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# A Witch Answers Back

One of Britain's leading witches takes up the cudgels to answer FATE writer ALAN ELLIS and other critics of the Cult of the Wicca.

by  
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**A**LTHOUGH this is supposed to be a free country, the very existence of the witch cult in Britain today arouses in certain people a state of near-hysterical rage.

A typical example of this was the article by Mr Alan J. Ellis in the September issue of FATE, quaintly entitled "Witchcraft — The Facts".

As I remarked in my letter to FATE, printed in the December 1964 issue, witches seldom bother to answer mud-slinging. We prefer to treat it with the contempt it deserves. However, when such twaddle as that written by Mr Ellis finds its way into the columns of FATE, I feel that it should have an answer.

Not that I think Mr Ellis's article would make any impression upon people who have any real inside knowledge of witchcraft. In my opinion, they would simply dismiss it as a piece of cheap, sensational journalism. Indeed, the weekend after the article appeared, three of my fellow-witches with whom, according to Mr Ellis, I am at deadly enmity and rivalry, came in for a cup of tea. We discussed the article, as I have also done with representatives of two other covens, with whom, according to Mr Ellis, I am engaged in "flinging curses" back and forth. I had better not quote their unanimous comments on Mr Ellis's "inside information" verbatim; but they can be summed up in one word—"Poppycock!"

Mr Ellis has, however, one piece of "inside information"

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40 which is truly remarkable. He tells us that my old friend in Brighton, "Tudor Keryx" is the "self-styled king-pin of the witches". Now, I have known "Tudor Keryx" for years, and I'd never suspected that before—and neither has "Tudor Keryx!"

I quite enjoyed Mr Ellis's previous article on Africa; but I must say I liked some of it better in its original form, in the pages of "Witchcraft and Magic of Africa" by Frederick Kaigh (Richard Lesley and Co., London, 1947), and "Witness to Witchcraft" by Harry B. Wright (Corgi Books, 1958). It appears to me that Mr Ellis has borrowed whole passages from these books, particularly the former, almost word for word, without any acknowledgement.

I would have pointed this out to Mr Ellis's devoted fans, Colonel Cleaver Archer-Deene, Mr Jack Randall, Mr Trevor K. Rawstone and Mr Malcolm K. Raymond, all of whom wrote fulsome praise of Mr Ellis in letters published in FATE. But alas, personal investigation of the addresses given by these gentlemen (full details of which have been sent to the Editor) has disclosed that each and every one of them was bogus. Mr Ellis apparently has excellent liaison with the spirit world. All his fans turn out to be phantoms.

Although "Tudor Keryx" is, we are told, "The king-pin of the witches", Mr Ellis assures us that there are "real practising white and black witches with covens conducted on money-paying systems . . . but Tudor Keryx

would not know of a single one!" We are very much obliged to Mr Ellis for this entirely unsolicited testimonial; because it has been alleged by others of the anti-witch faction that our witchcraft is a money-making racket conducted for profit.

I can reveal, however (as all the best exposers say), that Mr Ellis's discovery of "real witches" is remarkably recent. For on February 17th, 1965, a letter from him appeared in the "Mid-Sussex Times", in which he stated, "There is not one genuine practitioner of witchcraft among all the claimants in Great Britain today . . . no real witch exists in our country."

As for Mr Ellis's lurid story about "The fraternity of the Goat", this name first appeared in an article in "Tit-Bits", dated March 7th, 1964. I have this article in one of my scrap-books of press cuttings; and the author, Bill Eyton Jones, makes it quite clear that he is talking about the stupid and nasty antics of believers in black magic. There is not one mention of witchcraft in it, from beginning to end.

It is rather comic that Mr Ellis should accuse witches of acting like "fisherwives." Whatever controversy there may be in the witch cult, it is nothing to the torrents of abuse poured forth by the witch-haters upon us. But of course there is controversy among witches. The very fact shows that the cult is alive and kicking, not dying as the anti-witch hate-merchants would like to pretend.

But what of the contradic-

tions among the hate-merchants themselves? One yammers that witchcraft does not exist, never has and never can; while his rival yells about "real covens". "They all work in the nude—shocking!" shrieks one. "They import elaborate robes from Germany", howls the other. Really, gentlemen—hadn't you better sort yourselves out, before talking about witches?

The story of the robes, "Salve of Satan", magical books, etc., alleged to be imported from Germany for the use of British witches, far from being a sign of "real covens", sounds so much like a commercial racket that one feels tempted to ask if any of the people who sell this stuff give trading stamps?

The truth is that the Craft of the Wise is not conducted for money. (Perhaps this is why Mr Ellis thinks we're silly?) We do not sell people magic wands or so-called tools of witchcraft; we teach them how to make their own. My magic wand cost me every penny of three-and-sixpence — my bus fare to the wood where it was cut; but when to cut it and what tree to choose I had to learn. Some of us work in the nude and some of us don't. I have a magical robe; every stitch of it is hand-sewn by myself, which is how robes should be made, according to tradition.

As for the so-called "Devil Dirt" that British covens are alleged to be importing from Germany, if anybody is really doing so they are being taken

for suckers; because this is simply an old name for *gum asafœtida*, which you can get from any good herbalist. It is a digestive stimulant, and has been used for years to give the distinctive aroma to that sinister Satanic brew, Worcester sauce.

There is one part of Mr Ellis's article, however, which deserves to be taken seriously. He boasts of having inside information about the disgusting desecrations of churches in Sussex that have taken place in the name of "black magic". He seeks to connect this with witchcraft. If this is true, then it is his plain duty as a citizen to place this evidence in the hands of the police at once, for a full investigation.

I publicly challenge Mr Alan Ellis to do this, as he should with any evidence he possesses about "vile and loathsome" cults of black magic.

If he is telling the truth, then the police are the people to deal with it. Has he placed this evidence in their hands? And if not, why not?

Mr Ellis is trying to revive the silly old cry of "devil-worship against witches. It will not work, because one only has to read the writings of Gerald Gardner to discover that, far from having transferred his allegiance to Satan, he didn't believe in Satan (and as a witch, neither do I). Nor did he ever call himself a "warlock" or "insist" upon anyone else doing so. His biography by Jack

Bracelin (published by the Octagon Press, London, 1960), is boldly entitled "Gerald Gardner: Witch". The facts upon this point, as opposed to Ellis-type "fact", have been in public print for years.

Why are the anti-witch faction so vociferous? If, as Mr Ellis assures us, we witches who were associates of old Gerald Gardner are so small in numbers, laughable and pathetic, what is all the fuss about? I suggest the truth is that, far from the Craft of the Wise being a dying cult, it is very much alive and on the increase—and that's what all the noise is about!

The old Craft is dependent neither upon Satan nor upon Gerald Gardner. There are, to my personal knowledge, plenty of covens who were nothing to do with Gerald Gardner, and today they are linking up and increasing in membership, as the covens old Gerald himself founded.

A big help in this link-up has been the "little news-sheet" Mr Ellis informs FATE readers about; rather late in the day, as it was advertised in FATE months ago! Its title is "Pentagram"; although he claims to have studied it, Mr Ellis hasn't even got the name right.

With regard to his remarks about British witches going to America, why shouldn't they? There are already several covens in America, stemming from the British witch cult; and the old Craft of the Wise survives in rural parts of America, notably

the Ozark mountain district, even as it does here.

Now, let Mr Ellis and all who write like him get this and get it straight. Witchcraft has survived hangings, burnings, torture, exile, and every kind of terrorism; and what centuries of persecution have failed to do, any cheap little smear-campaign is certainly not going to accomplish.

The old pagan Craft of the Wise is our religion; and today we live in a country where freedom of religion is a basic human right. No sane government of either party is going to put the clock back by reviving the old Witchcraft Act. So what do the hate-merchants hope to achieve by heaping abuse upon people who have never done them any harm? If they possess any evidence of the wild allegations they make against witches, they should take it to the police; and if they don't then in my opinion they are merely windbags, who should be well and truly deflated.

What is the real truth about witchcraft in Britain? Simply that we witches are followers of the old pagan traditions that have been handed down to us. Our rites may vary from one coven to another, with regional differences; but our basic beliefs are much the same. Our pagan Horned God is far older than the Christian idea of Satan. We regard the latter as an invention of priestcraft, to frighten people into obedience.

The pagan dieties of the

witches, the Horned God and the Moon Goddess, are personifications of the powers of Nature. Through invocation and worship, we seek to enter into harmony with Nature, and thus with the Forces of Life itself. This is the deeper meaning behind the idea of witchcraft being a fertility cult. The forces of Nature are the forces of the Universal Life. To be in harmony with that Great Life is to find wisdom and blessedness.

The tendency of modern materialism is to cut humanity off from our roots in Nature. We humans ourselves are beginning to realise this; and this is why the cult of witchcraft, the Craft of the Wise, is on the increase. Men and women everywhere are seeking in the man-made wilderness of the present day for their lost birth-right; lost, when they turned away from Nature, the Great Mother, to follow the path of materialistic greed.

We believe that the powers now called extra-sensory perception are part of man's natural heritage, and we seek to develop them. The word "supernatural" is a misnomer. All these things are contained in Nature.

We believe that reincarnation, too, is a law of Nature; and our Goddess is also the Goddess of Fate, or Karma as the Eastern version of the Ancient Wisdom calls it.

Our Sabbats are regular religious festivals, in harmony with the changing seasons of the year. The Esbat is the monthly meeting, held at the full moon, the high tide of psychic power.

How many covens are there in Britain? I don't know, and I've been a witch for a good many years; so I certainly don't believe Mr Ellis does. Still less does he or anyone else know the total number of individual witches, not all of whom are organised into covens.

There is no such title as "Chief Witch of Britain." Most witches I know have more wisdom than to seek domination over others. They have realised that the true aim of magic is dominion over oneself.

The Craft of the Wise is not merely an interesting relic of the past. It is a living religion, with a part to play in the future. But the only way that mankind will have a future is by people learning to be tolerant towards each other; to respect the liberty of others to hold different ideas from their own, and to follow different paths; to cease pouring out hate-propaganda against people of other religions, or other races.

It is the witch-baters, not the witches, who want to put the clock back; because the future holds no place for them.