

Jewish Textual Architectures

Jewish Spaces, Places, and Architectures in Literature. Online Anthology

Diary of the physician and educator Siegfried Lehmann (1892-1958), entry and sketch dated February 28, 1925

Date	February 28, 1925
Source Type	Text
Creator	Siegfried Lehmann
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Source Description and Interpretation	Born out of crisis: Siegfried Lehmann's idea for a youth settlement in Palestine (Beate Lehmann)

Source Description

The diary of Jewish doctor and educator Siegfried Lehmann is kept in the archives of the children's and youth village Ben Schemen in Israel, which he founded. It is a thread-bound notebook in DIN A5 format with a semi-rigid black cover and blank pages. The first pages of the notebook, which were apparently written on, are missing, and the last pages, which were probably blank, have been cut out. The entries cover the period from December 29, 1924 to December 20, 1930 on 87 pages. The individual entries were generally written at long intervals. The entry dated February 28, 1925 deserves special attention. At that time, Siegfried Lehmann had already decided to give up his position as head of the Jewish orphanage in Lithuania and leave the children's home he had founded in Kaunas. His plan was to establish an agricultural youth settlement in Palestine, where children and young people from Kaunas would receive agricultural training that would enable them to earn their own living later on. In the entry dated February 28, 1925, Siegfried Lehmann describes what motivated him and how he envisioned the settlement. Siegfried Lehmann used various materials and methods to win supporters for his idea, including [brochures](#), lectures and films. However, Lehmann used his diary entries solely for self-reflection and to structure his thoughts. He never published the sketch of the planned youth settlement that accompanied the entry.

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Transcription

[1 : [1]]

Palästina pläne haben Revolution gemacht,
in mir und im Haus.
Herrlicher Gedanke: Kleine Kinder wachsen
heran, bereiten sich auf die Aufgabe für
Volk und Menschheit vor und gehen herüber,
um ihr Leben, das schon vorbereitet ist von den
älteren Brüdern u. Schwestern.

Kreis geschlossen.
Und ich selbst? Ich glaube heute nicht,
dass mir viel Bücher nottun, Vorträge etc,
nur Einsamkeit, Besinnung und das eigene
Ich.

Träume von einer Jugendsiedlung,
für die ich mich ganz, ganz, ganz hingeben
will. – Ein „Kinderheim“ kann ein
Kunstwerk sein, eine Symphonie, ein
Bild – Machtbewusstsein? Nein,
Freude am künstlerischen Schaffen.
Es gibt Idee eines Kinderheims.
Gelingt es, diese Idee vollkommen
darzustellen, führe ich einen Teil
der getrübten, unreinen Welt auf ihre
Reinheit u. Schönheit zurück.

Herausgreifen ein kleines Stück Welt,
und aus Chaos Kosmos machen.
Mit welchen Kräften?

[2 : [2]]

Vor allem mit der Kraft der Liebe,
Güte, mit dem Verstehen der anderen,
tiefste Liebe, vollste Verantwortung
für die ganze Gemeinschaft.
Mit der Kraft der Ehrlichkeit, die
das Leben in der Natur in uns
natürlich bilden wird.

Mit der Kraft, die mir die Bindung
an hohe Bindungen gibt: Natur und Kultur.
Ich habe nicht viel gelernt. Ver-
stehe aber die Bedeutung dieser beiden
Bindungen, deshalb habe ich das Recht,
dafür in dieser Richtung zu arbeiten.

Zeichnung Jugendsiedlung

English Translation

[1 : [1]]

Palestine plans have sparked a revolution
in me and in the house.
What a wonderful thought: little children are growing
up, preparing themselves for the task ahead
the people and humanity, and go over
to give their lives, which have already been prepared by
older brothers and sisters.

Circle completed.
And myself? Today, I do not believe
that I need many books, lectures, etc.,
only solitude, reflection and my own
self.

Dreams of a youth settlement
to which I want to devote myself completely, completely, completely
– A “children's home” can be a
work of art, a symphony, a
picture – a sense of power? No,
joy in artistic creation.
There is an idea for a children's home.
If this idea can be fully realized,
I will lead part
of the troubled, impure world back to its
purity and beauty.

Picking out a small piece of the world,
and turning chaos into cosmos.
With what powers?

[2 : [2]]

Above all, with the power of love,
kindness, with understanding of others,
deepest love, full responsibility
for the entire community.
With the power of honesty, which
life in nature will naturally form within us
will naturally form within us.

With the power that gives me
to high values: nature and culture.
I have not learned much.
But I understand the importance of these two
connections, which is why I have the right
work towards this goal.

Drawing Youth settlement

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