

REVIEWS

GERMANY.

EDUCATION FOR DEATH. By Gregor Ziemer. (Constable; 7s. 6d.)

One of the most popular anecdotes of this, as of other wars, is that which tells of the enemy prisoner who, after a few days in captivity, professes surprise at the kindness of his captors and the unexpected plenty of their food supplies: 'We were told that you shot all your prisoners—that you were starving,' and so on. It seems highly probable, if the present spate of atrocity books continues, that our own soldiers will experience a similar surprise when they discover, on occupying Germany, that not all German children goose-step their way to the grocer's, that there are still a few Germans left not visibly marked with the lash of a Gestapo whip, and that quite a number of people still attend German church services without apparent fear of the concentration camp as an immediate sequel. German propaganda has bent the truth to such an extent that it has become a boomerang. Unofficial propagandists for the allied cause seem well on the way to a successful imitation. Despite the lurid and exclamatory descriptions on the dust-cover, Mr. Gregor Ziemer's book is, however, a step in the right direction. At least he does not deal with purely physical atrocity, and his account of the National Socialist educational machine does point to the essential evil of Hitler's Germany—its inculcation of a false and immoral ideology into the minds of the young—even the very young. Mr. Ziemer's book will be read more by those seriously interested in the German situation than by the mere sensation seeker, and for this reason it is a pity that his picture of Nazi educational methods portrays the extreme as if it were the norm. There is no doubt that the types of education quoted by Mr. Ziemer could be authenticated in many National-Socialist schools, but the system of extreme militarism and neglect of genuine study which he describes is certainly not as general as he would have us believe; in fact, the writer's own impressions were that the academic standard of the German school-leaving examinations was considerably higher than our own. The Nazi propaganda machine, working through the schools, is quite bad enough as it is. We do not need to weaken our own case by an over-emphasis which verges on the *suggestio falsi*. Mr. Ziemer appears to have written his book in a hurry and to have been over-conscious of its purpose as propaganda. Had he been more reflective, *Education for Death* would have been more readable, more convincing, and certainly no less effective. It was surprising to find quite common German words mis-spelt (pp. 53 and 60), and other little grammatical slips.

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