitely. Urban renewal without the word Federal preceding it. Federal Urban Renewal provides for the normal and natural controls that must be a part of any Federally-subsidized program.

MRS. SCHLAFLY: When we use the term Urban Renewal do we usually, or always, mean Federally-controlled Urban Renewal?

MR. GOEKEN: Not always. Urban renewal is being instituted and brought into effect all across our country in small towns by privately-financed projects, not necessarily with the urban renewal Federally-financed projects.

MRS. SCHLAFLY: When we do have urban renewal with Federal controls, what kind of Federal controls are involved in the program?

MR. GOEKEN: Federal controls start with the violation of the 4th Amendment of the constitution, in my opinion. They provide for the

right of entry without warrant. Though the Urban Renewal Act makes no mention of inspection, the Urban Renewal Administration has stated through its urban renewal commissioner in Washington, DC, that the urban renewal administration does not intend to subsidize a program limited to local code enforcement, nor do they intend to approve projects that are only code enforcement plus public improvement.

MRS. SCHLAFLY: Haven't we always considered that one of the great freedoms we have, because of our English heritage, the right to be safe and secure in our own home? Do you mean to tell us that under the urban renewal program this is no longer true?

MR. GOEKEN: Actually, the Urban Renewal Administration has said many times that it does not advocate search without warrant. However, the local codes that are being put into effect all across our country are promulgated by local city councils, but supplied to them by national organizations from the Federal government. These organizations, not necessarily Federal institutions, provide, in many of their model ordinances, for inspection without warrant -- entry into your home without the due process of law.

MRS. SCHLAFLY: Earlier this year, Richard Daley was elected to a third term as Mayor of the city of Chicago. Immediately after his election he published a list of what his program was for the city of Chicago, and high on that list was the indication that he is going to abandon urban renewal for Chicago. Mr. Daley is known as a very shrewd judge of the popular temper and it has been interpreted by many people that he believes that urban renewal is no longer popular. Now, what do you think is the reaction of the general public to the urban renewal in most communities? Is it true that it is an unpopular program?

MR. GOEKEN: Whenever the voters are allowed to speak at the polls, they say "No". Los Angeles in December 1962 voted against the program, a

$2,739,000 Federally-sponsored urban renewal and housing project. Tuscon, Arizona has voted it out; Chicago, Illinois; Fresno, California; Lincoln, Nebraska; Dangerfield, Texas; they voted against it by a margin of 2-to-1 in Texas. Representatives, such as Everett Dirksen, Senator from Illinois; Congressman Bruce Alger of Texas; Thomas B. Curtis of Missouri; Representative John Dowdy of Texas; all have stated their interest in an investigation into the mistreatment and the plight of small business under the urban redevelopment and the urban renewal projects, and are very much interested in bringing about this investigation at this time.

MRS. SCHLAFLY: It might seem very strange to the average citizen that these communities you mentioned would vote against the Federal government coming in and clearing their slums, making it a better community for them to live in. What is the reason for this? Do these people fear the Federal controls?

MR. GOEKEN: Federal control along with an unsound tax policy. Housing projects that are put on the books in order to take of those people cleared from the slums are tax exempt and pay only in lieu of taxes for supplied facilities by the local communities. Acquisition of properties in town after town, city after city, has shown an alarming shrinkage, alarming shrinkage, in the value of land properties. In the city of New York, in ten projects, a total expenditure for the acquisition of land involved $82 million. When it was sold for redevelopment it shrunk to the fabulous figure of only $25 million, a shrinkage of 68%. Philadelphia, Pennsylvania--their shrinkage there in two projects was 81%. Congressman Bruce Alger has called the attention of these figures from a letter from the urban renewal administration dated May 1, 1956. This is the reason. We have seen it in action, it is not a financially-sound project for the taxpayer.

MRS. SCHLAFLY: Well, then, you don't think that urban renewal is a financial success? Those figures you gave are alarming. What about the experience of some of the other cities? I know that in St. Louis, Missouri, for example, large areas remain idle which have been cleared by urban renewal. That also is a loss to the taxpayer and to the community in general, is it not?

MR. GOEKEN: A great loss to the taxpayer and a greater loss to the community small businessman. 25% of the businesses uprooted by urban renewal failed to go back into business. The load placed upon them for moving, for relocation, is far in excess of the $3,000 allowed by the urban renewal project. In some cases the cost of moving and replacing machinery in the changeover runs as much as $20,000, a minimum of $10,000. The average small businessman cannot stand the move.

MRS. SCHLAFLY: Under our constitution the government has the right to take private property for public use under the authority of eminent domain. Do you think there is a constitutional issue in this urban renewal in that, under the Federally-financed and controlled urban renewal programs, private property is taken, not for public use like a highway, but it is taken for private use. It is resold to private developers. Is not that the case, in many of these urban renewal programs?

MR. GOEKEN: Definitely. Where the project involved city business areas, they may have previously been a housing area. These areas are then condemned or cleared by the housing authority through the Housing and Home Finance Administration; the properties are then resold to business developers at a loss to the taxpayer. The figures cited in the New York project and the Philadelphia project point this up. The cost to the taxpayer is tremendous and the loss of individual rights. You are taking my property, paying me an assessed value, giving it to someone

else at a ridiculously low price, to then gain and profit by my loss.

MRS. SCHLAFLY: Well, the person who buys the property then might have quite a windfall. He gets a nice piece of property at a cheap price, is that correct?

MR. GOEKEN: Definitely. He is buying prime raw land, cleared and ready for use. The burden is placed on the local taxpayer, and the individual who loses his property through condemnation process.

MRS. SCHLAFLY: You feel that this is a misuse of the power of eminent domain, do you?

MR. GOEKEN: Right. This is one of the great things, and the greatest issue of the whole thing. The Representative from Texas, Democrat John Dowdy, has said over and over again that the mistreatment, the misuse, the promiscuous use of the right of eminent domain is harsh and unreasonable. This is the reason these cases have been cited and are in existence. This is the reason the alarm is here, and the people are up in arms.

MRS. SCHLAFLY: Is it possible that you could live in a house which is perfectly all right and meets all the standard, but if you are in an area that has been declared blighted, your house would be knocked down and demolished along with the area?

MR. GOEKEN: Definitely. The majority of homes in an area to be cleared being substandard according to the newly-installed ordinances, are cleared. Your property goes along with them because the average ordinance requires the clearance of an entire area, the minimum size requested by the administration being 13 acres.

MRS. SCHLAFLY: Do you believe that private enterprise can do the job without Federal money and Federal controls?

MR. GOEKEN: This is part of the smoke screen. Only private enterprise can renew your city. The Federal government's program does not provide

for building buildings, installing new shopping centers, bringing in industries. It merely provides for the condemnation and the clearing of the ground. Private enterprise must do the job. Why should we then submit ourselves, our cities, our homes to the rigid Federal controls asked for when we have no guarantee of this rebuilding, this rejuvenation. It must come from private enterprise. It can be done without Federal intervention.

MRS. SCHLAFLY: Do you think that if we spend our own money in our own community we will have more money to spend for urban renewal, than if we send our money down to Washington and then part of it comes back?

MR. GOEKEN: Yes; I do not have complete and accurate figures with me, but I know the figure in some states comes to about 40%; 40 cents of our dollar coming back home. Surely it can be done much better at home at a less and more reasonable cost and expense to the local taxpayer. This smoke screen that we are getting something for nothing. 2/3 of any project is paid for by Federal money, 1/3 by local tax money, this is still 100% tax dollars.

MRS. SCHLAFLY: Thank you, Mr. Goeken, very much for being with us today and thank you for the educational work you have done to tell our citizens about the urban renewal programs under the control of the Federal government.

ANNOUNCER: At the annual meeting of the Daughters of the American Revolution held every April in Constitution Hall in Washington, DC, reports are made by the DAR societies in each of the American states and territories. Here are just a few of the totals reported at the DAR meeting this year; Good Citizenship medals were presented to 3,500 girls and boys. More than 50,000 American Flags were presented. During the past year DAR members planted almost 4 million trees, plus 4½ million seedlings, and 38,000 shrubs. The nine millionth

Americanism manual was distributed to a new citizen, and 46 Americanism medals were presented to outstanding adult naturalized citizens. DAR chapters awarded 32 medical and occupational therapy scholarships, made 469 loans to worthy students, and awarded a $1,000 college scholarship to a national winner. An all-time high was reported for contributions to DAR schools and to the American Indians.

Listen in again next week at this same time for another in the series of programs called AMERICA WAKE UP.

WOKZ Broadcast, June 9, 1963.