COMMENTS

DIVORCE REFORM—ONE STATE’S SOLUTION

Although New York has long been a leader in reform legislation, it has also had one of the most ineffective divorce laws in the nation. Therefore, it was not unrealistic to hope that when New York recently revised its divorce laws the new product would serve as a model for future reforms in other jurisdictions. While the new law as finally enacted is defective in several respects, its provisions reflect an attempt to accommodate the basic reform trends in current divorce law. This comment investigates briefly the evolution of governmental controls of divorce, the American tradition prior to the New York reform, and the implications of the procedures finally adopted by that state.

Evolution of Divorce Law and Policy

The development of the basic elements of the system of divorce law prevalent in the United States can be traced primarily to Roman and early Christian antecedents. The earliest rudiments of current principles appeared in Roman society prior to the Empire. There the method of termination of marriage depended upon whether ceremonial formalities accompanied the inception of the marriage. Since marriage was a consensual relationship not controlled by the state, a marriage based on consent alone without the appropriate ceremony was dissoluble at the will of either party. If the marriage

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1 See 2 J. Bryce, Studies in History and Jurisprudence 786 (1901) [hereinafter cited as Bryce]. See generally R. de Pomerai, Marriage Past, Present and Future 168-81 (1930) [hereinafter cited as de Pomerai]; J. Lichtenberger, Divorce 74-99 (1931) [hereinafter cited as Lichtenberger]; 3 E. Westermarck, History of Human Marriage 319-77 (1925); E. Westermarck, A Short History of Marriage 286-98 (1926) [hereinafter cited as Westermarck].

2 Bryce 800-01; Lichtenberger 54-59; Thwing, The Family 39-40 (1913) [hereinafter cited as Thwing]; Westermarck 286-87.

There were two types of binding marriage. Confarreatio, originating in an early religious ceremony, was the formal right that placed the patrician wife in the power (manus) of her husband. The plebian marriage was initially a free association with no legal incidents, but after the granting of citizenship to the plebians in 455 B.C., they could contract legal marriages by ceremony in the form of a symbolic sale, coemptio. de Pomerai 170-73.

3 Bryce 798-99.

4 Id. at 799-800; de Pomerai 173.
were accompanied by the prescribed ritual, a husband could sever the union only upon a finding of fault by a family council.\(^5\) Later, consensual dissolution and perhaps even dissolution at the will of either party was extended to ritual marriages.\(^6\) By the time of the Empire, the ritualistic aspects of marriage were no longer required, with the result that the relationship was terminable at will.\(^7\)

By the beginning of the fifth century, the Christian church had begun to exert its influence on the prevailing divorce laws. While marriage could still be terminated at will,\(^8\) capricious dissolution in the absence of fault was subject to penal sanctions. As the influence of the church became predominant, marriage was subsumed as a sacrament of the church, and the law of divorce underwent a fundamental change. Unlike the more liberal Roman law, the church viewed marriage as indissoluble.\(^9\) Yet, the prerequisites to the formation of a valid marriage became so complex that a scholar could find an impediment to the sufficiency of almost any union.\(^10\) In addition to the theoretical indissolubility of marriage, spouses were under an affirmative duty to cohabit.\(^11\) While relief from this obligation could be had in the form of a divorce *mense et thoro*, which is similar to a judicial separation, the marriage bond itself was not dissolved,\(^12\) thereby preventing remarriage.\(^13\) In contrast to the Roman law under which absolute divorce could be based on the will of one spouse, the duty to cohabit could not be waived by

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\(^5\) 2 Bryce 800; De Pomerai 171. Divorce in earlier times was the right of the husband, and the acceptable causes seem to have been limited to adultery, preparing poisons, and falsification of keys. Under the Twelve Tables the right became reciprocal. Lichtenberger 57.

\(^6\) Thwing 39-40; Westermarck 287. When first allowed, the right to dissolve the union seems to have been rigidly circumscribed by the censors and public opinion. See 2 Bryce 800-01.

\(^7\) Lichtenberger 57-58.

\(^8\) 2 Bryce 803-05; De Pomerai 173-78.

\(^9\) 2 Bryce 825-26. See generally T. Bouscaren, A. Ellis, & F. Korth, Canon Law (4th ed. 1939). Although theoretically indissoluble, see Canon 1013, a valid marriage may be terminated under two exceptions. If the marriage is not consummated, it may be dissolved by papal dispensation. Canon 1119. If a married person converts and his or her spouse makes practice of the new religion difficult, the first marriage may be dissolved by remarriage under the Pauline privilege if neither spouse was baptized at the time of the first marriage, see Corinthians 7:12-15, or by papal authority if one of the spouses in the first marriage was baptized and one was not.

\(^10\) E.g., 2 Bryce 826-27; De Pomerai 179; Westermarck 290.

\(^11\) Canon 1128; see Westermarck 289.

\(^12\) 2 Bryce 827; Lichtenberger 89.

\(^13\) 2 Bryce 827; De Pomerai 178-78; Lichtenberger 89.
consent. Separation required a finding of fault on the part of one spouse in the form of heresy, adultery, or cruelty.\textsuperscript{14}

While there is some dispute as to the binding effect on the Church of England of decisions made in Rome,\textsuperscript{15} the system of matrimonial law of the Roman church was enforced in England's ecclesiastical courts even after Henry VIII assumed authority over marriage and divorce in 1532.\textsuperscript{16} Although absolute divorce became available through action of Parliament after 1669,\textsuperscript{17} the theory of indissoluble marriage was enforced by ecclesiastical tribunals until the Matrimonial Causes Act of 1857.\textsuperscript{18} The system of ecclesiastical courts, which was not terminated in England until 1857, was in effect during the period from the settlement of the English colonies in America until their independence. Consequently, the law of that period was arguably part of the common law incorporated into the law of the several states.\textsuperscript{19} However, since this type of court was never utilized in this country, the only courts with jurisdiction over marital causes were statutorily created.\textsuperscript{20} Apparently influenced by new social conditions and ideas of the reformation, colonial legislators provided for absolute divorce rather than restricting relief to judicial separations.\textsuperscript{21} Although the form of relief was changed, the principles on

\textsuperscript{14} 2 Bryce 827; see de Pomerai 178-79.

\textsuperscript{15} Compare C. Duggan, Twelfth Century Decretal Collections (1963), with F. Maitland, Roman Canon Law in the Church of England (1908).

\textsuperscript{16} It has been said that during the reign of Queen Elizabeth absolute divorce for adultery was available but that this position was contracted in Foliamb's Case in 1602 wherein only divorce a mense et thoro was allowed. 91 Eng. Rep. 738 (K.B.). This view of divorce was retained despite Henry VIII's assumption of authority over marriage and divorce. See 24 Hen. VIII (1533); 1 W. Holdsworth, History of English Law 588-92 (1922) [hereinafter cited as Holdsworth].

\textsuperscript{17} Surprisingly, considering the source of Henry's difficulties with the church in Rome, see McCurdy, Divorce—A Suggested Approach, 9 Vand. L. Rev. 685, 686 (1956), the first absolute divorce through Parliament was not until the case of Lord deRoos in 1669. See 1 J. Bishop, Marriage, Divorce and Separation § 1425 (1891) [hereinafter cited as Bishop].

\textsuperscript{18} 1 Holdsworth 622-23; see 2 F. Pollock & F. Maitland, History of English Law 393-94 (2d ed. 1923).

\textsuperscript{19} See 1 Bishop §§ 116-49.

\textsuperscript{20} 1 Bishop § 116; 2 Bryce 830.

\textsuperscript{21} See W. Goodsell, A History of the Family as a Social and Educational Institution 341-82 (1938); G. Haskins, Law and Authority in Early Massachusetts 195 (1960). Absolute divorce was not granted in the middle and southern colonies until after the revolution. See Goodsell, supra at 380-82. New York serves as an example of the effect of the English influence in these colonies. As a state which had been ruled by the Dutch and English, its policies shifted with its colonial masters. There were absolute divorces under the Dutch; but except for a few divorces granted by the royal governor, apparently under the misapprehension that Dutch law still applied,
which relief was based were not. The nonwaivable fault grounds and defenses which developed for judicial separations in the ecclesiastical courts became the colonial "common law" of divorce.22

After the removal of marriage from the exclusive jurisdiction of the church, the courts generally held that the relationship resulted from a civil contract formed by the consent of the parties. However, under the new view, the lack of a theoretical justification for a state's disallowing termination by consent caused some difficulty.23 In 1852 Bishop suggested a basis in theory when he contended that marriage was a status and not a contract,24 a view which gained substantial judicial recognition.25 Despite the groping for a satisfactory rationalization for governmental sanctioning of divorces, the judiciary never doubted the necessity of such control.26 However, in the view of Justice Story, even though state approval of a dissolution could be made prerequisite to its validity, governmental power to control divorce was not absolute.27 Because some contractual aspects of marriage could be found, Story speculated that termination of marriage in the absence of consent or fault might be unconstitutional as an impairment of the obligation of contract. This idea was refuted, however, in Maynard v. Hill28 when the Supreme Court upheld a legislative divorce granted to a domiciliary whose nonresident spouse had not been at fault and from whom no consent had been obtained.29

none were granted under English rule. Responding to public pressure, the legislature provided for absolute divorce after independence. See notes 63 & 64 infra and accompanying text. On the other hand, with only slight exception, South Carolina, another English colony in this class, provided no absolute divorce until 1950. See note 31 infra. 22 See Burch v. Burch, 195 F.2d 799 (3d Cir. 1952); McCurdy, supra note 17, at 685; Neuner, Proposed New Techniques in the Law of Divorce—The Compromise Solution, 28 IOWA L. REV. 272 (1943); Silving, Divorce Without Fault, 29 IOWA L. REV. 527 (1944). 23 See Dartmouth College v. Woodward, 17 U.S. (4 Wheat.) 517, 694 (1819) (Story, J., dissenting); Maguire v. Maguire, 7 Dana 181 (Ky. Ch. 1838); Wood v. Wood, 2 Paige 108, 111 (N.Y. Ch. 1830); 1 Kent, Commentaries 417-18 (12th ed. 1896). See also 1 Blackstone, Commentaries 433, 442 (5th ed. 1773). 24 See 1 Bishop § 34. 25 Id. §§ 11, 34. 26 See, e.g., Maynard v. Hill, 125 U.S. 190, 205 (1888). 27 Story suggested that fault of the divorced party was required. Dartmouth College v. Woodward, 17 U.S. (4 Wheat.) 517, 694 (1819) (dissenting opinion). See 1 Kent, Commentaries 418 (12th ed. 1896). 28 125 U.S. 190 (1888). 29 The Court indicated that the divorce could have had no effect on vested property rights although it would terminate dower and curtesy. Id. at 216. However, the Supreme Court subsequently decided that support rights are not terminated by an ex
Granting that the state can terminate a marriage without the consent or fault of the party against whom a petition is filed, a more difficult question occurs as to the circumstances under which a state should grant a divorce. Most commentators find an answer by correlating the state's interest with the functional status of each individual marriage: it is in the state's interest to allow termination of a marriage that has ceased to provide social stability and thereby has failed to fulfill the purposes for which it was established. Various

_ parte_ decree of a jurisdiction other than the domicile of the unrepresented spouse, whether or not those rights were reduced to judgment in a separation action prior to the _ex parte_ decree. See Estin v. Estin, 334 U.S. 541 (1948); Vanderbilt v. Vanderbilt, 354 U.S. 416 (1957). These decisions overrule the language in _Maynard_ as to jurisdiction to terminate property rights, but not as to power to dissolve marriages.

Although there is dictum in an old leading case to the effect that marriage may be terminated without the fault or consent of either party if in the public interest, see _Maguire v. Maguire_, 7 Dana 181, 184 (Ky. Ch. 1838), no holding on this precise issue has been found.

Absolute prohibition of divorce has generally proven undesirable. In South Carolina, where divorce was prohibited until 1950 except for a brief period during reconstruction, disgruntled spouses merely migrated to nearby states or established illicit liaisons. See _P. Jacobson, American Marriage and Divorce_ 109-12 (1959) [hereinafter cited as _Jacobson_]; _Brearley, A Note Upon Migratory Divorce of South Carolinians_, 2 LAW & CONTEMP. PROB. 329 (1935). In "divorceless" England where migration was not so easy, there was widespread adultery, desertion, and bigamy. _Mueller, Inquiry into the Status of a Divorceless Society_, 18 U. PIT. L. REV. 545 (1957); _see_ _Rheinstein, The Law of Divorce and the Problem of Marriage Stability_, 9 VAND. L. REV. 633, 649-51 (1956). Furthermore, there is nothing to indicate that the welfare of children, sometimes offered as a justification of prohibition, is protected by such a policy. That children are adversely affected by divorce seems established, _see_ _J. Despert, Children of Divorce_ (1955); _W. Goode, After Divorce_ 310 (1956), but a separation may affect them more adversely and so may a continued unhappy home, though adequate evidence is lacking, _see_ _Goode, supra_ at 310-11.

In fact, provided some grounds are available, the restrictiveness of grounds bears no significant relationship to the _rate_ of or desire for divorce. _See_ _Lichtenberger_ 171-88. Although there may be some question of the efficacy of these criteria to measure actual marriage breakdown, the limited information available indicates that the effect of other social and economic variables greatly overshadows the effect of variation in divorce laws. _See_ _Rheinstein, supra_ at 658-64. Therefore, it is more probable that the phenomena of family instability and a relaxed divorce law were both products of more basic economic and social changes rather than that the relaxed divorce law created a higher rate of instability. _See_ _Jacobson_ 88-96. However, it is important to note that the U.S.S.R. was forced by family instability and juvenile delinquency to replace restrictions on divorce after a period of almost complete freedom of dissolution. _See_ _J. Hazard & I. Shapiro, The Soviet Legal System_, pt. 3, at 99-102 (1962).

phrases have been employed to describe the marriage at this stage, among them "dead,"33 "broken,"34 and "permanently disrupted."35 However, there is no agreement in defining the status so labeled.36 Recommendations for nonfault legal, as opposed to sociological, criteria have generally fallen into two categories: separation for a period and failure of conciliation procedures.37 Strong appeals also have been made by eminent authorities for the establishment of "socialized," nonadversary, consolidated family courts having jurisdiction over all actions in order to facilitate more effective employment of the conciliation approach.38

The separation period approach is based on the premise that a lengthy separation serves both as a check on capricious dissolution of marriages and as an indication that the marriage is sufficiently dis-

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33 1966 JLC REPORT 21-23.
34 Kohut, supra note 32, at 9.
35 McCurdy, supra note 17, at 706.
36 For a survey of various attempts at definition, see Kohut, supra note 32, at 13-25.
37 See notes 39-56 infra and accompanying text. Another nonfault ground that has received some support from the commentators is incompatibility. See Rutman, supra note 32, at 192. This ground, however, has received very limited official acceptance and is presently a recognized ground in only two states, New Mexico and Oklahoma. N.M. STAT. ANN. § 22-7-1 (1954); OKLA. STAT. ANN. tit. 12, § 1271 (1961). But see Rutman, supra note 32, at 190. One of these jurisdictions has considerably weakened the nonfault basis of the ground by allowing consideration of recriminatory defenses in the discretion of the court. Compare Pavletich v. Pavletich, 50 N.M. 224, 174 P.2d 826 (1946), with Clark v. Clark, 54 N.M. 364, 225 P.2d 147 (1950).

The Children's Court of Conciliation in Los Angeles has demonstrated that conciliation procedures need not be associated with a consolidated family court system in order to be successful. See Foster, Conciliation and Counseling in the Courts in Family Law Cases, 41 N.Y.U.L. REV. 353, 364-67 (1966). The new New York conciliation machinery in divorce cases, which is to be considered in detail below, was made part of the Supreme Court, a court of general jurisdiction, rather than being annexed to the state's Family Court which does not have divorce jurisdiction. See notes 120-21 infra and accompanying text.
rupted to establish that the state's goal of preserving a stable social unit is no longer attainable.\textsuperscript{39} It is argued that such a criterion covertsly recognizes consent—the factor that is the basis for most divorces anyway—and, therefore, provides a much more reliable indicator of the extent of disharmony in a particular marriage than is provided by a fault requirement.\textsuperscript{40} Separation period grounds are no longer unique, having been adopted in fifteen states with the requisite periods varying from one to ten years.\textsuperscript{41} Most of the states allowing divorces on this basis have abandoned the fault principle at least to the extent of refusing to recognize the common law defense of recrimination.\textsuperscript{42} The courts of other jurisdictions in which abandonment will not satisfy this ground consider fault in ascertaining the voluntary nature of the separation.\textsuperscript{43} Those states requiring voluntary separation have provided nonfault relief to approximately eighty five or ninety percent of those persons seeking divorce, but have left fault grounds as the only alternative to the ten or fifteen


\textsuperscript{40} See Rheinstein, supra note 31, at 645-46; Rutman, supra note 32, at 192; Wadlington, supra note 39, at 81-87; Note, 97 U. Pa. L. Rev. 705, 706-09 (1949); Note, 1959 Wash. U.L.Q. 189, 194-95, 199.


\textsuperscript{42} See, e.g., cases cited note 39 supra. In considering petitions alleging satisfaction of the statutory separation period, some courts inquire into fault only as an aid in evaluating whether conciliation is possible. See Pearson v. Pearson, 77 Nev. 76, 80, 359 P.2d 386, 388-89 (1961); Smith v. Smith, 54 R.I. 236, 172 A. 323 (1934).

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percent whose spouses will not consent.\textsuperscript{44} Finally, some states permit conversion of separation decrees into decrees for absolute divorce by either spouse after a specified period of continued separation.\textsuperscript{45} Apparently the premise of this procedure is that after spouses have lived apart for the requisite period, the proof of a broken marriage is sufficient to discount any interest the state had in its continuation.\textsuperscript{46} As in the case of separation by agreement, this conversion procedure seems necessarily to contain an element of consent since a spouse agreeing to a judicial separation would probably have knowledge of the statutory conversion feature.

Some commentators and a recent English proposal have gone further toward abolishing fault than any of the above procedures and have recommended that marriage disharmony evidenced by separation or certain other indicia be the \textit{only} ground for divorce.\textsuperscript{47} The English proposal provides that divorce should be possible even in the absence of mutual consent.\textsuperscript{48}

A second criteria recommended as a determinant of marital breakdown is the failure of attempts at conciliation through formal procedures. This criteria is usually denoted mandatory or compulsory conciliation.\textsuperscript{49} Advocates of this standard argue that not only are fault grounds inadequate, but that separation periods, in effect, leave the decision of whether the union is severed entirely to the spouses. To give legal significance to a decision so made, a couple merely has to live apart for the requisite period, while with the assistance of counseling their marriage might have been preserved.\textsuperscript{50}

\begin{footnotesize}
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\item \footnote{Between 1946 and 1950 only 14.8\% of divorces were contested. JACOBSON 120. More recent New York figures show an even smaller percentage of contested actions. From July 1, 1946, to July 1, 1956, only 7\% were contested. In the final year of the period, 1955-56, the figure was 9\%. 1966 JLC REPORT 21-23.}
\item \footnote{See ALA. CODE tit. 34, § 22 (1) (1959) (four years); COLO. REV. STAT. ANN. § 46-1-1 (1964) (three years); MNN. STAT. ANN. § 518.06 (Supp. 1966) (five years under limited divorce and two years under separate maintenance decree); TENN. CODE ANN. § 36-802 (Supp. 1966) (two years—in discretion of court up to two years); UTAH CODE ANN. § 30-3-1 (Supp. 1965) (three years); WIS. STAT. ANN. § 247.07 (Supp. 1967) (five years).}
\item \footnote{See A DIVORCE LAW FOR CONTEMPORARY SOCIETY, REPORT OF GROUP APPOINTED BY ARCHBISHOP OF CANT. IN JAN. 1964, at 33, 41, 57 (1964).}
\item \footnote{See generally Foster, supra note 38; Lawless, \textit{Compulsory Conciliation for New York?}, 14 BUFFALO L. REV. 457 (1965).}
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Other commentators contend that mandatory conciliation counseling would be ineffective because individuals react adversely to attempts at forced cooperation.\textsuperscript{61} The validity of these objections will be considered in detail in evaluating the New York procedure.

Conciliation procedures have been established by statute in eleven states and the District of Columbia.\textsuperscript{62} Further, two states have abandoned such structures after their application proved unsuccessful.\textsuperscript{63} The two basic types of conciliation procedures, mandatory and voluntary, are exemplified by the provisions adopted in the state of Wisconsin and the city of Los Angeles. Wisconsin requires, as a precondition to the filing of a petition for divorce, a report from a conciliation commissioner that mediation was attempted.\textsuperscript{64} Los Angeles, on the other hand, maintains a separate tribunal which initiates conciliation procedures on the petition of either spouse, irrespective of whether other matrimonial relief is sought.\textsuperscript{65} While in both jurisdictions attendance of one spouse can be compelled if the other seeks conciliation,\textsuperscript{66} the Wisconsin mandatory procedure can be employed to compel both spouses to participate in the conciliation procedure although neither desires to do so.\textsuperscript{67}

Delay, a common factor in both the separation period ground and conciliation procedures, is most objectionable to the divorce peti-
tioner. Historically, provisions in divorce laws prohibiting, limiting, or protracting a grant of relief have had their effectiveness reduced by evasion devices. If only restrictive methods of divorce are provided, spouses simply desert, seek a divorce in another jurisdiction, or find other means of dissolving the marriage. Also, if separation periods are required for some grounds and not for others, spouses tend to choose the statutory provisions without a separation period even though the alternative necessitates admittance of less socially acceptable conduct. Even if a state adopts a divorce law structure which forecloses evasion within the state, consenting spouses can secure a divorce in another state with less stringent prerequisites. Divorces achieved in this manner generally must be recognized by the domiciliary state under the full faith and credit clause of the Constitution.

Two approaches limiting migratory evasion of divorce law have been attempted. First, efforts have been made to amend the Constitution to allow federal control. Divergent state policies concerning divorce and the absence of a pressing urgency on a national scale

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88 Of the jurisdictions having a combination of separation period grounds and fault grounds, without separation periods, most have a much higher percentage of decrees granted on the basis of fault than on separation periods. The following data, which includes only those states in the reporting area for the Census Bureau, graphically demonstrates this conclusion:

<table>
<thead>
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<th>State</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Adultery</th>
<th>Cruelty</th>
<th>Desertion</th>
<th>Nonsupport</th>
<th>-Other</th>
<th>Not Stated</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Idaho</td>
<td>2,548</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>2,194</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>112</td>
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<tr>
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<td>5,970</td>
<td>1,100</td>
<td>2,400</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6,760</td>
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<td>2,150*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>7,640</td>
<td>270</td>
<td>6,760</td>
<td>2,130*</td>
<td>330</td>
<td>330</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>4,550</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>3,840</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>340</td>
<td>210</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| States with Separation Periods
| Alabama        | 12,380| 440      | 6,780   | 2,280     | 40         | 100    |
| Tennessee      | 9,500 | 80       | 6,660   | 2,280     | 40         | 80     | 60        |
| Utah           | 2,460 | 2        | 1,686   | 70        | 82         | 62     | 558       |

* [Includes 1,960 decrees granted after a period of separation.] See 3 Vital Statistics of the United States, Table 2-19 (1962).

89 See notes 22-35 infra and accompanying text.

have apparently defeated these attempts.61 Also, case precedent has rendered futile unilateral efforts by a state to stop migratory divorce by its domiciliaries; for it has been held that where both parties appear and collateral objection to the finding of domicile is barred in the rendering state by res judicata, the decree cannot be attacked in any state.62 Finally, no uniform law would seem to be able to satisfy all of the various policies of the several states.63

From the brief outline provided here, it can be observed that fault, which was introduced as a ground for divorce in Roman law and became the basic concept under the influence of canon law, has lost its exclusive status, and consent, limited by separation periods and conciliation procedure, is frequently being introduced. Evasion, intra- and interstate, is a threat, however, to effective implementation of such reforms.

HISTORY AND SUBSTANCE OF NEW YORK DIVORCE REFORM

Following a period of over one hundred years as colony and state during which no judicial procedure for divorce was available,64 New York finally granted divorce jurisdiction to its equity courts in 1787. The enabling statute was in some ways more restrictive than its ecclesiastical predecessors, for adultery was specified as the only ground for dissolution.65 As a result of legislative inaction, the substantive grounds for divorce remained unchanged until 1966.66

Nurtured by the existence of this single basis for termination

61 See Lichttenberger 187-209. The rate of migratory divorce probably amounts to no more than three to five percent annually. Jacobson 109. See also Currie, supra note 60, at 68.
63 See 2 C. Vernier, American Family Laws 7 (1932). Ten states have adopted the Uniform Divorce Recognition Act; only two of these took the action subsequent to the time when the full effect of the Sherrer decision became known. Of those states employing the format of the uniform law, several have applied restrictive qualifications to the original provisions. See 9A Uniform Laws Annotated 437 (1965). Withdrawal of the law is under consideration by the commissioners. See H. Foster & D. Freed, Law of the Family—New York 54 (Supp. 1965) [hereinafter cited as Foster & Freed]; Note, 16 Hastings L.J. 121 (1965).
65 See N.Y. Sess. Laws 1787, ch. 69. Although theoretically power remained in the legislature to grant divorces, no such case has been found; and in the 1846 Constitution, the courts were granted exclusive jurisdiction. See N.Y. Const. art. 1, § 9 (1846) (now art. 1, § 9) (no divorce to he granted except by due judicial proceeding).
of the marriage status, intrastate evasion devices reached their ultimate development in New York.67 A discontented spouse could obtain a dissolution if his marriage partner had disappeared for at least five years,68 had been found to be incurably insane for a five year period or impotent,69 or had been finally sentenced to life imprisonment.70 In practice, the courts increased the availability of annulment by interpreting fraud in the inducement of a marriage promise in a manner similar to that given fraud in the law of contracts.71 Also, the use of fraudulent evidence and the exploitation of indifference of the bench provided a less acceptable liberalization of a too restrictive law.72 Finally, for those possessing sufficient financial resources, divorce was always available in a sister state and, more recently, in Mexico.73

A widespread public interest that originated with the lower court decisions in 1963-64 in the Rosenstiel v. Rosenstiel and Wood

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67 In 1965 New York marriages were dissolved by the following means: annulments—2,942; divorce—4,149; dissolution for absence—327. 1966 N.Y. JUD. CONF. REP. 425. See generally Wels, New York: The Poor Man's Reno, 35 CORNELL L.Q. 303 (1950).
69 N.Y. DOM. REL. LAW §§ 140 (d), (f) (McKinney 1963). See also ALA. CODE tit. 34, § 20 (1956); COLO. REV. STAT. ANN. § 14-1-1 (1963); IND. ANN. STAT. § 3-1201 (1946); KAN. GEN. STAT. ANN. § 50-1501 (Supp. 1965); MINN. STAT. ANN. § 518.06 (Supp. 1965); NEB. REV. STAT. § 42-301 (1943).
70 Annulment has been given the primary characteristics of divorce by provisions for alimony, N.Y. DOM. REL. LAW § 285 (McKinney 1963), legitimation, N.Y. DOM. REL. LAW § 145 (McKinney 1963), and custody of children, N.Y. DOM. REL. LAW § 240 (McKinney 1963).
72 See N.Y. DOM. REL. LAW § 140 (c) (McKinney 1963); Wels, supra note 67, at 318-21; Note, 41 COLUM. L. REV. 503 n.4 (1941). The general leniency of the courts did not go unnoticed. In 1962 in New York there were 2,331 annulments and only 4,224 divorces as compared to 400,308 divorces and 12,692 annulments in the Census Bureau's reporting area. See 3 VITAL STATISTICS OF THE UNITED STATES Tables 2-2, 2-3 (1962).
73 See 1966 JLC REPORT 21-23; JACOBSON 115; H. O'GORMAN, LAWYERS AND MARRIAGE CASES 25-70 (1963). "The investigation confirmed what had long been suspected, widespread fraud, perjury, collusion and connivance pervade matrimonial actions of every type .... Moreover, examination of the records of the Supreme Court leads to the conclusion that those charged with the administration of justice in this type of litigation could not have been unaware of these conditions." 1948 New York County Grand Jury Presentment, reprinted in 1957 JLC REPORT 105.
74 "[The actual number of divorces] ... has probably been about one third to one half greater than the number recorded in New York State; currently, it may even be double, in view of the marked increase of Mexican divorces to Americans following .... 1952 .... New York Supreme Court [recognition] ... ." JACOBSON 116. See Caswell v. Caswell, 111 N.Y.S.2d 875 (Sup. Ct.), aff'd, 117 N.Y.S.2d 325 (App. Div. 1952).
v. Wood cases,\textsuperscript{44} which held two bilateral Mexican divorces invalid, apparently stimulated legislative action to formulate more realistic divorce procedures. While these cases were before the Court of Appeals, the legislature authorized the Joint Legislative Committee for Matrimonial and Family Laws (hereinafter JLC) to study the substantive law of divorce.\textsuperscript{76} Under pressure generated by the subsequent Court of Appeals decision in the Rosenstiel and Wood cases,\textsuperscript{70} public JLC hearings,\textsuperscript{77} endorsements of JLC proposals by prominent political leaders,\textsuperscript{78} and Catholic lay support,\textsuperscript{79} the legislature was prodded into action. After the legislative leaders resisted the bill proposed by the JLC\textsuperscript{80} and drafted their own,\textsuperscript{81} the legislature accepted a compromise between the JLC-proposed Wilson-Sutton Bill and the Leaders' Bill.\textsuperscript{82} Although the reform is less than pervasive,\textsuperscript{83}


\textsuperscript{76}The JLC was created in 1957, but its functions were limited to inquiries into the procedural aspects of divorce law; however, a concurrent resolution authorizing investigation of substantive grounds was passed on June 8, 1965. See Foster & Freed, Supp. at 5. Rosenstiel was argued Feb. 1, 1965, and decided July 9, 1965.

\textsuperscript{77}The committee held a total of eight days of hearings in New York City, Buffalo, and Albany. See 1966 JLC Report 13-16.

\textsuperscript{78}See, e.g., N.Y. Times, Dec. 20, 1965, § 1, at 40, col. 2 (Mayor Wagner of New York City); N.Y. Times, Feb. 8, 1966, § 1, at 31, col. 4 (Mayor Lindsay of New York City); N.Y. Times, Feb. 8, 1966, § 1, at 1, col. 2 (Senator Robert F. Kennedy).

\textsuperscript{79}A group of eighteen prominent Catholic laymen formed a Committee of Catholic Citizens to Support Divorce Reform in New York State. N.Y. Times, Feb. 4, 1966, § 1, at 1, col. 4.

\textsuperscript{80}See 1966 JLC Report 85-106 for the JLC proposal.

\textsuperscript{81}See First Draft of Leaders' Bill (on file Duke University School of Law Library).

\textsuperscript{82}The final statute contained substantially the same type grounds proposed by the JLC. Compare N.Y. Dom. Rel. Law § 170 (McKinney Supp. 1966), with 1966 JLC Report 85. However, clarifying language was added to the definition of cruel and inhuman treatment to ensure its extension to purely mental cruelty. Compare N.Y. Dom. Rel. Law § 170 (1) (McKinney Supp. 1966), with 1966 JLC Report 85-86. Criteria for divorce for imprisonment were altered. Compare N.Y. Dom. Rel. Law § 170 (8) (McKinney Supp. 1966), with 1966 JLC Report 88-89. Written, recorded separation agreements were added as a requirement for the ground of separation for two years, see N.Y. Dom. Rel. Law § 170 (6) (McKinney Supp. 1966); and a new provision for conversion of judicial separations to divorces after two years was provided, see N.Y. Dom. Rel. Law § 170 (5) (McKinney Supp. 1966). The Los Angeles type "voluntary" conciliation procedure recommended by the JLC was rejected in favor of a procedure somewhat similar to that used in Wisconsin. See Foster & Freed 21. Compare N.Y. Dom. Rel. Law §§ 215 to 215-g (McKinney Supp. 1966), with 1966 JLC Report 99-108. A provision concerning migratory divorce was carried over from the Leaders' Bill. See N.Y. Dom. Rel. Law § 250 (McKinney Supp. 1966).

\textsuperscript{83}See notes 144-241 infra and accompanying text.
the overall plan of the statute is commendable as an attempt to deal with all the major reform proposals previously discussed. The new law attempts to provide more realistic bases for divorce, including nonfault grounds based on a separation period;⁸⁴ to establish a conciliation procedure intended to preserve viable family units;⁸⁵ and to restrict migratory evasions.⁸⁶

The new grounds for divorce in New York include cruel and inhuman treatment, expanded from the former separation ground to include mental cruelty,⁸⁷ abandonment for two years,⁸⁸ confinement in prison for three consecutive years,⁸⁹ and two years separation under a separation decree⁹⁰ or a recorded separation agreement.⁹¹ The combined effect of a redefinition of the original ground of adultery,⁹² the newly enacted bases, and the relief available under annulment and dissolution in cases of absence or final life sentence,⁹³

⁸⁵ See id. §§ 215 to 215-g.
⁸⁶ See id. § 250.
⁸⁹ Id. § 170 (3): "[an action for divorce may be maintained on grounds of] the confinement of the defendant to prison for a period of three or more consecutive years after the marriage of plaintiff and defendant." The use of the preposition "for" in the phrase "confinement . . . for a period" has already caused some confusion. While the press release announcing the compromise bill states, "sentence is not material as a consideration but only the period of confinement," Press release, Wednesday, April 20, 1966, distinguished commentators have stated that the section probably is intended to refer to sentence, Foster & Freed, Supp. at 13. The sounder interpretation seems to be that the "for" should be read as "during" and that actual confinement during three years is required, since the introduction of waiting periods seems to have been a prime objective of the new law and the original proposal from which this provision is derived requires sentence for five years and confinement for two. See 1966 JLC REPORT 85, 88-89.
⁹² N.Y. Dom. Rel. Law § 170 (4) (McKinney Supp. 1966) makes adultery a ground for divorce, and defines it as "the commission of an act of sexual or deviate sexual intercourse, voluntarily performed by the defendant, with a person other than the plaintiff after the marriage of plaintiff and defendant." This proviso is in response to Cohen v. Cohen, 200 Misc. 19, 103 N.Y.S.2d 426 (Sup. Ct. 1951), which held homosexual acts were not adultery. This provision, by restricting the grounds to acts with another person, does not make bestiality a ground for divorce. See Foster & Freed, Supp. at 14.
⁹³ See notes 68-70 supra.
now provides New York with a divorce law system encompassing most of the procedures recommended.

The most significant aspect of the new grounds is not their number but their approach. More specifically, the nonfault theory of divorce is extensively employed. Two of the grounds, abandonment and imprisonment, contain waiting periods beginning with the occurrence of the requisite culpable acts and lasting until the accrual of a cause of action. These are not purely "cooling off" periods in the usual sense of an interim during which spouses can contemplate their actions before pursuing a divorce, but rather are longer periods intended to evidence a breakdown of the marriage as well as to allow for revaluation by the partners, and as such are composite grounds importing a nonfault element. Separation for two years under a separation agreement is a true nonfault ground requiring only a showing that the marriage partners have lived apart pursuant to the terms of the agreement.

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95 N.Y. DOM. REL. LAW §§ 170(2), (3) (McKinney Supp. 1966). The statute of limitations as applied to divorce and separation provides that no action may be brought on a ground which arose more than five years before. N.Y. DOM. REL. LAW § 210 (McKinney Supp. 1966). There should be no difficulty in applying § 210 to the ground of abandonment because the ground arises two years after the initial abandonment. See N.Y. DOM. REL. LAW § 170(2) (McKinney Supp. 1966). However, when the ground of confinement to prison arises depends on whether "confinement . . . for a period" refers to sentence or confinement during sentence. As to the effect of confinement in other jurisdictions see Note, 12 N.Y.L.F. 105, 107 (1966).


97 "The [JLC's] proposal . . . is to permit divorce by reason of abandonment only where it has continued for a period of two years or more, thus, demonstrating to the state that the marriage is now a mere legal formality . . ." 1966 JLC REPORT 8 (emphasis added). As to its proposal for a ground of imprisonment for two years, lengthened to three years in the statute, the JLC states: "[T]he proposal provides that the divorced spouse must be imprisoned for at least two years prior to the divorce being granted; this serves the purpose of (1) breaking the natural but sometimes too rash inclination to dissolve a marriage upon the conviction of the wrongdoing party; (2) giving the convicted party an opportunity to obtain his or her release from prison prior to dissolution of the marriage through reversal of the conviction on appeal." Id. at 89 (emphasis added).

98 In reference to its proposal for two years separation as a ground, which was similar to the separation ground appearing in the statute, the JLC states: "If a couple demonstrates to the state that their marriage is dead, the state should then, with appropriate safeguards for the parties and their children, recognize the need for divorce . . . One of the most convincing ways in which it can be demonstrated that a marriage is 'dead' is proof that a particular couple had lived separate and apart for
years under a judicial decree can also be classified as a nonfault ground, since either party to the separation action may "convert" the original court order into a divorce decree by showing two years of living apart and adherence to the terms of the separation decree. The remaining grounds, adultery and cruel and inhuman treatment, are traditional fault grounds, requiring no waiting or separation period.

In addition to the de-emphasis of culpability in the present statute, the legislature also refrained from providing defenses for all grounds except adultery. Although the legislative history of this omission is enigmatic, it was apparently intended that none of the traditional defenses be available for the new grounds. Such a continuous period of years," 1966 JLC REPORT 90. See McCurdy, Divorce—A Suggested Approach, 9 VAND. L. REV. 685 (1956) (cited by committee report).

To avoid the trap laid by Viles v. Viles, 14 N.Y.2d 365, 200 N.E.2d 567, 251 N.Y.S.2d 672 (1964), where the court held that a separation agreement made in contemplation of divorce even without express provision for attaining a divorce was subject to attack as against public policy, N.Y. GEN. OBLIGATIONS LAW § 5-311 (McKinney Supp. 1966) was passed barring attack in the absence of such an express provision.

Considering § 170 (6) separately, it is not clear that the defendant in the original action can apply for a conversion to divorce, since that clause states that the plaintiff may so apply. There is no specification of which plaintiff is intended—the one in the initial separation suit or the one in the petition for conversion to divorce. Any doubt is dispelled by reference to the immediately preceding clause, § 170 (5), which refers to plaintiff in identical language, since that clause concerns application for divorce on grounds of living apart for two years under a separation agreement—a procedure in which there is no plaintiff in any proceeding except the one for divorce. It is therefore apparent that plaintiff in both clauses refers to the plaintiff in the divorce proceeding.

Although the title to the reform law indicates that N.Y. DOM. REL. LAW §§ 170 (1), (4) (McKinney Supp. 1966), which provides for defenses to adultery, is repealed, it apparently is merely a carryover from an earlier draft of the Leaders' Bill which provided for such repeal. See First Draft of Leaders' Bill; FOSTER & FREED, Supp. at 9. In the absence of a specific provision in the text, the new title would not have the effect of repealing the original statute. Cf. Squadrito v. Griebisch, 1 N.Y.2d 471, 472-73, 136 N.E.2d 504, 506-07 (1956); People v. O'Neill, 280 App. Div. 145, 112 N.Y.S.2d 756 (1952); FOSTER & FREED, Supp. at 9. Therefore, § 171 is not repealed, and by its terms it applies only to adultery.

Both the JLC proposal and the Leaders' Bill as originally drafted provided for repeal of § 171. See 1966 JLC REPORT 95-97; First Draft of Leaders' Bill § 2. Since the law as passed deletes any specific reference to § 171, the inference is that it was deliberately left in effect and no other provided. See also note 101 supra.

The failure to provide statutory defenses arguably results in no defenses being available, since divorce law in New York is entirely statutory, see Erkenbrach v. Erkenbrach, 96 N.Y. 456, 462-63 (1894); Griffin v. Griffin, 47 N.Y. 134, 138-39 (1872); Burris v. Burris, 1 Hopk. Ch. 557, 554-55 (N.Y. 1826), except for matters traditionally within the equity jurisdiction, see Griffin v. Griffin, supra at 139 (awarding counsel fees to defendant's wife); Wightman v. Wightman, 4 John. Ch. 343 (N.Y. 1820) (lunacy of one party at time of marriage renders marriage void); Ferlat v. Gojon, 1 Hopk. Ch. 478, 493-94 (N.Y. 1829) (recognizing fraud as voiding marriage). But see 1 BISHOP § 129.
a result is logically justifiable upon analysis of the philosophical change attempted by the reform. The ground of adultery, based on fault, has been accorded the full range of fault-based defenses including the basic ones of recrimination, collusion, connivance, and condonation. Since separation by judicial decree or agreement is based on principles of nonculpability, the defenses developed in a fault oriented system would appear to be inapplicable, except insofar as the statutory defense of justification is made applicable in the initial action for separation. Finally, the statutory definitions of the remaining provisions—cruel and inhuman treatment, abandonment, and confinement for three years—place an evidentiary burden on the petitioner sufficient to eliminate the need for the traditional defenses.
Restriction on remarriage by the party at fault has also been eliminated by the reform law. Originating in the canon law dogma concerning the indissolubility of a marriage bond, restraints on remarriage were apparently later conceived in part as a punitive measure. A proposal in the Leaders' Bill that restraints on remarriage be extended to both spouses and be reduced to six months must have been contemplated as a deterrent to divorce. The en...
acted bill abandoned this proposal in favor of elimination of all restraints except during the three month period between the interlocutory decree and final judgment.\textsuperscript{112} The rejection of the archaic restrictions on remarriage was partially motivated by a realization of the practical ineffectiveness of such limitations insofar as they would not affect subsequent marriages contracted outside of New York.\textsuperscript{113}

Although the legislature seems to have sought a compromise between fault and nonfault principles in providing for grounds and defenses, in one respect it has gone very far toward complete adoption of the nonfault principle. If parties separate under the required recorded agreement or by judicial separation after the effective date of the statute, there is no way to prevent conversion to divorce by either party at the end of two years.\textsuperscript{114} A person, the stability of whose marriage is becoming doubtful and who wishes some sort of binding readjustment of his marital status short of divorce, is not only deterred from seeking such solutions\textsuperscript{115} but also has very limited

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\textsuperscript{114} See \textit{N.Y. Dom. Rel. Law} §§ 170 (5), (6) (McKinney Supp. 1966). See also notes 151-60 infra and accompanying text.

\textsuperscript{115} A wife might be deterred from converting her separation into absolute divorce by the prospect of loss of her election and intestate succession rights, for under N.Y. \textit{Deced. Est. Law} § 50 (a) (McKinney Supp. 1966), conversion extinguishes those rights. Furthermore, if the wife seeks to protect her marital property rights by agreement, she
alternatives. There is some indication that the significance of these reform provisions might become even more far-reaching, for the only decision interpreting the new law, In re Curatolo, held that the statute's conversion provisions can be applied to pre-existing separations without modification of a decree or re-execution of agreement. The Attorney General has issued an opinion providing for a similar effect.

The second major reform in the New York system is the establishment of an elaborate conciliation procedure. This machinery will be administered through a state-financed Conciliation Bureau located in each judicial district, supervised by a supreme court justice, and staffed by commissioners and counselors appointed by the supervising justice. Provisions are included for the appointment of a conciliator when a dispute arises over the terms of a separation agreement. See notes 162-66 infra and accompanying text. Procedures which would not raise the possibility of absolute dissolution of the marriage seem to be limited to support and custody actions, see N.Y. Dom. Rel. Law § 240 (McKinney 1963); N.Y. Family Ct. Act §§ 412, 651 (McKinney 1963), and actions for separation for a period less than two years, see N.Y. Dom. Rel. Law § 200 (McKinney Supp. 1966).

Concern over county financing has resulted in a bill that will be introduced in the 1967 legislature to provide for state financing for all courts. 157 N.Y.L.J., Jan. 5, 1967, at 1, col. 6.


The New York City and County Bar Associations recommended an amendment substituting an administrative official for the supervising justice. A.B.C.N.Y. Report, at 4; N.Y. County Bar Report, at 31-32.

Concern has been shown over the method of compensation and lack of required qualification for the commissioner and counselor positions. Since the statute specified compensation by fee, it apparently requires payment at a fixed rate per case rather than set salaries, with the probability...
ment of special guardians to represent the interests of any children.\(^\text{124}\)

The only jurisdiction granted the Conciliation Bureau is specified in section 215-a: "The Conciliation Bureau shall have the power to conduct all conciliation proceedings after the commencement of an action for divorce. . . ." Nothing is said about jurisdiction in separation proceedings.\(^\text{125}\) Since Article 9 of the Family Court Act had already provided for a Family Court conciliation service in any case in which either spouse petitions for conciliation,\(^\text{126}\) the apparent intention of the legislature in its subsequent formation of the Conciliation Bureau was that conciliation rendered by the Family Court would now be limited to cases falling outside the exclusive jurisdiction of the Bureau. Thus, in separation actions, presumably a stage in marriage breakdown earlier than divorce, conciliation proceedings are not required, but are available on petition to the Family Court.

After commencement of a divorce action by service of summons,\(^\text{127}\) a notice of such commencement must be filed with the Bureau within ten days or the action will be discontinued.\(^\text{128}\) Commencement by summons rather than complaint not only avoids any objection of denial of speedy access to the courts,\(^\text{129}\) but also prevents

\(^{124}\) See N.Y. Dom. Rel. Law §§ 215-b (a), (d), 215-c (c) (McKinney Supp. 1966).\(^{125}\) See Foster & Freed, Supp. at 22-23.\(^{126}\) See N.Y. Family Ct. Act § 921 (McKinney 1963), implementing N.Y. Const. art. 6, § 13b (6).\(^{127}\) See N.Y. Dom. Rel. Law § 211 (McKinney Supp. 1966).\(^{128}\) See N.Y. Dom. Rel. Law § 215-c (a) (McKinney Supp. 1966).\(^{129}\) In Illinois, People ex rel. Christiansen v. Connell, 2 Ill.2d 332, 118 N.E.2d 262 (1954), held that forcing a sixty-day waiting period prior to filing was unconstitutional under the state constitution as a denial of immediate access to the courts. In People ex rel. Doty v. Connell, 9 Ill.2d 390, 137 N.E.2d 849 (1956), a statute requiring a waiting period between service of summons and filing of a complaint was held constitutional. That such problems have concerned the legislature is apparent from a JLC memorandum to the governor relative to a statute providing for referrals of spouses on a voluntary basis to private or county-supported conciliation sessions: "In any event, if either spouse withdraws his or her consent at any time, the conciliation services cease and the parties are immediately returned to the Court with their action. This is necessary because of the Constitutional rule that parties cannot be deprived for an
exacerbation of the defendant's feelings by an inflammatory complaint. Discontinuance of the action for failure to file the requisite commencement notice is one of the features lending compulsoriness to conciliation proceedings.

To begin the conciliation procedure, the Bureau's supervising justice assigns the matter to a conciliation commissioner who, within five days thereafter, gives notice of the date of a conciliation conference. Another compulsory feature appears at this point in the form of a power in the supervising justice to order attendance if either party fails to appear at the conciliation conference. A finding by the commissioner of "no necessity" for further conciliation proceedings "for good cause shown" can terminate the entire conciliation procedure at this juncture. While the statute gives no indication of the nature of good cause, it would seem that if the long separation periods associated with all but two of the statutory grounds are sufficient indicators of the death of the marriage, additional conciliation procedures, which could last as long as 120 days, would be superfluous. However, the legislature apparently intended counseling as an additional rather than an alternative safeguard to the separation period, since a finding of "no necessity" was left


181 See N.Y. DOM. REL. LAW § 215-c (b) (McKinney Supp. 1966). Section 215-c (b) (1) also permits at this point the appointment of a special guardian for any minor, handicapped, or incompetent children.

182 See N.Y. DOM. REL. LAW § 215-c (b) (3) (McKinney Supp. 1966). See also N.Y. FAMILY CT. ACT § 92 (4) (McKinney Supp. 1966), which contains a similar procedure that is not automatic but requires a request by the spouse seeking aid of the Family Court conciliation service before attendance will be compelled.


184 No action for divorce can be tried until the commissioner submits his final report, or 120 days after the filing of notice with the Bureau. N.Y. DOM. REL. LAW § 215-g (McKinney Supp. 1966). In addition, no verified complaint, which includes all complaints except those alleging adultery, may be served in a divorce or separation until 120 days after service of summons. N.Y. DOM. REL. LAW § 211 (McKinney Supp. 1966). The requirement of a 120 day waiting period in separation actions has been soundly criticized because of the absence of any conciliation requirement in separation actions. "[This provision] . . . is patently a typographical error which should be eliminated. A compulsory delay of 120 days between the service of a summons in a separation action and the filing of a complaint has never been suggested by anybody." The Report of the Special Committee on Matrimonial Law of the Association of the Bar of the City of New York (Pt. II), 156 N.Y.L.J., Oct. 18, 1966, at 4.
completely discretionary and was not in any way correlated to specific grounds. Nevertheless, causes which seemingly should be sufficient to render conciliation unnecessary include prior unsuccessful counseling by approved counselors, particularly a prior failure of reconciliation by the Family Court, and unavailability of one spouse, as in a suit based on abandonment or imprisonment.

If a finding of no necessity cannot be justified, the commissioner is directed to hold an informal conference to determine if the parties are to be referred to counselors. Since attendance at these counseling sessions may be compelled, whether such counseling is made mandatory is within the combined discretion of the commissioner and the supervising justice. Within thirty days after the report of the counselor, the conciliation commissioner may hold a conciliation hearing at which each party is entitled to be heard, present evidence, cross-examine, and be represented by counsel. The primary purpose of this post-counseling hearing is, according to the statute, to determine if a sixty-day reconciliation period should be ordered. After this final hearing if the commissioner reports that reconciliation is not possible, statutory procedures are at an end, and the plaintiff may file his complaint.

The legislature also passed a provision apparently aimed at interstate evasion by migratory divorce. This provision, adopted from Section 2 of the Uniform Divorce Recognition Act, is in the form of a presumption of domicile within New York in cases where a party obtaining a divorce in another jurisdiction was domiciled in New York within twelve months prior to the decree and returns to New York within eighteen months after departure. Domicile is also presumed if at all times between departure and return a place of residence has been maintained within New York.

LIMITS OF THE REFORM

Within the context of the history of divorce law and the present status of that law, the New York reform is not a unique departure.

1 See N.Y. DOM. REL. LAw § 215-c (b) (2) (McKinney Supp. 1966).
10 Id. § 215-c (b) (4).
13 See id.
15 Id. § 215-d.
19 See id. § 215-d (e).
14 Id.
143 Id. § 215-g (1).
144 See N.Y. DOM. REL. LAw § 250 (McKinney Supp. 1966).
145 See notes 218-41 infra and accompanying text.
Nonetheless, serious weakness can be found in the statutory structure finally adopted. Compromise of nonfault, nonadversary policies with traditional concepts of divorce law has resulted in a system which leaves uncertain whether separation as a basis for divorce applies only when the spouses live apart subsequent to the enactment of the present statute and to fulfillment of filing requirements. The compromise has also created intrastate evasionary devices which encourage the self-defeat of many of the motivations for the reforms. Further, the recently articulated constitutional right to marital privacy raises doubts as to the validity of the conciliation procedure adopted. Finally, the jurisdiction of the courts has been restricted in an attempt to limit recognition of sister state decrees.

Compromise of Policies. Of the basic policy decisions represented by the new reform, several represent compromises between traditional principles of divorce and current trends toward nonfault grounds and nonadversary proceedings. In one compromise the legislature chose not to rely exclusively on a nonadversary, family court as the tribunal rendering divorce decisions. Although New York has a family court which handles most family-oriented problems, divorce proceedings have been left in the jurisdiction of the Supreme Court, the court of general jurisdiction in New York. As a further compromise, the Supreme Court procedure is designed to be partly adversary and partly nonadversary in nature. Since a mandatory conciliation procedure is interposed before the trial of the divorce action, a situation is created in which the objectives of each procedure may be defeated by the other. Feuding parties may be discouraged from sincere attempts at reconciliation by the prospect that cooperation in the conciliation sessions might reveal information or strategy which would handicap the prosecution of their case at trial. On the other hand, since most cases will be tried by a judge who will be aware that conciliation has already been found impossible or unnecessary, there will exist an unconscious pressure to allow dissolution of a marriage the further success of which appears doubtful.

145 Compare N.Y. Const. art. 6, § 13, with N.Y. Const. art. 6, § 7.
146 See notes 183-84 infra and accompanying text.
147 New York judges in the past have gone to extremes to allow dissolution of marriage by annulment for fraud in order to mitigate a restrictive divorce law. See note 72 supra.
As have other jurisdictions in this country, New York stopped short of adoption of nonfault grounds exclusively. Unfortunately, the linking of delays with those grounds not based in culpability may promote undesirable results. When the potential petitioner views the protraction necessitated by the combination of a possible 120 day conciliation period and the pre-existing three month interlocutory period, the availability of alternative fault grounds which do not impose the additional delay of a separation period may provide incentive for avoidance of the nonfault grounds.

Retroactive Effect of Separation Grounds. The states adopting separation periods which have decided the retroactive effect of the statute have almost unanimously held such provisions applicable to pre-existing separations. Of course, these decisions, based on interpretations of particularized statutes, are not necessarily precedent for a similar interpretation of the New York statute. However, a New York Supreme Court case, In re Curatolo, would allow retroactive application of the new separation agreement and separation decree provisions. The court in Curatolo based its holding on legislative intent discerned from the inclusion of an express disclaimer of retroactive effect in the original proposal of the Joint Legislative Committee on Matrimonial and Family Law and the absence of such a limitation in the bill as passed. However, this interpretation is at variance with statements by the principal drafter in response to questions on the floor of the legislature.

148 See notes 39-46 supra and accompanying text.
149 See notes 87-91 supra and accompanying text. Both nonfault separation periods and the strictly fault grounds of cruelty and adultery were adopted.
150 For the effect of alternative fault grounds without a separation period, see note 57 supra and accompanying text.
154 In re Curatolo, 52 Misc. 2d 31, 274 N.Y.S.2d 514 (Sup. Ct. 1966).
155 See Foster & Freed, Supp. at 15.
and disregards as "merely evidentiary" the requirement that separation agreements need be recorded within thirty days of their making. Furthermore, since the conversion feature arguably applies only to a spouse who accepts a separation agreement with knowledge of the possibility of conversion, it is rather anomalous to apply it to spouses who, because of lack of such knowledge, could not have been consented to conversion. The ambiguity seems to necessitate legislative clarification. However, contentions that retroactive application would be void as a violation of due process should have only negligible inhibitory effect upon judicial or legislative action to affirm such application. While retroactivity might be viewed as an unconstitutional taking of property since a wife's interest in her husband's estate is terminated by divorce, the United States Supreme Court has upheld a New York termination provision as a valid exercise of legislative power. Any allegation that mere separation is an inadequate justification for imposing the disabilities accompanying divorce would have to overcome the precedential significance of decisions in other jurisdictions dismissing similar challenges.

Intrastate Evasion. The effectiveness of the reform law seems certain to be impaired by intrastate evasionary devices. The reform structure not only established new incentives for evading the statutory provisions but also left old evasionary devices untouched. Under the old law the impetus for evasion of the divorce law came from its restrictiveness. While this incentive has been mitigated by the more liberal grounds, there are several factors which might motivate avoidance of the most significant of the innovations—separation period grounds and conciliation procedures.

158 See note 115 supra.
159 In referring to the statutory elective share of a wife in her husband's estate, the New York Court of Appeals stated: "Since rights of descent and distribution of a decedent's estate are created by the law of the State, the State may change or take away such rights . . . ." In re McGlone's Will, 284 N.Y. 527, 533, 32 N.E.2d 539, 542 (1940), aff'd, 314 U.S. 556 (1941).
Economic considerations might discourage suit for a separation decree by an “injured” spouse. Part of the leverage in bargaining for a property settlement results from the fact that even after a judicial separation decree, an “innocent” spouse retains her election and inheritance rights in the “guilty” spouse’s estate. However, a conversion into a divorce would terminate those rights. Thus, the possibility of conversion deters the “innocent” spouse from seeking a separation until a property settlement agreement is made.

An incentive to avoid the separation agreement ground, at least for persons in the middle and upper income brackets, is found in the federal gift tax law. Under the separation period provisions of other states, no formal agreement is required to begin the running of the statutory period; but under New York law, the commencement of the period is not recognized unless such an agreement is recorded within thirty days of its execution. If separation agreement property settlements are followed within two years by divorce, Internal Revenue Code, section 2516, presumes them to have been made for adequate consideration and thereby renders them exempt from the gift tax. Thus, under the New York statute requiring a two year separation period after a written separation agreement, the gift tax provision will be very difficult to satisfy. Although it seems both that the recorded separation agreement requirement of the divorce law could be satisfied by an agreement which did not provide for a property settlement and that any property settlement

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161 See note 115 supra.
162 Incompatibility with the gift tax was first noted by a study committee of the New York Chapter of the American Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers, see N.Y. Times, Dec. 5, 1966, §1, at 64, col. 1, a group with a vested interest in tax protection of wealthy clients. Under current gift tax rates, a husband transferring residential property worth $23,000 would have to pay taxes up to $1,200, depending on the extent to which the specific exemption of §2521 had been depleted. See Int. Rev. Code of 1954, §§2502, 2503.
163 See authorities cited note 41 supra.
166 If a settlement is made in appreciated property, the “donor” is subject to an income tax irrespective of his liability under the gift tax provisions. See United States v. Davis, 370 U.S. 65, 69 n.5 (1962); Farid-Es-Sultaneh, 160 F.2d 812, 814-15 (2d Cir. 1947).
167 Although the issue is not free from doubt, it appears that satisfaction of §2516 is not necessary to exempt settlement of support as opposed to property rights from
could be postponed until within two years of a final divorce decree, such an arrangement is highly unlikely as a practical matter. The only motive for an agreement without property settlement would be to gain a tax advantage for the prospective donor, a factor hardly compelling consent by the prospective donee. Further, if the latter accepts such an agreement, she loses her leverage in bargaining for a property settlement since the agreement, even without a property settlement, would give rise to conversion rights in the prospective donor. In order for the separation period grounds to attain the objectives intended by their promulgations, it would seem that the legislature must correct the conflict between the federal and state provisions by either removing the recording requirement or shortening the separation period.

Strong incentives also exist for evasion of the conciliation procedures. Although there will be those who generally object to the idea of counseling, the extent of such attitudes is unknown. More troublesome, however, are the potentially significant expense and delay engendered by the increased number of hearings inherent in the conciliation procedure. For the poor, there is the prospect of additional attorney's fees, for not only will an attorney probably appear at the divorce trial, but the two or more additional hearings in connection with conciliation may also require his presence. Such added expense could discourage spouses from initiating divorce proceedings or encourage contrived abandonments which would probably result in an early termination of conciliation through a finding of "no necessity." Further, the separation period required for abandonment could be avoided if divorce on grounds of cruelty were sought.

The more affluent, for whom fault grounds are usually either distasteful or unavailable, and for whom conciliation engenders too much delay, can resort to migratory divorce as an alternative to the intrastate devices. The possibility of a conciliation period which might last 120 days followed by a three month interlocutory period

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168 See notes 58-59 supra and accompanying text.  
170 See notes 127-41 supra and accompanying text.  
171 See text following note 133 supra.  
172 See notes 95-100 supra and accompanying text.
has little appeal when compared to a sojourn of six weeks in Las Vegas,\textsuperscript{172} and divorces of the one day variety in Mexico which might still be valid in New York.\textsuperscript{174} Even if a party is not motivated to avoid conciliation, incentive nevertheless exists for non-cooperation during counseling sessions. If the divorce action will be actually contested, the conciliation process may lead to revelations that will be harmful to a spouse's case in the subsequent adversary proceeding.\textsuperscript{175} The harshness of this possibility is partially avoided in most jurisdictions having conciliation procedures by restrictions upon admissibility of information revealed in conferences.\textsuperscript{176} However, New York provides only that the records are to be confidential and their availability restricted to parties, their attorneys, and the staff of the Conciliation Bureau.\textsuperscript{177} While revelation to the counselor is arguably privileged under a New York statute granting a limited privilege to certified social workers and psychologists,\textsuperscript{178} there is no specific statutory requirement that these counselors be so categorized.\textsuperscript{179}

**Right to Privacy.** The right to privacy in the private law context is a relatively new concept, having been established as an independent right of action during the present century.\textsuperscript{180} Various aspects of such a right find expression in the specific provisions of the first ten amendments of the federal constitution. However, it was not until *Griswold v. Connecticut*,\textsuperscript{181} which held unconstitutional a Connecticut statute which had been construed as prohibiting the use of contraceptives in marital intercourse, that the right to privacy

\textsuperscript{172} See NEV. REV. STAT. § 125.020 (1963).
\textsuperscript{174} See notes 74-75 supra.
\textsuperscript{175} While only about ten percent of divorces are actually contested, see note 44 supra, a lawyer may find it difficult not to react negatively to any revelation which could potentially endanger his case.
\textsuperscript{176} See CAL. CIV. PROC. CODE § 1747 (West Supp. 1967) (treated as official information); COLO. REV. STAT. ANN. § 46-5-6 (1963); OR. REV. STAT. §§ 107.600 (2), (5) (1965); WIS. STAT. ANN. § 247.081 (Supp. 1967). Indeed New York itself has such a provision in reference to its family court conciliation procedure. N.Y. FAMILY CT. ACT § 915 (McKinney 1963).
\textsuperscript{177} N.Y. DOM. REL. LAW § 215-f (McKinney Supp. 1966).
\textsuperscript{178} See N.Y. EDUC. LAW §§ 7611, 7710 (McKinney Supp. 1966).
\textsuperscript{179} See note 123 supra.
\textsuperscript{181} 381 U.S. 479 (1965).
was recognized in the public law context. On the basis of this limited precedent it has been suggested that the right to privacy may be invaded by a compulsory conciliation procedure such as that enacted by New York.\(^{182}\)

There are three compulsory features of the reform that must be examined in order to assess the constitutionality of the New York procedure. First, a party is compelled to notify the Conciliation Bureau of the filing of the divorce petition under penalty of dismissal. Second, after notification of the Conciliation Bureau, a party may be compelled by court order, backed by the contempt power, to appear for a conciliation conference with a conciliation commissioner. Finally, at the discretion of the commissioner or a conciliation counselor, spouses may even be ordered to attempt reconciliation for sixty days.\(^{183}\) Yet, since a party's action for divorce can be stayed for only a maximum of 120 days, the provision for use of court orders to compel attendance and attempts at reconciliation is, in reality, the primary compulsory element of the procedure. It should be noted that at the counseling stage the parties are only compelled to appear; there is nothing in the statute which requires cooperation or communication with counselors in any manner. The orders to compel attempts at reconciliation for sixty days do appear, however, to require a semblance of cooperation.\(^{184}\)

Since the basis of the right of privacy is unclear\(^{185}\) and its standard of application unsettled,\(^{186}\) an analysis of New York's complex divorce procedure by constitutional standards is speculative indeed. Nonetheless, it appears that the standard is to be a balancing test,\(^{187}\) with

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\(^{183}\) N.Y. Dom. REL. LAW § 215-d (e) (McKinney Supp. 1966).

\(^{184}\) "If . . . the commissioner shall find that reconciliation is possible and would best serve the interest of both parties to the marriage, and any children thereof, the commissioner shall . . . apply for an order . . . requiring the parties, for a period not to exceed sixty days, to attempt to effect a reconciliation." N.Y. Dom. REL. LAW § 215-d (e) (McKinney Supp. 1966).

\(^{185}\) Although the opinion in Griswold is concerned with the basis of the right in the penumbra surrounding the first, third, fourth, fifth, and ninth amendments, 381 U.S. at 484-85, the separate concurring opinions of Mr. Justice Goldberg and Mr. Justice Harlan make more clear the dichotomy between the selective incorporation approach to substantive due process and Harlan's thesis that substantive due process includes those rights fundamental to the concept of ordered liberty without necessity for reference to the Bill of Rights. Id. at 488, 499-500. See Emerson, Nine Justices in Search of a Doctrine, 64 Mich. L. Rev. 219, 228-31 (1965); Note, 1966 DUKE L.J. 562, 569-71.

\(^{186}\) See Emerson, supra note 185, at 230-31; Note, 1966 DUKE L.J. 562, 566-69.

\(^{187}\) Although the opinion of the court in Griswold seems to rely solely on the undue
the burden on the state to show a "subordinating" and "compelling" interest. Thus, the initial step must be to determine if the individual's interest falls within the scope of the right to privacy. The *Griswold* holding, the only one to recognize privacy as an independent, constitutionally based right, is rather narrowly restricted to the facts before the Court which dealt only with the privacy of marital intercourse. Nevertheless, there is language in the several opinions of the majority which hints that the scope of the right protected is to be rather wide, and extend to aspects of the marital relationship other than sexual intimacies.

Considering first compelled attendance at conferences, one could argue that a logical extension of the *Griswold* right to marital privacy includes freedom from nonconsensual surveillance of intimate aspects of the marital relationship other than sexual intimacies.

*breadth of the Connecticut statute, 381 U.S. at 485-86, Mr. Justice Goldberg, joined in a concurring opinion by the Chief Justice and Mr. Justice Brennan, id. at 497, and Mr. Justice White’s concurrence in the judgment, id. at 504, employ a balancing test. See Emerson, supra note 185, at 250-31.*

*88* 381 U.S. at 497, 504. Since the divorce remedy is entirely statutory and it appears that a state might entirely deny the remedy, see notes 28-30 supra and accompanying text, it would seem, by analogy to the procedural due process cases involving public employees, that the state might reasonably condition the remedy, see United Public Workers of America v. Mitchell, 330 U.S. 75, 101 (1947). However, the condition must not be arbitrary or discriminatory. *Slochower v. Board of Higher Educ., 350 U.S. 551, 555 (1956); Wieman v. Updegraff, 344 U.S. 183, 192 (1952). Although the extent of the burden on the state may vary according to the nature of the rights involved, see *Garrity v. New Jersey, 385 U.S. 493 (1967), this burden of justification does not seem to be as great as that necessary to sustain the *Griswold* result in favor of private litigants.* It therefore would appear that if the *Griswold* criteria can be satisfied, the procedural due process requirements would necessarily be satisfied also. The conclusion below that the conciliation statute will probably stand in the absence of a demonstrated pattern of abuse even under the *Griswold* standards, see notes 205-09 infra and accompanying text, renders unnecessary any effort to designate precisely the scope of the state’s burden in defending its alleged invasion of privacy.


*The Court had previously held that freedom of association was a peripheral first amendment right, NAACP v. Button, 371 U.S. 415, 430 (1963); NAACP v. Alabama, 357 U.S. 449, 462 (1957), but in *Griswold* the Court aggregates zones of privacy created by several constitutional guarantees and finds it unnecessary to relate the particular right to a specific guarantee, see 381 U.S. at 484-85.*

*The term "relation" is frequently employed by the Court and nowhere defined, but the Court concludes: "We deal with a right of privacy older than the Bill of Rights . . . Marriage is a coming together for better or worse, hopefully enduring, and intimate to the degree of being sacred.” 381 U.S. at 486 (emphasis added). Mr. Justice Goldberg also indicates greater breadth when he says, “. . . the rights to marital privacy and to marry and raise a family are of similar order and magnitude as the fundamental rights specifically protected.” Id. at 495 (Goldberg, J., concurring).
mate relations. Furthermore, both recent congressional investigations into psychological testing and reactions of commentators indicate support for extension of the right of privacy to include protection against nonconsensual psychological surveillance generally. If, as has been suggested, psychological testing and polygraph tests are means of "psychological surveillance," interviews with psychologists would also seem to qualify as surveillance. Freedom from nonconsensual submission to such sessions could thus be said to be within the scope of the right to privacy. There would seem to be doubt, however, as to whether compulsory attendance at conciliation conferences in practice results in nonconsensual interviews that might be called "psychological surveillance," since rather extensive experience in compelling attendance at conciliation in other jurisdictions indicates no abuse which has resulted in a reported case.

Even if it is assumed that some abuses will occur, against this risk must be balanced the interest of the state in the preservation of the family unit. Although the Supreme Court has given great weight to the governmental interest in this area in the past, the procedure adopted to promote stable family units must be considered

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102 See Beaney, supra note 189, at 257-58.
103 See Hearings on Invasion of Privacy Before a Subcomm. of the House Comm. on Government Operations, 89th Cong., 1st Sess. (1965) [hereinafter cited as 1965 Hearings]; Creech, Psychological Testing and Constitutional Rights, 1966 DUKE L.J. 332, 366-68. Particular concern has been expressed over the possibility of revealing aspects of a subject's personality that he does not desire to reveal and is unaware he is revealing. See 1965 Hearings (Testimony of Mr. Freedman, 344-50); Creech, supra at 366-68. Much of the criticism is directed at the validity of the tests themselves and not the approach of psychology generally, see 1965 Hearings (Testimony of Mr. Gross, 63-90); Creech, supra at 350-58, a criticism that would tend not to apply to conciliation where reliance on testing is minimal, see 1965 Hearings (Testimony of Mr. Macy, 36-55).
104 See L. CRONBACH, ESSENTIALS OF PSYCHOLOGICAL TESTING 459-60 (2d ed. 1960); Creech, The Privacy of Government Employees, 31 LAW & CONTEMP. PROB. 413, 419 (1966); Emerson, supra note 185, at 292-93; Ruebhausen & Brim, Privacy and Behavioral Research, 65 COLUM. L. REV. 1184, 1199-1203 (1965); Westin (I), at 1221-22.
in light of available alternatives.\textsuperscript{198} The most viable alternatives appear to be either a provision requiring the consent of at least one spouse\textsuperscript{199} or a compulsory "screening" procedure.\textsuperscript{200} Requiring consent of one of the parties reduces the potential for invasion of privacy since one spouse has already indicated willingness to discuss intimate relations by his petitioning for assistance. However, this approach is apparently not as effective in preserving marriages as the Wisconsin compulsory screening system. When Wisconsin shifted from a procedure based on consent to one based on compulsory screening, the number of divorce proceedings abandoned increased by nine percent.\textsuperscript{201} The compulsory screening procedure has been proposed as an alternative to the New York procedure because it purportedly infringes less on the dignity of the individual.\textsuperscript{202} Such a distinction is illusory, for the only significant difference between the New York and Wisconsin procedures is that while the New York statute expressly provides for compulsion by use of the contempt power,\textsuperscript{203} Wisconsin commissioners lack such a specific grant.\textsuperscript{204} Also, even a procedure specifically providing that a screening before a commissioner could be compelled, although a counseling session with a trained counselor could not, would make the distinction turn on the counseling ability of the interviewer. Thus, there appearing no realistically distinguishable, equally effective alternative to compulsory counseling, determination of the constitutionality of the New York statute is relegated to a balancing of the interests of the individual against the policies of the state as evidenced by present statutory provisions.

The Supreme Court, until recently, has been reluctant to attempt the difficult balancing required in the area of social welfare. Prior to Griswold, the Court had relied on the issue of standing to dispose of two appeals under the same Connecticut statute.\textsuperscript{205} There are also


\textsuperscript{199} See CALIF. CIV. PROC. CODE § 1772 (West Supp. 1966); N.Y. FAMILY CT. ACT § 921 (McKinney 1963).

\textsuperscript{200} See notes 54, 56-57 supra and accompanying text.


\textsuperscript{202} See id. at 380-81; Foster, Divorce Law, 156 N.Y.L.J. Oct. 14, 1966, at 1, col. 6.

\textsuperscript{203} N.Y. DOM. REL. LAW § 215-c (b) (3) (McKinney Supp. 1966).

\textsuperscript{204} The Wisconsin commissioners are granted the general power to hold in contempt for disobedience of any order. See Wis. STAT. ANN. § 252.15 (Supp. 1966).

indications that the Court, when it undertook the requisite balancing, gave much deference to expressed state policies, especially when these were widely implemented. For example, the Court was willing to accept administrative searches without warrants and to condone the denial of criminal procedural protections to juveniles. However, in addition to the Griswold invasion of state policies, the Court has recently stringently applied constitutional standards to both searches by administrative personnel and juvenile court procedures. Yet, as to both of these recent developments, patterns of abuse had been shown. Therefore, it may be doubted whether anything less than a systematic abuse will suffice to invalidate the New York type compulsory conciliation procedure.

**Jurisdiction.** The legislature has not only failed to grant all of the divorce jurisdiction which would be constitutionally permissible, but has also restricted previously existing jurisdictional criteria. Formerly, jurisdiction of an action for divorce was granted if both parties were domiciled within the state when the “fault” leading to the disunion occurred, if the plaintiff were a domiciliary at the time of the offense and the commencement of the action, if the offense occurred in the state and the injured party were a domiciliary when the action commenced; or if the parties were married in the state. Now, only if both parties are domiciliaries and the cause of action arose within the state is jurisdiction granted without a required period of residence. If the above conditions are not met,

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211 N.Y. Sess. Laws 1962, c. 313, § 7, repealed by, N.Y. Sess. Laws 1966, c. 254, § 2. The jurisdictional bases for separation and annulment differed slightly. In those actions, jurisdiction existed if both parties were domiciliaries; if the parties were married within the state and one party were a domiciliary when the action was commenced; or when the parties were married without the state, if one party had been a resident for one year. N.Y. Sess. Laws 1962, c. 313, § 10, as amended, N.Y. Sess. Laws 1963, c. 685, § 3 (now N.Y. Dom. Rel. Law § 230 (McKinney Supp. 1966)).
and if there has been substantial contact with the state by the marriage, or cause for divorce or residence as man and wife within the state, then the waiting period is one year. Otherwise, the required period of residence is two years.\textsuperscript{212} All of these New York jurisdictional bases exceed the minimum contact—the domicile of one party within the state—required for recognition under the full faith and credit clause.\textsuperscript{213}

Legitimate needs would seem to dictate that New York take a more liberal view of divorce jurisdiction than that currently represented by the reform statute. For instance, several other states have sought to expand jurisdiction with regard to military personnel, who may be resident in a state for an extended period but may not qualify as domiciliaries because of a lack of requisite intent to remain in the state.\textsuperscript{214} Although New York cases indicate no great problem in the past, the presence of 41,115 military personnel in the state at the time of the 1960 census\textsuperscript{215} foreshadows difficulties under the current statutory reform. However, even assuming the constitutionality of extensions such as special jurisdictional criteria for military personnel,\textsuperscript{216} any alteration of current standards is unlikely in the absence of amendment of the new section purporting to limit recognition of out-of-state decrees; for the scope of New York divorce


\textsuperscript{213} See Williams v. North Carolina (I), 317 U.S. 287, 298-99, 303 (1942). Whether less contact than domicile will satisfy the full faith and credit clause is a matter of controversy. See E. CHEATHAM, E. GRISWOLD, W. REASE & M. ROSENBERG, CASES ON CONFLICT OF LAWS 855-57 (5th ed. 1964); A. EHRENZWEIG, CONFLICT OF LAWS 238-42 (1962); H. GOODRICH, CONFLICT OF LAWS 256, 258 (Scoles ed. 1964).


\textsuperscript{215} General Social and Economic Characteristics—New York, United States Census of Population, Table 52 (1960).

\textsuperscript{216} In Alton v. Alton, 207 F.2d 667 (3d Cir. 1947), a Virgin Island statutory presumption of domicile from six weeks residence was held unconstitutional as a violation of the due process clause of the fifth amendment. Other language has also indicated that domicile is a prequisite of jurisdiction. See Bell v. Bell, 181 U.S. 175, 178 (1901). Such decisions have been employed to restrict special jurisdictional statutes for military personnel. See Martin v. Martin, 253 N.C. 704, 118 S.E.2d 29 (1961). Yet, at least one state has expressly found such a status to be a reasonable basis for jurisdiction. See Wallace v. Wallace, 63 N.M. 414, 416, 320 P.2d 1020, 1022 (1958); cf. David-Zieseniss v. Zieseniss, 205 Misc. 836, 129 N.Y.S.2d 649 (Sup. Ct. 1954). Furthermore, New York courts have expressly held in cases involving decrees of foreign countries that a valid domicile was not always requisite to recognition. See Rosenstiel v. Rosenstiel, 16 N.Y.2d 64, 209 N.E.2d 707 (1965), cert. denied, 383 U.S. 943 (1966); notes 226-28 infra and accompanying text.
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jurisdiction was apparently constricted in order to be consistent with the new recognition policy.\textsuperscript{217}

\textit{Extraterritorial Evasion.} The delay of the conciliation procedure and, for those not wishing to resort to fault grounds, the delay of long separation periods may furnish an incentive for migratory divorce.\textsuperscript{218} Apparently in anticipation of such an eventuality, the legislature enacted a provision intended to limit extraterritorial evasion:

Proof that a person obtaining a divorce in another jurisdiction was (a) domiciled in this state within twelve months prior to the commencement of the proceeding therefor, and resumed residence in this state within eighteen months after the date of his departure therefrom, or (b) at all times after his return maintained a place of residence within this state, shall be prima facie evidence that the person was domiciled in this state when the divorce proceeding was commenced.\textsuperscript{219}

However, the practical effect of section 250 is uncertain: the presumption of domicile in New York as against the granting state raises constitutional questions under the full faith and credit clause, while the reliance on presumed domicile may render the section ineffective as an attempt to prevent recognition of foreign country decrees.\textsuperscript{220}

Any decree which qualifies under the full faith and credit clause must be given the same effect in sister states as would be given in

\textsuperscript{217}See notes 218-20 \textit{infra} and accompanying text. To conclude that the legislature attempted to make the jurisdictional statute and the foreign decree recognition sections harmonious requires one to ignore dissimilarities in the wording of the two sections. Jurisdiction is based on "residence" while recognition is based on "domicile." \textit{Compare} N.Y. DOM. REL. LAW § 230 (McKinney Supp. 1966), \textit{with} N.Y. DOM. REL. LAW § 250 (McKinney Supp. 1966). There is no doubt, however, that in light of relevant precedent, residence in the jurisdictional clause will be interpreted as domicile. See note 210 \textit{supra} and accompanying text.

\textsuperscript{218}There are no statistics indicating that procedures such as those adopted in New York result in increased migration. Wisconsin is the only state with a comprehensive divorce law structure similar to that now adopted by New York. The law when adopted in Wisconsin apparently resulted in no significant effect in the migratory divorce, since the rate of divorces granted in Wisconsin courts actually rose from 1.6 to 1.8 per thousand. \textit{See} 1965 \textit{Statistical Abstract of the United States} 11; 1959 \textit{Report Wis. Jud. Council} J-46; 1963 \textit{Report Wis. Jud. Council} 7. However, the effect in New York may be entirely different because of the pre-existing pattern of migratory divorce, and the incentives for evasion generally that remain. See notes 168-171 \textit{supra} and accompanying text.

\textsuperscript{219}N.Y. DOM. REL. LAW § 250 (McKinney Supp. 1966).

\textsuperscript{220}See \textit{Foster & Freed}, Supp. at 32-33; \textit{A.B.C.N.Y. Report}, at 4.
the state where rendered, if jurisdictional requirements are met. However, in an ex parte proceeding where the defendant does not appear and have the opportunity to litigate the jurisdictional facts, a recital of jurisdiction may be attacked in a forum which would also have had power to hear the case. If both parties appear or are represented and there is an opportunity to contest the jurisdictional issue, resolution of that issue is res judicata as between the litigants and as to any third party who would be so barred in the rendering state.

From the above, it appears that section 250 could have no application to bilateral sister state decrees since res judicata precludes any relitigation in which the presumption might be applied. Furthermore, the Supreme Court in Williams v. North Carolina (II), an ex parte decree case, stated: "The burden of undermining the verity which the [sister state] decrees import rests heavily upon the assailant." Since this statement appears in an exposition of the scope of the full faith and credit clause, that clause apparently requires


222 "[T]he Clause does not make a sister-State judgment a judgment in another State. . . . 'To give it the force of a judgment in another state, it must be made a judgment there' . . . . It can be made a judgment there only if the court purporting to render the original judgment had power to render such a judgment. . . . had jurisdiction, that is, to render the judgment." Williams v. North Carolina (II), 325 U.S. 226, 229 (1945).


224 "As to the truth or existence of a fact, like that of domicile, upon which depends the power to exert judicial authority, a State not a party to the exertion of such judicial authority, in another State but seriously affected by it has a right, when asserting its own unquestioned authority, to ascertain the truth or existence of that crucial fact." Williams v. North Carolina (II), 325 U.S. 226, 230 (1945). As to limitation of this principle to ex parte decrees, see note 231 infra.

225 See Johnson v. Muelberger, 340 U.S. 581, 582, 589 (1951) (appearance by attorney bars collateral attack by third parties if barred by rendering state); Coe v. Coe, 334 U.S. 378, 384 (1948) (res judicata whether or not domicile actually litigated); Sherrer v. Sherrer, 334 U.S. 343, 351-52 (1948) (res judicata if party appears and has opportunity to be heard).
that the burden of proof be placed on the party attacking the validity of a decree. However, section 250 places the burden on the party asserting the validity of the sister state decree under the listed circumstances and as such would be repugnant to the Williams directive.227 It can, therefore, be concluded that in all cases involving sister state decrees, section 250 would probably be either ineffective or invalid if applied. This, however, does not mean that the section is invalid on its face. The section is taken from the Uniform Divorce Recognition Act § 2, and the drafters of that act specifically provide that it is intended to occupy only a constitutionally permissible area.228

There remains to be determined the effect of section 250 in cases involving decrees granted by jurisdictions outside of the United States, for such judgments are not covered by the full faith and credit clause. Recognition of such foreign country decrees is determined by comity, a policy-based doctrine.229 In applying this doctrine in Rosenstiel v. Rosenstiel,230 the Court of Appeals of New York held that domicile was not the only possible basis for divorce jurisdiction and that no policy of the State of New York prevented recognition of the two Mexican divorces before the court, which were valid where rendered.231 This decision followed a long line of New York decisions extending comity to foreign country decrees.232 Thus,

227 Foster & Freed, Supp. at 30.
228 See § 2, Comment (a).
231 Id. at 74, 209 N.E.2d at 713, 262 N.Y.S.2d at 91. One of the actions considered in Rosenstiel was based only on submission to personal jurisdiction. In the other, minimal Mexican residence requirements had been satisfied. Id. at 70, 74, 209 N.E.2d at 710, 713, 262 N.Y.S.2d at 88, 91.

The liberality of the New York courts in recognizing decrees rendered in foreign countries has not extended to judgments resulting from ex parte proceedings. See Gorie v. Gorie, 26 App. Div. 2d 368, 274 N.Y.S.2d 985 (1966); Maltese v. Maltese, 32 Misc. 2d 993, 224 N.Y.S.2d 946 (Sup. Ct. 1962); Johnson v. Johnson, 13 Misc. 2d 891, 181 N.Y.S.2d 73 (Sup. Ct. 1957); Hirsch v. Hirsch, 51 N.Y.S.2d 452 (Sup. Ct. 1944). However, in one case a New York court came very close to recognizing such decrees. In Cannon v. Phillips, 44 Misc. 2d 986, 255 N.Y.S.2d 753 (Sup. Ct. 1965), the court held it was bound under the full faith and credit clause by a California declaratory judgment which upheld, under a California statute, an ex parte Mexican decree obtained by one arguably a New York domiciliary, even though the defendant, also a New York domiciliary, had appeared in neither of the previous actions and had not been personally served. The California statute, apparently Cal. Civ. Proc. Code § 1915 (West 1955), gave the same effect in California as would be given by the rendering jurisdiction if the rendering jurisdiction had jurisdiction according to its own law.

section 250, in form a presumption of domicile in New York, is of no effect unless it is read as changing the policies on which Rosenstiel was based by making domicile of one spouse in the rendering state the exclusive basis of recognition.\textsuperscript{233} In light of widespread pre-enactment publicity that the law would bar "quickie" Mexican divorces, this interpretation would not seem unreasonable.\textsuperscript{234} However, there is an indication that such a result was not intended. Although section 250 adopts section 2 of the Uniform Divorce Recognition Act, it does not enact section 1 which makes domicile the basis for out-of-state decree recognition.\textsuperscript{235} By failing to enact section 1, the legislature has refrained from expressly overruling the New York cases giving comity to foreign country decrees and has apparently merely opened the door for reconsideration of Rosenstiel in light of the new reform law.\textsuperscript{236} Since Rosenstiel was arguably a judicial attempt at liberalization of a too restrictive divorce law,\textsuperscript{237} section 250 provides the New York courts with the opportunity to base a withdrawal from Rosenstiel on legislative policy, without requiring such withdrawal. However, since section 250 cannot constitutionally foreclose recognition of sister state decrees, such an interpretation would do little more than increase the cost of evasion of New York policies by requiring a six weeks' residence in Nevada.\textsuperscript{238}


\textsuperscript{233} See D. Currie, Suitcase Divorce in the Conflict of Laws: Simons, Rosenstiel, and Borax, 34 U. CHI. L. REV. 26, 62-63 (1966); Comment, 18 SYRACUSE L. REV. 71, 86 (1966); Note, 12 N.Y.L.F. 105, 115-16 (1966). If domicile in the rendering jurisdiction becomes the exclusive basis for recognition, such interpretation would be more restrictive than the UNIFORM DIVORCE RECOGNITION ACT §1, which requires recognition except when both parties are domiciled in the state entertaining the action challenging the validity of the decree. However, the uniform law does not extend to cases where the plaintiff in the foreign decree is not domiciled in the state in which the challenge is entered, this circumstance apparently to be decided on comity. See Cannon v. Phillips, 44 Misc. 2d 986, 255 N.Y.S.2d 755 (Sup. Ct. 1965); note 231 supra.

\textsuperscript{234} See, e.g., N.Y. Times, March 24, 1966, §1, at 1, col. 2; N.Y. Times, March 29, 1966, §1, at 15, col. 4.

\textsuperscript{235} "A divorce from the bonds of matrimony obtained in another jurisdiction shall be of no force or effect in this state, if both parties to the marriage were domiciled in this state at the time the proceeding for the divorce was commenced." UNIFORM DIVORCE RECOGNITION ACT §1. See note 233 supra.


CONCLUSION

The New York reform is rife with imperfections. Internal inconsistencies resulting from the compromise of competing policies and incompatibility of the reform with existing tax and property law threaten to perpetuate intrastate evasion of the divorce law and to divert feuding couples from employment of the separation period innovations in favor of the more traditional and less desirable fault grounds. The system of conciliation has the possibility of becoming a mere procedural obstacle because of its complexity, and stands under a perhaps unfounded pall of uncertainty as to its constitutionality. Finally, an abortive attempt to restrict migratory divorce seems to have done little more than elicit renunciation and confusion.

Imperfections notwithstanding, the New York reform can be viewed as a political accomplishment of major proportions. Furthermore, the legislature, apparently in anticipation of difficulties inherent in major reform legislation, delayed the effective date of most of the reform legislation until September 1, 1967. Such delay allowed intensive criticism by the organized bar and other interested groups. The Senate Judiciary Committee considered amendments which would meet most of the criticisms made herein. However, under an avalanche of proposals, the legislature ended its term without acting.\textsuperscript{242}

\textsuperscript{239} See Rostenstiel v. Rostenstiel, 16 N.Y.2d 64, 73, 209 N.E.2d 709, 812, 262 N.Y.S.2d 86, 90 (1965), cert. denied, 383 U.S. 943 (1966): "The State or country of true domicile has the closest real public interest in a marriage but, where a New York spouse goes elsewhere to establish a synthetic domicile to meet technical acceptance of a matrimonial suit, our public interest is not affected differently by a formality of one day than by a formality of six weeks."

\textsuperscript{240} See N.Y. DOM. REL. LAW § 215-g (McKinney Supp. 1966); notes 128, 131, 134, 135-39 supra and accompanying text.

\textsuperscript{241} See N.Y. DOM. REL. LAW § 170 (McKinney Supp. 1966).

\textsuperscript{242} See 157 N.Y.L.J., March 17, 1967, at 1, col. 4.