



*PaRDeS*

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FOR JEWISH STUDIES IN GERMANY

## **Basle and Vilna, 1897**

Call for Abstracts for PaRDeS 33 (2027)

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The final decades of the nineteenth century witnessed the emergence of two Jewish political movements in Europe that would grow into some of the largest movements of their kind worldwide. Both took shape at congresses held in 1897: the First Zionist Congress in late August in Basle, and, a few weeks later that autumn, the foundation of the Jewish Labor Bund in Vilna. However different their concepts of autonomy, both movements converged in their rejection of what was described as assimilation and perceived as a threat to Jewish existence – whether through legal emancipation or (communist) pressures of acculturation. Their self-locations diverged in the ways how they related to humanity as a whole. The visions of Jewish belonging they offered, and the answers to it, differed in content and form, yet overlapped in an enormous project of nation-building – one that unleashed tremendous energies toward cultivating Jewish culture and language, and toward developing Hebrew and Yiddish alike for everyday use, as literary languages, and for scholarship and administration.

These intersections – symbolically marked by the year 1897 and spatially tied to Basle and Vilna – point to a convergence that is only seemingly coincidental. The PaRDeS 2027 issue traces this simultaneity and examines the relation between these two movements, their shared roots, and parallel developments, family ties, friendships, and biographical transformations. It investigates the tipping points and cascade mechanisms through which strategic or even far-reaching alliances became possible or impossible. What soon grew into an ideologically charged, conflict-ridden history

touched at its core on decisions about the future of Jewish communities worldwide: Should they remain in their home countries – perhaps even help shape their character? Or should they build Jewish settlements, leaving behind the path of the past and the diaspora, to live the life of a self-determined majority? At its core, this was a question of paths for and within Europe, of the coexistence of minorities with their surrounding societies, and of possible forms of political and cultural autonomy.

The PaRDeS 2027 issue will focus on the first decades of their emergence, though studies extending into the 1930s will also be considered. Possible avenues of inquiry include, but are not limited to:

What methodological possibilities and pitfalls does a history of relations offer in comparison to a history of conflict? Which biographical intersections were possible between Cultural Zionism, Labor Zionism, and the Bund? What kind of disputes emerged along the borderlines? Which organizational structures were created at the level of leadership and in specific areas of activism (education, women's labor, publishing, and the like)? How did the establishment and expansion of these two movements unfold, and how was membership recruited? What parallels can be identified in the cultivation of Hebrew and Yiddish? How was the transnational character of the Jewish community and of the movements' ideas accounted for? How did their ideological positions take shape? Which voices within the Bund opposed its anti-Zionist orientation, which Zionist voices favored cooperation with the Bund – and what considerations shaped these positions? Finally, what can be said about the relevant archives?

The journal welcomes contributions in German or English from a range of disciplinary perspectives, including but not limited to history, literature, cultural studies, sociology, political science, international law, religious studies, and museum studies.

Please send your proposal by **November 30, 2026** to [pardes\[at\]uni-potsdam.de](mailto:pardes[at]uni-potsdam.de) as one single PDF file. Submissions should include an abstract of 500 words and a short biographical note of up to 100 words. Notifications will be sent out in December 2026. Final manuscripts are due by June 30, 2027. Full articles should be between 30,000 and 35,000 characters (including spaces and notes). We also welcome shorter submissions focusing on a specific source, archival collection, or media format (8,000 – 15,000 characters). All submissions will undergo a blind peer-review process. Publication is scheduled for fall 2027.

PaRDeS, published by the Association for Jewish Studies in Germany in cooperation with the Institute for the History of German Jewry, is an interdisciplinary, peer-reviewed journal. All articles in PaRDeS are indexed in Rambis: Index of Articles on Jewish Studies.

The journal is published online in open access as well as in print. Previous issues are available here:

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