

MESSAGE OF ADOLF KRAUS

*President of the*  
INDEPENDENT ORDER OF B'NAI B'RITH



*To the*  
CONSTITUTION GRAND LODGE  
CONVENTION  
At Atlantic City, N. J.  
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have been characteristic of citizens of other faiths. The poisonous aftermath of war—its hatreds and passions, its miseries, murders and lies, have been visited upon them in far greater measure. A people with this historical background has a long emotional memory and through the centuries has prayed with fervent hearts for the dawn of that day which the present Conference seems to portend.

"May God be with you in your deliberations and guide you.

Very respectfully,

ADOLF KRAUS."

On the same day the following reply was received from the President's Secretary:

"My Dear Mr. Kraus:

"The President has received your telegram and he asks me to thank you and all concerned for it. He wishes you to know that he is grateful for and heartened by this expression of approbation and assurance of confidence.

"Sincerely yours,

GEO. B. CHRISTIAN, JR.

Secretary to the President."

## B'NAI B'RITH HILLEL FOUNDATIONS

The subject of religious education of Jewish youths attending American Colleges and universities has been a much debated one in recent years. An examination of the reports of the annual proceedings of the Central Conference of American Rabbis for the past twenty-seven years shows that at each annual conference the matter was given serious thought and consideration and various plans projected. However, up until the establishment of the Hillel Foundation at the University of Illinois in the fall of 1923, no serious attempt had been made in the history of American Jewry to provide systematic religious contact for American college students of the Jewish faith.

A large measure of credit for the initial establishment at the University of Illinois is due to our lodge brethren in Champaign, Illinois, who for years used every effort to establish a resident rabbi on the campus and who finally, during the year 1923, raised from among the Jewish residents of Champaign and a few of our co-religionists in Chicago, sufficient funds to justify the calling of a rabbi to take charge of the student work at Illinois. During the school year 1923-1924 this work at the University of Illinois, under the direction of Rabbi Benjamin Frankel demonstrated its

practicability and its value. The funds for its continued maintenance and extension into other schools were lacking. There was no organization behind the movement, although the Union of American Hebrew Congregations had endorsed it and had contributed \$1,000 toward the Foundation's \$12,000 budget. Realizing that the institution could not develop and could not extend into other schools unless and until the movement was adopted by some national Jewish organization, Rabbi Frankel early in 1924 came to our office in Chicago and asked the Order to investigate the general problem of Jewish education in colleges and to consider seriously the matter of adopting a program of religious education for students as part of the work of the Order.

At the meeting of the Executive Committee, held in April, 1924, a memorandum was presented by the Secretary, reporting certain conferences held with leaders in American Jewish life with a view to ascertaining whether participation by the Order in this line of activity would meet with general approval. The report and a further investigation subsequently made indicated that the Order, in view of its neutrality on the subject of religion and the breadth of its platform, was in a better position to undertake this type of work than any other American Jewish organization.

After a careful consideration of the whole problem, the Executive Committee at that meeting directed that the University Foundation work be undertaken as part of the work of the Order: that funds be provided for the maintenance of the Foundation at the University of Illinois during the school year 1924-25, and that a similar Foundation, to be known as the B'nai B'rith Hillel Foundation, be established at the University of Wisconsin for one year commencing September, 1924, as a further experiment. In recommending the establishment of the Foundation at the University of Wisconsin, the Committee had in mind the very different conditions existing in Madison as compared with those existing at Champaign. At Champaign there was a considerable Jewish population, keenly alive to the necessity of an institution such as the B'nai B'rith Hillel Foundation. In Madison, on the other hand, there was only a small community and 400 Jewish students, with practically no contact with the local Jewish families, who, themselves, had no organized Jewish communal activities.

The Executive Committee believed that the experiences of the Foundations in two such varying places would be a great help in

demonstrating its usefulness and would be informative as to methods to be followed in other communities. To carry on the work, the Executive Committee created a commission which is known as the B'nai B'rith Hillel Foundation Commission, which is appointed by the President of the Order, and which is directly responsible for the conduct of the two Foundations thus far established. This committee has presented a report embodying the reports of the directors of the Foundations at the University of Illinois and at the University of Wisconsin, which will be submitted to the Convention at the proper time.

I have watched the development of the work at these two Foundations during the past year with very deep interest. There are close to 400 Jewish students at each of these institutions. I have come to the conclusion that the Order could find no better, no more satisfactory, no more valuable endeavor than that in which it is now engaged. I believe that foundations such as those now existing at the University of Illinois and at the University of Wisconsin should be extended into all universities and schools for higher education, in which suitable provision is not made for Jewish students, to encourage the cultivation of their Judaism. Logically and naturally most of the leaders of the future will come from the classrooms of higher educational institutions. Shall these leaders who are Jews lead as Jews proud of their heritage or shall they lead without a thought that they are Jews? Shall they go forth from the colleges and universities ignorant of and even ashamed of their religion and ancestry, when they might go forth as Jews proud of their heritage, because during the formative period of their lives they have been made acquainted with the long history of the Jews and the priceless treasures of Judaism?

The Jewish student is, as a rule, only passively Jewish. He is not sure of his Jewish learning. When he enters the University and finds what he interprets as anti-Semitism, he ducks his head in the sand like an ostrich and thinks he has solved the problem. Immigration has closed our doors. They are not likely to be reopened for many years to come. The Jewish leaders of tomorrow and the day after tomorrow will be American-born. It is part of our responsibility to help in their training if we Jews of America are to produce a generation of leaders. If we of the B'nai B'rith are to insure our own future as an organization progressively and intelligently led, the attitude of the average Jewish student as above

set forth must be overcome. The work thus far done by the Order through its college foundations, to my mind, indicates an effective means of overcoming that attitude.

When a Jewish student enters either of the institutions above mentioned, he is immediately brought into contact with an organization that represents him on the campus. He openly makes the declaration, "I am a Jew," by affiliating himself with the organization, and as time goes on, if he makes a name for himself on the campus, the respect that he receives is reflected on all of his co-religionists and on the Foundation.

Every other denomination has for years been extending to the students of their respective denominations during their college years the opportunity for religious affiliation. Only the Jewish students were neglected; so neglected, in fact, that at the University of Illinois, Professor Chauncey C. Baldwin repeatedly called the attention of American Jewry to that neglect, and an Episcopalian educational leader at the University of Wisconsin, a friend of the Jew and sincerely interested in the problem, in urging the establishment of some Jewish religious endeavor at that school, stated "that if it weren't for their Yiddische ponem, the Jewish students here wouldn't know that they were plain Goyische heathen."

At both schools we are now trying to train the student so that in later life he may assume intelligent leadership, for after all interest in Jewish life comes only when responsibilities are realized. We find an overpowering interest in Jewish life chiefly because the burden has been placed on our shoulders, and the interest grows with responsibility. Likewise with the Jewish student who, when he finds the burdens placed on his shoulders, finds his interest grows; he wants to know something about his people and their life.

The B'nai B'rith Hillel Foundations are organized in such a way that the responsibility is placed on the shoulders of the student. Everything is done by the student. At each Foundation there are six standing committees. A committee on religious education, which is in effect the Student Board of Directors of the religious congregation. One of its purposes is that of demonstrating to Jewish students the need for religious education. Last year this committee at the Foundation at the University of Illinois made a survey of the student body to determine some idea of the religious feelings of Jewish students at the University, based on about 300 questionnaires filled out by the students. The committee also sponsors various

study groups which are being conducted by the Director of the Foundation and members of the University faculty. There is also a social welfare committee; a committee on open forum; a publication and publicity committee, and a Menorah committee. The latter is an outgrowth of the local chapter of the Menorah Society, which conducts the Menorah Club of the Foundation, and which requires of every applicant for membership the reading of a paper showing original research work in some problem of Jewish interest. The chairman and sub-chairman of these various committees constitute the student council, which is constantly considering methods of improving the Foundation's work.

This year the Foundation at the University of Illinois was able to provide special courses in "The History of Judaism," "Social Ideals of Judaism" and "Jewish Ethics," for which the University is giving full University credit toward a college degree. These courses are given directly under the auspices of the Foundation and the instructor, Dr. Moses Jung, a graduate of the University of London and a Doctor of Philosophy from Dropsie College, is a member of our Foundation staff. Each student registered in these courses is required to do standard University preparation work for each class.

But even better, in my opinion, than classroom instruction is the self-instruction which the students are constantly assimilating in their committee work. During the first year it was with difficulty that enough students could be secured to fill sixty-eight committee positions. That the Foundation has captured the attention and interest of the student body is evident from the fact that at the beginning of the current school year there were three applicants from among the students for every committee position and the committees had to be materially enlarged. In these committees the students are grappling with every phase of the so-called Jewish problem and are trying to understand it. This, to my mind, is the best method of education.

Both at Madison and at Champaign the Foundation provides religious services each week, both reform and orthodox. Before the advent of the Foundation at Illinois, student attendance at religious services on Sunday was less than sixty. Last year at Illinois, the average attendance was close to two hundred at every service, and thus far this year the average attendance has been over 200. At Madison, though there the Foundation has been operating only

a few months, the attendance at both orthodox and reform services has been gradually but surely increasing each week. At the holiday services last fall, it was impossible to provide accommodations for all the students who wished to attend services; a striking contrast to conditions in former years, when it was the rule rather than the exception for the Jewish student to attend classes on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur.

One of the interesting developments of the Foundation at Champaign is the training course for religious school teachers, which after two years' work gives the student a splendid preparation for teaching in religious schools.

The various reports that will be submitted will go into all these matters in further detail than it is possible for me to present in this message. But before passing to another subject, I wish to state my conviction that if we adhere to the program mapped out and establish and extend the religious foundation work as rapidly as circumstances will permit into other schools where the greatest necessity exists, then within a few years the religious work so conducted by the Order will be universally recognized as one of the most powerful influences in American Jewish life. I believe that it will do more toward alleviating anti-Semitism, toward developing a fine class of Jews than we could do in any other way. It is a field of work which the Order can undertake with lasting benefit to American Jewry. Though different in one sense from the Americanization and Anti-Defamation work which we are doing, it is, nevertheless, in direct line with them.

I recommend that the Convention give most careful consideration to this phase of our activity and that steps be taken to extend the work to other schools as rapidly as circumstances and our resources will justify.

## MEXICO

For the first time in Mexican history an outgoing President has stepped out of office and gracefully welcomed his successor. For the first time a change of administration has taken place in Mexican history without a revolution. This fact is of great significance to all those who have been looking forward to the day when Mexico will begin to show signs of industrial and commercial development. To those of our co-religionists from foreign lands who have been seeking some land to which to immigrate where there is a chance