

Lebensborn Popular History As Sex (Eugenics) Fantasy



Siegfried Egel

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By
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The reality of Lebensborn was far removed from the Hollywood-style fantasy. Here, two student nurses bottle feed infants at one home. Student nurses were carefully screened for they too, like the mothers, had a lofty duty to the nation to fulfil. Actually most mothers preferred to breast feed as long as possible to prolong their stays at the comfortable Lebensborn facilities. Expectant mothers were provided with fresh fruit and vegetables, chocolate and real coffee. They had no duties except to keep their rooms neat and provide for the health of their offspring and were encouraged to take strolls for exercise through the broad lawns and gardens surrounding many of these country homes

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MENTION "Lebensborn" to most Americans today, and they will give you a blank stare. If anything, they would probably confuse it with "Lebensraum" — German for living space, or elbow room. But a few decades ago, the name had a suggestive ring. And the organization it stood for had been in fact an SS affiliate. Little wonder, then, that the post-World War II rumour mongers and fantasy peddlers had such a merry time with it. Even today, the man in the street misremembers dimly that the Hitler regime had some sort of racist scheme to operate human stud farms, with the party faithful acting as the studs and blond-haired blue-eyed girls as the recipients of their "service." During the incarceration of Dr. Udo Walendy, Siegfried Egel has been carrying forward his work on *Historische Tatsachen* (Historical Facts). The following article from that series is translated by Andrew Gray.



A frame from the film *Lebensborn e.V.*—with young, nubile girls eagerly eyeing an SS-Obersturmbannführer. "My young ladies," he is saying, "are you all good National Socialists"? Are you really dedicated with your whole heart in it? "Jawohl!" they reply in joyous chorus. "I thank you, young women. If you will now enter your names in the list, you will be selected to found a new race and give a child to the Führer." This scenario was a hit at box offices worldwide. Contemporary views of wartime Germany have not changed much beyond the highly fictionalized portrayals typified in this late 1950's B-grade cinematic production.

"Himmler's baby factories," "SS bordellos," and "breeding farms for the master race"—these were just a few of the provocative terms invented by pornographers and anti-German propagandists which have been used to describe *Lebensborn e.V.* (*e.V.* stands for "registered association;" or in German, *eingetragener Verein*).

Actually this SS affiliate was nothing so titillating or sinister. It was in fact nothing more than a system of lying-in hospitals for pregnant women. But multitudes at the time leapt at the chance to believe the worst whenever Germans were concerned—and, sadly, that is still the case today.

Predictably enough, the U.S. Military Tribunal rose to the occasion after the war and opened, on October 10, 1947, formal proceedings against the surviving leaders of this organization. The prosecution brought three principal counts against them.

Count 1 charged a crime against humanity based on the abduction of foreign children for the purpose of Germanization or extermination.

Count 2 charged plunder of public and private property in Germany and the occupied territories.

Count 3 charged membership in a criminal organization.

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The trial lasted five months. According to the verdict delivered on March 10, 1948, the three chief SS officers in command of Lebensborn e.V. —Max Sollman, Gregor Ebner and Günther Tesch — were acquitted on the first two counts and convicted only on the third one, as of course the SS itself had been declared a "criminal organization" in the prior Nuremberg kangaroo court.

The head nurse, Inge Viermetz, was acquitted on all counts.

This should have put an end to all the propaganda nonsense, but needless to say, it did no such thing. Lebensborn (the word means, literally, "wellspring of life") lives to this day in the popular imagination as an SS sex park.

Revisionist historian Erich Kern later summarized the facts about Lebensborn in these terms:



"Lebensborn e.V was among the most exemplary charitable organizations of its time. Founded in 1936, it grew to include a total of 18 lying-in hospitals. These also served as temporary homes for orphans. More than

11,000 children first saw the light of day in them. Unwed mothers, it is true, were also accepted by these hospitals, but in such cases every effort was made to arrange subsequent marriages with the biological fathers, and the organization offered further care to the extent needed.

"This often included help in securing living quarters. In special cases adoptions were arranged. The facilities, admittedly, were not available to all German women. There were in fact racial requirements, and proof of Aryan ancestry including all four grandparents had to be provided. Women with obvious genetic defects were also excluded.

"But the facilities, though financed entirely from monthly contributions by SS members, were not restricted to SS use alone. During the war years, up to 90 percent of the women giving birth there were wives of soldiers and officers of the army, navy and air force."

As to the charge that Lebensborn participated in a program for the Germanization of children abducted from the conquered territories, the U.S. Military Tribunal found no substantiating evidence whatsoever. On the contrary, it found Lebensborn policy was to make every effort to bring orphaned children together with their surviving next of kin.

Children transferred to Lebensborn orphanage facilities by other organizations always received the best possible care. No instances of cruelty or sexual abuse of any sort were ever adduced.

These factual and judicial findings, however, proved no barrier to the myth makers. Early in the 1950's, the German illustrated magazine Revue ran a sensationalistic series purporting to show Lebensborn as a "breeding farm for the master race."

The nonsense reached its apogee in a late 1950's German film, by Arthur Brauner, entitled simply Lebensborn e. V In Brauner's cinematic fantasy these lying-in hospitals underwent a transmogrification into sex parks. This film was an instant hit and was circulated throughout the globe.

All attempts to block this defamation of German men and women failed in the court system. As a result, to this day, the term "Lebensborn" often

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arouses even in literate people a vision of beautiful, scantily clad young women offering themselves to SS officers. It is a complete fiction. Yet, when was truth ever a bar to popular misconceptions about the Third Reich?

Actually, when you come right down to it, the National Socialists and SS were quite prudish. So are most authoritarian regimes. Loose sex is for democracies.



The End

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