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Herzl's Image and the Messianic Idea

Abstract: Theodor Herzl (1860–1904) is credited for laying foundations of the political Zionism the aim of which was to be recognizable on the literal as well as visual level. As a result of this postulate Zionism promoted itself by means of various visual arts and viewed them as an important Zionist medium. In this way, the image of Herzl became an incarnation of Zionism and an expression of its ideas. His figure was a multilayered carrier showing the ideology's evolution and providing the point of departure for many motifs and iconographic themes employed by the movement. One of them is the so-called Messianic theme that can be derived from the Zionist projection of the leader's image. Although Herzl is not directly portrayed as the Messiah, there are certain elements implied in his images that drove the development of his Messianic myth. Herzl's image, personality, politics and his ability to wake up the Jewish masses from a "deep slumber" by bringing up their "hidden powers," all evoked associations with the Messiah. Mythical and idealistic elements as well as emotions connected with this figure were mostly focused around the Messianic message.

Keywords: Theodor Herzl, Zionism, Messianism, Zionist iconography, Jewish art.

The term 'Zionism' denotes a range of ideas referring to the concept of the *return* of all Jews from the Diaspora and the creation of a state in Eretz Israel that would correspond to the Promised Land. The Zionist philosophy derives its name from the word 'Zion'—the name of a mountain in south-east Jerusalem, originally identified with this city, and which the Jewish tradition believes to denote Israel as a whole.

Zionism as a political movement was initiated by Theodor Herzl (1860–1904). It intended to be recognizable not only literally but also visually thanks to an extensive usage of visual arts. Art—iconography in particular—was meant to play an important role of a Zionist medium. For its purposes Herzl became a personification of his people, whereas his iconic

image turned into an incarnation of Zionism and its ideas.[1] Herzl's figure is a multilayered carrier that exhibits the ideology's evolution and constitutes the source of many significant Zionist motifs and iconographic themes, one of them being the so-called Messianic aspect. The Zionist projection, especially the one employed in the image of Herzl, exhibits frequent references to the Messianic concept. Although Herzl is not directly portrayed as the Messiah, certain Messianic aspects seem to emerge from the image and contribute to the creation of his myth.

This phenomenon was referred to by the first prime minister of Israel, David Ben-Gurion, who commemorated Herzl in 1948 by writing, "as a ten year old boy living in Poland under the Russian rule I heard the news: Messiah has come. A tall, handsome man, a scholar from Vienna, a Doctor at least."[2]

Herzl did not call himself the Messiah, yet Messianic elements were very prominent in the ideology of his movement,[3] with Herzl's image being its key component. His visual presentation was supposed to carry certain Zionist ideological tendencies, in this case—Messianic ideas. Many members of the movement pointed to the relation between Herzl and many other figures from Jewish history who were identified with the Messiah.[4]

[1] For Herzl's appearance in cultural and political context, see e.g.: Michael Berkowitz, "Herzl and the Stock Exchange," in Gideon Shimoni, Robert S. Wistrich (eds.), *Theodor Herzl, Visionary of the Jewish State* (Jerusalem–New York, 1999), 99–111; id., "Art in Zionist Popular Culture and Jewish National Self-Consciousness, 1897–1914," in Ezra Mendelsohn (ed.), *Art and Its Uses: The Visual Image and Modern Jewish Society* (New York–Oxford, 1990), 9–42; Robert S. Wistrich, "Theodor Herzl: Zionist Icon, Myth-Maker and Social Utopian," in Robert S. Wistrich, David Ohana (eds.), *The Shaping of Israeli Identity: Myth, Memory and Trauma* (London, 1995), 1–38; David Tartakover, Mark Scheps, *Herzl in Profile: Herzl's Image in the Applied Arts* (Tel Aviv, 1979) [exhibition catalogue]; Sylvia A. Herskowitz, Boni Dara-Michaels, *Theodor Herzl. If you will it, it is not a dream* (New York, 1998) [exhibition catalogue]; Reuven Hecht, Yigal Zamora, *When the Shofar Sounds: Herzl, His Image, Achievements and Selections from His Writing*, vols. 1–2 (Haifa, 2006).

[2] David Ben-Gurion, *Recollections* (London, 1970), 34.

[3] See e.g.: Abba H. Silver, "Herzl and Jewish Messianism: Nationalism as a Means to a Greater Goal," in Meyer W. Weisgal (ed.), *Theodor Herzl: A Memorial* (New York, 1929), 254–256; Jacob Allerhand, "Messianische Elemente im Denken und Wirken Theodor Herzls," in Norbert Leser (ed.), *Theodor Herzl und das Wien des fin de siècle* (Wien, 1987), 61–75; Jacob Katz, *Zwischen Messianismus und Zionismus* (Frankfurt am Main, 1993); Jody E. Myers, "The Messianic Idea and Zionist Ideologies," in Jonathan Frankel (ed.), *Jews and Messianism in the Modern Era: Metaphor and Meaning* (New York–Oxford, 1991), 3–13; Simone Berger, "Jewish Messianism," in Heiko Haumann (ed.), *The First Zionist Congress in 1897: Causes, Significance, Topicality* (Basel, 1997), 24–28.

[4] See e.g.: Robert S. Wistrich, "In the Footsteps of Messiah," in Shimoni, Wistrich (eds.), *Theodor Herzl*, 321–338. This publication is one of the most important ones concerning Herzl and his relation with Messianism.

From the Zionist point of view those past "messianic surges" —even though they were initiated by false Messiahs—constituted positive attempts of "national liberation," healing of the Jewry and strengthening of the bond with the Promised Land.[5]

Dr. Joseph Samuel Bloch, the editor of *Österreichische Wochenschrift*, told Herzl that if he proclaimed himself the Messiah, the Jews would turn against him—reminding him of the false Messiahs before him who brought only chaos. "Messiah," Bloch said to Herzl, "must be veiled, must be a concealed figure."[6] As a result, Herzl skillfully bordered on the line between rejecting the kind of Zionism that made identification with the Messiah on the one hand, and the subtle bond with the mysteriously mythical sphere on the other. Nevertheless, he was aware that he was commonly compared or juxtaposed with historical figures that proclaimed themselves Messiahs, as well as with Messianism itself. In a diary entry from March 1896 he wrote: "the difference between myself and Sabbatai Zevi, or the way I perceive him . . . is that Zevi became so great that he equaled the greats of this world, whereas I belong to the little ones of this world."[7] Moreover, a short story by Herzl entitled "Altneuland" contains a motif of an opera featuring Sabbatai Zevi—a false Messiah presented in a new, European reality.

Due to his Messianic aura, during his first visit in Turkish Palestine in 1898, Herzl was afraid that, just like Sabbatai Zevi two centuries before, he would be arrested by the Turkish government. An entry in his diary from 31 October 1898 says: "while we were visiting the Jerusalem Tower of David, I joked to my friends in front of the entrance: 'this place seems perfect for me to be arrested by the Sultan'."[8] When he was visiting king Victor Emmanuel III in Rome in July 1904, the King, referring to the

[5] A historian Simon Dubnow, who was an opponent of Zionism, wrote that actually there were Messianic elements in the Herzlian vision of Zion and compared him to Solomon Molcho. Both Herzl and Molcho called for actions leading to a Jewish renaissance, they had a vision of a free country of the Israeli people and both of them were in negotiations concerning this issue with the Turkish government, the Pope and the Germans. Simon Dubnow, *Weltgeschichte des jüdischen Volkes* (Berlin, 1929), 10: 338. See also Wistrich, "In the Footsteps of Messiah," 330.

[6] Chaim Bloch, "Theodor Herzl and Joseph S. Bloch," *Herzl Year Book* 1 (1958), 158.

[7] *The Diaries of Theodor Herzl*, ed. and trans. Maurice Lowenthal (Gloucester, 1978), 3: 960 (below the book is quoted as "Herzl, *Diaries*"). Moreover, according to Joseph Nedava, in July 1895 Herzl read a short story by Ludwig Storch, *Der Jakobsstern*, which talks about Sabbatai Zevi. See Joseph Nedava, "Herzl and Messianism," *Herzl Year Book* 7 (1971), 13–14.

[8] Herzl, *Diaries* (31 Oct. 1898), 3: 283–284.

story about Zevi, asked Herzl: "one of my ancestors conspired with a false Messiah . . . do Jews still anticipate Messiah?" Herzl replied that "only religious Jews do. We, that is, the emancipated and educated Jews, have no such thoughts. Our movement is purely secular."[9] Moreover, Herzl mentioned to the King that while visiting Jerusalem, he did not want to use a white horse, mule or donkey in order to avoid associations with the coming of the Messiah.[10]

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Nevertheless, in the Central Zionist Archives in Jerusalem one can find two pictures showing Herzl riding on the back of a white donkey, evoking strong association with the Messianic iconography [see Fig. 1].[11] The photos were taken by David Wolffsohn who accompanied Herzl during his travels around Middle East.[12] In the context of Herzl's words, both pictures showing almost identical scenes seem to be intentional efforts of the propaganda due to the straight posture of the rider, his raised elbow in a self-presenting gesture, as well as the fact that numerous attempts to capture this scene were made (hence, more than one picture). What is more, Herzl is also in white.

In iconographic tradition the Messiah is often portrayed as a man on a white horse, mule or donkey, usually entering the city (Jerusalem) gates.[13] In this context, another artistic motif seems to acquire an intentional character. In 1914 Leo G. Stein used a woodcut coming from the sixteenth-century Venice Haggadah[14] as an illustration for a column about Passover

[9] Herzl, *Diaries* (23 Jan. 1904), 6: 425–426.

[10] Ibid.

[11] It is worth to mention David Reuveni, one of the false Messiahs. He proclaimed himself the Messiah and in 1524 came on the back of a white horse to Pope Clement VII who welcomed the visitor warmly. See Geofrey Wigoder, *Słownik biograficzny Żydów*, trans. Andrzej Jaraczewski et al. (Warsaw, 1998), 433–434.

[12] However, these photographs were not reproduced in the Zionist press. Moreover, it is not clear where they were made. Sources give two places: Damascus and Cairo. There is one more photograph showing both Herzl and Wolffsohn on white donkeys and their companions on grey donkeys, all of them in presentation poses at the entrance to the Jewish settlement Rehovot near Jaffa.

[13] Shalom Sabar, "Messianic Aspirations and Renaissance Urban Ideals: The Image of Jerusalem in the Venice Haggadah, 1609," *Jewish Art* 23/24 (1997/98), 295–312. See also Aviva Kantor, *Jewish Women, Jewish Men: The Legacy of Patriarchy in Jewish Life* (New York, 1995), 39.

[14] It seems relevant to note that one of the first images of the Messiah on a donkey in Jewish art is a relief from the so-called Prague Haggadah of 1526. See Richard I. Cohen, *Jewish Icons: Art and Society in Modern Europe* (London, 1998), 91–93.

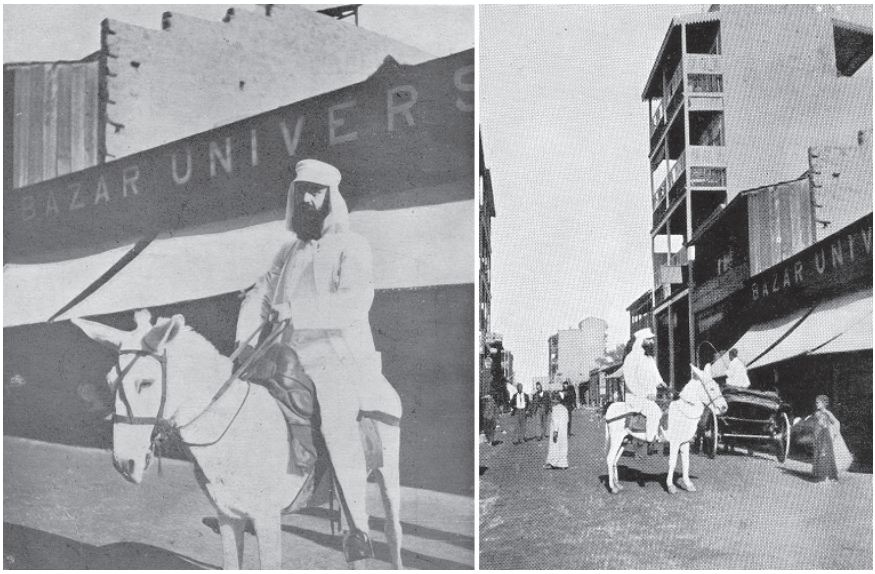

Fig. 1. Theodor Herzl on a white donkey, photograph taken by David Wolffsohn, 1898, Central Zionist Archives in Jerusalem [henceforth: CZA], 1004961-אצמ, 1004973-אצמ.

in the Zionist magazine *Die Welt*, established by Herzl.[15] The use of this iconographic motif in the periodical appears to stem from this Messianic way of visual presentation employed by Zionists. This intentional projection is supposed to emphasize the parallel between the Herzlian "Zionist vision of Messianism" and the concept of the Messiah, whose arrival will initiate the return of all Jews dispersed in the Diaspora to the Promised Land and will grant them national sovereignty.

According to the traditional belief, the Messiah is supposed to bring redemption, salvation and liberation of the Jews living in the Diaspora.[16] The origin of this phenomenon dwells in the historical memory of the powerful kingdom from the time of David referred to in Talmud and Midrash literature—sources of broad interpretations over the nature of Jewish existence and eschatology.[17] This hope of liberation and restitution contains not only faith in reconstruction of the old political significance of an independent Israel but also evokes the Messianic concept of world

[15] Leo G. Stein, "Die letzten Schulerin," *Die Welt* (1914), 16: 397.

[16] Gershom Scholem, "Zum Verständnis der messianischen Idee im Judentum," in id., *Judaica* (Frankfurt am Main, 1986), 1: 7–74.

[17] Zvi Baras (ed.), *Meshihiyut ve-eskatalogiah* (Jerusalem, 1984).

redemption.[18] Originally the word 'Messiah' was used to refer to king David and meant *anointed by God*.[19] Biblical David, as Heinrich Graetz writes in the context of Messianism, was the first leader that united Jews within the Land of Israel—both in terms of politics and religion.[20] This is why the Messiah in the Jewish tradition (also in Christian theology) has to be David's ancestor, whose image would present an ideal ruler of the kingdom—a forestate of the future Jewish country.[21]

Thus, the Messiah is not a timeless and divine figure, but a historical personification and God's tool. The Babylonian Talmud says that the Messiah is subject to the divine order but his arrival might happen at any moment so it is worth waiting for him every day.[22]

Tradition has it that the coming of the Messiah shall be preceded by a time of oppression and suffering of Jews—something that Zionism saw in the increasingly growing anti-Semitism in Europe of the time, e.g., the Dreyfus affair, anti-Semitic politics of Karl Leuger in Vienna, the Kishinev pogrom—events that had a big influence on Herzl's views. All these signs of Jews' miserable political, social and life situation were interpreted as the "birth pangs of the Messiah," preceding his arrival.[23]

The belief in the imminent liberation is a key for the Messianic ideology, present across the whole history of exile.[24] Moreover, the shape of Zionism was strongly influenced by the so-called pro-Messianic concepts of the nineteenth century, in particular the ones by Zvi Hirsch Kalischer[25]

[18] The love of Zion is a theological aspect of the eschatological doctrine based on the belief in healing of humanity, present not only in Judaism but also in Protestantism and Shiite part of Islam. It is a hope for a common order, harmony and justice. See Abdelwahab M. Elmessiri, *The Land of Promise: A Critique of Political Zionism* (New Brunswick, 1977), 10. This aspect has its main source in quotations from the Book of Isaiah (55: 1–5).

[19] See the extensive analysis on this topic: Bernard F. Batto, Kathryn L. Roberts (eds.), *David and Zion: Biblical Studies in Honor of J. J. M. Roberts* (Winona Lake, 2004).

[20] Shlomo Avineri, *The Making of Modern Zionism: The Intellectual Origins of the Jewish State* (New York, 1981), 31–33.

[21] John T. Willis, "David and Zion in the Theology of the Deuteronomistic History," in Batto, Roberts (eds.), *David and Zion*, 125–140. See also Nahum Sokolow, *Zionism in the Bible* (London, 1918), 12.

[22] See Gershom Scholem, *The Messianic Idea in Judaism and Other Essays on Jewish Spirituality* (New York, 1971), 25.

[23] Kantor, *Jewish Women*, 39–41.

[24] Chaim Herzog claimed that in this context Zionism was a Jewish attempt at transforming ancient dreams into reality. Elmessiri, *The Land*, 11. During the Roman uprising in 132–135 Rabbi Akiva proclaimed Bar Kokhba (Son of a Star) the Messiah. Kantor, *Jewish Women*, 49.

[25] Avineri, *The Making*, 47–55.

and Judah Alkalai.[26] Another thing that had an impact on Zionism was the nineteenth-century nationalistic movement adapting the ideas of redemption and the new, radical, revolutionary socio-political movements such as socialism and communism. They constituted a secular variety of Messianism and propagated a classless society as well as postulates of common peace and justice.[27] In this context, the Jewish Messianic vision is often compared to historical, social and political utopia.[28]

Another factor that had a groundbreaking importance for Zionism was the philosophy of Moses Hess,[29] who due to his cooperation with Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels was known as the ideologist of socialism—into which he openly incorporated aspects of Jewish Messianism—and was called the *communist rabbi*.[30] In the book *Rome and Jerusalem* published in 1862, Hess extensively quotes Kalischer and Alkalai, with the idea of secular Messianism being the key aspect of the book. However, Hess was primarily a source of inspiration for Jewish ideologists of Zionist socialism in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, such as Nachman Syrkin, Ber Borochov and Berl Katznelson.

At the turn of the centuries, obtaining independence in the Holy Land was still perceived by the majority of the Jewry through the prism of religious tendencies, that is, the mystical vision of redemption,[31] whereas earlier theories of Alkalai and Kalischer did not include the idea of creating an independent Jewish state at all. Thus, from the point of view of orthodox Jews, it was not the call for the return to the Promised Land that posed a threat, but the secular nature of Zionism and its focus on human activity only, excluding faith in a divine intervention. According to the orthodox approach, restitution of Zion that was supposed to be initiated by the Messiah could not be done by a human whose actions would

[26] Arthur Hertzberg (ed.), *The Zionist Idea: A Historical Analysis and Reader* (Philadelphia–Jerusalem, 1997), 101–107, 108–114; Wigoder, *Słownik biograficzny*, 25–26.

[27] Words that Michael Gold said to workers in 1930 are worth mentioning here: "O workers' Revolution, you are the true Messiah." See Kantor, *Jewish Women*, 45–46.

[28] Katz, *Zwischen Messianismus*, 22. For Zionism and socialism see: Northrop Frye, "Varieties of Literary Utopias," in Frank E. Manuel (ed.), *Utopias and Utopian Thought* (London, 1973), 260–280; Michael Higger, *The Jewish Utopia* (Baltimore, 1932); Frederik L. Polak, "Utopia and Cultural Renewal," in Manuel (ed.), *Utopias*, 281–295.

[29] Avineri, *The Making*, 36–46; id., *Moses Hess*: *Prophet of Communism and Zionism* (London–New York, 1985). See also Lionel Kochan, *Jews, Idols and Messiahs: The Challenge from History* (Oxford, 1990), 161, 182–184.

[30] Chris Kaiser, "Early Zionism – Messianic Redemption and Jewish Nation," in Haumann (ed.), *The First Zionist*, 30.

[31] See, e.g., Yosef Salmon, *Religion and Zionism: First Encounters* (Jerusalem, 2002).

take priority over God's will.[32] What is more, attempts at estimating the time of the Messiah's arrival were seen as blasphemy.

Theodor Herzl was aware of the discrepancy between his Zionist projection and the orthodox Messianic theology. He stated that "the orthodoxy should understand that there is no contradiction between *God's will* and the Zionist attempt of grabbing the destiny with one's own hands."[33]

The context of this reconceptualization of the above-mentioned phenomenon should be complemented by the interpretation that Asher Eder derived from the prophecy of Zechariah (9:9). Eder writes that the Hebrew word 'hamor' meaning *donkey* is made on the basis of the same letters as 'homer' which means *equipment.* Therefore, a donkey is only a tool at the disposal of the Messiah. Eder suggests in this way that the Messiah controls destiny, not the other way round, using the *hamor*/*homer*, i.e. donkey,[34] as a means of transportation, which according to him is what Herzl meant by "grabbing the destiny with one's own hands." Also Seffi Rachlevsky in his book *Messiah's Donkey* employs this terminology to describe the Messiah's tools: *hamor*—in this case identified with the contemporary people of Israel.[35]

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From the very beginning Zionism opposed the conservative rabbinate and the religious Jewry in general. This aspect is well shown via a harsh caricature depicting Herzl and Max Nordau riding a white horse that is pushing away one of the attacking dogs with his hooves [see Fig. 2]. The author and the press source of the caricature remain unknown.[36] In his biographical album devoted to Herzl, Julius H. Schoeps puts this situation within the context of the "Messianic conflict" between the Zionists and the German rabbinate. In 1897, shortly after the First Zionist

[32] See Yosef Salmon, "Tradition and Nationalism," in Jehuda Reinharz, Anita Shapira (eds.), *Essential Papers on Zionism* (New York–London, 1995), 106.

[33] Theodor Herzl, *Altneueland: Roman* (Leipzig, 1902), 27. See also Hecht, Zamora, *When the Shofar Sounds*, 2: 606. Herzl was directly called a false Messiah by the religious orthodoxy. See: Asher A. Druyanov, *Ketavim le-toldot Hibbat Tsiyon* (Tel Aviv, 1925), 2: 925; Saul R. Ben-Horin, *Hamishim shenot tsiyonut* (Jerusalem, 1946), 107.

[34] Asher Eder, *The Star of David* (Jerusalem, 1987), 137, footnote 248.

[35] Seffi Rachlevsky, *Messiah's Donkey* (Tel Aviv, 1998), 121, footnote 63. Messiah's donkey should be differentiated from Baal's donkey who was God's tool and was not subordinated to Baal.

[36] The graphic without the inscription is located in the Central Zionist Archives in Jerusalem.

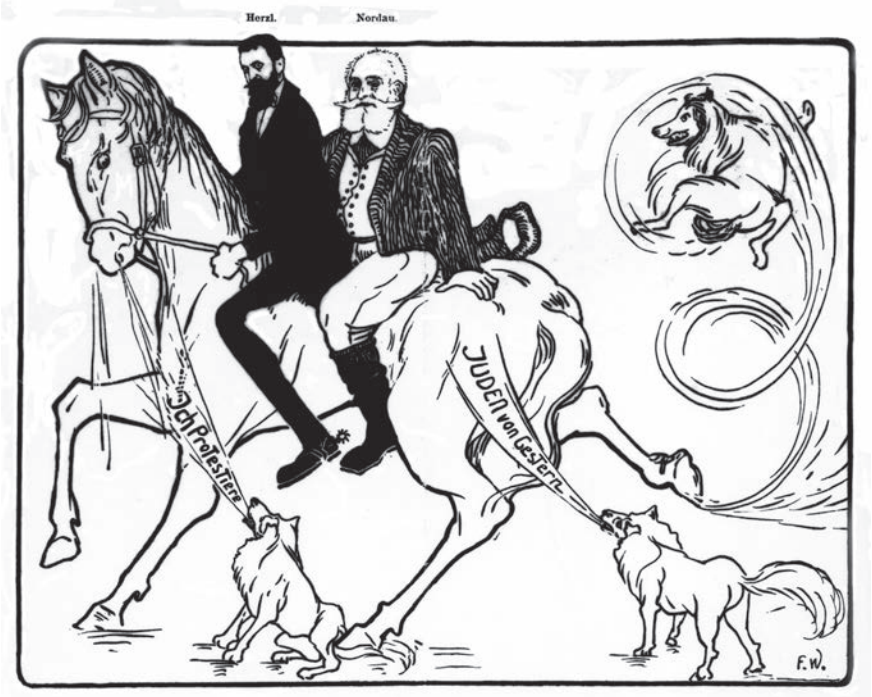

Fig. 2. Theodor Herzl and Max Nordau, caricature from the magazine *Schlemiel*, 1898, CZA, 1097044-אצמ.

Congress, the General Rabbinical Association (Allgemeiner Rabbiner-Verband) issued an anti-Zionist protest in the *Berliner Tageblatt* daily wherein the first point of accusation stated: "we are negating the aim of the so-called Zionism which proclaims establishing the Jewish state in Palestine and contains Judaistic elements connected with Messianism."[37]

In the atmosphere of this dispute, the caricature appears to be a vivid response to the critical and aggressive words of Max Nordau aimed at the "rabbis' protest."[38] Nordau wrote:

> whatever these noble local officials have or don't have to say means nothing to us. Their importance for the Jewish nation is gone . . . we don't have anything to do with the kind of Jews who choose to live like slaves or dogs . . . such slaves and Jewish dogs have no place in Zionism because Zionism is a movement for the Jews

[37] See Julius H. Schoeps, *Theodor Herzl 1860–1904: Wenn Ihr wollt, Ist es kein Märchen* (Wien, 1995), 148. All quotations translated by the author.

[38] Yaakov Zur, "The 'Protest Rabbis,'" in Haumann (ed.), *The First Zionist*, 128–130.

> who want to live with dignity, not like slaves or dogs . . . we will not attempt to convince our opponents, who cynically pledge to remain dogs and slaves.[39]

Also Herzl responded to these accusations by saying that "the last thing we need in our movement is a rabbis' protest . . . Max Nordau has already described them with a name that will stick to them."[40]

In a text consisting merely of thirteen lines Nordau used the name "dogs" five times, which makes his speech and the caricature rather fierce. The illustration emphasizes the above-mentioned first point of accusation, that is, the Messianic context of the Zionist ideology. Herzl and Nordau are riding on the back of a white horse and seem not to be bothered by the rabbis' attacks. Nordau, besides Herzl, was the most significant person in the Zionist pantheon, who participated in the creation of the movement's foundations. The illustration in this case is not trying to present Herzl as an individual Messianic figure but implies that Zionism should be perceived as an ideological movement parallel to the concept of Messianism present in Judaism. The religious kind of Messianism interpreted as patient and passive waiting constituted a hindrance to the propagation of Zionist postulates. However, the Messianic sphere became an important component of secular Zionist tendencies. Messianic symbolism played a big part, especially at the time when the Zionist iconography was beginning to form. Thanks to it, the initial fervor and impetus of Zionism contributed to the ignition of the faith in redemption.

Some ideologists tried to reconcile Messianism with Zionism. The most noteworthy one of them, Abraham Isaac Kook, in a way managed to unify aspects of the Jewish theology with the secular ideology of Zionism.[41] Kook underlined the importance of "earthly Jerusalem" (in opposition to the religious vision of heavenly Jerusalem) and Palestine. According to him, hope for the Messianic redemption was the source of strength for Judaism in the Diaspora, with the Zionist vision of Messianism forming a bridge between this vision and the rabbinical Judaism. The settlement of non-religious Jews in Palestine was, according to Kook, a divine projection where the Zionist process was the first step towards real salvation.[42]

[39] *Stenographisches Protokoll der Verhandlungen des III. Zionisten-Congresses in Basel (1899)*, Michigan 1929; quoted in Schoeps, *Theodor Herzl*, 148.

[40] Ibid.

[41] See Zvi Yaron, *The Philosophy of Rabbi Kook* (Jerusalem, 1991), 197–244. See also Avineri, *The Making*, 187–197.

[42] Yaron, *The Philosophy*, 241–242.

Rabbi Kook claimed that "Messiah was not only a perfect Jewish king but also a process evolving in time."[43] He further stated that

> in exile (*galut*) Jews misunderstood the concept of Messiah, partly because of the fact that Christian teachings started to enter the collective Jewish consciousness. Messiah was perceived by many as a religious superhero, who will emerge in the glow of miracles and God's signs in order to lead the Jews to Israel. . . . we were helpless against the misery of exile, without any possibility of fulfilling our dreams and coming back to the Zion so this idealistic vision of Messiah seemed to be the only way of escaping the brutal reality of the ghetto.[44]

Thus, Zionism found common ground with the Messianic tradition in reference to one of the most important postulates, that is, the return to Palestine and creation of Jewish independence.[45] In the wake of the Jewish emancipation movements in Europe, Zionism was meant to constitute a Messianic response to the crisis of Judaism and the Jewish identity that resulted from the social, political and economic changes in Europe.[46]

Thus, Zionism rejected the idea of passive waiting for the Messiah to come and bring redemption through a divine intervention. Despite the fact that many Zionist organizations negated any associations with religious Messianism, their program fundamentally referred to national healing, liberation, redemption, Jewish integration in the Diaspora, obtaining independence. Moreover, the Zionist rhetoric was often inspired by quotations from Biblical prophetism.[47] Zionism tried to be a historical heir to the Messianic impulse and emotions derived from the Jewish tradition. Images of Herzl incarnating Zionism played a key role in this attempt. This Messianic message incorporated in the figure of Herzl—in the form of photographs, photomontages, sculptures, drawings and

[43] Ibid., 240–241.

[44] Ibid., 57.

[45] In later years, Zionism also used writings by Gershom Scholem (*The Messianic Idea in Judaism*) although Scholem himself spoke about Zionism in a skeptical manner. See also Gershom Scholem, *From Berlin to Jerusalem: Memories of My Youth*, trans. Harry Zohn (New York, 1998), 25–27, 45–46.

[46] See: Emil L. Fackenheim, *To Mend the World: Foundations of Future Jewish Thought* (New York, 1982), 8, 92; Michael Wyschogrod, *The Body of Faith: God in the People Israel* (New York, 1983), 235.

[47] Aaron Z. Aescoly (ed.), *Ha-tenuot ha-meshihiyot bi-Yisrael* (Jerusalem, 1956); Aryeh Morgenstern, *Meshihiyut ve-yishuv Eretz-Yisrael* (Jerusalem, 1985); Abba H. Silver, *A History of Messianic Speculation in Israel: From the First through the Seventeenth Centuries* (Gloucester, 1978); Gideon Aran, "A Mystic-Messianic Interpretation of Modern Israeli History," *Studies in Contemporary Jewry* 4 (1988), 163–175.

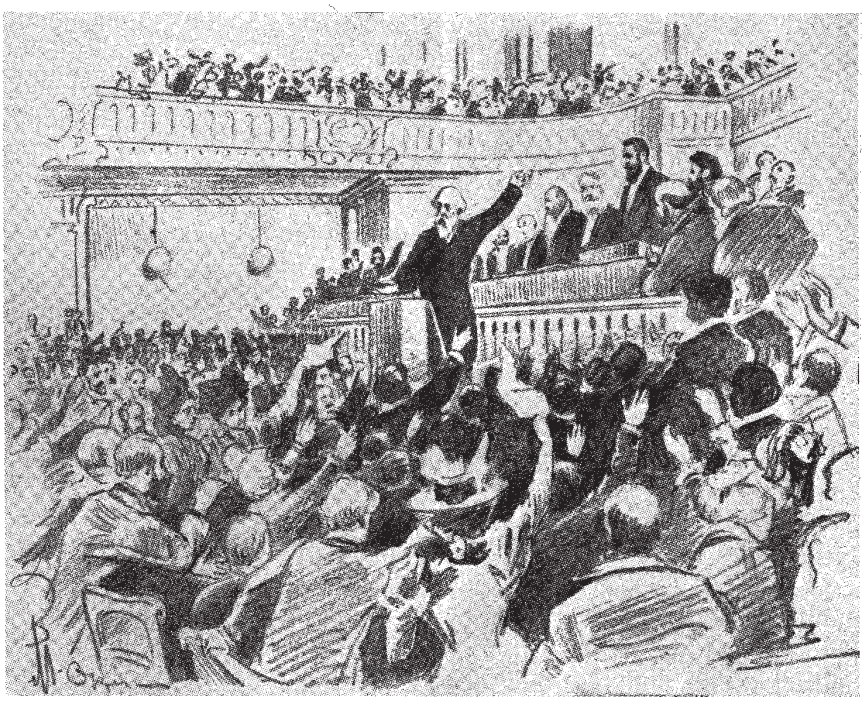

Fig. 3. Drawing by Menahem Okin from the Second Zionist Congress in Basel, 1898, CZA, 1002255-אצמ.

paintings—is present in many Zionist works from the beginning of the twentieth century.

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Menahem Okin, one of the artists working for Zionism and a delegate at the Congresses, made a series of documentary sketches depicting a few of early congresses, capturing the atmosphere in the auditorium during Herzl's speeches. What is important, all congress works of this author focus around Herzl; they depict his speeches, moments when he is being introduced to other people or is being awarded a gift. One of the sketches presents [see Fig. 3] the closure of the Second Zionist Congress in Basel on 31 August 1898. Rabbi Dr. Isaac Rülf from Klaipeda is thanking Herzl on behalf of the gathered delegates. Herzl is situated in the center, whereas Rülf's raised hand, the arrangement of the people in the stands right behind him and the hands of the cheering crowd are all pointing to Herzl who is standing slightly above them. The picture shows the scene

from the perspective of an onlooker situated behind the delegates and reflects the emotional atmosphere in the room.

Herzl's image, personality, politics and his ability to awaken the "unconscious powers" of Jewish masses all evoked Messianic associations. His mythologization and idealization, as well as emotions connected with this figure, were focused mostly around the Messianic message. The aura of a "divine inspiration and mystic mission" surrounded Herzl since the publication of *Das neue Ghetto*,[48] and later *Der Judenstaat*.[49] When he was entering the stands during the First Congress, the delegates welcomed him with a long, thunderous applause as well as cheers *yehi ha-Melekh!*—"Long live the king!" One of the delegates, Mordechai Ben Ami, wrote in connection with the First Congress: "each of us had the impression that the long awaited Messianic and historical miracle had happened . . . it felt as if Messiah, son of David, had stood before us."[50] Herzl was welcomed with a similar reception in the London East End in 1898 and 1900, as well as during his visit to Vilnius in August 1903.[51] Moreover, during Herzl's visiting trip to the Sephardi community in Sophia in March of 1901, Dr.Reuben Bierer gave him a letter and enthusiastically informed him that the local rabbi considered him to be the Messiah.[52] Nahum Sokolow, the editor of the Polish-Jewish magazine *Izraelita*, viewed the Zionist project focusing around Herzl as parallel to Messianism. Sokolow wrote that Herzl's "prophetic genius" was comparable with *ru'ah ha-elohim*, that is, "the spirit of God," with a "compelling force of the Messianic vision" emanating from Herzl's *Der Judenstaat*.[53] Such comparisons of Herzl and Messianism in

[48] Theodor Herzl, *Das neue Ghetto* (Wien, 1898; Wien–Berlin, 1920).

[49] Theodor Herzl, *Der Judenstaat: Versuch einer modernen Lösung der Judenfrage* (Leipzig–Wien, 1896).

[50] Mordechai Ben-Ami, "Erinnerungen an Theodor Herzl," *Die Welt* (1914), 24: 692. See also: Wistrich, "In the Footsteps of Messiah," 321; Michael Berkowitz, *Zionist Culture and West European Jewry before the First World War* (Cambridge, 1993), 29–30, 32.

[51] Wistrich, "In the Footsteps of Messiah," 321; Shlomo Eidelberg, "Theodor Herzl: From Visionary to Reality," in Herskowitz, Dara-Michaels, *Theodor Herzl. If you will it*, 19.

[52] On the same day, Herzl met William Hechler, a Christian Zionist, and a delegate of the British Embassy in Vienna. According to Hechler's estimations based on prophetic Biblical texts, particularly on the Book of David, Palestine will be reclaimed by Jews in 1897 or 1898. See William Hechler, "The First Disciple: The British Chaplain Who Aided Herzl in His Activities," in Weisgal (ed.), *Theodor Herzl*, 51.

[53] Nahum Sokolov, "Zionism as a Moral Question: Herzl's Infusion of Eternal Values into the Movement," in Weisgal (ed.), *Theodor Herzl*, 17–20. See also Francois Guesnet, "The First International Zionist Congress as the Turning Point in the Jewish Reform Movement of Congress Poland, and Its Reception in the Warsaw Newspaper *Izraelita* in 1897," in Haumann (ed.), *The First Zionist*, 155–160.

the literature on the topic are very common—even Abraham Isaac Kook described Herzl as an "authentic Messianic figure."[54]

The admiration Herzl received turned him into a legend during his life of which Herzl was fully aware. On 15 June 1896 he wrote in his diary: "I can see and hear how this faint mist is beginning to grow around me. It will probably become a pillar of clouds amidst which I will have to walk . . . this what I am writing now is nothing more than a curiosity, nevertheless my own legend has already been born."[55]

During the above-mentioned trip to Lithuania on 16 August 1903, Vilnius Rabbi Shlomo Hakohen gave him a sculpture of the Arc with the Torah inside and said: "You are the greatest of our people."[56] Such a reception of Herzl's figure is presented in the caricature—an elegant person, full of dignity, wearing a black tuxedo, with unnaturally long legs referring to his "greatness" as well as to the speed at which Zionism travelled around Europe [see Fig. 4]. The caricature was published in 1898 in a Jewish, Berlin-based, satirical monthly *Schlemiel*, often read by Herzl. It included a sign saying "The biggest of all Jews."[57] This work is not part of the Zionist projection but it depicts the common reception of this figure, whose myth and legend got remarkably large. Herzl's fame, as Michael Berkowitz writes, spread as fast as the news about Zionism.[58] Herzl quickly became a mythical hero, especially for the Jews living in Central and Eastern Europe, with the Messianic symbolism becoming a natural component of the Zionist idea.

The influence the myth exerted on culture was an issue taken up by the Zionist propaganda with further mythologization of Herzl's figure in mind. Features of numerous characters coming from legends and Biblical stories were ascribed to him. He was identified not only with the Messiah but also with Moses, Aaron, David, Judas Maccabeus, Mattathias, the prophet Hezekiah and many others. The attempts at imparting Biblical and supernatural features to Herzl were also present in literature. However, it was the visual and iconographic sphere where comparisons

[54] Yaron, *The Philosophy*, 243–244. See also Chaim I. Waxman, "Messianism, Zionism and the State of Israel," *Modern Judaism* 7 (1987), 2: 190, footnote 56.

[55] Herzl, *Diaries*, 2: 224.

[56] Quoted in Hecht, Zamora, *When the Shofar Sounds*, 2: 618. See also Tartakover, Scheps, *Herzl in Profile*, 42–43.

[57] See also: Hecht, Zamora, *When the Shofar Sounds*, 2: 620–621; Schoeps, *Theodor Herzl*, 95.

[58] Berkowitz, *Zionist Culture*, 8–39, 165–187.

of Herzl to the Messiah had the greatest significance for the religious masses of *Ostjuden*.

Cultural communication based on the "spiritual sphere," that is, originating from legends and Biblical stories, was of great importance for the Zionist movement. The ghetto community interpreted the surrounding reality by means of traditional and religious perspectives. Thus, secular elements of Zionism and the socio-political developments of the time could easily reach the ghettos in a mythologized form. The Messianic reverberation of Herzl's myth reached the perfect ground in the form of the miserable situation of Jews, particularly those of Eastern Europe.[59] A perfect example could be found in the aforementioned fragment of Ben-Gurion's speech from 1948 about the reception of Herzl at the time. In general, the powerful meaning that certain visual projections of national heroes have, as Ahad Ha-Am wrote, is not contained within themselves and it does not dwell in deeds but rather in the idealized form that they acquire in the collective Jewish awareness or in a given community.[60]

Herzl's image was its perfect reflection as it met the expectations of the masses. An important picture by J. Olivella, exhibiting the reception of his myth, is found on the cover of a panegyric awarded to Herzl by the Buenos Aires Zionists to celebrate the Fifth Congress in 1901 [see Fig. 5].

Fig. 4. Theodor Herzl, caricature from the magazine *Schlemiel*, 1898, CZA, 1097181-אצמ.

[59] See the following articles in Haumann (ed.), *The First Zionist*: Catherine Schott, "The Change of Jewish Patterns of Life in Poland and the Reorientation of Jewish Self-Image," 51–57; Stefanie Middendorf, "My Shtetl Is the People Who Live in It, Not the Place," 58–63; Almut Bonhage, "Jewish Individuality in the Eastern European Shtetl: Sholem Aleichem's 'aisnbangeschichtess'," 64–68; Heiko Haumann, "'Present-Day National Work' in the Shtetl: The Beginnings of Zionism in Galicia," 74–78; Patrick Kury, "'Foreign and Backward': Eastern Jews in Basel around 1900," 197–201.

[60] Ahad Ha-Am, "Herzl, 'The Living Man' – Herzl, The Idealized Figure," in *Collected Writings of Achad-Ha'am* (Tel Aviv, 1904), CCLI; reprint in Tartakover, Scheps, *Herzl in Profile*, 51.

Fig. 5. Cover of the book given to Herzl by Buenos Aires delegates to the Fifth Zionist Congress, 1901, CZA, 1097016-אצמ.

Herzl as a "Messianic redeemer" is standing on a pedestal with an outstretched arm in front of Mount Zion and the rising sun. Moses, portrayed as an old man with a long and grey beard, is emerging from the clouds and is handing Herzl a mace, that is, insignia of power alluding to

the Staff of Moses—a symbol of leading the Jews out of Egypt. Moses is accompanied by the people of Israel dressed like traditional Israelites, whereas on the side where Herzl is situated there are contemporary Jews. This juxtaposition of the ancient people and the nineteenth-century Jews is an important iconographic representation of the ahistorical nature of the idea of Messianism and refers to the Jewish "timelessness." Placing the dead and the living together is a projection of the Messianic hope for the coming of the Messiah that would bring resurrection to all Jews and would help them return to the Land of Israel. The picture shows various social classes, men, women, children and the elderly, presented as onlookers. The composition is based on the Star of David.

This visual arrangement is referred to an important fragment of an account by an Israeli writer and Herzl's first biographer Reuben Brainin. On the basis of conversations with Herzl himself, Brainin writes that at the age of twelve Herzl had a dream in which

> [t]he King-Messiah came, a glorious and majestic old man, took me in his arms, and swept me on the wings of the wind. On one of the shining clouds we encountered the figure of Moses . . . Messiah called to Moses: "It is for this child that I have prayed!" And to me he said: "Go and declare to the Jews that I shall come soon and perform great wonders and great deeds for my people and for the whole world!"[61]

It is worth pointing out that on the peripheries of the book there are scenes of grape harvest shown. At the top, there are palm branches—indicating that the setting is somewhere in the Middle East—and the Star of David. At bottom an angel with a halo[62] is seen—also in the shape of the Star of David—pointing to the industrial aspect of the Zionism, the direction of migration. In the background of the scene at the bottom one can see another Zionist motif—of the rising sun. On the other hand, the agricultural element of harvesting evokes the pro-Messianic symbolism. The first Jewish agricultural settlements in Palestine established in the middle of the nineteenth century by the so-called proto-Zionists were interpreted in the Messianic categories as the "first of four redemptions" and as "the first sunray of the coming dawn," also called *athalta di-geulah* (dawn of redemption) and *itaruta di-leteta* (rising from

[61] Reuben Brainin, *Hayyei Herzl* [The Life of Herzl] (New York, 1919), 17–18, See also Wistrich, "In the Footsteps of Messiah," 326.

[62] It is a motif borrowed from the Charter of Delegates of the Fourth Zionist Congress in London in 1900.

the bottom), derived from cabalistic symbolism.[63] Thus, the symbol of a rising sun—a common Zionist motif—constitutes another important reference to Messianism. This visualization of the myth or glorification of Herzl was done not by Zionists surrounding their leader but by enthusiasts and supporters of Zionism inspired by the aura of Herzl's beauty. Within this context coming back to David Ben-Gurion seems relevant. He described Herzl using the following words: "He was a beautiful muscular man with a long, black beard resting on his chest . . . one glimpse at Herzl and I was ready to follow him to the country of my ancestors."[64]

The ability to attract masses was a huge advantage in Herzl's political endeavors, with his visual appeal providing firm ground for his iconization. The popularity of his image can be attributed to this collective reception and can be compared with the myth of the Messiah present among the Jewish masses. The Messiah seen as this Jewish superhero had been anticipated for two millennia and his image present in the collective Jewish awareness had been discussed within cabalistic, artistic and historical contexts. However, this concept requires a commentary given from the perspective of the Jewish tradition. According to Moshe Idel, this physical, erotic attractiveness that constituted a specific thinking mode of ancient Greeks and Jews provided foundations for both cultures' mythologies and, in case of the Jewry, influenced mysticism.[65] Idel claims that a cosmic Eros (intentional borrowing from the Greek terminology)[66] is the subject of writings by one of the most "Messianic" Jewish thinkers, Nathan of Gaza (1643–1680). In his theological treatise, *Sefer ha-Beriyah*, Nathan describes an ideal (idealistic) integration of divine power (Hebr. *oz*), sephirot and God's faces, known as *parcufim*, in one unified structure. This integration could be done only by means of the act of love, affection and desire,[67] which is closely related to the cultural and psychological aspect of Moses' "desire," that is, his coming and the attempts at his visual presentation. Idel calls the concept taken by Nathan of Gaza "cosmoerotism" and claims that its most interesting elements can be found in Polish Hasidism dating back to the times of Baal Shem Tov according

[63] Salmon, "Tradition and Nationalism," 106–107.

[64] Ben-Gurion, *Recollections*, 327–328.

[65] Moshe Idel, *Kabbalah and Eros* (New Haven–London, 2005), 53.

[66] Ibid., 199.

[67] As Idel further notes, this aspect is similar to or even identical with the Christian concept of unity of all those who believe in Jesus Christ, that is unity in his beautiful image (*Corpus Domini*). See also Moshe Idel, *Messianic Mystics* (New Haven, 1998), 241.

to whom the aspects of love, affection and desire (Hebr. *heshek*) come from the world of higher spheres.[68] This infinite, Messianic affection is identical with the so-called "God's contracts" which He concludes with the present, earthly world. Therefore, this love can have a present, earthly and human form. Baal Shem Tov stated that such a world of love (*olam ha-ahavah*) as well as the world of affection and desire (*olam ha-ta'anug*) have been brought to earth and are a part of the higher, mystical world.[69]

This is why Ben-Gurion's quote expressing admiration for Herzl's Hasidic beauty should be placed within the context described above. Herzl's visual appeal, or his iconized attractiveness, as Ben-Gurion writes, evoked the Hasidic conceptions of Messianism. Herzl was an incarnation of this mythical or irrational, it might have seemed, possibility of visual representation of Zionism itself. He was a perfect archetype of the new Jew that was in line with the Zionist aspirations.[70]

So this Messianic and cosmoerotic concept of Hasidic mysticism, that reflected the mentality and the worldviews of the Jewish society at a given time and place, is transformed so as to take into consideration the requirements of social psychology. Herzl's as well as Zionism's reception changes against the background of socio-psychological phenomena, which in turn provides an impulse for reigniting the mystical concept of Messianism. Herzl revives the myth and becomes its personification to initiate real and tangible changes in the social, political and cultural areas, all three closely connected with one another and intertwined with the mystical and erotic spheres.

Michael Berkowitz in his analyses of the Zionist pantheon at the beginning of the twentieth century also notes that the projection of leaders' images and pictures openly used this erotic, "misleading quality" in order to promote their own postulates.[71] This conceptual "interaction of

[68] Idel, *Kabbalah*, 199–201. Here, Idel is citing Chaim Wirszubski, *Between the Lines: Kabbalah, Christian Kabbalah and Sabbatianism* (Jerusalem, 1990), 214, 216–217, and Abraham Elqayam, "leda'at meshi'ah: ha-dialektikah shel ha-siyah ha-mini ba-haguto hameshihit shel Natan ha-Azati," *Tarbiz* 65 (1996), 4: 669–670.

[69] See Idel, *Kabbalah*, 200–201, footnote 105.

[70] Peter Loewenberg, "Theodor Herzl: A Psychoanalytic Study in Charismatic Political Leadership," in Benjamin B. Wolman (ed.), *The Psychoanalytic Interpretation of History* (New York, 1971), 150–191. See also Peter Loewenberg, "Theodor Herzl: Nationalism and Politics," in id. (ed.), *Decoding the Past: The Psychohistorical Approach* (New Brunswick, 1996), 101–135.

[71] Michael Berkowitz, *The Jewish Self-Image in the West* (New York, 2000), 33, footnote 106.

eroticism and Messianism" was a blatant element of the propaganda, with Herzl's figure being the ultimate and perfect example of this phenomenon. It could be stated that Herzl masterfully created his myth himself, although Martin Buber states that "he was shrouded in a legend by masses of ordinary Jews, who put a Messianic halo above his head."[72]

In analogy to the broad concept of Messianism, it is worth taking into consideration a series of press adverts published in Zionist periodicals such as *Die Welt*, *Ost und West* and *Jüdische Rundschau*, advertising pocket watches with Hebrew letters instead of digits. What is important is the fact that these products were targeted to Zionists, which becomes clear from the German inscription "Hochinteressant für Zionisten" (highly interesting for Zionists). The advertisements appeared in the three abovementioned magazines from August 1904 until the beginning of the 1910s; sometimes the same advertisement was published in all three periodicals.

The press ads as well as several pocket watches have survived until today. Their Zionist character is attributed not only to the Hebrew letters but also to the image of Herzl printed on the faces of these watches [see Fig. 6]. However, the context of meanings through which the watches should be looked at is pretty complex. It is so because the Messianic time is an irreversible time, not subject to any measurements, impossible to be counted, thus, it cannot be represented by clocks, watches or calendars. Any tool designed to measure time cannot refer to the historical time, that is, the "earthly dimension" which emerges from the Messianic time. It raises the question how these pocket watches found their way to the deliberations about the Messianic nature of Zionism. The answer lies in one of the key aspects of Messianism, that is, the internal, personal experiencing of time, understood through Henri Bergson's definition of continuity.[73] It is supposed to be subject to individual consideration and thinking about the state of the historical time, that is, one's internal readiness for the coming of the Messiah.[74] Also the Babylonian Talmud states that the Messiah is subordinated to the divine order but his coming

[72] Martin Buber, "Herzl und die Historie," in id., *Die jüdische Bewegung: Gesammelte Aufsätze und Ansprachen. Erste Folge: 1900–1915* (Berlin, 1916), 169; id., "Er und wir," *Die Welt* (1910), 20: 445–446; id., "The Man and the Cause: The Organic Relation Between Them Exemplified in Herzl," in Weisgal (ed.), *Theodor Herzl*, 23–24.

[73] See John Lechte, *Panorama współczesnej myśli humanistycznej*, trans. Tadeusz Baszniak (Warsaw, 1999), 208.

[74] See also: Moshe Idel, *Kabała: Nowe perspektywy*, trans. Mikołaj Krawczyk (Kraków, 2006), 290; Irving Greenberg, *The Jewish Way: Living the Holidays* (New York, 1988), 182–215.

Fig. 6. Pocket watch with an image of Herzl, Germany, 1903, silver and enamel (in collection of Hary Baron, Tel Aviv), photo taken from the exhibition catalogue: David Tartakover, Marc Scheps, *Herzl in Profile. Herzl's Image in the Applied Arts* (Tel Aviv, 1979), 19.

might take place any time, so, according to Gershom Scholem, it is worth waiting for him each day. Interestingly, in the already discussed illustration on the Buenos Aires panegyric (see Fig. 5) one person standing on the Herzl's side is turning his gaze away from the scene and is looking at his pocket watch. Another version of this Zionist poster series features a person holding a clock or an hourglass. Thus, it seems that these Zionist watches are not designed to estimate the time of the Messiah's arrival but they manifest the necessity of permanent readiness for his coming. Herzl's image is supposed to personalize this new Zionist interpretation of Messianic motifs. The Zionist watches play a symbolic role in giving direction to a certain mode of thinking and interpretation of given historical events.

It should be emphasized once more that Herzl's image is not an incarnation of the Messiah but merely a suggestion of a "Messianic" preparedness for his coming. It is a Zionist postulate of a historical and political program striving for a revival of the Jewish nation and an escape from the Diaspora.

In a letter dated "4 Av, VI Congress," sent from Warsaw to Shmuel Fuchs shortly after Herzl's death, Ben-Gurion writes: "it is 1904 according to the Gregorian calendar, but I have got used to dating events in accordance with the congress years, where the First Congress is the beginning

[of time]."[75] These words are close to what Herzl wrote in his diary on 16 June in the same year: "for me life has stopped, whereas the world history has just started."[76]

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Another piece of art that seems to feature Zionist-Messianic motifs is a sculpture by Henryk Glicenstein *Śpiący Mesjasz* (*Sleeping Messiah*) from 1905[77] [see Fig. 7]. It depicts a sitting, stooping, half-naked and muscular man. The face of the depicted Messiah, although it does not resemble Herzl, was intended to be the Zionist leader's face. This marble sculpture, completed a year after Herzl's death and exhibited in Paris in May 1905, was supposed to be Herzl's tomb sculpture—an artistic tribute paid post-mortem by the artist.[78] Moreover, it seems that creation of this piece of art was driven mainly by the artist's fascination with the leader's image. Glicenstein even tried to make himself look like Herzl by growing a long, black beard.

The sculptor was a supporter and a propagator of the Zionist movement. He said that the sculpture representing Zionist ideas through Herzl's personification "is meant to symbolize the awakening of the nation from a very long and deep slumber."[79] In Herzl's right hand, which is hanging down, the artist put a shofar. This could be associated with a text by one of the delegates at the First Congress, Mordechai Ben-Ami, who wrote that "in the atmosphere of the First Congress, Herzl's voice sounded like the Messiah's shofar."[80] Moreover, the tradition has it that the Messiah shall be accompanied by the prophet Elijah who will be blowing the shofar to announce the coming of the Savior. This iconographic theme is presented in the already mentioned illustration from the Venice Haggadah. However, Glicenstein decided to put the shofar in the Messiah's hand.

[75] Ben-Gurion, *Recollections*, 70; see also reprint in Hecht, Zamora, *When the Shofar Sounds*, 2: 713. Emil Fackenheim writes that only the initiation of the state of Israel allowed them, after two thousand years, to participate again in history, or rather to come back to it. Fackenheim, *To Mend the World*, 8, 92. Also Michael Wyschogrod writes in the aforementioned book *The Body of Faith* that "only with the initiation of the state of Israel, Jews have come back to history." See Wyschogrod, *The Body of Faith*, 235.

[76] Herzl, *Diaries*, 5: 450. See also Hecht, Zamora, *When the Shofar Sounds*, 2: 607.

[77] See Tamara Sztyma-Knasiecka, *Syn swojego Ludu: Twórczość Henryka Glicensteina 1870–1942* (Warsaw, 2008).

[78] Isaac Sonora, "Henryk Glicenstein," *Jewish Chronicle* (26 May 1905), 55.

[79] Ibid., I express special thanks to Tamara Sztyma for suggesting this aspect.

[80] Mordehai Ben-Ami, "Erinnerungen an Theodor Herzl," *Die Welt* (1914), 24: 692.

Fig. 7. *Sleeping Messiah*, sculpture by Henryk Glicenstein, 1905; copy from 1913, Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw.

The sculpture was exhibited in one of the rooms of the Bezalel Academy of Arts and Design from 1906 until 1910 when it was moved to the school's garden.[81] In this way, Glicenstein's work inspired many travesties by the academy's students providing them with a model of artistic quality and a source of Messianic elements.

One such adaptation of Glicenstein's work is found in a bust of Herzl's made by Boris Schatz in Bezalel in 1910 [see Fig. 8]. Schatz's work includes visible references to the sleeping Messiah, particularly the head bent down and the beard reaching Herzl's chest. The difference can be seen in the hairstyle and arms position, which in Schatz's sculpture are based on the gesture that Herzl is making on numerous photographs.

[81] Nurit Shilo-Cohen (ed.), *Bezalel: 1906–1929* (Jerusalem, 1983) [exhibition catalogue], 38.

An analysis of the Bezalel photographic archive from that time reveals an interesting phenomenon. Both works were interchangeably used in the background of group photographs taken in Bezalel [see Figs. 8 and 9]. So both of these works seem to be unanimous and parallel in the visual presentation that intertwined Zionism with Messianism.

It is also interesting that several dozens of such group photographs, where the above-discussed sculptures interchangeably feature as the background, can be found in the Bezalel archive, the Central Zionist Archives and in the press. The common nature and frequency of taking group Zionist photographs in front of one sculpture or the other is truly intriguing. It seems that the reason for this is not only the desire to evoke Herzl's presence among the photographed people but it is another complex visual Messianic reference.

This phenomenon can be explained on the basis of Gershom Scholem's concepts, according to which any human activity, individual or collective, is considered as an effort contributing to the *tikkun* process, that is, healing of the world that leads to the Messianic time—a concept often called "an act of helping Messiah."[82] As Scholem suggests, salvation is not brought by actions of the Messiah as the person responsible for this specific mission, but actions of you and me. It is a logical consequence of the process (and act) in which we all are partners.[83]

Group photographs from Bezalel seem to imply that the Jewish community, understood in broad categories, is the "proper" Messiah, which is supported by Rabbi Kook.[84] It is a "Messianic" act of collective visual presentation of the people of Israel, regardless of whether Glicenstein's or Schatz's sculpture is in the background—from now on they have the same meaning. Herzl constitutes an important element of this process of Salvation and plays the role of a core of this Messianic concept that gathers and unifies all Jews—symbolized by the ones present in the photographs. This complex metaphor is a meaningful aspect of the Zionist call for unification and for undertaking the Zionist effort, with the visual material being crucial to this kind of propaganda. The figure of Herzl in the background is an important vector of meanings

[82] Gershom Scholem, *On the Kabbalah and Its Symbolism*, trans. Ralph Manheim, New York 1965, 127.

[83] The history of people in exile is understood as a continuous progress in the direction of a Messianic end. See ibid.

[84] See Yaron, *The Philosophy*, 239–243.

Fig. 8. Boris Schatz, Herbert Samuel, Menachem Ussishkin and others, photo taken against the background of the sculpture of Herzl made by Schatz, the 1920s, CZA, 1030312-אצמ.

Fig. 9. Group of the Bezalel's teachers and students against the background of the sculpture *Sleeping Messiah* by Henryk Glicenstein, the 1920s, photo from the magazine *Jüdische Rundschau* 18 (1913).

and a suggestion of a certain mode of interpretation. This mechanism of manipulating symbolism uses Herzl's image as an iconographic motif uniting Jews in the Messianic sense. Thus, Zionism is not only trying to directly call him the Messiah but, through a specific mode of visual presentation, is adapting the Messianic symbolism into its own iconography, where Messianism, understood in a broad perspective, becomes a tool of the Zionist propaganda.

It should be pointed out that this practice of making group portraits with the sculpture of the sleeping Messiah or Herzl in the background is a kind of Messianic act that imparts a meaning and function to the work. It does not seem to exist or perform this function on its own, as an independent artifact, but when placed within the context of the group that is depicted, it acquires its proper meanings. This act of creating a group portrait gives life to the work just like the process of its multiplication in press.

As it was mentioned before, Glicenstein's sculpture was meant to be Herzl's tombstone, so why isn't it a literal and direct portrait? In fact, the lack of this literal character seems intentional and can be explained by the potential consequences of this blatant comparison that might have been viewed as religious abuse or blasphemy. It also stems from the declaration and carefulness of Herzl himself as well as the warning against such direct identification included in postulates of many Zionists.

According to Scholem,

> The Jewish mysticism of recent centuries, in any case, has brought forth the "hidden saint" (*nistar*), an enormously impressive type with a profound appeal for the common people. According to a tradition that goes back to Talmudic times there are, in every generation, thirty-six righteous men who are the foundations of the world. If the anonymity, which is part of their very nature, were broken, they would be nothing. One of them is perhaps the Messiah, and he remains hidden only because the age is not worthy of him. Especially among the Hasidim of Eastern Europe, later generations spun endless legends about these most obscure of men, whose acts, because they are performed so entirely beyond the ken of the community, are free from the ambiguities inseparable from all public action.[85]

In light of the notion of the hidden righteous ones, Joseph Samuel Bloch's words seem to acquire a new meaning. He warned Herzl that if he had proclaimed himself the Messiah, people would have turned away from him. The "Messiah has to be concealed," he said.[86]

[85] Scholem, *On the Kabbalah*, 6–7.
[86] Bloch, "Theodor Herzl and Joseph S. Bloch," 158.

Thus, the Glicenstein's sculpture refers to the notion of the so-called "Hidden Messiah." On the one hand, the work lacks a literal nature, on the other the commonly understood Messianic aura emanating from it and the artist's declarations might suggest an analogy between Herzl and the Messiah. This work is harbinger of the real Messiah to come later. It manifests his symbolic presence here and now, despite his slumber. However, he is still to truly arrive and he will do so when he wakes up. From a figurative perspective this awakening could be understood as an active participation of the Jewish people in the process of building their future state. The people of Israel are responsible for waking up the Messiah, as Rabbi Kook claimed.[87] Moreover, the aforementioned Moses Hess as well oftentimes refers to the aspect of the "Messianic awakening." The introduction to the book *Rome and Jerusalem* (published in 1935 in Tel Aviv, second edition) says that "in his philosophy Hess describes waiting for a revival of the Jewish country as an eternal *winter sleep*."[88]

Herzl died on Saturday 3 July 1904; the news of his death was quickly spreading around the world. In line with his last will, he was buried in an iron coffin next to his father in the nineteenth sector of the Döbling Cemetery in Vienna, until "[his] bones are taken to Eretz Israel by the Jewish nation."[89] The funeral took place on 7 July and was attended by over ten thousand people; however, not all of them managed to arrive early enough to take part in the procession. Max Nordau opened the next, that is, the Seventh Zionist Congress in Basel on 27 July 1905 by calling Herzl a "tortured Messiah,"[90] while Martin Buber stated later that "Herzl could not have chosen a better time to die. Despite any frictions and misunderstandings in the organizational structure of Zionism, Herzl died at the peak of his popularity. Now his myth can acquire a new, more solemn and more powerful character."[91]

After Herzl's death, this Messianic implication continued to play an important role, with the visual presentation of this aspect taking various

[87] See Yaron, *The Philosophy*, 239–243.

[88] Kochan, *Jews, Idols and Messiahs*, 161, footnote 3.

[89] Quoted in Gustave Sil-Vara, "At Herzl's Grave: The Burial of the Leader—and Other Memories," in Weisgal (ed.), *Theodor Herzl*, 21–22; Hecht, Zamora, *When the Shofar Sounds*, 2: 626–627.

[90] *Stenographisches Protokoll der Verhandlungen des VII. Zionisten-Kongresses in Basel (1905)*, (Wien 1929). See also: Hecht, Zamora, *When the Shofar Sounds*, 2: 707; Berkowitz, *Zionist Culture*, 100.

[91] Buber, "Herzl und die Historie," 169 (author's own translation).

forms. He was more and more often portrayed as a supernatural character or God's messenger.

What seems greatly interesting in this context is the illustration on the Haggadah cover designed by Zeev Navon, published in Tel Aviv in 1930.[92] It depicts Herzl with wings, standing between two angels at a gate which seems to be the heaven's gate. He is greeted by Arthur James Balfour who died in 1930. Balfour is known mostly for the Balfour Declaration of 1917 under which the Jews obtained territorial sovereignty in part of Eretz Israel.[93] In this way Lord Balfour, as one of very few non-Jews, got accepted by the Zionist movement.[94] At a banquet in London Royal Albert Hall, he said: "[We] have completed a great challenge. By *we* I mean the Jewish nation and the British Mandate in Palestine;"[95] thus, placing himself with these words among the Zionist leadership.

According to Berkowitz, the reception of Balfour's image is now a factor that greatly influences the reception of his declaration.[96] Besides, as Mordechai Breuer wrote, for some of the Jews the document was an announcement of the Messiah's era, which for them had begun with the Declaration's Act coming into force.[97] Likewise, Herbert Samuel stated that the "Declaration started a new epoch, whereas Balfour, just like Cyrus the Great, won a permanent place in the Jewish culture and in the Jewish awareness."[98]

During a party in Czernowitz in 1927, Chaim Weizmann said that when he was holding the Balfour Declaration, he had the impression that he could hear the approaching Messiah's footsteps. However, he was aware that according to the tradition the Messiah was supposed to come "silently, unnoticed, like a burglar at night."[99] Weizmann's use of the phrase "Messiah's footsteps" comes from the Aramaic expression "ikveta de-Meshiha," which means *Messiah's heels*—the lowest and symbolic

[92] This Haggadah is deposited in the Jewish Diaspora Museum in Tel Aviv and is also reproduced in the above-mentioned exhibition catalogue: Herskowitz, Dara-Michaels, *Theodor Herzl. If you will it*, 61.

[93] See, e.g., Jonathan Schneer, *The Balfour Declaration: The Origins of the Arab-Israeli Conflict* (New York, 2010).

[94] Michael Berkowitz, *Western Jewry and the Zionist Project, 1914–1933* (Cambridge, 1997), 26–32.

[95] Quoted in ibid., 29.

[96] Ibid., 28.

[97] Mordechai Breuer, *Modernity within Tradition*: *The Social History of Orthodox Jewry in Imperial Germany*, trans. Elisabeth Petuchowski (New York, 1992), 28.

[98] Quoted in Berkowitz, *Western Jewry*, 29.

[99] Quoted in Elmessiri, *The Land,* 11.

point of his body.[100] Thus, the phrase indicates that getting closer to (and further from) the Messianic era is dependent on the human actions on earth—a common element of the Jewish ethics, according to which good deeds bring the Messiah closer. The religious and mystical idea of the return of huge Jewish masses was also inspired by the Messianic rhetoric of Rabbi Kook, who became the main Ashkenazi rabbi of Palestine.

Zionism, as many scholars write, was meant to be perceived as a "secular Messianism" attempting to change the collective position of Jews among other nations. It did not matter if it was called emancipatory liberalism, integrational nationalism or constructivist socialism as long as it could provide Jews with a politically stable place of existence. David Litwak explained that within the notions of Zionism "Jews realized that they can no longer expect a miracle but should depend on their own strengths."[101] On the other hand, Arthur Hertzberg argues that Herzl's thinking was in fact purely Messianic. He states that despite the fact that it was expressed in secular and political terms, "it was Messianism that laid the foundations of his attitude because Herzl proclaimed that the Jewish country is historically destined to emerge."[102]

At this point it is worth making another reference to Ben-Gurion. He wrote that "Herzl incarnated two thousand years of dreams, which are now close to coming true . . . he galvanized our belief that Eretz Israel is obtainable and that we can reach it with our own hands."[103]

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[100] Idel, *Kabała*, 291.
[101] Quoted in Wistrich, "In the Footsteps of Messiah," 325.
[102] Hertzberg (ed.), *The Zionist Idea*, 46.
[103] Ben-Gurion, *Recollections*, 34.