

**PRISON REFORM IN THE UNITED
STATES: PROCEEDINGS OF A
CONFERENCE HELD AT NEWPORT,
RHODE ISLAND, AUGUST 1ST AND
2D, 1877; PP.3-53**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649279401

Prison Reform in the United States: Proceedings of a Conference Held at Newport, Rhode Island, August 1st and 2d, 1877; pp.3-53 by E. C. Wines

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E. C. WINES

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PRISON REFORM

IN THE

UNITED STATES.

PROCEEDINGS OF A CONFERENCE

HELD AT

NEWPORT, RHODE ISLAND,

AUGUST 1ST AND 2D, 1877.

NEW YORK:
NATIONAL PRINTING COMPANY,
13 CHAMBERS STREET,
1877.

PROCEEDINGS OF THE CONFERENCE.

In response to an invitation issued by the Hon. Richard Vaux, of Pennsylvania, and the Rev. Dr. Wines, of New York, jointly with the Board of State Charities of Ohio, a number of gentlemen, interested in the matter of prison discipline and reform, met in conference in the city of Newport, R. I., at 10 a. m., Wednesday, August 1, 1877. The Conference was held in the State House, by invitation of the state authorities. It was strictly private, the general public not being admitted, and the discussions were of an informal and conversational character.

On motion of the Hon. J. W. Andrews, of Ohio, Dr. Wines was called to the Chair; and the Rev. J. L. Milligan, of Pennsylvania, and the Rev. T. D. Howard, of Massachusetts, were appointed Secretaries.

The sessions of the Conference were opened by prayer, in which the assembly was led by the Rev. A. G. Byers, of Ohio.

The Conference was composed of the following persons, viz.:

E. C. WINES, D. D., LL.D., Sec. Nat. Pris. Ass'n, . . .	New York.
SAMUEL ALLINSON, Pres. Bd. Mans. State Ref. School, . .	New Jersey.
HON. J. W. ANDREWS, Mem. Bd. State Charities, . . .	Ohio.
HON. JOSEPH PERKINS, " " " " " "	"
MURRAY SHIPLEY, " " " " " "	"
REV. A. G. BYERS, Secretary " " " " " "	"
HON. FREDERICK SMYTH, Ex-Governor,	N. Hampshire
EBEN WENTWORTH, Supt. State Reform School, . . .	Maine.
F. B. SANBORN, Secretary Am. Social Science Ass'n, .	Mass.
H. W. B. WIGHTMAN, Member Bd. of Pris. Com'rs, . .	"
REV. T. D. HOWARD, Secretary " " " " " "	"
BURNEAM WARDWELL,	"

JAMES B. CONGDON,	Mass.
CAPTAIN M. L. ELDRIDGE, Sup't Prov. Ref. School,	R. Island.
E. M. SNOW, Pres. Bd. for building new State Prison	"
COL. T. W. HIGGINSON,	"
E. B. HEWES, Warden State Prison,	Connecticut.
HON. ISAAC T. ROGERS, Mem. Bd. State Pris. Directors,	"
HON. GEO. W. HALL, Ch. Joint Leg. Com. Pris. Labor,	Pennsylvania
HON. H. J. FISHER, Mem. " " " "	"
HON. A. J. HERR, " " " "	"
S. B. COLLINS, Stenographer, " "	"
REV. J. L. MILLIGAN, Chaplain Western Penitentiary,	"
J. G. ROSENGARTEN, Member Phil. Prison Society,	"
HON. T. S. WILKINSON, Warden State Prison,	Maryland.
J. T. FORD, Member Bd. Directors "	"
C. FAIRBANK,	Virginia.
REV. FRED. H. WINES, Sec. Bd. State Charities,	Illinois.
MAJOR R. W. McCLAUGHEY, Warden State Prison,	"

The Hon. Mr. Vaux was detained at home, and unable to be present, by reason of sickness in his family.

The Chairman read letters of apology for non-attendance from Governors Rice of Massachusetts, Hubbard of Connecticut, Bedle of New Jersey, and McCreary of Kentucky; also from Hon. C. I. Walker of Michigan, Chancellor Hammond of the Law School of Iowa University, Rev. Wm. Clarke, D. D. of New Hampshire, Gen. Eaton, U. S. Commissioner of Education, Hon. Geo. L. Harrison and T. H. Nevin, of Pennsylvania, Hon. Ezra Graves and Z. R. Brookway, of New York, and others, expressing sympathy with the objects of the Conference and regret at not being able to be present. Dr. Wines, of New York, submitted to the Conference a Syllabus of Propositions embodying, in outline, the draft of a complete system of preventive, reformatory and penitentiary institutions and discipline for a state. This paper was, on motion of Dr. Byers, made the basis of the informal discussions of the Conference, and, during successive sessions, its several points engaged the body in animated, interesting and instructive conversation, in which all the members, more or less, participated.

After discussion, on motion of Mr. Sanborn, the paper was referred to a Committee of three, for the introduction therein of such modifications as had been already indicated as the sense of the Conference, and of such others as the Committee, on a closer examination of the document, might deem advisable. The Chair named, on the proposed Committee, Messrs. Sanborn, Allinson, and Hall. Subsequently the Committee reported back the Syllabus with a number of amendments, which were further discussed and amended. Whereupon the following resolutions, reported by the Committee, were unanimously adopted, to wit:

Resolved: That this Conference has listened with deep interest to the Syllabus containing a summary of principles, lying at the foundation of a reformed prison discipline, and the outline of a prison system for a state, and hereby expresses its concurrence with the general views therein contained.

Resolved: That the Syllabus be adopted as the sense of the Conference, with the modifications voted,* and that it be recommended to the careful and earnest consideration of the Legislatures of the several States of the Union, especially such as are seeking to introduce improved systems of prison management.

After listening to a statement by Mrs. S. L. Little, of Rhode Island, President of the Prisoners' Aid Association of that State, in reference to the plan of a Temporary Industrial Shelter for Discharged Prisoners who desire to live an honest life, and the progress made therein, the Conference, on motion of Dr. Byers, passed the following vote, viz.,

Resolved: That this Conference has heard with great interest the statement of Mrs. S. L. Little, of Newport, R. I., President of the Prisoners' Aid Association of that

* These modifications are incorporated in the text.

State, and we hereby desire to express our sympathy in this work, and would heartily commend the enterprise of the Association in providing a temporary industrial shelter for discharged prisoners; but in doing so, the Conference desires to place upon record its conviction that such institutions should be looked upon as transitional in their character; that the prisoner's stay in them should be the shortest possible, and that permanent work should be provided for him at the earliest practicable moment.

Dr. Snow stated that it had been the intention of Professor Chase, President of the Rhode Island Board of State Charities, to be present to-day, but, being unavoidably prevented, he had commissioned him to invite the Conference, in the name of the Board, to visit the public institutions of Rhode Island. On motion of Mr. Milligan, the invitation was accepted with thanks.

Messrs. Wines, Milligan, and Sanborn were appointed a Committee to superintend the printing of the proceedings.

Mr. Andrews moved, and it was voted, that the thanks of the Conference be given to the Chairman, for his work in organizing the Conference, for his preparation of the able and admirable paper offered to its consideration, and for the acceptable manner in which he had discharged the duties of presiding officer.

Thanks were also voted to the authorities of the state for the use of the State House.

Mr. Sanborn invited the members of the Conference to attend and take part in the meeting of the American Social Science Association, to be held in Saratoga, Sept. 4th, ensuing.

On motion, the Conference adjourned without day.

E. C. WINES,
Chairman.

J. L. MILLIGAN, }
T. D. HOWARD, } *Secretaries.*

NEWPORT, R. I., AUGUST 2, 1877.

PRISON REFORM IN THE UNITED STATES.

OUTLINE DRAFT of a System of Preventive, Reformatory, and Penitentiary Institutions and Discipline, adopted by the Prison Reform Conference of Newport, August 2nd, 1877, and recommended to the Legislatures and People of the several States, for their Study and Adoption, so far as approved.*

SECTION FIRST.

The problem submitted to the examination of this Conference is the minimization of crime—how to bring it down to the narrowest possible limits. This problem has three terms:—

* On presenting to the Conference his Syllabus of Propositions, DR. WINES prefaced the reading with the following remarks:—

MR. CHAIRMAN AND GENTLEMEN:—Before I proceed to the reading of this paper, a word of explanation and apology may not be inappropriate. It may be thought presumptuous in me to offer to the Conference a document of this kind, when there are others as well or better qualified for such a service. But as the Conference has been called together on the sudden, without preparation, and is intended to be quite informal and even conversational in its character, not supposing that any other person would be likely to undertake a labor of this sort; yet, believing that it would tend to facilitate the work in hand to have a kind of nucleus around which our thoughts and discussions might gather, I have ventured to prepare this Syllabus of Propositions, embodying, in outline, something like a general system of preventive, reformatory, and penitentiary institutions and discipline for a state. The paper is both longer and shorter than I could have wished: longer of necessity, because the field is so broad; shorter of necessity, because the argument on each point had to be compressed into so narrow a compass. Yet I have sought to realize, as far as possible, the *juste milieu* between length and brevity; and I have, especially, endeavored to so frame my propositions, that the simple statement of them should carry with it an argument in their support. With what success, the members of the Conference will judge. One word further:—My aim has been truth, rather than originality. Consequently, I have not hesitated to draw upon my own previous writings; upon the transactions of our several National Prison Reform Congresses—particularly the last, in New York; and, to some extent, upon the productions of the man whom I regard as the wisest as well as the profoundest of all thinkers and writers on the penitentiary question—ALEXANDER MACONOHIE.

1. How to secure a suitable education to all the children of the state. 2. How to save homeless, destitute, neglected, and vicious children from a first fall; or, if they have fallen, how to lift them up again, and rescue them from a criminal career. 3. How to bring adult criminals to a better mind and a better life, through agencies applied to them during their imprisonment. When these three questions are correctly answered, the whole problem of the prevention and repression of crime will have been solved. It is a problem that may well engage the interest and study of the highest statesmanship, since it concerns the order and safety of society, and the lives and property of men. As it unfolds itself in all its length and breadth, it will be seen to be among the foremost problems of the day. Happily, it has now, almost everywhere, taken a strong hold of the public mind. Baron von Bülow, Minister of Foreign Affairs for the German Empire, in a conversation with a member of this Conference, made the striking remark: "This question of the prevention and repression of crime is infinitely more worthy to engage the interest and study of statesmen than nine-tenths of the little every-day politics that occupy so much of the time and attention of cabinets." Ex-President Thiers of France, in a letter to the same gentleman, said "Prison reform is a work in which all civilized nations have an interest. To punish men, with a view to their reformation, is the best of social labors, and the one whose success is most to be desired."

SECTION SECOND.

The two master forces which have heretofore opposed, and do still oppose, the progress of prison discipline and reform in our country, are political influence and instability of administration. In many states the prisons have formed, and do form, a part of the political machinery of the state. The interest of politicians has mainly controlled their management; while the interest of the people and the interest of the prisoners, which are really the same, have been practically ignored. With every turn of the political wheel there is a clean sweep of the officers in charge; the adherents