

ZIONISM & ANTI-ZIONISM: The history of two opposing ideas

EPISODE 1: POLITICS

EMANCIPATION & POLITICAL ZIONISM

We start with a brief history of the Jewish people leading up to the moment of Jewish emancipation in Europe. The offer of emancipation sparked a great debate among Jews. Some communities felt excitement about the prospect of individual equality and sought to assimilate further. Others felt that the Jews would never truly be viewed as equal in the nation-states that were forming around them. Zionism took root among the latter group, emerging as one of the many liberation movements of this time. The founders of political Zionism asserted that Jews should finally have a home and become masters of their own fate.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What is the dramatic promise for the Jews of Emancipation? | **Timecode: 14:43 - 17:14**
2. What is the price of Emancipation for the Jews? | **Timecode: 17:14 - 18:55**
3. What is the Jewish response to Emancipation? | **Timecode: 18:55 - 19:40**
4. What is the Zionist analysis of the failure of emancipation and how does Zionism answer this failure? | **Timecode: 20:41 - 24:07**
5. What are "the three parents" of political Zionism. Why were all three necessary? | **Timecode: 24:08 - 25:13**
6. What is the critique leveled by political Zionists against Judaism as it has adapted to exile? | **Timecode: 25:40 - 26:50**

OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS

1. Dr. Wilf challenges the idea that Judaism is a religion. Is she correct? Why or why not?
2. "As much as it is true that power corrupts, so powerlessness corrupts." Do you think this is true? How so?
3. To what extent, if any, does Zionism depend on the existence of antisemitism?
4. Do the aims of political Zionism necessarily pose a threat to the interests of other national groups living in the Land of Israel?

PRIMARY SOURCES FOR CONVERSATION

1. [French National Assembly's Debate on Eligibility of Jews for Citizenship](#)
2. [Assembly of Jewish Notables: Answers to Napoleon on Rabbinic Authority in a Democracy](#)
3. [Poems "Wake My People!" and "We Will Go with Our Youth and Our Elders"](#) by Yehuda Leib Gordon
4. [The Pittsburgh Platform](#)
5. [Introduction to "The Jewish State"](#) by Theodore Herzl