

Russian Baltic provinces. Internally, it has been proving itself in the increased activities of courts martial, and similar "liberal" institutions, and it has just now again proved itself in the defeat of the Prussian Equal Franchise Bill.

And let there be no mistake about it: It is not merely a question of the perfidy of the Kaiser or of the Prussian Junkers. It is a case of general reaction, reaching deep down into the masses of the population, including the most advanced sections of the proletariat. The unvarnished truth is that reaction is triumphant all along the line in Germany. One of its most significant as well as most discouraging symptoms is a series of electoral defeats suffered by the Independent, or "minority" Socialist party,—the most important of which is the defeat of its candidate for the Reichstag in a by-election in the Nieder-Barnim district, one of the strongholds of the "Independents."

And the reason for these defeats, the underlying reason of the entire reactionary wave, is to be found in the condition of the war-map: Had the German armies failed on the "Eastern front" in the measure that they have actually succeeded, the New York Call might have turned out a true prophet even though but a poor news-reporter, and autocracy in Germany might have been considerably curbed at least, if not entirely abolished, by this time.

But the German armies *have* succeeded where good Germans, along with other good people, wanted them to fail. So we must be prepared for a strong onward sweep of German reaction for some time to come.

In a recent article Karl Kautsky, the veteran Socialist theoretician and one of the principal leaders of the German Independents, discusses the Nieder-Barnim election in its relation to the general reactionary mood of the German people at the present moment, and shows that this is a mere repetition of what occurred in Germany after the great German victories in the wars of 1866 and 1870.

"No man," says Kautsky, "was more hated by his people than was Bismarck at the beginning of the war of 1866. Nor was

any war ever met with stormier manifestations of protest on the part of the population than was that war. Had the Prussian armies failed of victory, the result would have been, if not actual revolution, at least the overthrow of the Bismarck governmental system, and the introduction of the parliamentary system instead. But the Prussian armies *were* victorious and immediately, after the first victory, the temper of the people changed, and Bismarck was being acclaimed with the greatest enthusiasm."

Kautsky proceeds to show how the liberal opposition, which controlled the "House of Delegates" before the war of 1866 by the enormous majority of 241 votes out of a total of 352, dwindled down within a few years, under the influence of the victorious wars, to a pitiful 50 votes in a house of 433.

And then, turning to the present situation, he says:

"During the summer of last year the great majority of the German people were in a mood to listen favorably to the policies advocated by us (the Independents). So much is proven by the concessions which the weathercocks of the majority block, then just organized, were willing to make to the idea of a peace without annexations and with the right of nations to self-determination. But the last few months have made a great change in the situation; and this again, may also be seen from the attitude of those same weathercocks. The politicians of the momentary mood, in the Reichstag as well as among the people, see nothing but the forward march of the German armies, without bothering much about the causes to which it is due. They see only the peace,—the very profitable peace—and do not stop to think about the consequences that are likely to follow in its wake. They see only the successes, and become enthusiastic over the state policy thus seemingly crowned with success.

"So long as this mood continues, we Independents will have a hard row to hoe. Let us not deceive ourselves: the tide is for the present against us."

Since the above lines were written by Kautsky, about two months ago, the situation has not improved. On the contrary, it is going from bad to worse.