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More Articles By Dr. Yitzchok Levine

In two earlier articles we traced the life and rabbinical career of Rabbi Simon Glazer until 1918. Rav Glazer was a rare individual in that he was a secularly educated European trained Orthodox Rov who spoke and wrote English fluently.

Rabbi Glazer left Montreal in 1918 to become the rabbi of Congregation Bikur Cholim in Seattle, Washington. However, in 1920 he accepted the position of chief rabbi of a consortium of Orthodox synagogues in Kansas City, Kansas and Kansas City, Missouri.

The rabbi's organizational ability, his determination to work with all the Jewish groups in a community, and his outreach beyond the Jewish community were already evident, therefore, before he arrived in Kansas City. Invited to become head of the eight Orthodox congregations in the Greater Kansas City area, which had federated as the United Synagogues, he was quick to take advantage of the opportunity now afforded him, and he began to implement what he would later refer to as the "Kansas City Plan."¹

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In Kansas City, he successfully centralized, under the auspices of the United Synagogues, many areas of Jewish life, including education, kashrut supervision and philanthropy. He attributed his success to his decision to place the synagogue in the center of his kehillah organization. The synagogue, he argued, was the only institution capable of

representing the entire spectrum of the Jewish community . Another major factor in his success in Kansas City was the fact that he had obtained both city and state charters for the United Synagogue, something which he had not done in Montreal. Having legal status, the United Synagogues of Kansas City was very effective in implementing it programs.²

Political Activism

As we have seen, Rabbi Glazer was multi-talented, and he was one of the first Orthodox Jews to understand the importance of using political connections to benefit the lives of American Jews. He spearheaded efforts to block the passage and signing of the Johnston-Dillingham Bill that sought to limit immigration to the United States. This bill was eventually signed into law by President Harding, but the delay in its passage enabled thousands of Jewish immigrants to enter the country.

Rabbi Glazer was an ardent Zionist, so it is not surprising that he played a key role in fostering the passage and signing of the 1922 congressional resolution on Palestine.

On June 30, 1922, a joint resolution of both Houses of Congress of the United States unanimously endorsed the "Mandate for Palestine," confirming the irrevocable right of

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Jews to settle in the area of Palestine - anywhere between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea:

"Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled. That the United States of America favors the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which should prejudice the civil and religious rights of Christian and all other non-Jewish communities in Palestine, and that the holy places and religious buildings and sites in Palestine shall be adequately protected."

On September 21, 1922, the then President Warren G. Harding signed the joint resolution of approval to establish a Jewish National Home in Palestine.³

Rabbi Glazer was involved in a myriad of diverse issues. On November 19, 1921 The New York Times reported, in a story headlined "Harding Lets Rabbi Adopt Five Orphans in Rumania":

President Harding gave Rabbi Simon Glazer of Kansas City, Kan., executive permission to adopt five children who are now in Rumania. The rabbi has already five children, and the new additions are Jewish children who were left orphans by the death of their mother in one of the massacres in the Ukraine in 1920 and the death of their father in the United States.

Immigration restrictions would have prevented them from coming to the United States, but President Harding agreed to allow Rabbi Glazer to adopt them and thus legalize their entry.⁴

In 1923 Rabbi Glazer relocated to New York, where he served a number of congregations. He began as the rabbi of Beth Medrash Hagadol in Harlem, then served as rabbi of Temple Beth-El in Brooklyn from 1927 to 1930, and finally as rabbi of the Maimonides Synagogue in Manhattan from 1930 until his passing in 1938.

Prolific Writer

Rabbi Glazer not only authored 26 books, he wrote literally hundreds of articles for newspapers and magazines.

His multivolume *History of Israel* and his translations of Maimonides' writings were considered useful educational tools for untutored laymen. He also wrote instructional material for children like the Sabbath School Guide, published while Glazer was a rabbi in Toledo. In addition, Glazer often edited the local Jewish newspapers in communities where he served as rabbi. While in Des Moines, Iowa, for example, Glazer was the editor of the Jewish Herald, and in Toledo, Ohio, he assisted in the publication of the Jewish Compromiser. In Montreal he was part of the editorial staff of the Jewish Times, revived the dormant Yiddisher Shtern, and was one of the founders of another Montreal Yiddish newspaper, the Kanader Adler.⁵

On May 22, 1938 Rabbi Glazer died at the age of 60, thus depriving American Jewry of an unusual rabbi, activist, and scholar.

His New York Times obituary read in part: "Since coming to the United States more than forty years ago, Rabbi Glazer had held many important positions, among others, those of chief rabbi of the United Synagogues in Montreal, 1907-18; chief rabbi of Kansas City, 1920-23; rabbi of Beth Hamidrash Hagadol, this city, 1923-27. From 1930 until his recent retirement he was head of the Maimonides Synagogue and school at 312 West Eighty-Ninth Street. Surviving are his widow, Ida Cantor Glazer; three sons, B. Benedict Glazer, who is an associate rabbi of Temple Emanuel; Charles and Aubrey Glazer, all of New York, and two daughters, Mrs. David Schneer of New York and Mrs. Sidney Goldberg of Newark, N.J."⁶

1. "Rabbi Simon Glazer and the Quest for Jewish Community in Kansas City, 1920-1923" by Joseph P. Shultz and Carla I. Klausner, *American Jewish Archives*, 1, 1983.

2. "The American Rabbinic Career of Rabbi Gavriel Zev Margolis" by Joshua Hoffman, *Masters Thesis, Bernard Revel Graduate School, Yeshiva University*, July 1992 (unpublished).

3. www.mythsandfacts.com/article_view.asp?articleID=100

4. *The New York Times*, October 30, 1923.

5. *Orthodox Judaism in America, a Biographical Dictionary and Sourcebook* by Moshe D. Sherman, Greenwood Press, 1966.

6. *The New York Times*, May 23, 1938.

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