

Short biography

Fritz Kahn, Border-Crosser Between Worlds

First impressions: Halle – Hoboken – New York – Hamburg – Halle – Bonn

On September 29, 1888, Fritz Kahn is born in Halle.

Just like his father, doctor and writer Arthur Kahn, Fritz is very talented and interested in various topics. He grows up with a Jewish-Orthodox tradition and a classical humanistic education.

The family immigrates to the USA but returns to Germany three years later.

Finally a home again: Berlin

After several relocations, the family settles down in Berlin. Kahn studies medicine, the natural sciences, and the humanities. He also writes popular science articles for nationwide newspapers.

At the front: Alsace – Vosges – Northern Italy

During World War I, Fritz Kahn serves as an army doctor. In his spare time, he writes his first book: »Die Milchstraße« (The Milky Way).

Fame and persecution: Berlin

After the war, Kahn works as a surgeon and obstetrician in a hospital and writes two successful books: »Die Zelle« (The Cell) and »Die Juden als Rasse und Kulturvolk« (The Jews as Race and Cultural Nation). At the beginning of the 1920s, he begins his family and opens a gynecological practice and a studio where he employs secretaries and illustrators. He becomes an acclaimed author through the book series »Das Leben des Menschen« (The Life of Man).

In a climate of growing anti-Semitism, Kahn exemplifies a liberal attitude, founds a humanistic community, and becomes chairman of the Jüdische Altershilfe (Jewish Senior Aid). In 1933, his books are publicly burned. Because of his Jewish heritage, he loses his medical accreditation and is banished from Germany.

Escaping: Jerusalem – Paris – Bordeaux – Lisbon

Fritz Kahn immigrates to Palestine and later he moves to Paris with his second wife. In Switzerland, his internationally successful book »Unser Geschlechtsleben« (Our Sex Life) is published.

In 1938, Kahn's books are registered on the Nazi »list of harmful and unwanted writings«. After the occupation of France, he escapes to Bordeaux, where he is detained. During this time, »Der Mensch gesund und krank« (Healthy and Ailing Man) is published in Switzerland.

Kahn escapes to Portugal and, with the help of his friend Albert Einstein, to the US in 1941.

Exile: New York

After a first attempt to return to Europe, Kahn continues his successful career in the US. In addition to »First Aid« and »Man in Structure and Function«, he publishes »Das Atom – endlich verständlich« (The Atom – Finally Explained), »Das Buch der Natur« (The Book of Nature), and »Design of the Universe«.

Back to Europe: Ascona – Lugano – Munkerup – Locarno

In 1956, Kahn finally returns to Europe and settles in Switzerland. Among other articles, he issues a matrimony guidebook entitled »Muss Liebe blind sein?« (Must Love Be Blind?).

After surviving a serious earthquake in 1960 in Morocco, Kahn lives and works in Denmark. He develops new book projects continuously but is barely able to publish any of these ideas. At 79, he travels to Ascona to hibernate. On January 14, 1968, Fritz Kahn dies in a clinic in Locarno.