

Biography of Leon Kahn

Leon Kahn was born to an Orthodox Jewish family in 1925 in Eiskes, Poland (today in Lithuania). In June 1941, Eiskes was occupied by the Germans and a few months later, the majority of the Jewish inhabitants of the town were murdered by Lithuanian members of the *Einsatzgruppen*. Leon and his brother witnessed the massacre from their hiding place.

They fled to the nearby Radun ghetto where their family had managed to escape earlier. When the ghetto was liquidated in May 1942, Leon's family hid in an attic but was soon discovered. His father escaped, while his mother stayed behind with his grandmother. They were probably deported to Treblinka and immediately murdered by gas.

Leon also managed to get away and he joined the partisans. He received combat training and became an expert at blowing up trains. When the Soviet Army liberated the region in July 1944, Leon spent two months catching Germans and sending them to POW camps or killing them on the spot.

In September he returned to Eiskes but found no one from his family. His brother had been killed by Lithuanian collaborators, his father and sister by members of the Polish Home Army. Leon was enrolled in a KGB school in Vilnius but after three months he ran away. He managed to get over the border to Lodz, Poland and from there went to a Displaced Persons camp in Salzburg, Austria.

He immigrated to Canada in 1948, when the country specifically sought immigrants who were tailors. He managed to pose as a tailor and settled in Vancouver, where he became a successful real estate developer. He had two sons and a daughter. Leon died in 2003.