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*Iris ZONENŠAJN-FRAJLIH\**

## CHILDHOOD INTERRUPTED



**I**ris Zonenšajn was born in Slavonski Brod on December 2, 1929, the only child of Mirta (nee Fuks) and Filip Zonenšajn. Her closest family were killed in the Holocaust.

After the war she finished high school in Belgrade before graduating from the Faculty of Agriculture in Zemun. She worked in the Institute for Corn in Zemun Polje and, in 1956, emigrated to Israel, working in Beer Sheva as a mathematics teacher until her retirement. She married

Emil Frajljeh, originally from Sarajevo, and has two children and six grandchildren. She lives in Beer Sheva.

I was born in Slavonski Brod in December, 1929, to my mother Mirta Fuks and my father Filip "Tiki" Zonenšajn, a timber expert in the forestry industry in Našice.

I had a carefree childhood, secure in the comfort and devotion of my parents, my grandmother and my grandfather. The atmosphere had a strong feeling of belonging to the Jewish people, my grandfather, Rudi Fuks, being very active in the Zionist movement. But in my twelfth year my childhood was interrupted when deportations to the Ustasha camps began after the occupation in 1941. I was taken with my

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\* As dictated to Dr Eta Najfeld.

mother, my grandmother and other women and children from Slavonski Brod in February, 1942, to the Stara Gradiška camp. After some time we were taken from there to the Đakovo camp.

Thanks to the work of the Jewish Community in Osijek, some of the children were saved from the camp by being put into the care of particular families. In this way I managed to get out of the camp after being allocated to a Croat family, the Srdars, in Slavonski Brod, who took me in by agreement with my mother. My parents left various valuables with the Srdar family for safe keeping. I lived with them under the name Mira Seljan, as the daughter of their cousin. They lived on the edge of the town and I was not able to go into the town itself where someone might recognise me. They often used to take me to their cousins in the neighbouring village of Pleternica, but most of the time I stayed inside the house, out of sight.



*Iris Zonenšajn has lived in Israel since 1956, in the town of Beer Sheva. Here she visits the nearby Bedouin market.*

I was fifteen years old when the war ended and I realised that I had to fend for myself because my entire family had been killed. I graduated from the Faculty of Agriculture in Zemun and, in 1956, emigrated to Israel where I live today in Beer Sheva.