

however, if the idea prevailed that because visits are a privilege that they are permitted merely as a generosity on the part of the prison officials. On the contrary, visits rank with food or medicine as meeting basic needs of inmates and as leading toward their reformations.<sup>7</sup>

In the past, California prisons have attempted various temporary projects which focused on the prisoner's outside contacts, but such programs have been relatively few and far between.<sup>8</sup> Finally, in 1968 the California Correctional Institution at Tehachapi began an experimental program in extended family visiting for selected prisoners. Even though family-conjugal visiting as a correctional technique has existed for more than fifty years, the Department spent two years testing and recording the results of the family visiting program.<sup>9</sup> With all indications being positive, the California correctional system began in 1971 to slowly institute a limited form of special family visitation.

In response to the interest surrounding visitation, a bill was introduced (AB 2063) which provided for the majority of state prisoners to have private visits up to 48 hours (minimum of 24 hours). Prisoners would be eligible three times a year for this special visitation with families and friends. The legislation was designed to establish visiting as a right and to allow more prisoners to receive outside contact, thus furthering the possibilities of successful parole. Unfortunately, the legislative proponents of conjugal visiting seemed more interested in utilizing the bill as a publicity mechanism than pushing it seriously. The visitation bill ("sex bill") quickly developed into a highly controversial issue which barely received passage in the assembly's policy and fiscal committees, even though both committees are "lib-

7. American Prison Association, *Handbook on the Inmate Relationship with Persons from Outside the Adult Correctional Institution*, 1953, p. 26.

8. Norman Fenton, *The Prisoner's Family* (Palo Alto: Pacific Books, 1959).

9. D. F. Miller, "Inmate Attitudes and Views of Two Experimental Programs," *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Criminology*, vol. 14, no. 1 (March, 1971).

eral." It was evident that it was doomed unless further amendments were accepted. The author consented to take a less radical approach. However, he was, unwilling to expend further energies on behalf of the bill. It was soundly defeated after a jocular barroom session on the sexual implications of family visiting.

### *Adjustment Centers*

Legislative reaction to the issue of the Adult Authority's administration of the indeterminate sentence was artificial and contrived, dealing with the politics, rather than the substance of prison reform. Community groups, the United Prisoners' Union, and prison lawyers were, however, able to persuade sympathetic legislators to introduce more substantive legislation to deal with the extremely important issue of the abuses of prison disciplinary procedures and the "adjustment center."

The use of solitary confinement cells almost invariably means that the prisoner is sentenced to additional months and often years of confinement. The Adult Authority is very unlikely to parole men so confined because it considers such confinement evidence of their failure to be "rehabilitated." Psychological studies have indicated that the monotony of prolonged solitary confinement and the concomitant extreme sensory deprivation cause mental deterioration in most subjects. In November, 1971, a Department representative testified that some 850 prisoners were confined in these small cages. However, an extensive report commissioned by the state disclosed that 1,224 men were so confined on January 7, 1971, which, according to the report, is a higher percentage than other states.<sup>10</sup>

Many California prisoners are sentenced to life imprisonment under the indeterminate sentence law. Those in the adjustment

10. Robert E. Keldgord (program director), *Coordinated California Corrections*, vol. 1, "Institutions," (Sacramento: Board of Corrections, Human Relations Agency, 1971).