AMERICA WAKE UP, Broadcast No.45

THE MORAL OBLIGATIONS OF CITIZENSHIP

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

MRS. SCHLAFLY: In presenting Saint-Gaudens' statue of Abraham Lincoln to the British people in London in 1920, the American statesman Elihu Root said: "Politics is the practical exercise of the art of self-government, and somebody must attend to it if we are to have self-government; somebody must study it, and learn the art, and exercise the patience and sympathy and skill to bring the multitude of opinions and wishes of self-governing people into such order that some prevailing opinion may be expressed and peaceably accepted. Otherwise, confusion will result either in dictatorship or anarchy. The principal ground of reproach against any American citizen should be that he is not a politician. Everyone ought to be as Lincoln was."

Today it is more important than ever before for American citizens to engage in politics. The secret Communist document by the top Czechoslovakian Communist Jan Kozak, published for Americans under the title AND NOT A SHOT WAS FIRED, describes how the Communists plan to take over a democratic country by political rather than military means. Khrushchev revealed his confidence in this technique when he boasted in Bucharest, Romania on July 19, 1962: "I am convinced that tomorrow the Red flag will fly over the United States. But we will not fly the flag. The American people will hoist it themselves."

If Western civilization is to survive the Communist onslaught, if we are to continue to enjoy self-government in America and "secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity", then good Americans must accept their moral obligation to participate in the political life of our country. Self-government necessitates self-participation.

William Penn emphasized this point nearly 150 years ago when he said: "Governments, like clocks, go from the motion men give them, and governments are made and moved by men, so by them they are ruled also. Therefore, governments depend upon men rather than men upon governments."

Americans have developed many ingenious excuses to rationalize refusal to engage in politics. Some say, "I have just one vote. What does one vote matter?" Rutherford B. Hayes was elected President by just one vote in the electoral college. His election was contested, and it was referred to an electoral commission, where again Hayes won by a single vote. The man who cast that deciding vote for President Hayes was a Congressman from Indiana, who was himself elected by just one vote. That one vote was cast by a friend who got up from his sickbed to go to the polls. Just 575 votes in New York elected Grover Cleveland to the Presidency. Only 1,904 votes in California elected President Woodrow Wilson. In 1960 the Presidency was won by less than one vote per precinct over our entire nation. Only one vote gave statehood to California, Idaho, Oregon, Texas and Washington. The Draft Act of World War II passed the House of Representatives by only one vote.

But just voting is not enough. If you are content merely to vote on election day, you are only a part-time citizen; you have disfranchised yourself from your right to determine most of the major decisions that confront our country today. The history of American government for the last 30 years shows that the major national and international issues have been decided <u>within</u> each of the two major parties, rather than <u>between</u> them. Only when you are active in the political party of your choice can you exercise your full privileges as an American citizen. Only then can you help choose public officials from a wide field of qualified candidates in the primaries, instead of just between the two who appear on the ballot on election day. Only then

can you have a voice in determining the character of the party organization, the platform on which the candidates run, and the making of appointments and other decisions that come after the election.

Our American government functions through the two-party system. The real operating responsibility of government rests with parties, rather than with individuals. History has shown this to be a superior system to a multitude of parties, as in France, where no one party commands enough backing to form a stable government. Good party organization, conducted by honest and responsible men, is essential to the functioning of a stable government. This point is effectively illustrated by this little poem called "Be Wise, Organize".

A stage driver passed o'er a trail one day,
Past meadow and woodland he took his way,
His long whip snapped with unerring aim,
Whether standing or moving, 'twas just the same.

A horsefly fell as his snaky lash
Shot out, as sure as the lightning's flash;
A grasshopper here and a butterfly there,
Fell prey to his aim as they winged the air.

A hornet's nest hung on a limb nearby,
But the stage driver passed that carefully by...
"What's the matter?" his passenger cried, surprised!
"Well," he answered, "Them hornets is ORGANIZED!"

The horsefly, butterfly, and the grasshopper too,
Have a fate that's a lesson and a warning to you!
You will flutter and fall, with the hoppers and flies,
Unless, like the hornets, YOU'RE ORGANIZED!!!

Don't be intimidated by the smear words "political" and "controversial". These are clever slogans designed to paralyze the will of good Americans. Nearly every man and woman in history who accomplished anything was controversial at the time: St. Peter, St. Paul, Joan of Arc, Christopher Columbus, Louis Pasteur, George Washington, Thomas Jefferson and the women suffragettes.

Nor should we be discouraged by repeated defeats. Just listen to the record of defeats in business and political life suffered by Abraham Lincoln: failed in business, 1831; second business failure, 1832;

defeated for the Legislature, 1832; third business failure, 1833; elected to the Legislature, 1834; sweetheart died, 1835; had nervous breakdown, 1836; defeated for Speaker of the House, 1838; defeated for Elector, 1840; defeated for Land Officer, 1843; defeated for Congress, 1843; elected to Congress, 1846; defeated for Congress, 1848; defeated for the Senate, 1855; defeated for Vice President, 1856; defeated for the Senate, 1858; elected President, 1860. These are just a few of the rough spots in the life of Abraham Lincoln, who had the fortitude to survive his many defeats and continue to accept the responsibilities of political life. Life is a grindstone; whether it grinds you down or polishes you up, depends on what you are made of.

No matter who or where you are, you live in one of the 145,723 election districts or precincts in the United States. These divisions are kept small so that individuals such as yourself can participate in the running of your government. You can be a precinct committeeman or woman, or a member of the precinct team that gets out the vote. You can be an election judge or poll watcher to ensure honest elections. You can be active in a woman's club, finance committee, or other auxiliary to the regular organization. You can distribute the voting records of your Senators and Congressmen, and otherwise spread political education among the electorate. You can organize citizens groups in support of the candidate of your choice. You can work to improve election laws. You can plan now to run for office: precinct committeeman, county chairman or other party office, Delegate to the National Nominating Conventions, county, state or national offices. All over the United States, candidates are being selected now who will appear on the ballot a year hence and hold positions of power during the succeeding two or four years. Either you run the government, or the government will run you.

Shortly after the U.S. Constitution was signed in Philadelphia in 1787, a woman asked Benjamin Franklin, "What have we got, Dr. Franklin?" "Madam," he replied, "We have a Republic -- if we can keep it." Nearly a hundred years later a somewhat similar question was put to James Russell Lowell, then American Minister in Great Britain. "How long," Lowell was asked, "will the American republic endure?" Lowell's answer, like Franklin's, was crisp and to the point: "As long as the ideas of the men who made it continue to be dominant."

Our Republic can survive only if American citizens dedicated to the victory of freedom over Communism accept their full responsibilities of citizenship. We should remember the warning issued by Plato 2,400 years ago: "The punishment of wise men who refuse to take part in the affairs of government is to live under the government of unwise men."

ANNOUNCER: The Daughters of the American Revolution have active national, state and local committees on Conservation. Since this Conservation work began, DAR members have planted 68 million trees, shrubs and seedlings in public parks and roadsides, plus thousands of bulbs and wildflower gardens. Enormous quantities of seeds and suet have been fed to birds during winter and migratory seasons, and many areas have been designated as bird sanctuaries through the efforts of DAR chapters. The DAR gives special assistance to CAR societies, Junior American Citizen clubs, 4-H Clubs, Junior Audubon Societies, and other youth groups in planning programs on conservation. To further educate our youth in the values of conservation, the DAR sponsors essay, poster and scrapbook contests, gives many scholarships to students and teachers attending conservation camps and meetings, and dis-

tributes conservation literature to schools and libraries.

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

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