

PSYCHIATRY

# Psychiatrists of 30 Nations Issue Warning Against War

## Dutch Physicians Take Lead in Campaign Against Surrender of Civilization to War Psychosis

**P**SYCHIATRISTS of the world have begun a campaign against the surrender of our civilization to the insanity of war.

That the people of the world may be headed for a "war psychosis" is the solemn warning contained in a document signed by 339 psychiatrists from 30 nations.

The Netherlands Medical Association sponsors the document and has formed a Committee on War Prophylaxis.

Copies of the scientific warning against war have been sent to leading statesmen, particularly in Europe.

The document warns statesmen that twentieth century man still possesses strong, fierce and destructive instincts which break loose as soon as the community to which he belongs feels itself threatened by danger.

The complete text of the statement by 339 psychiatrists of 30 countries to the statesmen of the world, warning against the threat of war, is as follows:

### Complete Text of Psychiatrists' Statement

**W**E PSYCHIATRISTS, whose duty it is to investigate the normal and diseased mind, and to serve mankind with our knowledge, feel impelled to address a serious word to you in our quality of physicians.

It seems to us that there is in the world a mentality which entails grave dangers to mankind, leading, as it may, to an evident war-psychosis.

War means that all destructive forces are set loose by mankind against itself.

War means the annihilation of mankind by technical science.

As in all things human, psychological factors play a very important part in the complicated problem of war.

If war is to be prevented the nations and their leaders must understand their own attitude towards war.

By self-knowledge a world calamity may be prevented.

Therefore we draw your attention to the following:

1. There is a seeming contradiction between the conscious individual aversion to war and the collective preparedness to wage war. This is explained by the fact that the behaviour, the feelings, the thoughts of an independent individual are quite different from those of a man who forms part of a collective whole. Civilized twentieth century man still possesses strong, fierce and destructive instincts, which have not been sublimated, or only partly so, and which break loose as soon as the community to which he belongs feels itself threatened by danger.

The unconscious desire to give rein to the primitive instinct not only without punishment but even with reward, furthers in a great measure the preparedness for war.

It should be realised that the fighting-instinct, if well directed, gives energy for much that is good and beautiful. But the same instinct may create chaos if it breaks loose from all restraint, making use of the greatest discoveries of the human intellect.

2. It is appalling to see how little the peoples are alive to reality.

The popular ideas of war as they find expression in full dress uniforms, military display, etc., are no longer in keeping with the realities of war itself.

#### Apathy Surprising

The apathy, with regard to the actions and intrigues of the international traffic in arms is surprising to anyone who realises the dangers into which this traffic threatens to lead them. It should be realised that it is foolish to suffer certain groups of persons to derive personal profit from the death of millions of men.

We come to you with the urgent advice to arouse the nations to the realisation of fact and the sense of collective self-preservation, these powerful instincts being the strongest allies for the elimination of war.

The heightening of the moral and religious sense in your people tends to the same end.

3. From the utterances of well-known



#### FROM A GREAT HEIGHT

*Viewed from ordinary eye-height, a carpet of moss has an astonishing likeness to a forest of pines or spruces seen from an airplane. But the comparatively huge fern leaf betrays the forest as one in the land of Lilliput. Photo by C. H. Eiffert.*

statesmen it has repeatedly been evident that many of them have conceptions of war that are identical with those of the average man. Arguments such as "War is the Supreme Court of Appeal" and "War is the necessary outcome of Darwin's theory" are erroneous and dangerous, in view of the realities of modern warfare. They camouflage a primitive craving for power and are meant to stimulate the preparedness for war among the speaker's countrymen.

The suggestive force of speeches made by leading statesmen is enormous and may be dangerous. The warlike spirit, so easily aroused by the cry that the country is in danger, is not to be bridled, as was evident in 1914.

Peoples, as well as individuals, under the influence of suggestions like these, may become neurotic. They may be carried away by hallucinations and delusions, thus involving themselves in adventures perilous to their own and other nations' safety.

#### Sufficiently Advanced

We psychiatrists declare that our science is sufficiently advanced for us to distinguish between real, pretended, and unconscious motives, even in statesmen. The desire to disguise national militarism by continual talk about peace will not protect political leaders from the judgment of history. The secret pro-