

# Book Reviews

**Sex in Prison: The Mississippi Experiment with Conjugal Visiting,** Columbus B. Hopper. Pp. vii, 160. Baton Rouge, La., Louisiana State University Press, 1969. \$5.95.

Conjugal visiting seems like a humane idea, a daring innovation to improve prison conditions. We would expect it to be implemented in modern, liberal, and well-staffed correctional systems. Our first impulse is to determine the name of the great humanitarian and reformer who is responsible for this innovation. In Columbus Hopper's *Sex in Prison*, we discover that the great innovator is nameless and that conjugal visiting is *not* an innovation or even an experiment.

The book is a straightforward account of the conjugal visiting program at the country's only prison where it is practiced—the Mississippi State Penitentiary in Parchman, where it is not an innovation but a tradition. The introduction to the book includes a short illuminating survey of conjugal visiting all over the world. Then we are introduced to the Parchman penitentiary, the rules of conjugal visiting, and its history.

The picture that emerges is quite different from uneducated guesses about the "conjugal visiting experiment." The penitentiary turns out to be a large plantation, indistinguishable from many other plantations in the area. Conjugal visiting is largely regulated by the inmates themselves and is bound by the rules of a long tradition. The origins of this arrangement are impossible to trace; for a long time the practice has merely

been one part of routine visiting procedures.

How are we to view it? One context, suggested by Hopper, is the male inmate's sexual deprivation, which, long accepted as part of the general prison condition, is challenged here. A result of sexual deprivation, Hopper emphasizes, is prison homosexuality. This in turn leads to greater institutionalization and to breakdown of family relations. Hopper attempts to show that conjugal visits decrease the incidence of homosexual behavior, and he clearly advocates their use in other prison systems. As he points out in the introduction, the main barrier to instituting conjugal visits in the U.S. is public opposition. Thus, in the name of "public mores," prisoners are pushed further away from their community and from their normal life patterns. Hopper strongly urges us to examine conjugal visits and furlough practices in other countries, with the aim of introducing some changes in American policies.

We can also look at the Mississippi practice in a sociological-theoretical context. How did a Southern state, with no reputation for progressive correctional practices, become the only state to have such a liberal policy? Hopper gives us all the necessary information for formulating the answer. We can approach it in terms of the Parchman prison community and its unique nature. In a prison which is essentially a plantation and in which all the patterns of outside social life are preserved, the relationship between guards and inmates is different and close. This is the con-

text in which the custom was created. It started with visits by prostitutes, to keep the plantation workers happy, and evolved into its present form and respectability.

The book is clearly written, but it is somewhat apologetic in tone. Too often Hopper tries to convince us that the Mississippi prison system is becoming more "correctional" and more professionalized. Considering the unimpressive results produced by "correctionalized" and professionalized prison systems, we hope this will not happen.

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**The Future of the Juvenile Court: Implications for Correctional Manpower and Training**, *Ted Rubin and Jack F. Smith*. Pp. 67. Washington, D.C., Joint Commission on Correctional Manpower and Training, 1968. \$1.

This brief monograph is one of a series of helpful papers made available by the Joint Commission on Correctional Manpower and Training. Prepared by Ted Rubin and Jack F. Smith, who were at the time judge and referee, respectively, of the Denver Juvenile Court, the paper represents an approach by thoughtful practitioners to the analysis of some of the changes now taking place in the American juvenile court and their probable manpower and training implications. The emerging changes brought into focus are largely those in the court's jurisdiction and definition

of its function, the authors taking little reckon of the turbulence, turmoil, and pathology of American life which make delinquency and dependency inevitable and may go far toward finally determining the nature and scope of the manpower needs of the juvenile court and related services.

Nonetheless, the factors given consideration by Rubin and Smith are important and will also significantly affect the court's future. They can be summarized as (a) the looming trend toward narrowing the range of juvenile behaviors which should call official court intervention into play; (b) the continuing "representation explosion," which is creating a rapidly expanding need for legal manpower; and (c) the future course of decisions as to the court or noncourt auspices under which many services are to be offered.

Rubin and Smith tend to agree with most other students of the problem in their perception that "the juvenile court of the future may be seeing mainly cases of children alleged to have committed serious offenses, those who have continually repeated minor misbehaviors, or those for whom past attempts at informal dispositions have failed." Services to dependent and neglected children are by now fairly generally recognized as the responsibility of the community social service structure, with recourse to the courts when legal decision-making becomes necessary. Somewhat similar developments may take place regarding children involved in conduct illegal only for children (truancy, running away, etc.), though the authors seem less sure of this. They make a strong case for responsible intake screening based upon sound legal and social diagnosis but would place considerable emphasis upon court provision of "in-