

## Book Reviews

FRIDOLF KUDLIEN (editor), *Ärzte im Nationalsozialismus*, Cologne, Kiepenheuer & Witsch, 1985, 8vo, pp. 309, [no price stated].

GEORG LILIENTHAL, *Der "Lebensborn e.V." Ein Instrument nationalsozialistischer Rassenpolitik*, Stuttgart and New York, Gustav Fischer, 1985, pp. vii, 264, DM.48.00.

Before the late 1970s, virtually no research had been done on medicine in the Third Reich. There were only one or two brief though useful accounts of the "euthanasia" programme and a collection of documents used at the Nuremberg doctors' trial, which dealt with the lethal medical experiments carried out on concentration camp inmates and which were edited by Alexander Mitscherlich and A. Mielka. Now, however, the gap is beginning to be filled. Much of the credit for this is due to the institutes of medical history attached to a number of German universities, notably Kiel and Mainz, whence the two books under review respectively originated.

Professor Kudlien, Kiel, has edited a collection of essays on various aspects of medicine in the Third Reich, focusing particularly on the medical profession itself and its relationship to National Socialism. He himself has contributed an article on those doctors who supported the Nazi movement before it came to power. There are also useful essays on the medical faculties and medical students (Michael Kater); on the Nazi doctors' professional organization, the National Socialist German Doctors' League (Georg Lilienthal); on the "Leaders School of the German Medical Profession", which was designed to create a medical élite, "a new leadership corps of doctors" based on Nazi ideology (A. Haug); on the purge of racially and politically undesirable doctors (W. F. Kummel); and on the role of doctors in opposition to the regime (Kudlien). In addition, there are one or two essays on various aspects of medical practice. Three areas form a particular focus of attention: first, the development of the relationship between orthodox and alternative medicine discussed by Haug. This involved interlocking conflicts between leading Nazi figures and between sections of the medical profession, conflicts which were highly characteristic for the history of professional groups within the regime. Second, there is the role played by medicine in the regime's attempt to boost productivity among the population. This is illuminated by an article on the irresponsible use of amphetamines (K.-H. Roth) and by another article on the plan to develop so-called "health houses". These were part of a policy of shifting the emphasis away from curing the sick to persuading people in various ways it was their duty to remain healthy. This Nazi version of preventive medicine included the idea of partially replacing hospitals (in German *Krankenhaus* lit. "house of the sick") by *Gesundheitshäuser* (lit. "houses of health"), in which those who were unfit but not actually organically sick would be subjected to a regime which would make them more productive.

The articles in this collection do not form a coherent whole. They are essentially pioneering sorties into different parts of what is still largely uncharted territory. Nevertheless, they have brought back valuable material for the major study of medicine in the Third Reich which is so urgently required.

Among the articles in the Kudlien collection are two which deal with the dual role of medicine in the major racial and eugenic programme of Nazism. On the one hand, there was the elimination of those regarded as racially and eugenically undesirable through sterilization, euthanasia, and extermination. This is by now a fairly familiar story. On the other hand, however, there was the "positive" selection of the racially and eugenically fit and the encouragement of them to breed. This second aspect of Nazi population policy—the improvement of the race—has received much less attention from historians. It is the focus of an article by Dr Georg Lilienthal of the Mainz Institute, which summarizes the conclusions of his book on the notorious SS organization, the *Lebensborn*. The *Lebensborn* achieved notoriety on the basis of rumours that it was an organization which encouraged and provided facilities for sexual relations between SS men and unmarried women with the aim of breeding a superior race. Through scrupulous scholarship and a judicious assessment of the evidence, Dr Lilienthal concludes that there is no truth in such rumours. However, he shows that the *Lebensborn* was intended to play an important role in the creation of an SS racial élite.

By providing (in the shape of nursing homes, anonymity, and financial assistance) facilities for unmarried mothers who were likely to bear children of good racial stock, the *Lebensborn* was intended to counteract the effects of a declining birthrate which Himmler attributed primarily to

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a trend towards small families, abortion, and homosexuality. With the outbreak of war, the *Lebensborn's* function was extended to the "germanization" of racially sound children from the occupied territories who were the offspring of liaisons between German military personnel and women from those territories or whose parents had been killed or imprisoned. Such children were effectively seized and brought to Germany for adoption in SS households.

Dr Lilienthal shows that the actual results of its activities—the birth of some 5,000 illegitimate children during the nine years of the organization's existence and the seizure of a few hundred children—bore no relationship to Himmler's expectation of preventing 100,000 abortions annually. He also argues convincingly that even under more favourable circumstances the scheme was utopian. This excellent study provides a valuable insight into an aspect of Nazi racial policy which has hitherto been obscured by ignorance and myth.

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C. STUART HOUSTON (editor), *Arctic ordeal. The journal of John Richardson, surgeon-naturalist with Franklin 1820–22*, Kingston and Montreal, McGill-Queen's University Press; Gloucester, Alan Sutton, 1985, 4to, pp. xxxiv, 349, illus., £16.50.

If the role of an editor is to present his material imaginatively, to explain discrepancies, to provide relevant supplementary information, to adduce significant features and to assess the merits of the work within its historical and scientific context, Dr Houston has succeeded admirably in his task. He has done more, for his insights into the character and performance of the expedition's members highlight the fatal obstinacy which underlay Franklin's charm, the faith and courage which shone through Richardson's multi-faceted scientific abilities, the tenacity and dependability which characterized Back in times of crisis, and the vital role of the Indians. Only one of the expedition's five officers was lost, but nine of the final eleven voyageurs fell victim to the combined effects of environmental stress, unremitting toil, and starvation. Singled out for special mention are the qualities of the French-Canadian interpreter, Pierre St Germain, without whose intelligence, resourcefulness, and dexterity, Dr Houston believes "we would have had no surviving officers, no published journals and no books of natural history". Other Indians brought succour, compassion, and sustenance, and Dr Houston pays belated tribute to these "unsung heroes" of Franklin's important first expedition, which defined an important stretch of the northern coastline of mainland Canada and laid the foundation for subsequent naval exploration in search of the North-West Passage.

The holograph journal of Richardson, Franklin's naval surgeon and naturalist, was acquired from his descendants for the University of Illinois through Dr. Robert E. Johnson, Richardson's percipient biographer. It covers the fateful last year of the expedition from August 1820 to December 1821. Richardson, in a revealing glimpse of his innermost feelings, omitted the harrowing details about the voyageur Michel's suspected cannibalism, murder of Midshipman Hood, and summary execution at Richardson's own hands during their desperate trek to Fort Enterprise while dying of starvation. The details, however, were the subject of an official report on the incident and Dr Houston uses it to bridge the gap in the narrative.

The private nature of the journal allows Richardson to record his impressions in vivid dramatic style and they betray an enormous breadth of knowledge and interest. Through his eyes, we are able to examine the fauna, flora, geology, and geography of the vast empty spaces of the Canadian north, to experience the hazards of shooting dangerous, unknown rapids or navigating ice-bound coasts in frail birch-bark canoes, and to picture a stumbling, emaciated party of survivors silhouetted against the white wilderness of the Barren Lands. These impressions are sharply enhanced by the stark sketches of H. Albert Hockbaum, who has spent many years in Franklin territory. They furnish one example of the way in which editor and publishers have collaborated to provide a book of very high quality. Others can be found in the arrangement of the material, the contributions of the numerous experts consulted, the use of relevant tables which have often involved Dr Houston in the painstaking analysis of data, an