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**SOCIETY**

Perhaps, the authors conclude, historians should focus less on the South and more on what William Faulkner called the North's "volitionless, almost helpless capacity and eagerness to believe anything about the South."

*Witchcraft: Off  
on a Technicality*

"Les procès de sorcellerie au Parlement de Paris (1565-1640)" [Sorcery trials in the Parlement of Paris (1565-1640)] by Alfred Soman, in *Annales—Economies, Sociétés, Civilisations* (vol. 32, no. 4, 1977), Librairie Armand Colin, 103 Boulevard Saint-Michel, 75240 Paris, France.

Witchcraft trials were common in France during the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. During the 17th century, however, the highest court in the land, the Parlement of Paris, began to reduce the sentences meted out to men and women convicted of sorcery.

According to most modern scholars, the Parlement's harsh attitude began to change only in 1624 when, after long association with Sorbonne theologians and Parisian freethinkers, the judges decreed that henceforth all sentences by lower courts entailing torture or execution be automatically subject to appeal. Some Western historians have argued that this more lenient judicial attitude reflected a "mental revolution" brought on by the dawn of scientific rationalism.

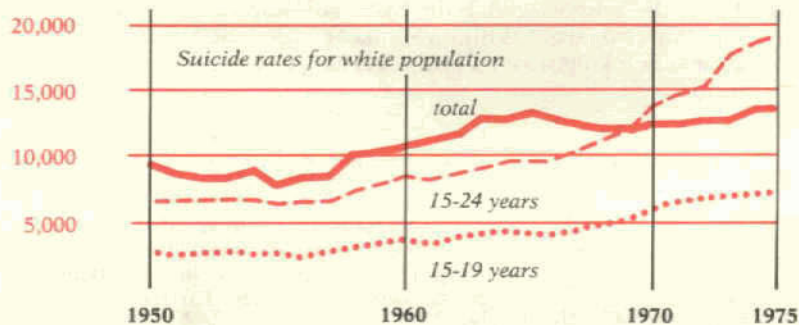
Not so, says Soman, a historian at the Centre National de Recherche Scientifique in Paris, who has examined newly available archives relating to 750 trials held between 1565 and 1640. In fact, he writes, the Parlement had treated sorcery with surprising clemency since the mid-1500s. Growing sophistication in jurisprudence, together with social changes—a lull in France's Catholic-Huguenot religious warfare, for example—affected the Parlement's treatment of sorcery more deeply than did changing intellectual theories. Finally, the men of the Parlement, "long before doubting the reality of sorcery itself," were concerned with the strict application of accepted legal methods—such as rules of evidence—in sorcery cases.

*Suicide and  
the Schools*

"Behind the Discipline Problem: Youth Suicide as a Measure of Alienation" by Edward A. Wynne, in *Phi Delta Kappan* (Jan. 1978), P.O. Box 789, Bloomington, Ind. 47401.

Many Americans now believe that lack of "discipline" is the public schools' biggest problem. Wynne, a professor of education at the University of Illinois, contends that the disorderliness of American adolescents masks a much deeper and more subtle malaise. For two decades, bellwether indices of social disorganization—youth drug and alcohol abuse, homicides, teen-age pregnancy—have been steadily

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Adapted, with permission, from Phi Delta Kappan. Sources: Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, Public Health Service, National Center for Education Statistics.

*Increases in the number of suicides among 15-19-year-olds account for much of the dramatic rise in the suicide rate among the total 15-24 age group.*

climbing. "Our children," Wynne contends, "are increasingly engaged in killing, hurting, and abusing themselves and others."

The most distressing statistic is the rise in suicide rates. In 1950, less than 3 youths in 100,000 in the 15-19 age group committed suicide; the figure in 1975 was nearly 8. As the 19th-century French sociologist Emile Durkheim demonstrated, suicide rates reveal more than the degree of individual unhappiness in society. They also reflect the health of a society's "integrating" institutions—such as schools.

Although not the only culprit, schools must bear a portion of the blame for the rising suicide rate, Wynne believes. Bureaucratic and impersonal, they tend more and more to segregate children from adults and from children of other ages. Indeed, he writes, they seem "designed to teach students how not to handle intimacy and, consequently, how to fear and flee from it."

### Live Right, Vote Left

"Professors Found To Be Liberal but Not Radical" by Everett C. Ladd and Seymour Martin Lipset, in *The Chronicle of Higher Education* (Jan. 16, 1978), 1717 Massachusetts Ave., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.

Conservatives who see U.S. universities as dominated by "liberal intellectuals" may have simplified the actual state of affairs—but not by much. According to an extensive study by Ladd and Lipset (whose continuing survey of faculty attitudes is published periodically in the *Chronicle*), academics are more liberal than other professionals (such as doctors and lawyers) but are "far from being radicals."

The liberal proclivities of American academics are most clearly pronounced in political matters. Some 57 percent are registered Democrats, 20 percent Republicans. In 1976, 66 percent of all professors voted for Democrat Jimmy Carter over Republican Gerald Ford—