

NEW JERSEY OPINION

Trenton's Policy On Sexuality Is Laissez-Faire

By ELIZABETH SADOWSKI

NEW JERSEY has been hung up lately on the subject of sex. Within the last year, the Legislature has grappled with issues such as:

¶Setting the age at which teenagers could legally consent to sexual relations.

¶Allowing each of the state's 567 municipalities to establish "combat zones," areas where sexually explicit publications and films could be sold and live sex shows presented.

¶Legalizing a phantasmagoria of sex practices — such as acts of incest involving those over the age of 16, sodomy and necrophilia — that the state had disallowed for the last 180 years on the ground that they were considered deviant and perverted.

¶Legalizing such socially popular forms of sexual activities as adultery, fornication, promiscuity and seduction resulting in pregnancy, activities that, although widely practiced, are not yet universally condoned by spouses and parents.

¶Reducing penalties for the sale of commercial, consumer-type sex (prostitution).

In revising its Criminal Code, New Jersey revolutionized the manner in which the state legally views the sexual conduct of its residents. It has given virtually free rein to all manner of sexual expression.

Last August, or a month before the new Criminal Code was to become effective, it was discovered that the code lowered, from 16 to 13, the legal age at which teenagers could consent to sexual relations with a person of any age.

An intense grass-roots brouhaha ensued with parents, teachers, school

New Jersey currently has legislation directed at controlling so-called "adult" book stores, using the borderline guide mandated by the United States Supreme Court to meet community-standards criteria.

The language of the new proviso is innocuous enough:

"Nothing contained herein shall be construed to prohibit a municipality from adopting, as part of its zoning ordinances, an ordinance permitting the sale of obscene material, in which event such sale shall be deemed legal."

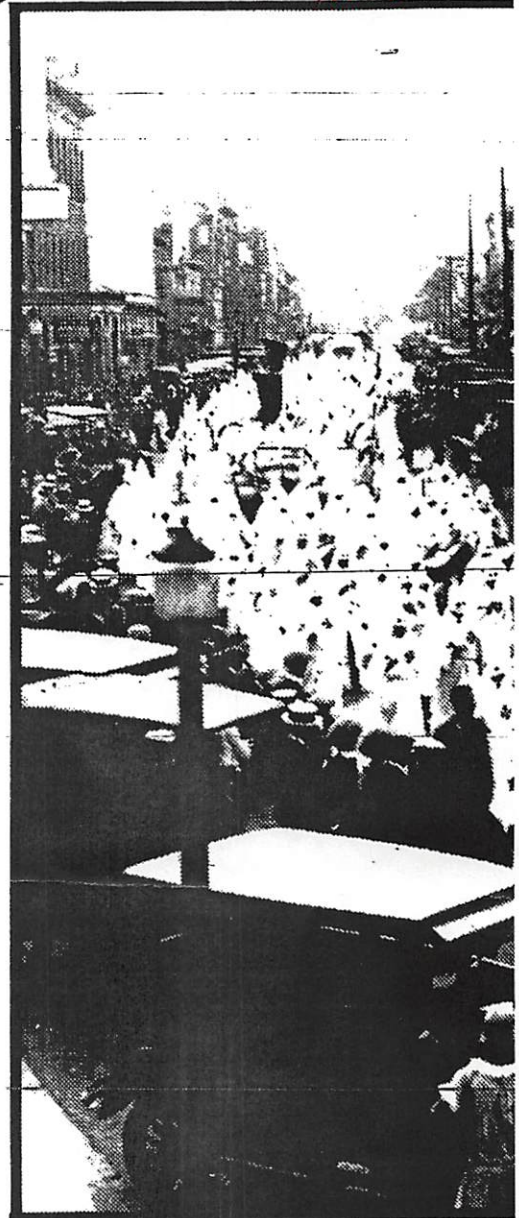
However, the Criminal Code redefines the meaning of "obscene material" thusly:

*"Obscene material means any description, narrative account, *display* or depiction of a specified anatomical area or specified sexual activity contained in, or consisting of, a picture or other representation, publication, sound recording, *live performance* or film, which by means of posing, composition, format or animated sensual details, emits sensuality with sufficient impact to concentrate prurient interest on the area of activity." (Asterisks denote new provisions.)*

Clearly, by redefining obscenity to include "live performance," what can legally be allowed in combat zones adds a new dimension to the potential recreational-sex pursuits of New Jerseyans.

Although there may be compelling legal considerations to establish the combat-zone mechanism that some say will be used to deter pornography merchants, the legislation revolutionizes legal sex for profit.

And now New Jersey is getting ready to cope with still another sex issue. The State Board of Education says that it



Members of the Ku Klux Klan march

The Beds

By JAN KING

THE community of West Hoboken no longer exists. But it did 50 years ago, when I was born there and it was the state headquarters of the Ku Klux Klan.

But both of us still exist, albeit in something less than our original prime condition.

Sometimes, I squeak a little around the shoulders and knees. In recent years, the Klan has been making

women on one nock, initiating Turnipi "Ma were le erson " But let "local burned night, the Kl their

An intense grass-roots brouhaha ensued, with parents, teachers, school boards, town fathers, law-enforcement authorities and religious leaders demanding to know why the change had been made without their knowledge or consent. Not only that, but legislators who voted for the provision disclaimed any knowledge of the change.

The age-of-consent issue was not so much a commentary on an albeit badly informed, but blithely acquiescent, Legislature as it was on the judicial establishment. It had seen the provision and approved it, but failed to bring it to anyone's attention.

Ideally, such a fundamental change in state-sanctioned teen-age sex mores should have been dealt with by consensus, either by referendum or by public debate and other open forums.

Although New Jerseyans were not asked for their opinion, opposition to the proviso was so intense, veteran

to cope with still another sex issue. The State Board of Education says that it wants to mandate the teaching of sex education in all public schools from kindergarten through the 12th grade. The announcement has brought opposition from several sectors, including the New Jersey School Boards Association.

Given the state's legal viewpoint and approval of teen-age sex, different sex practices and so on, the curriculums being formulated should prove interesting, since what is legal in New Jersey could hardly be prohibited from being taught in the state's school-rooms.

Films depicting homosexual acts are being shown in some college health classes and in sex-education courses. The National Gay Task Force, a leading exponent of homosexual rights and interests, has placed its stamp of approval on "Learning About Sexuality," a textbook available to sex educators through the Educational Foundation for Human Sexuality at Montclair State College.

Two years ago, another group, the National Organization for Women, detailed its position on "lesbians and the schools." NOW is calling for lesbian clubs, counselors and courses in high schools.

The rationale for mandated sex education revolves around two of the most compelling social issues of the day: Accelerating teen-age pregnancy and venereal-disease rates.

According to Dr. Sol Gordon, a prominent sex-education expert, there is no proof that the teen-age maternity rate could be reduced by a dedicated sex-education program in the schools. This was echoed in a report by Susan N. Wilson, head of the Family Life Committee of the State Board of Education and a leading proponent of mandated sex education.

Dr. Rhoda Lorand, a New York psychotherapist and an authority on sex education, takes a more cautionary approach. She says that inaccurate information is being disseminated in classes on V.D., and she is concerned that no data are given on the painful and dangerous V.D. strains, such as genital herpes (which is not curable), as well as the penicillin-resistant strains.

According to Dr. Lorand, giving V.D. information to children of 10, 11, 12 and 13 is questionable because it is unreasonable to expect youngsters to appear at clinics for vaginal examinations and cervical smears.

In a paper entitled "The Betrayal of Youth," Dr. Lorand quotes William V. Shannon, a former member of The New York Times editorial board. He called on teachers to "halt their headlong flight from intellectual and moral standards and make schools once again places of challenge and decorum."

Mr. Shannon might very well have been referring to the current climate of sexual mores in the State of New Jersey.

Elizabeth Sadowski of Freehold is coordinator of New Jersey Majority Women, which has about 5,000 members in the state.

the shoulders and knees. In recent months, the Klan has been making some noises in Barnegat, Atlantic City, Jamesburg, Millville and Flemington.

Nothing major, just a lily white cross-burning or a pathetic little parade from time to time. It's hard to believe that the Klan once rode higher in New Jersey than in many a Southern state.

According to a survey published in "The Ku Klux Klan in The City," a book by Kenneth T. Jackson, some 60,000 New Jerseyans joined the secret society between the two great wars. That's a lot more than ever donned bed linens in Alabama, Louisiana, Florida, Mississippi, Virginia or the Carolinas.

Mr. Jackson wrote that the Klan's "bulwarks" in the Garden State included Monmouth County, "where the Sabbath was unmarred by bathing, vehicular traffic or secular activity and where the Klan's evangelists found their warmest welcome." Also, Jersey City, Hoboken and New Brunswick.

In the last-named city, 736 men and

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New Criminal Code revolutionizes way state legally views conduct of residents

state legislators said, that no issue within the last decade had earned them so much constituent abuse.

The torrent of petitions and telephone calls brought the matter to a somewhat ignominious conclusion. To pacify the irate citizenry, several bills were expediently put together for consideration.

In the Assembly, two legislators, Barbara A. Curran, Republican of Summit, and John H. Froude, Democrat of South River, pleaded with their colleagues to reject a remedial bill, asserting that it did not solve the problem. So did a former member of the Senate, Martin L. Greenberg, Democrat of East Orange. All three voted against the measure.

It seems that, in the pressurized attempt to bring the age of consent back to 16, the Legislature had legalized sex for anyone under 13 and opened up to criminal charges children of 15 and 16 who had sexual intercourse and those who engaged in heavy petting.

Still another bill was passed. Now, although criminal charges can be initiated for sex under 13, the age of consent is still 13 so long as the partner in intercourse is less than four years older.

Another controversial provision in the Criminal Code centers on the authority given to the state's municipalities to establish so-called "combat zones," a term taken from the Boston experience. Areas where pornographic material could be sold would be set aside, even though such sales would be illegal elsewhere. The "zone" in downtown Boston quickly became a magnet for violent crimes and criminal activity.

Religious Nature of Christmas Noted

There seems to be a need at The New York Times to bring to the attention of its readers each year the misguided holiday habits of certain Christians and Jews who have personal identity problems.

Every year at this time, one journalist or another will, through "case history" reporting, uncover for the world to see the "revelation" that intermarried, uninformed or un-Jewish-educated "Jewish" families are celebrating Christmas.

I truly feel sorry for the individuals quoted in Louise Saul's article ["For Non-Christians, It's Christmas, Too," Dec. 2]. Their comments, rationalizations and unfortunate misstatements of what they believe to be fact need not be reviewed or repeated, since the Jewish people has heard the assimilationist words too often before.

What I do take exception to is editorializing on behalf of the author, to wit: "Rather than bring Christmas customs into their home, many Jewish families join in the celebration of Hanukkah, a relatively unimportant Jewish holiday."

I submit that the author's rationale and research are defective. If a family celebrates Hanukkah, it is difficult to believe that its motivation is negative (because it doesn't want to celebrate Christmas). It would be tantamount to saying that Christians celebrate Easter because they don't want to bring Passover customs into their homes. How absurd!

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