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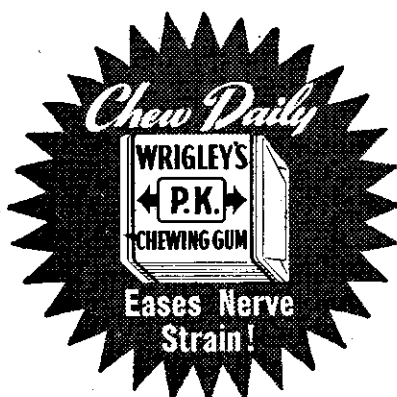
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DEMOCRACY BEGINS AT HOME

Home is the most treasured element in human life, says the actor, **LESLIE HOWARD**, in an article in "LONDON CALLING." but while the destruction and breaking-up of countless homes are the true tragedy of war, their restoration to a more secure and happier state must be the foundation of the new world for which we are fighting.

HOME is a remarkable institution—more potent than the Church, more significant than Government, more dear to most people than fame or riches, probably the strongest human influence there is, and unquestionably the oldest. Home represents man's victory over the wilderness, because nature and the elements in their natural state are to the frailty of human beings, harsh, dangerous and inhospitable.

From the earliest cave dwellings to the last word in steam-heated apartments, the self-made domiciles of man represent his protection and security, the background of himself and his loved ones and the repository of his dearest possessions. It is in these places that we are born, live, raise our children, and die; to which, in times of danger, we automatically return, and to reach which we are willing to suffer any hardship.

I have noticed in the London of to-day that people will brave the worst air raids, waiting unflinchingly for buses and trains, if they are on their way to the imagined security of their homes. It has proved exceedingly difficult to move people away from their places of abode, men, women and children, even if those places were in localities of daily and extreme peril. It is a foolish spectacle, but it is infinitely touching.

Real Effects of War

The real effect of war, its standard measurements in terms of ordinary everyday lives, is its impact on people's homes. The real disruption that a war causes is the breaking-up of families and the homes they live in. And that sort of breaking-up can happen far away from the battlefield. We have not seen in this war, in Britain, the destruction of people's houses by artillery bombardment, or families flying before an enemy advance with only such of their property as they can carry with them; and please God we never will. But we have seen a tragedy which has become almost commonplace; houses turned in a few seconds from settled and ordered homes into heaps of rubble and shattered woodwork and glass and crumbled plaster. This kind of destruction has smitten alike comfortable modern apartments, large, gracious, old-fashioned mansions in the historic squares of London, and little shoddy brick-built dwellings in the poor streets around our seaports. Each of them was called "home" by somebody. Most of them were houses where people had grown up, worked and lived and died,

and left treasured possessions to their children, not knowing that everything they had arranged and made and preserved would be crushed into non-descript wreckage by a diabolical misapplication of chemical science. But even if the house is not destroyed, the life that made it a home can be broken up, perhaps by the death in battle of the husband or father, so that his family has to leave the place, or, in a merely temporary way, by evacuation, or by the fact that the people of the family have got war jobs which make it impossible for them to live at home. The father may be working in a Government office, and sleeping there at night, one son may be away in a military training camp, a daughter perhaps driving a truck or working in a hospital, and the mother and the younger children sent away to the country. That home is dead, as a home, until the war is over, and it is quite possible that life may never return to it; or at least not the same life.

Disruption of Family Unit

This kind of disruption of the family unit is nothing new. It has happened one way or another in every war that has ever been fought. But this war has made us in Britain realise with especial clearness a side of every war that doesn't get into the history books. When you read of armies like those of Marlborough or Napoleon sweeping in great campaigns through the length and breadth of Europe, do you ever think of all the homes and individual soldiers of their armies left, many never to return to them, or of all the homes those armies must have wasted in their march—the ladders looted, the cattle driven away, the chickens with their necks wrung, useful things like linen and blankets and boots carried off, and perhaps, if the army was badly disciplined, a few throats cut and the peaceful homesteads left a heap of smoking ruins. These are the footprints of war. Time effaces them very quickly; but they are painful—terrible to see, when they are fresh.

Try to Realise

Look round at your own room. It is quiet, warm and friendly, and secure and familiar. Try to realise—for one ought to realise these things—that elsewhere in the world there were homes like yours, just as pleasant and comfortable, just as seemingly secure, where in a short moment people like you had all this beauty and decent order torn suddenly away from them.

In Poland, people have been turned out of their homes at half an hour's notice, without food or money, or warm



LESLIE HOWARD
Heart's where the home is

clothing, in the depth of the bitterest winter Europe has known for many years, and told that they could walk to a town twenty, fifty, a hundred miles away if they wanted shelter. In rooms like yours, men in France, Poland, Belgium, Holland, Norway, and Britain have said good-bye to their families and gone out never to return. To rooms like yours, in Warsaw, in Rotterdam, in Tournai, in Abbeville, in London, in Coventry there has come—suddenly out of the sky—a roar and a crash, a cloud of blinding, stifling smoke and dust, and nothing has been left of that room but a mass of rubbish.

Of course, there are rooms only partially destroyed. But I'm not sure that isn't worse. I've seen in London rooms whose windows have been blown out of their frames, whose walls show gaping holes, and whose floors have puddles of rainwater among the broken plaster—rooms which can never be lived in again. From all these homes, as dear to their owners as yours is to you, that spirit of domestic peace, which is common to all homes the world over, has been driven out. That is the true tragedy of war.

Planning a New World

Now, if war means the destruction of home life, it follows that peace means the restoration and security of it. There are many wise people in this country and in the British Dominions, and in the United States and elsewhere, too, who are looking ahead and planning some part of the new world which every one of us, in whatever part of the world we live, must take a hand in establishing. For it is now quite clear to even the most complacent that the old world, the world in which the majority of the human race has been living, has become, socially and economically increasingly uninhabitable.

The present war is but one of the end-products—the worst, so far—of the whole hopeless mess of human affairs. Fascism is no answer to the problem,

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