

EUROPE

Witchcraft In Europe Today

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● In Germany, a man justified his attempt to burn a woman to death by telling the court, "I had to do it because she was a witch . . ."

In Spain, a 10-year-old girl was tortured to death during a grisly "devil worshippers' ceremony . . ."

In England, the disinterred bones of a 200-year-old corpse were found on the altar of an abandoned church. Police traced the weird finding to the work of a "coven"—a gathering of thirteen self-admitted "witches . . ."

All over Europe, the rising tide of witchcraft is becoming a more and more serious problem. Police dossiers bulge with cases of rape, murder, torture and depraved debauchery that are all directly connected to the practice of black magic and the so-called "art" of the occult.

Black Masses: Black masses—hideous parodies of religious ceremonies in which a woman's naked body is used as an "altar"—have been reported as occurring with increasing frequency in every major city on the Continent. The sale of mysterious powders and liquids, labelled as "love potions," "magic philtres," "devil's dirt" and the like has reached alarming proportions. What's more, the bizarre preparations are not only to be found in small, remote villages—where superstitions of all kinds are still rampant—but also in the biggest and most cosmopolitan cities.

It is officially estimated that well over 50,000 men and women are actively practising witchcraft throughout Europe—10,000 of them in Germany alone. These figures do not include the many thousands more who believe in witchcraft and seek the "services" of those who claim to have full knowledge of black magic. Nor does it refer to those who become temporarily involved in devil-worship cults and sects.

It does, however, encompass the statistics available from all Western European countries.

Witchcraft's Two Faces: According to authorities on the subject, the problem of contemporary witchcraft can be divided into two separate sections.

"Roughly speaking, you might say that the first is found at the ignorant, peasant level and the second at the other end of the social scale—among decadent, monied thrill-seekers," explains Dr. Alphonse Mongeat, one of Europe's foremost sociologists. "But there are no hard and fast rules; the

dividing lines can blur both ways."

Dr. Mongeat goes on to identify the first type of witchcraft as being mainly confined to the casting—or removing—of spells, placing "hexes" on victims, concocting strange "medicines," all of which are supposed to have magical qualities and exorcising people who have become "possessed" by the devil or evil spirits.

Satanic Worship: "The second category," he continues, "can be defined as actual satanic worship. It involves macabre rites and ceremonies, all of which climax in complete sexual de-

Hahn had placed a spell on him which had made him seriously ill.

The entire village of Mailach, where both Vogel and the elderly woman lived, believed her to be in league with occult powers. The villagers even paid a "witch doctor" from a neighboring hamlet to exorcise the spells Elizabeth Hahn was supposed to have cast on all of them.

Vogel, convinced she had given him "the evil eye," sought to take matters into his own hands. Fully convinced that the only way he could destroy both the witch and her power over him



"Chief Witch" of England, Mrs. Sybil Leek, with her Jackdaw perched on her shoulder.

pravity. Many of them include ritual torture, physical mutilation and group practice of the most perverted sexual aberrations."

Both forms of witchcraft can maim, cripple, or kill—and both have their origins in the Middle Ages, a time when over two million "witches" were burned at the stake in Europe. In those days, it was believed that anyone in league with the devil could only be destroyed by fire.

Trial By Fire: Today, in the middle of the Twentieth Century, there are still people who subscribe to that belief.

Recently, a 26-year-old German was sentenced to prison for attempting to burn a woman he believed was a witch. The young man, Johann Vogel, told the court that 64-year-old Elizabeth

would be by fire, he proceeded to burn her cottage to the ground. Flames from the burning building leapt across to a nearby barn, also belonging to Elizabeth Hahn.

Fortunately, the terrified victim of Vogel's murder attempt managed to escape the blaze. The victim in another case—which also took place in Germany—was not so lucky.

Infanticide: A two-year-old child was literally beaten to death by his parents on the advice of a "sorcerer" in a small Bavarian village. The little boy, who suffered from asthma, was taken to the soothsayer because his superstitious parents believed his respiratory trouble could be cured by the right "spell."

The sorcerer's explanation of the



"The Witch" at work in her cottage. What magic potion is she brewing in her cauldron?

child's trouble was that he was "possessed by an evil spirit."

"You must beat it out of your son's body," he told the peasant couple. "Only by sticks and whips can you remove this evil from inside your child."

It was only a matter of weeks before the battered, bruised body of the infant was found in a field by a neighboring farmer. But, even when they were charged with infanticide, the parents continued to believe that their son had been "possessed . . ."

U.N. Interested: Cases such as these have been so frequent during the past few years that a special report has been sent to the United Nations. It was prepared by Johann Kruse, a retired schoolteacher who is a leading authority on all facets of witchcraft.

His report cites cases of witches and witch-doctors who charge fees of as much as 800 marks (two hundred dollars) for their "services." Some sorcerers even "specialize"—usually in exorcising evil spirits they maintain cause human beings bodily ills—and charge additional fees.

Kruse, whose treatise is mainly concerned with witchcraft in Germany, also refers to the case that occurred in Switzerland in 1959, when a man beat his sister-in-law to death. Even after his conviction for murder, he continued to maintain that she had "put a hex" on him. He also believed she had done so by reciting incantations from the "sixth and seventh books of Moses"—black magic books which have been proved to be forgeries, probably done in Europe during the last century.

Sorcerer's Prisoners: Switzerland was also the locale of the infamous black magic cult led by Paul Bauman, 42, whose weird "Mountain of Peace" estate was surrounded by electrified barbed wire. When police finally raided the cultists' mansion, they found most of the inhabitants in varying stages of hypnosis. One was hanging by chains in an underground torture chamber, many were in deep psychotic shock.

Paris Devil Cult: A similar cult was discovered in Paris during the summer of 1963. Reports of eerie screams coming from a large house in one of the older sections of the city caused police to set up a 24-hour watch on the place.

The building gave every indication of being abandoned—until the night police saw several cars draw up, discharge passengers and drive off again.

"The people all seemed to have keys to the place," recounts Police Captain Henri Duffet, who led the subsequent raid. "We had to wait another hour before we heard anything—but when the noise started, it was obvious there was trouble."

The moment they heard the first scream, the five gendarmes broke their way into the old house. Guided by the high-pitched shrieks, they rushed down a flight of stone steps into the basement, broke through another door—and burst into the midst of a hideous devil cult ceremony.

"The only light came from the tall black candles on a dais at one end of the room," describes Captain Duffet. "A naked woman was tied to a black-draped altar between them. The man standing over her with a long, curved knife in his hand had on a red, flowing cape—and nothing else."

Sexual Orgies: Two human skulls seemed to be suspended in mid-air over the screaming woman.

"We found out later they were hung from the ceiling on thin black wire," continues Duffet.

The other people in the underground chamber—eleven women and seven men—were ranged around the dais, all of them nude. Panic hit them the moment they saw the officers, but their attempts to escape were quickly thwarted.

"All of them were drugged—which is why we didn't have too much trouble rounding them up," explains the captain.

It was later discovered that the ceremony had been one of initiation. The girl on the altar, a newcomer to the satanists' circle, was to be "marked"—that is, have a design, symbolic of the devil's cloven hoof, slashed on her left breast. All the other women involved already carried the horrendous scar. They all admitted to have submitted voluntarily to the "initiation."

They also admitted that their rites always culminated in a frenzy of erotic excesses, during which each woman was "under a blood oath to Satan" to engage in specific sexual pervers-

sions with every man present.

British Cultists: Just across the English Channel, in London, the strong resurgence of witchcraft in various forms has also been noted with dismay by authorities.

Chelsea, the Foggy City's Greenwich Village, has become the new focal area for devil worshippers. Formerly the artists' quarter, Chelsea is now a melting pot for beatniks and bored socialites—a place where the jaded seek new thrills.

At the other end of London, in Paddington, satanic cultists have incorporated voodoo rites into their orgiastic gatherings. But the basic principles remain the same, since all black magic ceremonies of this nature are mass sex orgies. Voodoo—introduced into England by West Indian immigrants, many of whom live in the Paddington area—is said to be responsible for the use of several soporifics and drugs used by satanists. The taking of powerful aphrodisiacs has always been part and parcel of the black magic rites.

Number One Witch: But London is by no means the only place in England where witchcraft is practised. In the small village of Burley, a 41-year-old mother of two school-age children claims that she is Britain's leading witch—and actually plans to set up a school of witchcraft.

Mrs. Sybil Leek, whose rambling house is filled with objects and books connected with witchcraft, believes that full knowledge of the occult would enable a person to control the world. According to her theory, the occult forces are neither good nor evil, but merely neutral. Their power can be transformed either into "good, white witchcraft" or "evil black magic."

Zany as this may sound, Mrs. Leek claims to have thousands of followers and "fellow witches," including several witch-doctors in Africa who correspond with her.

She also claims to have exorcised spirits and broken a 200-year-old curse that had plagued one of England's leading aristocratic families.

Entirely Legal: Mrs. Leek has not brushed up against the law as yet, since no complaints of any specific kind have been lodged against her. An ancient statute, prohibiting the practice of witchcraft, was eliminated from the lawbooks ten years ago.

"It seemed the logical thing to do at the time, getting rid of an archaic law—but sometimes, I wish they hadn't," is the opinion of Detective Inspector Charles McLean. "If the law still existed, we would be able to take action much sooner, and on our own judgment. The way things stand now, we have to wait until someone makes a legitimate complaint."

Nail Cure: But, since witchcraft and the occult are surrounded by fear, few people have gone to the authorities—until it has been too late to avert



Strange rites were practiced in this quiet, rural community. Many died on a crude altar in a hidden cave. The dead were desecrated. When the police stepped in they found that this fourteen year old farm-boy had been slaughtered by the evil cult.

trouble, or even tragedy.

In October of last year, 40-year-old Michael Fish was rushed to a hospital in Southampton. A two-inch nail had been driven into the top of his head. Surgeons—who operated on Fish immediately—said that had the nail gone in another fraction of an inch, it would have killed him.

When questioned on the circumstances that had led to the nail's insertion, Fish told doctors: "I don't want to talk about what happened."

Black Magic: But eventually the truth came out. The nail had been driven into the victim's head at a black magic ritual—and was supposed to be a headache cure!

Many of the witchcraft ceremonies in England take place in cemeteries or ancient, abandoned churches. The skeleton that was found on the altar of the church ruins in Clophill had been dug up from a nearby grave.

It was the tomb of a young girl who died in 1770. The cover stone weighed over 400 pounds, making it obvious that several adults had been involved in its removal.

"We are sure it was the work of one of the newly-formed covens in this area," a Clophill official told newsmen. A coven is a gathering of thirteen people who practice witchcraft, usually twelve female witches led by a warlock—the male equivalent.

Horror In Spain: One of the most hideous of all crimes performed during black magic rites was the sacrifice of a ten-year-old child in Spain. The ritual murder, which occurred last year, took place near San Salvador, a small village in Spain's desolate northern area.

To this day, police have been unable to identify the members of San

Salvador's devil cult, but the townspeople maintain they were "rich people with twisted minds from the estates in the south."

But, although its perpetrators are unknown, the facts of the crime itself are hideously clear.

Dark-eyed Maria Diaz, 10, was last seen alive on the dusty main street of the village in which she had lived all her life. Eye-witnesses say she accepted a ride in "a big, expensive car." One man was driving, two others were in the back seat. The little girl was never seen again.

All that was ever found was a torn piece of pink and white cloth, part of the dress she was wearing when she disappeared.

Roasted To Death: The peasant who found the tattered cloth remnant in an old, abandoned monastery also found the remains of a fire glowing on the crumbling altar. He had heard screams while tending his sheep across the valley—the echoes no doubt carried over the distance by the mountainsides.

But by the time he managed to reach the site of the ruins, everything was over.

"I heard cars driving off as I got near to Demon Mountain," he told police. "The screaming had stopped a little while before . . ."

Authorities searched the area for the child's corpse, but failed to find any trace of it. Any one of the thousands of potholes on Demon Mountain may be the place where the criminals hid the body.

Army troops, called in on the massive man-hunt, placed a guard over the building in which the child was tortured to death, and plans now call for the building's total destruction.

"Devil worshippers have used the

place from time to time for years," explains a local resident. "The only way to stop them is to destroy the evil place."

Control Impossible: But the destruction of one gathering place is hardly enough to stop or even deter the warped devil worshippers from continuing in their hideous practices. Unfortunately, there is little that the authorities—in Spain, or anywhere else in Europe—can do about the matter.

Continental authorities—including Herr Johannes Kruse—have pointed out that education, at the peasant level, might stop some of the witchcraft practices in rural areas. They are not, however, overly optimistic about it.

"Fear and secrecy are the two ruling factors," says sociologist Mongeat. "The superstitious peasant is too afraid of the 'witch' he thinks is persecuting him to report him to the authorities. Or perhaps he believes that only another 'witch' or 'sorcerer' can be powerful enough to fight back."

In the depraved, devil-cult groups, secrecy and the fear of social disgrace controls most would-be informers.

"A great many people get involved with satanists because they think it will be a new 'kick,'" continues the sociologist. "When they are faced with the full obscenity of the macabre rites, they are already too involved to be able to get out without the rest of the group threatening revenge."

But, whatever the reasons for their secrecy, it is evident that more and more people in Europe are becoming involved in black magic. And, unless the authorities can work out a new approach to the problem, it looks as though Europe's tide of witchcraft will continue to rise for many years to come.