

THE FORUM—(Continued).**A POLITICAL LEAGUE TO ENFORCE PEACE.**

By CHARLES FREEMAN TAYLOR,
(Continued from last issue.)

Our Government wisely placed our naval forces at the disposition of the British Naval command when we entered the present war. But this is only for war purposes during the war. Our Government also wisely saw the importance of unity in the military command in France, and was quick to place our soldiers in France at the disposition of General Foch during the recent German drive in March and April. This action hastened the appointment of General Foch as generalissimo by the Versailles Military Council. Important as this is, it is only military, and only temporary—that is, during the war. Apparently there has not been even a thought of political association or co-operation of the nations at war with German aggression. If a military peace should come, Germany would hold her allies with a grasp that could not have been possible except as a result of this war, and she has already closed binding treaties with Rumania and the new political units carved out of cessation of military operations so that she can develop of Russian territory. All that Germany now wants is a to fight her fall apart again to their pre-war separateness the fruits of her political victories, while the nations allied as they have developed nothing of an organic political nature to bind them together.

Germany's political activities have been no less marked than her military activities. The absence of political enterprise on the part of the Allies is no doubt a great satisfaction to Germany. She feels certain that the present military alliance of the Allies will be temporary, limited to the duration of the war, as having been military alliances in the past, as a rule. Then she can approach each one separately, with bribe, threat, or cunning appeal to the separate selfishness of every former opponent. While Germany, politically, will be solid within herself, she will absolutely dominate her present allies and Rumania and the new nations being carved out of Russian territory.

We have opposed Germany's military aggressions with military defense. But we have not built up any political defense, for the present nor the future, against Germany's evident political plans, which are being realized so rapidly. If we are ever to form a league of nations to oppose Germany's plan to dominate the world, and permanently to keep the peace of the world, we can never again find as favorable a time to do it as immediately—during this war. We are now working together intimately and harmoniously against Germany's armies and submarines. Now is the time of all times, past or future, to make this association political. If it is not done now, when will it be done?

The writer formerly thought that at the Peace Conference would be the proper time and occasion to effect this political association. But the Peace Table will have plenty of problems of its own. And after peace has been consummated, every nation will be fully occupied with pressing problems and then will be the opportunity of the German trouble makers to sow seeds of discord among the Allies. This danger should be forestalled by political association now; and present political association and co-operation would help us to win the war, as well as to keep it won, by continuing the political association.

How shall it be done? Not by expecting to organize a complete international government, which shall settle all the difficult questions of representation, the executive, etc., immediately. All these things will be done in time. It will take poor humanity many years to work out these difficult problems. Our Continental Congress was only an improvised inter-colonial political organ. It paved the way to the government under the Articles, which was an imperfect, inefficient government. But this government served until the Constitution was made and adopted, and on the basis of this instrument, amended from time to time, we have built a great nation, never so firmly united and harmonious as at the present time.

It is proposed that some such crude beginning be made by the Allies to cement them together for their present task and their future destiny. As a suggestion it is proposed that Great Britain, France and the U.S.A. shall each appoint three delegates to an Alliance Political Council; that Italy and Japan shall each appoint two delegates; that the other nations associated in military opposition to

Germany shall each appoint one delegate; that these delegates shall meet in London and organize for business. The business of the Council would be chiefly deliberative and advisory; but could it not assume as much positive authority as did our Continental Congress, or as the Versailles Military Council is now exercising?

This would be an rudimentary beginning of international political life. This must begin some time if the world is ever to be saved from such calamities as the present war. Why not begin it now? There is every reason why it should begin now and no reason why it should not.

The mere act of appointing the delegates and the mere fact of their coming together in London (or elsewhere) would be the most notable political occurrence of history. It would hearten the Allies, deeply interest the neutral nations, and it would be a severe "offensive" against the Central Powers. Some of the neutrals that have long considered joining the alliance against Germany would see that alliance assuming stability and permanency, and would hesitate no longer. Even some of Germany's allies would feel a strong attraction toward such a combination. Particularly would this be true of the Czechs, Jugo-Slavs and other nationalities now embodied in the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Thus Austria-Hungary would become more unstable than ever as an empire and as an ally to Germany. And the government at Vienna, considering the importance of an outlet upon the Adriatic, thence to the Mediterranean, and out of the Mediterranean at Gibraltar and Suez, would consider the importance of harmony with a combination of powers commanding these strategic points. Turkey could do little with the Dardanelles, with Suex and Gibraltar closed against her, and with unfriendly warships at the outlet of the Dardanelles. The political combination mentioned above could easily command these strategic points forever, and use such command to enforce the peace of the world. This phase of the subject could be continued for many pages; but let us return to our pressing duty of actually forming this political council and consider its first duties.

Immediately upon the meeting of such a Council it would be universally recognized that this is the body that should speak, politically, for the powers opposed to Germany. Thus we would have a body authorized to speak for liberalism. The voice and acts of the German military autocracy would stand in plain contrast to the voice and attitude of the liberal body.

Such a body could express the allied war aims with authority and with powerful effect. The liberal world would feel that it at last has an organ—a central organ with tremendous future possibilities. And it would carry more dismay to autocracy, in Germany and elsewhere, than anything that has ever occurred. Then why hesitate? Why delay for a single day?

This proposed Alliance Political Council, call it by whatever name you wish, might not be a permanent international political organ. But it could be speedily created, and it could render immediate war service of incalculable value. And it could pave the way to a more complete international political organ. If it should serve the world in its present crisis as well as the Continental Congress served us in our early crisis, it would take an important place in the constructive political history of the world.

Our Continental Congress led to the Constitution. It is possible that many more steps would be required from the proposed Alliance Political Council to a politically organized and governed world. We need not consider these future steps now. If we take the proper steps now it will lead to the next step, and so on until the goal is reached. The goal is permanent peace. But it cannot be reached by a negative, anti-war attitude. It must be reached by mutual political service. Political organization is the first step toward mutual political service among the units so associated. War will meet its doom when political co-operation leaves no occasion to resort to war among the political units so associated, and when such an association includes the civilized world or becomes sufficiently powerful to control the civilized world.

The powers now associated in military opposition to Germany could, if they would only realize it, make an equally powerful political opposition to Germany. And this political opposition would grow in strength during the war and make the overthrow of autocracy certain and soon. The liberal nations thus associated could make the civilized world liberal, and permanently liberal.