

**THANK YOU FOR ASKING HOW I FEEL**

## THE TIME OF HOPE...

*The Dayton Peace Agreement stopped the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina. And this represents the most significant reference of this process. At the same time, this is the only reference over which exists the universal agreement, even ten years after signing this document.*

*Everything else has been differently interpreted and changed by various local and foreign officials and experts, and was additionally intensified recently with the discussion about transfer from "Dayton's" to "Brussels's phase".*

*This publication presents the attitudes of common people throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina, as they are speaking about the Dayton Agreement from the perspective of personal experiences and expectations, but with a humorous note, because they are aware of their minor influence on "high politics". After all, they are occupied with existential need, and do not have time for such things, neither the Dayton Agreement was accessible to them on their native language for the whole decade.*

*For these reasons, their views are only a small picture in mosaic of one difficult time. However, this picture is encouraging and precious, because it reflects a wish for overcoming hopelessness, even if it represents a joke at personal expense. Always, and everywhere, a hope in better future represents the essential human need, and in these areas, it often represents a prerequisite for survival. Times of despair here were always preceding times of catastrophes, whose scenarios were never written only at these areas, but always had local extras and stunt man as victims.*

*For that reason, I hope we will less and less have thoughts as a teacher from Mrkonjić Grad about moving "somewhere far away from this Balkan's tavern", or cleaning lady from Mostar, that our past was better "than this we have now".*

*For that reason, I also hope we will more and more paint our time and our areas with common human wishes, as student from Sarajevo that expects in a future he would run home "because of his great wife".*

*I wish for all of us to expect that here and now we live in a time of hope that will not be taken from us, ever again. I hope this is not only a dream...*

*Branislava Memon*



*Title*  
**“THANK YOU FOR  
ASKING HOW I FEEL”**

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# THANK YOU FOR ASKING HOW I FEEL



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## FOREWORD

Somewhere during spring, I asked Dunja, which was seven years old girl than, if she knows what is Dayton. She was thinking a little bit, and answered victoriously, “Computer!”

What an association on document that ended three years long war in B&H.

Approximately, during the same period, we started our travels throughout cliffs of Bosnia and Herzegovina. However, instead of children, we decided to ask adult citizens of B&H if they can remember where they had been ten years ago, on November 21, 1995, when the Peace Agreement was signed in Air Base “Right Paterson”. We also asked them how they had felt then, what they had done during the past ten years, when the last time they danced with someone had been, how they lived, in what they believed, and what they expected from their future.

For that purpose, we developed a questionnaire with fifteen questions that should reflect feelings, hopes, and views of “common people” in B&H.

We intentionally skipped politicians, diplomats, economists, and other experts, knowing that majority of them would like to say something in the public on November 21. They would certainly talk from their political, diplomatic, and experts’ perspective.

Collocutors in our poll were students, artisans, housewives, pensioners, tailors, physicians, administrative workers, teachers... We talked directly with some of them, and some people filled in our questionnaires. We collected 500 interviews in Bijeljina, Brčko, Modriča, Teslić, Banja Luka, Prijedor, Novi Grad, Kozarska Dubica, Bihać, Glamoč, Drvar, Srebrenica, Široki Brijeg, Tomislavgrad, Mostar, Konjic, Sarajevo, Zenica, Donji Vakuf, Bugojno, Jajce, Tuzla, Zvornik, Pale, Bosanski Brod, Orašje...

People filled in questionnaires at the street, their working places, in coffee shops, and houses, depending where we found them. There were also people that did not want to participate in something that “come

from Banja Luka” or “look as some new fraud of the international community.”

There were also people that said to us that they needed to think very hard to remember where they were during that period, and where they are now, and what are the nice things that happened to them during the past ten years.

And than questionnaires started to arrive. I am not so sure any more what we expected to get, but I know my soul was in pain when I read some of the first questionnaires that came to our office. Some answers expressed sadness and hopelessness so clearly, others where loaded with typical Balkan’s black humor.

Idea for title of this book came from Draženka from Dobož. On the side of her questionnaire, she wrote, “Thanks for asking how I feel.” Aco thought this sentence reflects what we wanted - to give “common people” an opportunity to look back on ten years of peace, and to publish their thoughts, to save a written track of their thinking and views. It is important because, common people are last who were asked for everything that happened, and nobody is asking them even today. Unfortunately, that is how it is.

Although our objective was not to conduct a scientific research, accompanied with suitable methodology, all types of experts - policy analysts, sociologists, and psychologists could make valuable conclusions through analysis of these questionnaires.

I believe the book would find an audience among different groups of population, because it is human and sincere. All credits for that should go to five hundred women and men that responded on the questionnaire, as well as to Sanja and Dragoslav, which traveled for many days throughout B&H, and intercepted people on the streets. Jelena, Željka, two Aleksanders and Sanja were processing questionnaires, and having personal small dramas, and Lidija, Miodrag, Aida, Bojana, and all others who contributed in making this book through different ways.

*Dragana Dardić*



## **MIRO**

**O**n November 21, 1995 in village Sabanci, municipality Ilijaš, there was happiness in the house of Miro Pejić. Not much because of signing of the Peace Agreement, but more because of the fact that Miro got married that day.

Miro says he lived well in 1995. “I married and had many plans – to demobilize from the army, start working, and get children.”

However, as he said, Miro had to leave the home. He became a displaced person, and now lives in Srebrenica.

“I started to work in another environment, got two children, and would have even more children if I stayed in my own house.”

## RUSMIR

I met Rusmir Kujović, on his workplace - the stand of lacquer and color shop, somewhere in Šenoina Street in Sarajevo. Rusmir is forty years old man from Sarajevo, and his friends call him “Black Sheep.” This is because he cannot loose extra kilograms, despite stubborn diets, and for many years, he is the favorite chubby guy in his company. As skilful salesperson, Rusmir convinced me to buy the polish for enamel surfaces, but he also “conquered” me with his optimism. Ten years after war, Rusmir still did not renovate his home that was destroyed in shell bombing. He did not manage to create a family. He does not go on summer, and winter vacations, and does not attend concerts. Yet, as he says, he enjoys every moment of his life in his city that “he would not change for America, even if they pay him”. Rusmir did not lose faith in people and God. With the neighbors that he knows well, Rusmir talks solely about “foodstuff”, because he is not interested in politics at all.

**N. DODIG**

*(1956), driver, Drvar*

What do you expect from your future?

**I wish to leave something good behind me.**

## ŠEHIDA

Seven years after signing of the Peace Agreements, which she considers one of the most beautiful things that happened to her Šehida Bolić from Zenica concludes that peace brought her only good things. There is no place for disappointments and laments in her life because “thank God she put her son on the right track, and now he has his bread in hands.”

She even visited her son several times in Austria, and went on the coast with her husband and daughter.

She likes to go to the theater, and enjoys in talks with her family and friends.

She expects from future to bring her a good health and “retirement, if it God’s will.”

## GOSPA POPOVIĆ

*(1941), pensioner, Ivanjska near Banja Luka*

What is the meaning of peace for you?

**We all like peace. At least I hope we all like it. It is important that no one would die. Everything can be agreed and solved.**

What do you expect from your future?

**I expect better days for pensioners.**

## DRAGICA

**D**ragica Kordanović from Kozarska Dubica was in the bus for Belgrade when “radio announced signing of the Agreement about cessation of war in Bosnia and Herzegovina”.

“I was happy after all misfortunes I survived.”

Dragica wrote, “I lived in uncertainty. I did not know what the next night or day will bring to me.”

For this graduated economist, traveling abroad represents unreachable abstraction “I cannot afford especially this luxury, this is only for new tycoons, judges<sup>1</sup>, and thieves.”

Today, Dragica lives in Kozarska Dubica, and talks with her colleagues about everyday’ survival and “injustice that bothers all of us.”

She believes only in God and nothing else, “because all moral values vanished.” She does not expect anything special from the future “if this political and economic situation persists.”

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1 Tycoons - Expression used widely with reference to wealthy owners of private business, usually with good political connections.

Judges - She referred to their several times higher salaries than average.

## IVAN

Ivan Perković from Tomislavgrad was digging potatoes in his garden, when he heard the news that war ended, and it did not make him happy too much. Ten years after, Ivan believes that “peace did not come yet.”

He lives worse than in 1995, and he kills the time with his friends in local cafe “DM”.

With friends, he talks “solely about sex”, because he is not interested in politics.

To the question if he knows his neighbors, Ivan resignedly responds, “Oh Jesus, of course I know them. We do not live in Berlin.”

He believes in God, while he lost the confidence in people long time ago, as well as the confidence in his future.

## RAŠID TALIĆ

(1984), student, Sarajevo

What is the most common topic of your discussion with other people?  
**Buttons on boxer shorts.**

## SLAVKO ARAMBAŠIĆ

When the peace was signed, Slavko Arambašić, fifty-six years old man was in Odžak, and he was very happy. In 1995, he was living “in love with his wife” and thinking how to educate his children, and solve his housing problems. And everything became reality for him. He exchanged his apartment, and his daughters finished school and both “married well.” Ten years after war, he claims with certainty that his granddaughter and grandson are the most beautiful things that happened to him since the war.

He traveled abroad to Serbia and Montenegro and Croatia. He was on the humanitarian concert “against NATO bombing” in 1999.

Slavko remembers his last dance on the wedding of his daughter, when he danced with his wife.

Today he lives in Modriča, and he says that he lives better. He talks most often with his wife and granddaughter about future, and currently “how we will sow the cabbage.”

He knows all of his neighbors. He believes in heart and common life with all good people. He wishes to live long enough to get old.

## JASMINKA

Jasminka says she never lived worse than now. In order to go on the summer vacation, as she said, she had to borrow the money from the bank.

“This is more and more bad and difficult. All my plans, dreams, and wishes did not become reality, and will not be realized in the country where criminal and amorality are imperative.”

Jasminka is an educational worker. She originates from workers family, and currently lives in Banja Luka. “Nothing is certain any more in my city,” says Jasminka. With her family and very narrow circle of friends, Jasminka talks “how to survive until the next miserable salary comes, or we remember good old days.”

Jasminka believes in truth and justice “whatever they are, and whenever they come,” and that every human has something good inside and “just needs to be tackled to express it.”

She believes there is no perspective in this country. “What do I expect from my future? Perhaps little bit more love to give or receive from anyone...”

## MILICA

*M*ilica Lugonja is seventy-three years old. She lost the only son in the war. Her husband was in captivity. He was released in May 1995. Milica was in Banja Luka when the Dayton Peace Agreement was signed.

“I was happy when I heard this news. I lost my only son, and I said let the war stop, so children will not be killed any longer, and let the perishing of Serbs stop”, says Milica.

She remembers 1995 as the year of sadness: “I lived in pain and sorrow, as I live today, because of death of my only male child. I did not have plans, I only prayed God for rest of my children to be live and healthy.”

In the past ten years, the happiest moment for her was the birth of her granddaughter that bears the name of her deceased only son.

Milica does not even think about concerts or theater plays. “Instead of that, I shed bitter tears because of everything that happened to me”, says Milica, and adds she lives sadly and ill today, without shelter.

“I am old, bereaved, and weak, and I go from one daughter to another to live with them in their houses, and I am homeless. Although I believe this state should take care of me.”

For Milica, peace does not mean anything without home, health, son, and husband. Milica does not expect anything more from her future, only harder life, with more illness.



## **DAMIR JAKUPOVIĆ**

*(1976), administration, Sarajevo*

What is the best thing that happened to you in past ten years?

**I found my dream girl, and if God wills it, we will get married soon.**

What is the meaning of peace for you?

**Peace is... nature, relaxing of brain without cell phone, books.**

What do you expect from your future?

**I would like to accomplish all of my plans. Marriage. Children, at least five of them.**

## **RADOMIR PAVLOVIĆ**

*(1962), physician, Skelani*

What was your life then? Did you have any plans in 1995?

**I lived in fear and uncertainty. To leave B&H. That was not my war.**

What plans did you achieve since then?

**I have happy family. I preserved my spirit and motivation. I completed my specialization, and got wonderful daughter – Isidora.**

## **NERMINA KAPIČIĆ**

*(1960), Sarajevo*

What was your life then? Did you have any plans in 1995?

**I lived on social welfare - as parasite. I had the plan to come back to B&H as soon as possible.**

What plans did you achieve since then?

**Solved housing problem, and somewhat normal job???????**

What is the best thing that happened to you in past ten years?

**I reunited with some beloved persons.**

## MIRKO

*M*irko Pejić is a projectionist by profession. He was born on 1931. He lives in Brčko, and in the time of signing of the Dayton Peace Agreement, he was a refugee in Novi Sad. He also had a life of refugee, dreaming how to return to his home. During past ten years, he succeeded to visit Vienna, but not to go on some concert or theater performance.

To the question if he remembers when the last time he danced with someone was, Mirko responded, “Gods forbid!”

Today, he barely survives with his earnings. “How I am going to live with 220 KM?!”

Although he believes things will get better, he is nostalgic when he remembers old times when former Yugoslav republics were under one roof, “To tell you the truth I believed the most in Tito.”

## MILENA K.

*(1962), economic technician, Trn*

During past ten years, did you go abroad, to coast, skiing, shopping, and visiting cousins...?

**In 2003, as the recipient of Bingo Lottery of RS, I was on coast in Bečići (Montenegro) for ten days.**

## A WOMAN FROM DRVAR

During the war, M.P. fled with her family from Drvar to Banja Luka. Relief was the first thing she felt when she heard the peace was signed. "I felt unburdened and relieved since many members of my close family were in the army."

She does not have good memories of 1995. "That was the worst period in my life, because no normal human would easily leave everything and live in uncertainty with two small children (2,5 years and 8 months old). No one needs you, and you are the burden to everyone. Yet, you can not stay under open sky."

To the question if she accomplished any of her plans, this thirty-six old woman from Drvar says, "Nothing. I returned to Drvar. We put in order our house alone, nobody even asked us if we needed something. All doors were closed for us. Suffering and pain, worrying the most."

Her family is all together, alive and healthy, and they returned to Drvar. They do not go to the concerts and theaters, because there is no such thing in their city.

"Today we do not live better - I can say this with certainty. Before we had secure job, and we did not worry for the future. Present time is so uncertain and full of stresses for us, so we do not know if we will have strength to overcome it." This merchant woman from Drvar believes in God "but also in myself, because I realized I cannot succeed without hard work".

Peace for her means freedom - the freedom of life, and security of expression and movement. She says that every human hopes for better, so as her. "As the first thing, I hope there will be no war again, although there will always be conflicts in these areas. Future is uncertain for all of us, but I hope we will succeed."

## AMINA

Amina Mlinarić, 19 years old woman from Donji Vakuf, lived to see realization of her dreams with the signing of the Dayton Peace Agreement. Remembering that day, Amina says, “I felt very happy, I wanted so much to go back to my house, and for my father to be out of the army, so I would not worry if he is alive or not. When the peace was signed, my wishes became true.”

In 1995, Amina was thinking about her school obligations. Although they were not working, her parents were struggling to provide everything for her, so she would not feel difficulties of war.

Today, Amina finished the high school, and have plans to enroll to the university. Her mother is working, but her father still does not have a job.

For the past ten years, the most beautiful events in her life were her travel to Turkey, and acquaintance with her boyfriend.

Beside Turkey, Amina was on the vacation in Croatia and Italy. She remembers the concerts she attended, “Merlin, Balašević... not to count more”, and the last theater performance she saw was “Ali Paša” in People’s Theatre in Sarajevo.

She talks the most about university, love, and people. Few nights ago, Amina danced with her boyfriend near Vrbas.

Amina and her parents have good relationship with their neighbors, and they regularly exchange visits with some of them.

She believes in Allah Dž. Š. From her future, Amina expects to finish the school, become engineer, marry for person of her destiny, to live happily in Bosnia and Herzegovina with her family, to have healthy children, and job. “If God wills it.”

## LOCKSMITH

*W*hen he heard that war actions finally stopped in B&H, locksmith from Teslić got drunk. During these war years, he lived from humanitarian aid, and hoped “Bosnia and Herzegovina would become small Switzerland”. He says he lives better today, although he visited Belgrade only once, and he did not attend any cultural manifestation. He mostly talks about politics and sport, and believes in better future. He hopes for bigger salary.

## HUSNIJA RAMOVIĆ

*(1954), Sarajevo*

Do you remember when the last time you danced with someone was?  
**I have a wooden leg – I am joking, Gods forbid!**

What is the most common topic of your discussion with other people?  
**What should I talk about when the state is in rags?**

In what do you believe?  
**I do not believe in God. If God exists, people would not put lightning rods on mosques and churches.**

## EVELINA

Evelina Spahalić is retired professor. She lives in Brčko, where she lived when the war ended in Bosnia and Herzegovina. She says she did not have any plans in 1995, and she did not experience anything nice for the past ten years. “I lost three brothers in war, and I only found bones of one of them.”

She did not go on the coast, “kuku i naopako”<sup>2</sup>, she did not go on concerts, cinema, or theater. To the question when was the last time she danced with someone, she responded shortly, “Ouch...”

Nowadays, Evelina lives a little bit better, more comfortable, and independent. She talks the most with her sister Vesna “that is an engineer and lives miserably.”

Evelina believes in people, “That is my religion. I still believe in human, in people. I am sorry because I am losing my friends.”

For her, peace is everything, and from the future Evelina expects “only health”.

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2 “Kuku i naopako” - literal translation would be “woe and upside down.” This expression is in use to describe general misery of someone’s position.

## ZDRAVKA

**Z**dravka Klepić was born in Sarajevo, and today lives in Banja Luka. When the Peace Agreement was signed, she was in her hometown, on Grbavica settlement. However, she felt “desperate,” because she had to leave her town. “I had to leave my own city, and to move into uncertainty. In that moment, I did not know where my life is taking me”, says thirty-seven years old Zdravka. This pharmaceutical technician struggled to survive. She worked on the green market, and waited for war to stop, so she could turn back to her job and peace. Today, she says, “I got a job, and regained my spiritual peace and self-security. The only thing that persists is survival. Yet, this is good, as she says - having in mind what kind of social situation is today.

Besides that, love and various friendships happened to her during the past ten years.

She remembers her travels to Montenegro and “our states of old Jug-a<sup>3</sup>”, as well as concerts of Zdravko Čolić and several theatre performances.

She talks about everything, about jokes, problems, and worries. At the end, everything boils down to the same thing “how to stay normal and survive these crazy times”. Zdravka knows her neighbors, but they rarely visit each other, because everybody has its own company.

She believes in God and better future, and expects to create a family, to have a reason to fight and live for.

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3 “Juga” - short slang expression widely used for former Yugoslavia.

## ZLATKO

On November 14, 1995, Zlatko Marković was on the theater of operations, “and he should be on his friend’s slava<sup>4</sup>”.

He remembers that he and his friends on the front line were shooting out of happiness when they heard the news from Dayton.

Zlatko had a plan to run away from Bosnia and Herzegovina to Sydney, in distant Australia. He did not reach Sydney, only Laktaši near Banja Luka. There he built a house, and settled.

Zlatko is auto mechanic, and he talks with his friends about current situation in B&H and in the world generally. He traveled to Serbia and Montenegro, Croatia, and Macedonia. He knows his neighbors, and last time he danced “a month ago”. He believes in God. According to him, peace is everything in life, “peace is something good that cannot be described”.

## IVO KOŽUL

*(1975), economist, Široki Brijeg*

What is the peace for you?

**Currently the only good thing in our country.**

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4 Slava - Serbian family feast, for its patron saint



## NEDA

*I*n 1995, Neda Malić lived from day to day, and only dreamed to go abroad. However, she is still in Tomislavgrad. Neda wrote, “I would gladly change the place if I had a chance for that”, and added that her “plans were failing one after another”.

The most beautiful things that happened to her were getting a job, and giving birth to two children.

She anticipated signing the peace with disbelief. “However, I was happy”, says thirty-four years old Neda that, as she says, learned to cope with her problems.

“I live better because I learned how to deal with the problems, not because things got better for me.”

She talks often about children with her female friends and colleagues, “because I am mostly afraid for their future”.

Neda has great relationship with her neighbors. She believes only in God. For her, peace means, “look on content people, smiled, and talkative. And, when someone greets you with a heart on the street.”

## BEKIR IFTIĆ

*(1958), industrial electronic expert, Bihać*

In what do you believe?

**In my ten fingers.**

## LJILJANA

**D**uring the war, Ljiljana Zekić fled to Novi Grad. When she heard news about the peace, she thought she would go back home. “I was happy and confused a little bit. I thought - now I will go home”, says Ljiljana, fifty-three years old professor. She says, she was completely lost and without plans in 1995, yet she got permanent job, and she works as a teacher.

As the most beautiful things that happened to her in the post war period, Ljiljana mentions her son’s high school graduation, completing army service, and his studying at the university today. Ljiljana did not have the opportunity to travel abroad. She did not visit theatre, cinema, or went to some concert. She spends time with her friends, and talks with them about everyday’ life problems. For Ljiljana, peace means calm soul, house, street, and working place. Today, she believes in God, in destiny, and expects that justice will come once on the agenda. About her expectations from the future, she says, “Nowadays, human cannot expect much. I expect God will give a good health to my family, and I would have a little bit more money, not to think how to pay my bills.”

## ERMIN KRIJEŠTOVAC

*(1979), salesman, Sarajevo*

How did you feel when you heard that peace was signed?

**I can tell you only one thing: only than I felt safe.**

What do you expect from your future?

**I do not know. After all, life is the wheel of fortune.**

## HAIRDRESSER FROM MOSTAR

*H*airdresser from Mostar was born on 1933. In 1995, he was happy that the war stopped. He was happy only because of that. He says, “I worked for the army as barber for soldiers, and my further plans were to start to work.” He did not succeed in carrying out his plans. Only the war stopped, and killings stopped. “People are hopping for better times, but this will not happen until new working places are opened, until factories are working, so people can work,” he adds. He thinks the life was better in 1995, because people had more money, and there were more work to do. “During that time, I was employing four people, and now I have only two workers,” he says, and costs for managing the business are only growing every day. These life problems are a central topic of his discussions with other people. He did not travel abroad, because he needs to work for his bread. He did not go to the cinema or sport’s game. In 1960, he married his wife, and danced the last time in that year. Nowadays, he knows his neighbors, as he says, “merhaba for merhaba”<sup>5</sup>. His only expectations from the future are that youth people would have better tomorrow. “I cannot retire because of problems with restitution, and uncertainty. Our government should deal with that

problem. When will I only go on the other world<sup>6</sup>. If I did not acquire anything until now, then I will not acquire anything. I only wish for youth people to have better perspective and better tomorrow”, he adds. Yet, despite all, he says peace with good life and health are for him something at the most, and greatest fortune.

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5 Merhaba - Turkish expression for “good day” or simply “hello”. It is commonly used in Bosnia and Herzegovina, especially among older generation people.

6 On the other world - referring to life on other world after death

**ZUHRA**

*(1941), a housewife, Bihać*

How did you feel when you heard that peace was signed?

**I felt like the happiest woman on the world. Only that war stopped.**

What of your plans became reality?

**Nothing has been repaired. My house was burned.**

Did you go to some good concert or watch some good theatre performance for the past ten years?

**I did not go anywhere. I have “sugar”, I have “pressure.”**

Do you live better today?

**I live better. I receive my pension regularly.**

Do you know who your neighbors are?

**There is Dika, there is Biba, there is Fata... Wonderful women.**

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7 “Sugar” referring to diabetes, “pressure” referring to high blood pressure  
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## DEJANA

*W*hen the peace was signed, Dejana Fejzić was thirteen years old girl. She says this news did not provoke any feelings in her. She lived day to day with praying God to live through the night, and because of that, she says, she aged too soon.

Past ten years are important for Dejana because of birth of her child, love with her husband, and job she get. She is working as a hairdresser in Sarajevo.

The greatest wish of her husband is to leave from here.

Dejana says there is no peace here, and there will be no peace as long as there are politics and dishonest people.

“It is too soon for expectations from the future,” says Dejana, and sends us the word to ask her the same question ten years from now.

## OZREN LAZAREVIĆ

*(1933), farmer, Dragaljevac Srednji*

Do you live better today?

**I live as Good wants.**

With whom do you talk the most often and what about?

**About farming, what else? I do not enter in discussions about politics that is all injustice.**

## BRANKO

During the past ten years, Branko Čerkuč traveled abroad “but only for business”. Privately, he accomplished everything he wanted. However, he would like to live in “more settled state”.

“Many nice things happened to me. Professional successes in school, loves, parties, new car, sport’ successes of teams I cheer for”, says Branko. He succeeded to go to the concerts of Iron Maiden, J. Tull, Nick Cave, Bijelo Dugme, Čolić, and Balašević.

He lived in Mostar when the war ended, and he still lives there. As he says, he felt wonderful.

Branko lives much better today, and with persons of his age, he talks about “movies, literature, music, sport, sex...”

He believes “little bit in himself, little bit in God.” To the question what the peace means for him, this twenty-seven years old computer engineer responded, “Possibility for smart and quiet people to succeed more than stupid and aggressive people.”

## ADIL

In the past ten years, the most beautiful event for Adil Hodžić was “that we got our state - the state of Bosnians and Herzegovinians”. He says that he is more spiritually content today than he was when he was in refuge in Germany. He lived there without plans, insecure, in apathy, and despair. “I am in debts, but I am satisfied because I am in my own house, in my country. I am resting as a human in my own garden.”

Adil believes in Allah Dž. Š, and peace for him represents “full freedom in all aspects of life, the right to say what I want, the right to work, the right to educate my children, and the right on my own opinion.” Forty-eight years old Adil hopes the time of normal living will come for every human, and says he will “be active for the well being of this region, and social equality of all citizens”.

## DRAGICA ORLOVIĆ

*tailor, Bijeljina*

With whom do you talk the most often and what about?

**With friends and family about mugging, that rules the state.**

What do you expect from your future?

**To find some politician with a good money and marry him.**

**M. KRUNIĆ**  
*(1946), Trebinje*

During the past ten years, did you travel abroad, on the seashore, skiing, shopping, and visiting cousins...?

**I am suffering from “money shortage.”**

**MILANKA**

When she heard that war ended, Milanka Nikolić was breaking bottles with happiness. Although, as she says, she lived miserably, she was happy and content.

The event she especially emphasizes was departure of her son on work to Australia.

Milanka is retired woman, and she did not travel much in the past period. “I did not travel anywhere, except to spa resort in Teslić, and I took a loan to do this.”

She does not follow the cultural events, theatre performances, and concerts. She prefers peace and silence.

Last time she danced when she was a young woman.

With her friends, she mostly talks about “problems, mugging, and pension”.

She believes only to her eyes, “and not to the people.” Peace represents the greatest happiness for her in the life, something the most beautiful. To the question if she lives better today, Milanka responded, “Now I am poorer health so...although now is generally better than it was in the war.”

Milanka hopes her children will get marry soon, and create families, so she can enjoy her grandchildren.



## EMIRA

*F*or five years, Emira Kohnić lived as a refugee in Germany. “I was expelled from my native city Prijedor. I experienced cruelty of war and human hate. I lost my closest ones. My two brothers and father were killed, and my mother died in Germany. One part of me disappeared together with them,” wrote Emira, and added that her internal wish for life pushed her to continue.

“I married my husband in December 1995. Internal wish for life guided me. Sometimes I felt regret, but I had to continue further.”

Emira finished the university, her husband got the job, they are going to the seashore, and visiting cousins. They are building better life for themselves, and “I can say we have a good life, comparing to other people.”

To the question what is the most beautiful thing that happened to her in the past ten years, Emira responded, “I finally found one part of my family.”

Several years ago, Emira returned from Germany. Today, she lives in Orašje. “Comparing to other people, I am living well. However, my soul is empty. I always search for one part of my soul that is missing.” This thirty-seven years old woman believes in “God, myself, and those people I love and they love me.”

To the question what is the peace for her, Emira said, “Peace is everything we lost from 1992 until 1995.”

In November 1995, Čedo was still living in Hadžići, the suburb of Sarajevo. At that time, one of his plans was to leave the city before entry of the B&H, and find refuge somewhere in Republika Srpska. Another idea was to rest from the war, then finishing school, and finding a job. However, some of his plans failed.

“Well, we found refuge, but we never had a rest from the war. It still haunts us all somehow. I finished some school without any use now, and there is no hope for job,” says Čedo, and adds that life is better today, despite these problems. “Slowly and unnoticeably, life still goes with rising path, but it is still difficult. Comparing how it was before, it is not so bad now.”

To the question what was the most beautiful thing that happened to him in the past ten years, Čedomir Glavaš responds, “Look, someone would say this is an easy question, but it makes me think about it. Well, probably it is founding of the youth association “Odisej”, which I initiated together with my friends. Having in mind the situation in Bratunac, and how much this organization offered us, I believe it is the best thing that happened to me.” In the past ten years, this twenty-three years old young man did not dance much. As he says, his body dimensions restrict him, and he dares to take this step only in extreme situations. He did not travel much abroad either. He traveled to Serbia, partly because its closeness, partly because cheaper shopping. “... And, yes, we went to visit our cousins in Croatia, not much, isn’t it? Our cousins that are living abroad prefer to come to visit us. I guess they are in better financial situation.”

To the question in what he believes, Čedo responded, “Gosh, I know in what I do not believe - in politicians, lies, and stories of my neighbor Dušanka. In what I do believe... well, I believe in my friends, and there are less and less of them. They are leaving with better life. I believe in the organization where I am active, I believe in God...”

Čedo does not expect much from his future - first of all a job, car, and other things that, let us say, one resident of Sweden has. “I expect I will live enough to retire, and I expect to see my children having all of this”, says Čedo. For him, peace represents prosperity in material and cultural sense, open and healthy dialogue, and readiness to listen all sides.

**ALMIR**

*(1973), merchant, Sarajevo*

What do you expect from your future?

**Million marks.**<sup>8</sup>

**IVANA PICUKOVIĆ**

*(1970), hairdresser, Široki Brijeg*

What do you expect from your future?

**I expect to get married, and to be happy with anybody.**

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8 Marks - referring to convertible marks, B&H currency

## BORISLAV

When the peace came, Borislav Šarić, fifty-eight years old teacher from Banja Luka was at the front. He was happy when he heard this news.

In that war year, he had the plan for him and his family to stay alive and healthy. His plans became reality. The war stopped, and his relatives are all alive and healthy.

Arrival of daughter-in-law in the family was the most beautiful event in the past ten years. "Everything else was simply daily occurrence, and expectation of some better time." Travels, seashore, departures abroad, shopping... all of these for Borislav are "privileges of the rich people." Yet, he is visiting cousins, keeps in track with majority of festivals and concerts. To the question when was the last time he danced, he says, "I do that very often."

Nowadays he does not live even close as he lived before the war. He did not change the place of residence. Borislav knows his neighbors, and they often spend their time together. With his friends and colleagues, Borislav talks about economic and political situation, and ways how to improve their life circumstances. He is not satisfied with the situation in his profession either.

He says for himself that he is a moderate Christian, Orthodox, as all of the members of his family, and adds that for every normal person peace represents "the greatest blessing and richness".

"I still believe that some better time must come. This we have now is some kind of confusion and trouble period", adds Borislav at the end.

## DEVLETA

“I

walked the streets of Čapljina in the first Dayton morning. Some acquaintances greeted me for the first time since the conflict between Croats and Muslims. I did not have these contacts for the long time.” Devleta Sarić was happy, because the Dayton Peace Agreement meant “the road to freedom, realizing plans, return to the working place, and freedom of movement through the former Yugoslavia.”

She expected to return on her teacher’s position in the elementary school in Čapljina, where she worked until 1993, when she was fired because her national unfitness. Her expectations did not become reality, “What I wanted the most did not happen. I did not accomplish anything. In the past ten years, there were also many nice moments, but sadness is still shadowing the beauty, and there is a grief for lost, disappeared, and vanished.”

Devleta forgot when was the last time she danced with someone, “It was long time ago, long before the terrible war in B&H.”

She lives in Sarajevo and Čapljina, and she talks with her family mostly about “the next day, and how to organize it to be nicer”.

She says that life today is very difficult and cruel. She believes in the nature, and nothing else. Currently, she does not expect anything from the future, “because everything she expected for herself failed”.

To the question, what peace means for her, Devleta says, “Peace is to live free, move free, create nice future for the next generations, and bringing back the smile for all people, which are suffering on the whole world.”

## MILAN

*B*ago Milan believes only in things he accomplishes alone. His occupation is the taxi driver, and some drive toward seashore is the only opportunity for him to swim in Adriatic Sea. “I drive someone to some places from time to time, but I did not travel.”

For Milan, it was all the same when he heard that Peace Agreement was signed. “I do not know what to say to you. I thought it would be better, and it is worse and worse every day.”

“I live worse today, I swear to my mother’s name. I am alone. Sometimes I go to visit my daughter, and have fun with my grandchildren,” says Milan. He has no time to talk with his neighbors as he used to do before. “We distanced from each other, everyone is in the rush, with its own problems”, wrote Milan from Široki Brijeg.

**Š.G.**

*(1970), Banja Luka*

What is the most beautiful thing that happened to you in the past ten years?

**Several vacations out of the city, and several excursions with friends.**

Did you attend some good concert, or watch some good theater performance in the past ten years?

**Just by coincidence, I was on the concert of one rock band.**

**M. M.**

*(1954), economist, Brčko*

With whom do you talk the most often and what about?

**About the job. To get it.**

**TATJANA**

When the war started, she was third-year student at the university. All of her plans were related to prewar period, and then they “scattered as a house of cards”. In 1995, she was in the same situation when the Dayton Peace Agreement came.

“As every normal person, I was happy when this monstrous situation that holds us all back for 100 years finally stopped”, said Tatjana Jančević from Trebinje.

Nowadays, she is thirty-five year old unemployed journalist. She spends time with her friends, and mostly talks with them about problems that are destroying her hometown.

Tatjana believes in the Lord Jesus Christ, and enjoys in children of her younger sister. As the association for peace, Tatjana quoted Meša Selimović, “And then the peace disturbed me.”

To the question what she expects from her future, she responds, “Unfortunately, the hope is the last one to die.”

## TONKA

Tonka Mamić remembers 1995, as the year of tension and anxiety. “We all lived under tension, constantly in problems and fear. The only plan we had was to stay safe and sound”, says Tonka, and adds she felt great when she heard the news that the war stopped. “We all could finally breathe a little bit more easily.”

To the question if her plans were achieved during the past ten years, merchant Tonka responded, “I did not accomplish anything. Moreover, nothing especially nice happened to me. I stayed without job, and without my husband. It is all about the pure struggle for survival.”

She says that only her faith in God is what keeps her alive.

Peace for Tonka represents “great prosperity that we are not aware about until we lose it. Peace is to love, to kiss, to be happy and free as a bird.”

Forty years old Tonka expects from her future to bring “better life, job, health, and to educate my children to be a good people.”



## MUSTAFA

"Everything is the same, only he is not alive - Tito." This is the response of Mustafa S. from Zenica on our question what the Peace Agreement from Ohio brought to him. With a note of resignation, he adds that the war continues today from all sides, and it is targeting "human mind".

Mustafa does not believe in anything. As he says, justice is far away from us.

He barely communicates with his neighbors, because "these people were coming down to Zenica only on weekends and now live here, while authentic people from Zenica are now living somewhere else".

He does not attend concerts and theatre plays any more, because he cannot bear to watch on scene "ex prompters and checkroom attendants, as well as inconvincible imitators!"

He says it is better not to have future, if it would look like the present time.

**M. B.**

*(1967), driver, Sarajevo*

What is the peace for you?

**1948 – 1980**

A. Đ.

"*H*onestly, I do not remember how I felt when I heard that the peace was signed", says twenty-three years old woman from Mostar. In 1995, she did not have any plans, and did not live well. "Was there any life?" asks A.Đ. The only thing she thought about was the fact that she survived, although she was "child without a future." A.Đ. did not change her place of residence. As she says, she stayed "faithful to her beloved town Mostar." The event that marked past ten years of her life was the moment when she finds out her mother is alive. "How to survive the next month", is the most frequent point of discussion in this family. However, there is always a time for cultural events, such are the concerts of Đorđe Balašević, Jamiroquai, U2,... A.Đ. believes in herself and her own work. She does not think about distant future, and lives every day, as is the last one. "Peace is a big word that carries big burden, a big word for small people like us." This is the definition of peace from the perspective of young woman from Mostar, which she shared with us.

**ĐORĐE PERIĆ**

*(1982), whitesmith, Brčko*

In what do you believe?

**I believe in one who brings the better tomorrow.**

## VELJKO

*I*n the time of signing the Dayton Peace Agreement, Veljko Ivano-  
vić was on his military service. As he says, he lived miserably and with  
uncertainty.

“I was expecting the life in peace. This became reality. I got a job, I  
have family and home, I have permanent place of living. My wife and  
I got daughter, and she is the most precious thing we have. Many other  
nice things happened in the meantime - going out, friends, vacation,  
barbecues, swimming...”

Veljko cannot afford attendances of concerts and theatre performances.  
He was in the cinema only once in two years. To the question if he re-  
members, when was the last time he danced, Veljko, mechanic techni-  
cian, says, “I had crazy dancing with my wife today. We suddenly in-  
creased the volume of radio and danced. Before that, we danced on some  
wedding, a year ago.”

Nowadays, Veljko lives in Bosanski Brod, and stretches between two  
ends. “Everything that is a daily common thing somewhere represents  
luxury for us - summer vacation, going out, buying clothes... we live  
more than modestly.”

Veljko knows his neighbors, he sees them every day, and they visit each  
other.

He believes there is one God that is good and will organize the coun-  
try where good people would live. They will destroy Satan, and remove  
all evil from the earth.

He expects better from his future, because, as he says, he deserves bet-  
ter.

“It is not that only I deserve better life, but also my family and friends,  
and all other people that did no harm to anyone. We waited so long  
for war to pass, to start a better life.”

N.N.

"Great - just if they stop with fighting." This sentence describes how a woman from Široki Brijeg felt when she heard the news about agreement for ending the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina. For her, the peace represents living close to each other, respect, and good relationships with neighbors.

"My life was very bad. It was better in the previous system, I had social insurance, and now - nothing", she says. In 1995, she did not expect anything special, only good health for her husband, children, and herself. They managed to stay healthy, but other "Nothing - only grief!" This woman from Široki Brijeg spent her entire life in her hometown. "I live worse now than 1995, because I had some supplies then, and now I have nothing", she says. Poverty and problems are the most common topics she discusses with her friends. She says she never danced before, and she does not remember any good concert or theatre performance. To the question if she traveled abroad, she says, "I did not go anywhere - and seashore is so close." She believes only in her efforts and hard work, and nothing else. Moreover, she says, she has the "least trust in government".

## ECONOMIC TECHNICIAN

(1960), Trebinje

During the past ten years, did you travel abroad, on the seashore, skiing, shopping, and visiting cousins?

**I did not go at any of those places and destinations where you need to spend the money. I did not have financial possibilities.**

## AMEL HELJIĆ

(1977), upholster, Brčko

What was your life than? Did you have any plans in 1995?

**I did not have a life until 2001, when I came back to my home in Brčko.**

## MIRJANA

*I*n the time of signing the Dayton Peace Agreement, Mirjana Ostojić, thirty years old operator from Teslić was in Novi Sad. She could not believe, and she still cannot believe that the peace was signed. Describing a life during war years, she says, “I think we all lived very difficult. No one had thoughts about the future. We did not plan anything during these years.”

As nice events after the war, she remembers buying the apartment and permanent employment. As for now, she traveled only to Greece three years ago, but she hopes she will visit some other country, after she pays off her loans.

Mirjana says she lives incomparably better now than she lived during the war period. She enjoys dance, and makes all the efforts to “dance at least once” every time she goes out.

For her, peace represents “going to sleep without fear, waking up without fear, this we have now. Birds singing that we hear wherever we go, happy children, parks, and streets full of young and old people.”

She expects from the future to bring open borders toward Europe and the world. This would enable her to reach her dreams, to travel and learn about new countries and cultures.

## SALIH

Salih Dunjić from Sarajevo awaited the news about the end of the war with sadness. War took away three members of his closest family, and he lived on the edge of existence. He took loans, reconstructed old jewelry store, and believed that life would be better. However, today, Salih is deeply disappointed in this “illusory peace”. “Peace does not mean anything. Even greater caution. For two times, thieves entered my store and robbed me. Police cannot do anything to them.” The only nice thing that happened to him in the past ten years was the news that “his son became electrical engineer there in America.” His son’s success brings him back the hope for better future for all. “I could wish only good health”, says Salih.

9

In November 1995, B.Š. was in Novi Sad, where she was finishing her university studies. As all young people, she hoped for better life. As she says, she lived well, comparing to the majority of people. However, she also worked a lot.

“Then my caterer career started, because that was one of the profitable ventures, and I needed to support my family in Republika Srpska. Since I ended seven years old relationship with my boyfriend, I had a plan to find the job in my profession.”

Her plan did not work out, and B.Š. came back to her hometown Kozarska Dubica, where she currently works in one insurance company. To the question what was the most beautiful thing that happened to her in the past ten years, B.Š. said, “Love. I thought I would not be able to love someone again after my long-term relationship ended. However, even greater love happened to me, and it lasts even today.”

She remembers the concert of Zdravko Čolić in Novi Sad, when thousands souls were one. She danced a long time ago, on student’s parties “that were the most amusing things in the life of students.”

Nowadays, B.Š. feels safer financially. “There is no more anxiety before the first day in month, if a landlord will increase your rent, if your boss would decrease your salary, or you will not receive it at all. I feel financially more safe, but not spiritually safe. I feel somehow empty, I live in small community, and a woman is the target in small place.”

B.Š. is now thirty-eight years old, and she knows all her neighbors. “That is the most important here, to know who lives where, what he or she eats, and what you wear. You fall into groove, and that is it. You can resist as much as you wish, but element is carrying everything.”

She is agricultural engineer. She believes only in herself because “everything I believed in betrayed me, so I am the only left to myself”.

She does not see the peace in B&H as the real one. “What kind of peace is that, when you look around, and see only two types of people: those who have everything, and those that have nothing?”

## ADMIR

**A**fter four years of war agony, thirty years old Admir Velagić could not believe the news that the peace finally came in the area of B&H. He learned again to be happy for small things, going to see a football game, and having fun with “raja”<sup>9</sup> in some of sports betting places in Mostar.

He enjoys his father’s role, and birth of his son represents the most beautiful thing that happened to him in the past decade.

He attends concerts sometimes, and he treasures in his memory unforgettable gig of U2 in Sarajevo.

He believes only in himself, and his motto for future is “just enjoy”.

## MILOŠ ŠARABA

*(1981), Trebinje*

What does the peace mean for you?

**The peace for me is when I wallow in my armchair and watch TV, and no one disturbs me.**

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9 “Raja” - short slang expression, used in B&H for narrow circle of friends.



## DRAGANA

**D**ragana was very happy when she heard the news about end of the war. “My brother was on the battle field, and he was the only thing in my mind”, she says. In 1995, her family lived very badly, and all of them were jobless. The situation did not change much in the meantime. “I had to work with private employer. I worked in cold room, and consumed dry food only. This was disturbing my health, and I stopped working. I got married”, explains this twenty-eight years old woman from Prijedor. Nowadays, she lives a little bit better, and has “only for bare existence”, with the help of parents. “I have no job. It is better to nurse a child than to work with private employer for small money,” she says. Dragana Cvijić believes in nicer future, security, and better life, and expects to find the job and live better, and expand her family.

## JASMIN TATARALJA

*(1966), male hairdresser, Bugojno*

Do you live better today?

**I think that I do not live better.**

With whom do you talk the most often and what about?

**When this situation would get better.**

## **CVIJO**

*I*n 1995, Cvijo Kalaba, worker from Glamoč was living in refugee in Srbac. He lived “sadly and miserably”, and the only important thing for him was “to save his family from hunger”. When the Dayton Peace Agreement was signed, he was full of optimism. He is disappointed today, because he lives “miserably as displaced person in alternative housing.”

He talks the most often about “roof-house”. He does not believe in anything, and does not expect anything from the future.

The most beautiful thing that happened to him in the past then years is that his family is alive.

## A WOMAN PHARMACIST FROM SARAJEVO

*N.N.* was in Ljubljana when the peace was signed. Remembering 1995, she says, “I lived as all other refugees from B&H in that period, and barely making ends meet. I did not believe the peace would maintain. So many agreements were already signed and violated.” Her only plan was to go back to Sarajevo, which she accomplished. Nowadays, she finds her peace in her son, husband, and parents. N.N. remembers her several trips abroad, and concerts of U2, Kemal Monteno, Zdravko Čolić, Hari Mata Hari... “I believe in love, God, and that every human has something good”, says thirty years old N.N. To the question about her plans, she shortly responds, “I live only for today.”

### ZVONKO DRAMAC

*(1972), auto mechanic, Jajce*

How did you feel when you heard that the peace was signed?

**I felt as every other normal person! I was happy.**

What do you expect from the future?

**I am afraid.**

**ZDRAVKA KONČAR**

*(1965), economic technician, Novi Grad*

How did you live during that time? Did you have any plans in 1995?

**I lived miserably and in poverty. The most important thing for me was to rest with my family in the peace.**

**DENIS MUJADŽIĆ**

*(1980), teacher, Sarajevo*

What is the most beautiful thing that happened to you in the past ten years?

**Nothing that would be worth mentioning. Perhaps my independence as a person.**

**DŽANA KAKNJO**

*(1982), student, Sarajevo*

What of your plans became reality?

**Nothing related to emigration abroad, because B&H citizens are not welcome anywhere.**

What do you expect from your future?

**To go from B&H to Australia, finish my studies, have family, and live one normal, relaxed life, as it was here before the war.**

## NEVENKA

*F*orty-seven years old Nevenka Bosnić, an economist from Prijedor heard the news about signing the peace on small, battery operated transistor, because there was no electricity in her town. She was happy that the war and bloodshed stopped, and hoped for peace in her soul and among people.

She had a difficult life than “as majority of people like me”, and she expected that peace would bring economic improvement, and the life worthy of a human being.

Nevenka did not travel abroad, neither to the seashore. She did not go shopping. In this situation of the general poverty, she hardly manages to attend funerals of her closest cousins.

“I have many friends, and why not to say, the enemies as well”, says Nevenka. She talks with many people how to activate the existing resources, to employ herself and other people, and to live from her work and earnings.

She believes in God because “only God can help us”.

To the question what she expects from her future, Nevenka responds, “I have many years behind me, and not too much future. Sincerely, I wish to spend the rest of my life in peace and life worthy of a human being. Considering the present situation, my wish is pretty unrealistic.”

## MARIO

*M*ario Jurilj was in his home in Mostar when he heard the news that “politicians came to their senses” and finally signed the Peace Agreement.

As he says, he felt huge relief, and moved toward the future with hope. He only partially accomplished his plans from that period. However, this thirty-six years old man did not lose optimism in better future.

Mario believes in work, honesty, and there will be an end of “mafia-politicians”. He emphasizes he is the great believer, and he believes God will enlighten our politicians one day, and make them lead our people, regardless of their nationality, to the right road. He also believes that super powers will see their interests to “lead this country to the right road, and have power over criminal”.

**N.N.**

*(1981), nurse, Bijeljina*

What do you expect from your future?

**I expect many things, I just wait for my opportunity, my five minutes.**

**N. J.**

*(1952), merchant, Bijeljina*

How did you feel when you heard the peace was signed?

**I breathed a sigh of relief.**

**ANA**

**A**na Špančić from Prijedor waited for peace in her hometown, and then she got a hope for life. She says she lived miserable during that time. “Alone. My son was in Germany. I am of other nationality than majority of people here, but I survived with the help of good people. I wished to save my head, and continue with my life where I was born and where I earned my retirement”, says sixty years old Ana. After the war, she succeeded to regain and buy up her apartment that was state owned. “I returned to my apartment. My son got accustomed abroad. He is my support, because it is difficult for me with a small pension”, she says, and adds she is living better now than in 1995, despite all difficulties. In the meantime, she also succeeded to visit her son. Ana believes in God and good people.

Peace for Ana means a normal life and contact with the family, and she expects in peace a safe old age, and better future for children and youth people.

## EMIR

Emir Serjanić is living in the same city where he lived ten years ago. At the beginning, he did not believe the peace was signed, because “until then, several other peace agreements were signed.” Since he was only surviving during 1995, his plans were to “compensate all lost years - having fun, travels, spending time with friends, etc”. After all, he succeeded to accomplish some of these plans, “but I still think it could be much better.”

Emir is not confident how to respond on question if he lives better today. “Comparing to whom???”

Emir believes in God, talks about work and his university studies, and emphasizes that birth of his son was the most beautiful thing that happened to him in the past ten years.

Emir believes that peace represents “the ultimate right of every human being.” To the question, what he expects from the future, he says, “To finish my school...to finally start in fourth decade of my life to collect the length of service, because the current balance is: 0 years, 0 months, 0 days, 0 hours, 0 minutes, 0 seconds...”

## MIRA

*(1957), merchant, Laktaši*

Do you live better today?

**I never worked more, and I never had less pleasure in my life than today.**



## DRAGICA

Dragica Bašić was very happy when she heard that the peace was signed. She also felt embittered that the peace did not come earlier, “and they could do it, if they wanted.”

She says her husband and she lived very badly. In 1995, both of them were unemployed, with three children of ten, twelve, and thirteen.

Only few of Dragica’s plans became reality during the past ten years. Just in this year, she succeeded to find a job. “Her children are attending universities without any scholarship support, none of us had the health insurance, and my husband is still without job, all our plans failed. We vegetate from day to day, and regret we stayed in B&H, when we could immigrate to the three different countries of our choice”, wrote Dragica. To the question what was the most beautiful thing that happened to her during past ten years, this forty-six years old, tourist worker says, “My children. They are as we educated them to be. My son obtained the degree of computer worker on the University ‘Džemal Bijedić’. I gained many friends from abroad that are helping my family.”

Dragica still lives on the same address in Mostar. Regardless of life misfortunes, she dances very often with her husband in their home.

She talks often with her friends and family about possibilities to leave B&H, because, as she says, she does not live better today. “My country B&H took care for us to live worse and worse every day.”

For Dragica, peace means everything, “freedom, possibility to work, education... spending time with people regardless of their nationality.” She does not expect much for her husband and herself, but she hopes the state “would at least take care that children with university degrees would not go to the other states to look for job.”

## MARINKO

"*B*ecause of grief, exhaustion, and pain in war, I did not have strength neither to cry, nor to be happy for something." This is how Marinko Bajić felt when he heard that the peace was signed.

Marinko is a police officer by profession. He says, ten years ago, he was a refugee "without shelter, without bread, and everything else". He hoped to return to his home and have a life as it was before the war. "Nothing happened. There is no house, there is no job, hungry and thirsty, no insurance, sick, and no possibilities for medical treatment for us that were defending our homes. The fact that I got married was the only bright spot, but I am still without house, and without work. What could be nice in that?" says Marinko resignedly. Visiting seashore, skiing, traveling abroad ...all of this is a distant past for Marinko. "I cannot afford it in the present situation, because we are more hungry than full."

To the question if he remembers when the last time he danced with someone was, Marinko responded, "In order to dance, one must be emotionally content."

Marinko certainly does not live better today, "how could I live better when everything is destroyed, and there is no job for me."

"I am working from one private employer to another, and no one pays social and health insurance for me, no one respects me. I talk with my wife, and every day we dream about better future, and every day is worse and more difficult for us", says Marinko. He expects a lot from his future, but as he says, "I will accomplish only a little bit of my plans."

**VLADIMIR Š.**  
*(1956), Široki Brijeg*

What was your life than? Did you have any plans in 1995?

**Lousy. To run away from Bosnia, as soon as possible.**

With whom do you talk the most often and what about?

**I talk with my friends about betting place.**

What is the peace for you?

**Sacred thing.**

**ALMA MORIĆ**  
*cleaning lady, Sarajevo*

In what do you believe?

**I believe in God. I believe in former Yugoslavia.**

What is the peace for you?

**Everything to be as it was during Tito's regime - to have jobs - the past was better to me than everything we have now.**

## REŠIDA

When the Peace Agreement was signed, Rešida was in her house in Orašje, with a month old baby, and three years old child.

“I felt happy and sad in the same time. We lived in fear not to devolve to Republika Srpska, because the plan was changing from hour to hour. There were no personal plans, only for those that stayed to survive, and to stay on our own.”

Rešida Beširević is an economist. She keeps in track with cultural events in her city that have tradition of organizing the days of Croatian cinematography. She travels to the seashore, goes on skiing, and travels abroad. Despite all of that, she believes she is living worse “than she would live if the war did not happen”.

She talks with her colleagues about the work, children, cuisine, and hopes her sons “would not experience what we did, and they would finish their schools, and form their own families”. As she says, the peace means a lot for her. “Peace is the balance in the air, readiness to solve any problem with conversation”, says Rešida.

## OZREN

*O*n the question how he felt when the Peace Agreement was signed, eighteen years old Ozren Đurić responded, “I was too small to understand such situation.” He only remembers his parents had a plan to immigrate to the USA in 1995.

The most beautiful event for him since the war happened in 1996 was when he reunited with his sisters.

Today, he lives in Bijeljina, and “who knows where I would live tomorrow.” He believes in what he sees, and his definition of peace is “everything that is not a war situation.” He does not expect anything from his future, but “I expect a lot from myself.”

**DAMIR HODŽIĆ**

*(1980), student, Sarajevo*

What is the peace for you?

**Peace means when there is no shooting from the hill.**

## ANTO

"*W*hen I heard the peace was signed, I felt great, just pleasant, although I did not have any plans in 1995. I was a refugee. The only plan I have had was to go back under roofing tile. I hoped the economy would revive. I went back home, and rebuilt my house, 70% alone, without the assistance of the international community. They gave us the construction materials of 10<sup>th</sup> class, very low quality. The most beautiful thing that happened to me during the past ten years was the birth of my granddaughter Barbara, and my grandson Karlo." This is how Anto Jakešević, a mechanic technician from Jajce, describes his life in the past ten years.

To the question if he lives better today, Anto responds, "I do not live better. Perhaps I am in better financial situation, but my soul is empty. There is no cinema, no sports, and no hospital."

He did not travel anywhere, "I did not even use my annual vacation." He does not remember the last concert he attended, but he likes to "dance on weddings with a glass on his head". When it is necessary for him to talk, he "argues with his wife".

Anto believes in God, but he is afraid of a future. "I have thirty-five years of accrued time, and soon I will retire. I am afraid I will not be able to live normally with my pension."

In November 1995, when the Peace Agreement was signed, Ljilja, a language teacher, was in school in Petrovo. She was lecturing. “It was great at first. We were all happy, and then we worried, how the map of B&H will look like. I am coming from the area that no one wanted at first, and then, suddenly, everybody wanted it. We worried where they will solder us”, remembers thirty-eight years old Ljilja.

As the most beautiful event in the past ten years, she describes the news that Ozren stayed in Republika Srpska. “I did not worry for myself. I was watching people who were emigrating, and what kind of things they were forced to do. I was afraid for my mom and dad. Only when you feel there is a chance for you to lose something, you see how much you love it.”

As she says, her pre-war plans were realistic, but everything failed during the war. “Everything happened to be only a dream. When the Second World War ended, we rebuilt everything and went back to normal, but everything is different here now. In 1995, I worked in a school, and I was not satisfied much. We were not paid. I stayed with my parents, and I thought I would leave and finally work what I want, something connected with tourism. However, I ended up in Doboj. I am disappointed somehow,” she says.

For herself, she says she is a very dissatisfied person. “Everybody believes I am successful person, and that I have a great life. However, I am not satisfied. I do not have my life goal any more,” explains Ljilja. She knows her neighbors. She even knows what they eat. Peace for her means the possibility of equal fight for survival. About her expectations, she says, “Huh, I wish things will come out as I direct and plan them. I wish to create my life alone. I cannot expect I will win the lottery if I did not buy a lottery ticket. Everybody makes its own mood.”

## KENAN

**K**enan Ališah lives in the same street where he was born in Sarajevo. As he says, during the wartime he lived “as many other people in this city, without electricity, water, sometimes even without food, under constant attacks of aggressors, Serbia and Montenegro.”

About the day when the peace was signed, Kenan says, “Peace was signed when Bosnian side was in the military advantage, and had a possibility to liberate occupied parts of B&H. But again, the peace is the most important, and better than one day of war.”

Kenan believes that past ten years brought progress, even better than he expected. “B&H survived and became even stronger as the state. Economic situation is difficult, but frankly, I expected even worse.”

Kenan attended concerts more or less regularly. He remembers the concerts of U2, Dino Merlin, Bijelo Dugme, and theatre plays “Hasanaginica” and “Ero from Another World.” He had the plans to see David Copperfield.

To the question what are the most common topics of conversation with other people, Kenan says, “I talk mostly about all topics, from terrorism to the new version of Audi A6.”

The peace represents “normal condition of human life, although it is not like that very often”, says Kenan. He adds that he expects a lot from his future.



## ČEDOMIR

"I

wanted to work, but I am still not working. All of this is shit." This is how Čedomir Golubović from Laktaši described his life ten years ago.

He says none of his plans became reality. He did not cross the state border, and he did not even visit his cousins. He does not go to the theatre, neither to the concerts. Births of his children are rare bright spots in his life.

Čedomir says he does not believe in anything. "Everything I believed in either failed or people betrayed me."

Although peace represents everything for Čedomir, he believes there is no peace here, and "it would be hardly peaceful here". Čedomir believes everybody turned against Serbs.

To the question what he expects from his future, Čedomir responded, "I do not expect anything. What is the future in occupied state? These occupiers are arresting everybody they want. There is no life and progress next to local thieves. All corrupted persons. They are doing everything for position."

**JASMINA HADŽIĆ**

*(1978), merchant, Bugojno*

What is the peace for you?

**This is the peace from war, but there is no economic peace.**

What do you expect from your future?

**The state is tailoring my future.**

## RADOJKA

"I am simply waiting for this survival and constant anxiety for money and job to stop. For one, two, or five years, I hope someone will live enough to see something better. I am still the optimist." This is how Radojka Drobić, forty-seven years old woman from Doboj thinks about the future. During the war, Radojka fled from Banovići to Doboj, and lived in this city when the peace came. "I did not know much about it. Nevertheless, I felt good. Everybody likes peace", she remembers.

During that time, she lived in someone else's apartment, and hoped she will exchange or sell her house in Banovići. "I accomplished everything I dreamed and planned about. I sold my apartment in Banovići and bought another apartment in Doboj. I educated my children as much as I could", says Radojka. The most beautiful moment for her in the past ten years was the birth of her granddaughter. Radojka works as a courier-cleaning woman, and she cannot afford to travel abroad. "That was my great wish, to travel somewhere, both to the seashore, and mountains. However, when you are in debts up to your ears, you can not afford it", explains Radojka.

She remembers parties and celebrations back in 90ties, there where she lived before.

When she looks back to the past ten years, she says it is better only because she has her own apartment again, and adds, "That is better. In addition, my children grew up. However, I am deep in loans. I should blame myself for that!" With her friends and all other people, she speaks about difficult financial situation. She says she goes to far sometimes, but "that is the only thing on my mind."

Radojka believes in better future, in God, and in justice. Peace represents something best for her. "If only we have peace, I would not care what I eat", she concludes.

**TANJA KOVAČEVIĆ**  
*(1978), student, Bosanski Brod*

What is the peace for you?

**Peace is the security of life. When no one is afraid of shootings, grenades, and no one has to go to war and shoot on other people.**

## **JURE**

Jure was only twelve years old boy when the peace was signed. He also had “great boyish dreams about the future.”

He has an extremely positive attitude about the life. He enrolled school at the University of Mostar, and “he is getting on well in a betting place.” He practically lives at the seashore, because part of his family is living in Split, and he often runs down to Berlin.

To the question what is the most common topic of discussion with other people, he responds with a bit of irony, “About politics. Everyone wants something for himself or herself. I want to be a politician too.” He does not care about his neighbors much, and as he says, he does not communicate with them.

He believes in better tomorrow for all three nations living in B&H, as well as better tomorrow for his family.

**D.T.**

*D. T.*

was engaged as a physician in the Army of Republika Srpska. He was thrilled when he heard the news about signing of the Dayton Peace Agreement.

In 1995, he lived as refugee in Banja Luka, where he came from Jajce with his wife and two minor children.

He expected to have the inner peace and general progress in the whole society after the war. He succeeded to get the apartment, and travel abroad with the family “but only thanks to the hard work and personal commitment of my wife and me.”

He changed the place of residence several times. Nowadays, he lives decently. “Both me and my wife are working, we hope for better job, or better paid job.”

D.T. believes in God. To the question what he expects from his future, he responded, “I expect that I will finally overcome my bad habits. I also expect I will always have understanding for my wife and children. I hope I will look behind myself at the end, and say that I existed and came to this performance to leave some trace behind me.”

## **A WOMAN SHOEMAKER**

*Široki Brijeg*

What do you expect from your future?

**I am forty years old. I have eight years length of service. I do not expect anything. Only to educate my children, so they can support me.**

## MIRHAN

*M*irhan Kiso watched the signing of the Peace Agreement on TV in his apartment. He remembers he was thrilled, and he felt free and happy. During the war, he was a member of the Army of Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

He lived “as majority of my age fellow townsmen from Sarajevo that survived the war. I did not have any money, but I had hope in better life. I wished to have fun, finish my school, and have a job.”

Almost all Mirhan’s plans became true, “but with great difficulties and during much longer period than I expected.”

Past ten years of Mirhan’s life have been marked “with many nice things, and several disappointments”.

He remembers the concert of Parni Valjak. He danced the last time with his wife, on the wedding, on March 5, 2005.

Mirhan believes in “divine God and His providence.” He puts equal between peace, freedom, and possibility of choice, “Peace = Freedom = Possibility to Choose = Freedom = Peace.”

## SADETA

Sadeta Salić, forty-two years old woman from Sarajevo was disappointed when she heard the news that the peace was signed. This was, as she says, “Because Bosniaks lost the state in Dayton, and gave it to chetniks.” In 1995, Sadeta did not have some big plans, but past ten years still brought her some small piece of happiness. Her children are growing, they are healthy, and are good students, so Sadeta believes they will “go on the right way and become good people”. She believes in God. Peace for her means everything on these areas, and hopes it would last.

**IGOR JOVANOVIĆ**

*(1977), student, Teslić*

What is the most beautiful thing that happened to you in the past ten years?

**Departure of Milošević to The Hague.**

## MILOŠ FROM DOBOJ

*M*

iloš was thirteen years old when the Dayton Peace Agreement was signed. He remembers everybody screamed when they heard this news. In 1995, Miloš planed to start training soccer, and to travel. He did not accomplish any of these two things.

The most beautiful thing that happened to him was that he fell in love, and the girls were falling in love with him.

He thinks he is living better today, “but not as I want. I wish I could work occasionally and earn my pocket money.”

This entire situation upsets him. “We will never progress. We have been in the vicious circle for the past ten years.”

Miloš believes in love. He does not believe in politicians. He hopes to finish the school, and get a job. To the question what the peace means to him, Miloš responded, “Peace among people - how wonderful this would be. World without borders, without weapon...”

## **ABDULKERIM**

*I*n 1995, except his wish to return home, Abdulkerim Popoja had another wish - to buy electric guitar. His wishes were granted.

“I have three guitars now, and I returned home,” says Abdulkerim, and adds he does not go to the seashore or skiing, because he is saving the money to buy a new guitar.

Abdulkerim is twenty-one years old, and he says he does not know how to dance. However, he is dancing only in exceptional situations.

He talks the most often with his girlfriend “how he needs money for new music equipment, you know, processor, studio...”

He adds that he definitely lives better today. However, he does not have a trust in peace “because it does not exist, it is illusion”.



**GORDANA LJUBEZ**

*(1950), professor, Jajce*

Do you live better today?

**No. In financial sense, I live very modestly. Culturally - 0 (zero).**

In what do you believe?

**This is the most difficult question.**

What is the peace for you?

**I do not know what to tell you. I will not philosophize. I am afraid to open the newspapers and watch television. Either it is the brutal reality - war, or it is a colorful lie - entertainment.**

**I.P.**

*(1979), administrative technician, Teslić*

What is the most beautiful thing that happened to you during the past ten years?

**Children, happy marriage, and job I like.**

In what do you believe?

**I believe in love at first sight, in God, and a good life.**

## LJEPOSAVA

*Lj*eposava Dokić is a housewife. She was in refuge in Serbia when the Dayton Peace Agreement was signed. “It was uncertain if I would go back to Glamoč, but at least the situation calmed down,” thought Ljeposava than.

Beside the fact that she returned to her apartment, nothing especially nice happened to her during the past then years. “Mostly, things are O.K.”

Beside business trips to Serbia, she did not travel anywhere during the past years. To the question if she lives better today, she responds, “I live worse! How can I live better with 100 KM?!”

She does not have close neighbors, and she likes to have a good talk with her friend Marica.

“I do not expect something special from the future, just to be healthy and to get on well.”

**S.K.**  
(1954), Zenica

What do you expect from your future?

**VAT<sup>10</sup> – hunger and poverty.**

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10 VAT - Value Added Tax will be introduced in Bosnia and Herzegovina on January 1, 2006.

## WOMAN FROM MOSTAR

"I hope this will never happen to anyone", says middle age woman from Mostar, when she remembers the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina and her city. When the peace was signed, she was in Mostar, but "unfortunately not in my home". A woman that used to work with computer in the office, and had annual vacation and regular salary, today accepts different jobs. "I would take anything", and adds, "I work hard for small money, without insurance, without accrued time." She believes there is not peace without available jobs, and without your own home. However, this we have is also good, "At least we can think about something better."

She is happy her children and husband are alive and healthy, and that they "kept the healthy spirit and even more directed to each other", despite everything that happened here.

They are attending concerts and theatre performances occasionally, when they get free tickets from their friends. She goes shopping every day, but only to buy groceries. She says she dances often when she is working something at home, even when it is the most difficult for her. "When I am feeling miserable and have difficult moments, when I become depressive, I increase the volume on my radio, take a dust cloth, and clean everything the best", she explains.

She knows her neighbors as many as she knows who enter what doors, and they say hello to each other at the stairway. She gladly helps if some older person comes across.

This woman from Mostar believes in God, her family, and the proverb "sooner or latter".

Children are her future. She hopes there will be no illness and war between people. "People are people, regardless of their color and nation", she concludes.

**S. TUBIĆ**

*(1970), teacher, Mrkonjić Grad*

What do you expect from your future?

**I wish to move somewhere far away from this Balkan tavern!!!**

**GORAN**

**G**oran Neimarević from Zenica was a teenager when the war stopped. He dreamed to finish the school, and find the job, but now, he is disappointed a little bit because “there is no job at all.” This is the reason why he thinks more seriously and more often about leaving somewhere abroad.

Goran enjoys sport, and he is passionate soccer fan of “Čelik” and representation of B&H. He travels often, but only within the borders of his B&H. He believes this is the most beautiful country in the world.

He believes this country has the future and that his future is bonded for B&H.

“I believe some better times for life in B&H will come sooner or later. If I would leave Bosnia and Herzegovina, I would definitely come back, because here is my homeland,” said twenty-three years old Goran.

**LJ.D.**

Ten years ago, Lj.D, twenty-eight years old man from Banja Luka received the news from a distant Dayton that the peace was signed. He reacted with a dose of skepticism and disbelief. He intimately hoped for buying a one-way ticket, and to escape from “that peace.” Unfortunately, his wishes did not become reality. He stayed to live miserably with everyday problems, and as a pedantic chronicler, to record everything that is happening in RS and B&H.

He believes our question if life is better today than it was ten years ago is at least funny. He emphasizes, “Beside current rulers Čavić and Terzić, he, as well as all other citizens of B&H can live only worse, and stagnate as combine harvester in a cornfield.”

He believes that changes are inevitable in B&H, because the peace we have is “the artificial creation of peace”. As the best example of reality, he talks about the soccer game between representations of Serbia and Montenegro and Bosnia and Herzegovina from the middle October 2005.

“You tell me if it is normal that 4500 soccer fans from Bosnia and Herzegovina went to Belgrade to cheer on Serbia and Montenegro, while 500 soccer fans went to cheer on B&H. In addition, the content of songs they were exchanging on the field...” remembers Lj.D.

He says, sooner or latter, he will come out with his platform and present it to the tired and tormented people, and show them the road toward light and better tomorrow.

Until than, he will strum the black chronicles with his friends (the favorite topic of discussions), and try to get used to folk singers.

## ZILKA

3 ilka was happy and content when the news about the end of war in B&H was broadcasted. This meant that her husband will come home from the battlefield, but also “killings, rape, destruction, and psychological pressure would stop, and we would continue to live in peace, as other people”.

Zilka is a professor by vocation. She was born in 1968 in Zenica, and lived there in 1995 when the peace was signed. During that time, her life was difficult, “My one year old child was sick, my husband was on the field, and municipality commissions for dislodges were searching through apartments with temporary permissions. In 1995, I wanted to leave the country, and try to find “normal” nook for life, where my child would not be forced to grow in hatred. I wanted to work and earn my salary. I wanted to go back to my apartment in Sarajevo.”

Zilka got a job, started earning money, and returned to her apartment. Her first neighbors are “Serbs that stayed in Sarajevo during the war.” The most beautiful thing that happened to her was the birth of her daughter, and this kept her positive thought and gave her motivation to work.

Zilka believes in God, justice, and love. She says about the peace, “It starts with us, in our hearts. If we do not have peace in us, we cannot share it with other people, and work on peace building. I am working on it, and I am happy I can bring back the peace and trust in B&H, together with other people.”

## DANILO

*I*n 1995, Danilo was in Banja Luka. When he heard the news about peace, he started jumping and screaming of happiness. “We lived as every other normal family in RS, on the edge of poverty. I had my plans - to finish high school, enroll to university, and find a job,” says Danilo. After for years of high school in Novi Sad, and four years of Musical Academy in Banja Luka, he returned to his parents in Prijedor. Nowadays, he is advanced university student, and he mostly accomplished all his plans related to the education. However, his job related plans failed. The most beautiful event in the past ten years was when his brother got his first son.

Peace for Danilo represents happiness and possibility for people to live and work normally.

He goes to the seashore, and went on excursions to Slovenia and Hungary. He was on EXIT Festival in Novi Sad for three times. To the question if he lives better today, he says, “No. No. And no. Disgusting!” The most frequent topics of conversations with other people are robberies and injustice over people. Until few years ago, he danced “non-stop”, and now he does not want it anymore. Danilo believes in God, word of honor, cheek,<sup>11</sup> and morality. “I would not like to ease up, and go into lies, fraud, bribe and corruption, and other systems of life in Republika Srpska. I wish to go away from here!”, says Danilo.

## ISMET TUTOVAC

*(1954), caterer, Sarajevo*

With whom do you talk the most often and what about?

**I talk with my wife, about our financial situation. We have three students...**

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11 Check - meaning in this context is to be honest.

## KREŠO

Krešo – Zvonko Omazić was in Munich when the news about the end of war came. As he says, he “fled” there.

It would not be correct to say he was happy when he heard the news. He believes the peace is only on paper, and “there will be no peace for Croats in B&H until they reach their independence.”

In universal poverty, Krešo turned back to the profession of his great-grandfathers - cattle breeding. Therefore, it is natural that the major topic of his talks is “selling young cows and bulls”.

He says for his neighbors they are “criminals”, and he does not expect anything from the future.

The only he still did not lose faith are Saint Anton and God.

## MILJA BURAZOR

*(1954), accountant, Kozarska Dubica*

With whom do you talk the most often and what about?

**About people, as they are now, and how they were before the war. Because they do not show with anything, they are the same people they used to be.**



"I lived in very difficult financial situation, and the most important thing for me was that my father returns from the battlefield to help my mother to support the family. When the peace was signed in B&H, I felt safe only for the moment. After that, I felt unprotected and unsafe again." This is how Tanja Damjanović, eighteen years old woman begins her story about the war and post war period. She used to live in Tuzla, and nowadays, Tanja lives in a small village Petkovača near Bijeljina.

"In 1995, I only planned to finish the 1st year of my high school with excellent grades, so my parents would be proud", continues Tanja, and adds, "After the Dayton Peace Agreement was signed, and I went to my home town to visit my grandfather that was the most important person in my life. I adored him, but unfortunately he died in 1996." That visit was the most beautiful thing that happened to her in the past ten years.

She does not live better today, because "at least I have had better conditions for education before. Now, regardless numerous five's<sup>12</sup> I will not have possibilities to enroll to the university. I never went to the seashore. My still unaccomplished dream is to leave to some other continent, far away from ill Balkan, and buy a small house on the open sea. I April 2004, thanks to the School of Human Rights, I went to the theatre performance for the first time in my life."

To the question if she remembers when the last time she danced was, Tanja provided us the interesting answer, "Oh! Nowadays, men dance without any passion, only when they are drunk. I do not remember my last dance."

For this young girl, peace means, "to be safe when you go out on the street that no one will harass you because of your skin color or ethnic affiliation. For me, peace represents the feeling of inner security and prosperity." Tanja expect her future would be bright, and, "to leave from Bosnia and Herzegovina".

12 Five (5) - the highest mark that student/pupil can receive for some school work or subject in the elementary schools and high schools in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

**P.N.**

*P.N.* changed his place of residence five times. He currently lives in Livno. He says he was “totally lost” since 1995. Since the signing of the Peace Agreement until today, P.N succeeded to get a job, and spend one day at the seashore.

He “only remembers”, concerts and theatre performances, and unavoidable topic of his conversations with other people is “going away somewhere abroad”. He says he does not live better today, and he knows only one of his neighbors.

To the question if he believes in something, this fifty-three years old forestry engineer responded, “I believe in God, I guess there is a God.” He expects “a little bit of health” from his future.

**VESNA ĐUKIĆ**

*(1959), merchant, Bijeljina*

Do you know who your neighbors are?

**Yes, I do, but I do not bond myself too much with them. People changed.**

**LJ. Š. K.**

*(1956), Trebinje*

What do you expect from the future?

**To string some more pearls on my life string, to have relatively good health. Some small, tinny pleasures, but above all, happiness, health, and satisfaction of my child.**

**JASMINKA**

*J*

asminka Salčić from Mostar rocked a cradle with her four months old son when she heard that the peace was finally signed. She gave a birth to her son in refuge in Kragujevac.

She believed in better tomorrow, and as she says, it came. She returned to her native city Mostar, and earns for life with selling cosmetics. In future, she expects to finally find a job in her profession (she graduated from the Law School), and her little son would successfully finish his education.

As she says, “faith in almighty God helps her to overcome all life difficulties”, and her old friends that she reunited with.

## PERO

In 1995, Pero Rađan found himself on the street, without anything. “I can say I was on the street, with my bare soul, and without anything. My plan was to return home with my family.”

Nowadays, Pero does not even think about the return. As he says, he gave up from returning to Jajce, where all of his property was burned. In the meantime, Pero find the way out, and currently lives in Bijeljina.

“I am satisfied 100%. I wrote off Jajce. My children find their way out well, all of them have their own houses,” says Pero. Although he is retired, he does some construction work.

He believes in God and Serbian nationality, and talks the most often with his wife and workers. He does not know his neighbors.

As he says, peace is “the life of every nation.” He expects from future “something much better,” and hopes “passions would calm down.”

**S. NJ.**

*(1973.), physicist, Banja Luka*

Where have you been in November 1995, when the Dayton Peace Agreement was signed?

**Lost passenger.**

**NADA ŠAVRLJUGA**

*(1951), accountant, Trn*

How did you feel when you heard the peace was signed?

**I was happy, because the war will stop, and my husband will come home.**

In what do you believe?

**I believe in God and change of government that would enable better life for my children.**

**ALBERT**

*I*n November 1995, Albert Glavina, thirty-seven years old waiter was refugee, expatriate in Slovenia. “I felt great. I thought it would be better, but it was only “peace”, remembers Albert. As she says, he had a good life than, because he know what he was doing, and the work was valued. Nowadays, he lives as subtenant in Mostar. He says about the future, “If the politics change, it would be better, perhaps. This could happen in five to ten years.”

Ž

eljka claims she will never eat beans, cabbage, and “that home made bread” again, because they remind her on the war days too much.

“I will never eat that again. This is how we lived in 1995”, says Željka. She was on the balcony of her apartment when the peace was signed.

“It was some slava that day. There was no electricity, but somehow we heard the Dayton Peace Agreement was signed. My brother and I went out on the balcony, firecrackers were shooting, and there were shootings and celebrations everywhere. Than, our mother came back home from the neighbors, and we jumped on her, and started hugging her, carried away with the atmosphere. Our mother was confused, and asked us if we suddenly became Serbs and started celebrating slava. She had no idea the Dayton was signed, and thought we were celebrating slava,” remembers Željka.

Željka was fourteen years old, and as she said, she was not aware of the war, as some other people that were on the battlefield. “For me, war was somewhere else. I lived in the city where bombs were not falling.”

Since then, she attended numerous concerts and theatre performances - EXIT Festival in Novi Sad, and “charade - Summer Festival in Banja Luka.”

She says she believe in the nature - “balance of good and evil.” To the question if she lives better today, Željka responded, “Of course, I do not eat beans. Now I have the alternative.”

She knows only her first neighbor. “I do not have a wish to meet others. I met her because I had to. She was complaining about my dog,” says Željka. She talks the most often with her friend, and says, “We philosophize.”

When someone mentions peace, Željka’s first thoughts are related to inner peace.

“We can say there is a rule of peace in B&H, but people are live in fear that we could have a war again, if SFOR leaves the country. I do not see this peace as something long-term, as there will not be a war in next 200 years here. One should have in mind our history, and everything what was happening in Balkans region. There is another war for every 50 years. I do not believe in talks we could be as Switzerland”, says Željka, a student. She adds she does not expect anything from her future “but I will make an effort to leave this country, and never come back”.

## BEĆIR

"*J*ust a few years more, and Adio Mare<sup>13</sup>", that is all that Bećir Mušić from Donji Vakuf expects from his future.

Bećir's only happiness is his grandchildren. After the war, he wanted to renew his apartment, and live happily with his family. However, "nothing really happened" out of all this.

He does not believe in anything. "If you wander for ten years, and no one does anything to help you...", says Bećir. To the question with whom he talks the most often, he responded, "With myself. No one else can help me."

**P.S.**

*(1967), salesman*

What is the most beautiful thing that happened to you in the past ten years?

**There is no beauty in these areas, only criminal.**

Do you remember when was the last time you danced, and with whom?

**I do not feel like dancing.**

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13 Adio Mare - a verse from Dalmatian song. Used in this context refers to his intentions to leave, and say good-bye to everyone.

## ZORAN AND DUŠANKA

Zoran accomplished his dream with his return to the native city Banja Luka, in contrast to his wife Dušanka, which did not hope for that. “It was not as I thought it would be. I did not plan to come back, it was because my husband wanted to return”, says Dušanka.

They were in Sidney when the Peace Agreement for B&H was signed. There, they monitored closely what was happening here, trying to find out where are their cousins that refuge, and how to help them.

While her spouse Zoran says that the most beautiful event in his life in the past ten years was “the fact he returned”, Dušanka emphasized a birth of her wonderful daughters. “I was aware I will never be alone because I have them.”

She says she does not know what to do in her own country. “It is much better life standard and people live differently in Australia. If we continue like this, we will not reach their life standard for 50 years, even more”, believes Dušanka.

She is infuriated with political situation and local politicians, “Our politicians do take care neither about the state nor about people. That is terrible. They only watch their positions and armchairs. No one would resign if they do not accomplish what they promised.”

Zoran also says he does not live financially better today, “I do not live financially better, but spiritually yes - much better.” From his future, Zoran expects peaceful life, good health, and future for his children. However, Dušanka does not expect “as much” from the future in B&H.



## ALBINA

**A**lbina Čehić was in Sarajevo when the Peace Agreement was signed. She reacted with disbelief when she heard the news. “It was a complete shock for me, disbelief, I thought I was dreaming, chaos, happiness.”

Albina says she did not live, but only surviving ten years ago. “My only plans were to live through another day. I prayed to God to die if grenade “catches” me, I did not wanted to become an invalid. I prayed for madness to pass.”

To the questions if she accomplished any of her plans, and what the most beautiful thing that happened to her in the past ten years was, thirty-three years old Albina responds, “I lived enough to see another day, I survived, madness stopped. I lived enough to see the peace. I became auntie, found a job, and found my soul mate.”

Nowadays, Albina lives in Novi Grad. She talks the most often with Gordana Ilić, about life and feelings. She attends concerts whenever she can, and she remembers the concerts of U2 in Sarajevo, Ibrica Jusić, Cubismo, and Josipa Lisac.

She believes in many things, because she is the great optimist. Albina writes - PEACE - with capital letters. From her future, Albina expects “a lot’s of health in peace”.

## IBRAHIM BUKVIĆ

*(1958), former private entrepreneur, Tomislavgrad*

What is the most beautiful thing that happened to you in the past ten years?

**There is nothing nice here for us that are not on some positions. Political parties are robbing everything.**

Do you live better today?

**We live only worse. Each city has five or more powerful people, and they are robbing with the help of authorities.**

Do you know who your neighbors are?

**My neighbors are Croats. I am living in rural community, therefore all of us are in the same situation, and we struggle for life.**

In what do you believe?

**I do not believe in anything, because I see murderers that are still leading this people, and robbing it together with Ashdawn.**

## NADA MILANOVIĆ

*(1951), economic technician, Teslić*

During the past ten years, did you travel abroad, on the seashore, skiing, shopping, and visiting cousins?

**You cannot travel anywhere without money.**

In what do you believe?

**I believe in myself only.**

## STJEPAN

*For* Stjepan Aulić, a driver from Mostar, peace represents prosperity because “there is nothing without peace”. However, Stjepan is disappointed with the postwar situation. “I expected from international community to send honest people here, but they sent us criminals to make a mess here. Their goal is to acquire personal gains, and not to help these people here. They are even worse than communists”, explains Stjepan. He says nothing nice happened to him in the past ten years, and he lives worse than he lived in 1995. Stjepan says he does not talk about anything with anyone. “Everything has been already said”, says Stjepan. He does not expect anything from the future, as long as the other people are tailoring it for us.

**ŽIKO KOJIĆ**  
*(1977), worker*

Did you accomplish any of your plans?  
**No, I have only miserable life.**

## VLADISLAVA

*V*ladislava Barišić from Kozarska Dubica was in her house on the day when the Peace Agreement was signed. Together with her family, she watched television because the news from Dayton. “That is the important date in my life, as it is for all people in former Yugoslavia. I was very happy, because four years of war brought my life into a dead end street”, she says. She did not have plans then, she just expected real peace, for killings to stop, for all people to be released from prisoner-of-war camp from the other side. Her cousin disappeared in 1992 in Posavina, and never showed up again.

Among nice events, she especially remembers her travels to Ostrog, resolving one important family problem, and doctoral degree from the Faculty of Forestry in Belgrade, which one of her students, a boy from countryside received.

Vladislava attends manifestations that are organized in Dubica. She does not dance, but she likes to watch other people dancing, and admires good dancers.

She frequently talks with her family, friends, and neighbors about job, everyday problems, good movies, TV show, or a book she reads.

She knows all of her neighbors. “We help each other when there is a need for that. I do not see them every day, I do not bother them, as they do not bother me, but I am always there if they need something,” says fifty-eight years old Vladislava.

In future she expects peace, where all people will mutually respect each other, “which is utopia”, better life for my children, and children of other people. “I wish for my children to be happier than I was, because I will manage somehow through my old days. I am not sissy, nor crybaby, I am a fighter”, she adds.

## LUKAN

Lukan Poplašen from Jajce was in Busovača when the peace came. He refuge there when “Jajce fell”, and he was there during the whole wartime. He accomplished his plans to return home. “We returned, I have got some donations, and contributed with my own hands as well”, says fifty-four years old Lukan. The most beautiful event in the past ten years is that he got seven grandchildren. He rarely goes anywhere, and last time he danced when he married “his old lady”. Anyway, he does not like to dance. Nowadays, he is struggling to survive. As he says, it is easier for those that are “fit”. Peace means a lot to him, if people help each other. He expects peaceful life and retirement from his future.

**S. M.**

*(1949), administrative lawyer, Gradiška*

How did you live in that period? What kind of plans did you have in 1995?

**Life was difficult, and I was hopeless. My plan was to build the house and establish beehive.**

What of your plans became reality?

**I built my family house, got a job, established beehive, and accomplished almost all of my plans.**

## V.B.

She is a lawyer from Trebinje, born in 1953. When the peace was signed, she experienced it as “huge relief, with a strong dose of mistrust”. Here is her vision of 1995: “That was not a life that would be acceptable for any human being. I think that relationships between people where on the level of primitive community. That craving of minds enforced my fear that has certain intensity even today. In August 1995, in the time of damned storm, I planned to go away with my whole family.” The most important things became reality, “Husbands, fathers, and brothers are not forced to go on the battlefield, bombings and massive exodus of people stopped.”

The most beautiful thing that happened to V.B. in the past ten years was reuniting with her close family.

She traveled to the seashore in former Yugoslav republics, and visited her cousins in Scandinavian countries. “When I was in Croatia, I often felt gray steel on the faces of local residents. Truly, there were also exceptions, and some people were really friendly.”

She often goes to the theatre, and remembers the performance of “Ana Karenjina”. She did not change her place of residence. She did not even change the job, “but my home town changed, as well as the people here. All of them have visible signs of survived horrors of war. A number of unemployed people are rising, and family budgets are impoverishing. On the other hand, war profiteers are strengthening their position.” She says she does not like to talk about the war. She believes the most in herself. She is not religious, but respects the people that are believers. Her motto is, “Don’t do things for which you know that are not right.” “Peace is not when NATO airplanes are destroying neighborhoods, schools, roads, bridges, kill people, children, disperse different poisons. That is not a way to accomplish peace. That is the crime. The peace does not have limits for values. You find out what peace and freedom are when you loose them,” says this woman from Trebinje.

## MOMČILO KOVAČEVIĆ

(1961), mechanic technician, Sarajevo/Kikinda

With whom do you talk the most often and what about?

**About the money.**

In what do you believe?

**I believe in God and money.**

## FARUK

*F*aruk Basara was twelve years old when the peace was signed in Bosnia and Herzegovina. He was already living in Stockholm. He felt relieved, but he knew it would last some time before the true peace came. Faruk had a solid life, and his plans were related solely to visit Bosnia. Since that time, he comes to visit his cousins in Donji Vakuf every summer.

The most beautiful events he remembers in the past ten years were enrolling to the university, and getting driver's license. He was on the concerts of Dino Merlin and Halid Bešlić, but in Sweden.

Last time Faruk danced the other night, near Vrbas. The most common topics of conversation with other people are university and love. To the question if he knows his neighbors, he responds, "Of course I know them."

He believes in God, "peace, love, and understanding". For him, peace is "only when there is no army or weapon in all countries in the world".

He expects from his future "nice little house, a car, wife, and children".

## ALEKSANDAR PERENDIĆ

The most beautiful thing that happened to Aleksandar Perendić in the past ten years was that he became “critical enough to realistically accept new world order dictated by world powers, and not to feel as a member of herd, which everybody exploits”.

At the end of the war, Aleksandar was in Bajina Bašta, and as he said, he was in optimistic mood for the future. However, peace for him represents “artificial break between two wars and it never lasts long enough. War industry is faster and faster dominating on the market”.

Aleksandar was always short with the money to attend some larger concert “and theatre in this country is in its dying out phase. Moonlights and cliché are ruling.” He does not travel out of the circle of 500 kilometers.

He says he lives only slightly better than he lived during the war, and much worse in comparison with the prewar period.

“When I find the victim, we talk about absurdities of modern age. Degradation is flourishing - nowadays people only retell stories, no one actually talks”, says twenty-seven years old Aleksandar. As he says, he is wanderer by profession.

To the question what he expects from his future, Aleksandar responded, “The life is as it is. I do not plan to have children, because I do not want to create just a few more warriors for future political wars.”



**N.N.**

*(1965), merchant, Široki Brijeg*

Where are you today (did you change the place of living)?

**No, but I will make an effort to do that, if any chance, few years from now.**

**NADA**

*W*

hen the peace was signed, Čeko Nada, a merchant from Drvar, worked in Bijeljina as day laborer. She felt awful “because Drvar was not saved”.

In 2000, Nada returned to her native city, and she got the keys of her apartment, which is one of the nicer things that happened to her in the past ten years.

With KUD<sup>14</sup> Drvar, she visited almost all countries in Europe, and traveled to America.

Nada is desirous of good theatre performances, concerts, and movies, but there is “nothing of that” in her hometown.

She nostalgically remembers old times with her friends. She knows all of her neighbors - “both old and new ones”.

Nada does not believe in God, but she believes in people, although, as she says, there is less and less of them.

She does not have special wishes for her future, “I am approaching toward the end of that future... my days are all similar, like duplicated.”

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14 KUD - abbreviation for cultural and artistic association.

## MUHAREM

*M*uharem Rekanović, sixty-six years old man, a locksmith from Bihać experienced the Dayton Peace Agreement as the beginning of false peace. During the war, he lost his son, and two grandchildren are remembrance on him.

The most beautiful thing that happened to him in the past ten years is the election of good city major Adnan Alijagić. Muharem did not visit his cousins, nor did he travel to the seashore. Last time he danced in 1978 on his daughter's wedding.

He talks about everything with his fellow townsmen from Bihać. They talk about the problems, but he still believes in better tomorrow.

He experiences peace as rebirth.

To the question what he expects from the future, he responds, "only health, but doctors are doing lousy job, because they have their private practices".

*Lj*iljana believes if she were smart, she would never await for war and its ending in B&H. “Because, who would give me the right to endanger lives of my children and their mental health”, Ljubica asks herself. When the Dayton Peace Agreement was signed, Ljiljana was in village Jošik, near Bosanska Dubica. “If I was smart, I would never stay here.”

She says, in comparison to the other people, her family lived relatively well in 1995. “My children, parents, and my husband and I were not hungry. We all lost our minds with war, because we lived in the border area, where constant shootings were happening”, says Ljiljana. “Croats could shoot me 100 times if they wanted to do that” while she was going to her work near embankment every day.

Ljiljana is disappointed today. She says, only war profiteers are getting rich while “small and simple people are still getting ruined.”

“I live much worse nowadays, I feel like I live in a ghetto. I am not guilty for anything, and I still feel very bad. I am working a lot, but everything has been degraded and underestimated”, says Ljiljana, and asks herself how to educate her children when “bad people and thieves came to the surface”.

She says the war showed “who the right neighbors were”. “Only one of my neighbors said ‘as long as I have, you will have too’”, she remembers. Ljiljana is a professor, and she says she does not believe in anything any more. She says she was taught to believe in communism before, and to believe in God during the war. One big nothing came out from all of this at the end. When you also add the lost faith in people, Ljiljana still “believes and likes only animals”.

To the question what was the most beautiful thing that happened to her during past ten years, among other things she said, “My husband stopped drinking. We bought better car, grandma and grandpa got war reparation payments.”

She talks with her friend about “how to buy all the medications for immobile father and ill mother, and how to educate children, with a small salary of professor”. She hopes her health will serve her well, “and if there is God, to give me quick and easy death, not to torment anyone, so no one would need to assist me”.

## MEHMED

*A*t the end of war, Mehmed was refugee in Zenica.

He hoped to return to Jajce and to have a normal life again. However, in nine months only, he lost his son, wife, and father.

“There is nothing nice today”, wrote this driver. In the meantime, he got sick, and had one heart attack.

He says he never danced in his life. He talks with everyone about “thieves on the higher level”, and does not expect “anything” from the future.

During the war, Sava Matijević escaped to Mišin Han, near Banja Luka, where she was when the Dayton Peace Agreement was signed. She was happy because the war stopped, and her children safely went out the war. She says it was difficult for her because she lost all property, but she had strength and motivation for a future life.

Sava expected from authorities to do something for the people that lost everything in the war. “However that did not happen. Authorities did not help us with anything. The only thing that saved me is the fact that I like to work - I have everything.”

She is happy that her health served her well in the past ten years, but she is the most satisfied that her children started to find solutions for their life problems.

She did not attend theater performances and concerts, but she says she is always in a good mood and likes to socialize with other people. She believes everything will be always good. Her neighbors are her companionship, and she manages to make “fun situation in any time”.

To the question when was the last time she danced, Sava responds, “when my son covered his house with a roof, I made a toast, congratulated for a new home, and really danced!”

The life is better than it was in 1995, however, she still feels sadness for her hometown in her heart, and she does not know if this would ever stop.

She talks very often with her neighbors about current situation in our country. “We are watching the news closely, and we talk about everything. It hurts me to see that our authorities show very little sufferings and misery of all of us that left everything, and we cannot go back because we do not feel freedom and safety.”

Sava is surviving thanks to her hope that she will never fail, neither in old age, nor in illness. “I know I gave a lot during my life, and I know it will return me with good. In my future, I hope only for good health, and happiness of my family.”

**JELENA VUJEVIĆ**  
(1960), worker, Sarajevo

With whom do you talk the most often and what about?

**About everything, just not about politics.**

What do you expect from your future?

**I expect a lot, but...To start finally to feel like one's own. I have to touch politics, to live in united B&H, "old B&H." I am "nostalgic."**

**N.I.**

*N.I.* forty-nine years old professor was in Serbia when the Dayton Peace Agreement was signed. As he says, he was, "dying of hunger." He felt awful and deceived. He did not accomplish any of his plans since 1995, "only grief and sorrow".

The most beautiful thing that happened to him in the past ten years was that one man paid for his eye surgery.

Once he was preparing concerts for performers, and now he cannot attend it. He cannot visit his cousins, and go to the summer vacation. He asks himself, "how to pay for it?"

N.I. lived the best before the war, and he remembers this period with melancholy, "Comrade Tito, we swear to you - Tito, Tito..."

The peace for him means the time without hatred, love for people, regardless of their religion, race, nationality - "you just let me live."

In his future, he expects the assistance from the international community, because it represents democracy, "and democracy is when they help people, not to cheat them all the time. Paddy Ashdown - Whom are you lying to? You should help people if you can, and if you cannot do that, you should leave!"

## VELJKO

*V*eljko Knežević was angry when he heard the news that the peace was signed, “Because Drvar, the city from which I was expelled, stayed - fell to Federation of B&H.”

Everything he succeeded to accomplish in the past ten years he did thanks to his hard work and efforts. He married, got a child, and traveled to several countries of European Union. Nowadays, he lives in Drvar, as he lived before. He has neighbors, and as he says, all of them live like one big family. To the question with whom he talks the most often, this music teacher responded, “currently I talk with my mother to buy her the apartment.”

He believes only in God, himself, and his work. Peace for him represents, “only one word in a sentence, the same like war. I do not even think about that.”

From future, he expects, “only good health for my son, wife, cousins, and friends. Everything else comes itself.”

**K.B.**

*(1982), student, Banja Luka*

In what do you believe?

**I do not believe in anything and anyone! I believe in myself, from time to time.**

## LATIF

When the peace was signed in B&H, Latif Hadžić from Bihać was “working in the street”. As he says, he was happy when he heard these news “... after 44 months”.

Ten years after, Latif lives “hundred times worse”.

“I am asking myself what I will eat for breakfast and lunch every day. I did not eat ice cream for past nine years,” says Latif, and adds he does not believe in anything, “neither in God, not in the Party<sup>15</sup>”.

He does not travel anywhere from Bihać, “All of my cousins ran away, and no one f...s me neither five percent<sup>16</sup>.”

For this man from Bihać, peace represents only “misery.” As he said, during the war at least he had enough food to eat.

## VELIMIR SAVIĆ

*(1950), high school education, Bijeljina*

Did you attend some good concert, or watch some good theatre performance in the past ten years?

**I did not. There were many concerts here, but I do not feel like doing that.**

Do you live better today?

**It is the same for me, even more difficult. There is no more humanitarian assistance.**

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15 Party - meaning political party. In this context, it refers to Communist Party of former Yugoslavia that ideologically promoted atheism.

16 Slang, referring that no one cares for him, neither a little bit.



## DEVADA ĐUGUM

*W*hat use is that I know who my neighbors are? This is totally irrelevant, because no one feels anyone as human being,” thinks Đevada. As she says, she “struggles only to feed her children, and to survive in this anarchy, in the country with lawlessness, and where mafia rules”.

Đevada Đugum was in Switzerland when the peace was signed. She felt great, “because I thought this is the most right thing that could be done among these savages”.

Đevada’s rerun from Switzerland to B&H did not bring any good for her. “I was financially secure in one wonderful country. My return here disappointed me. I live from day to day, without protection from anyone, and without any joy from the future of my children in this kind of structure.”

Đevada is a merchant by profession. She says she feels like foreigner in her own community, “because I belong to a ethnic minority.”

Đevada believes in “laws that are right”. To the question with whom she talks the most often, she wrote, “I talk with myself only, and think over things.”

## NEMANJA

*I*n 1995, Nemanja Radić was a refugee in Vojvodina, and he lived “in complete misery.” He did not have any plans for future. He was “totally impressed” when the peace was signed in that year.

Nemanja is thirty-three years old, and he is unemployed. He accomplished only few of his plans, but he says he lives better today. The most beautiful thing that happened to him was his return to Drvar. He expects better life in future. He talks with his friends about happier future, and believes only in God. Nemanja does not travel much. During the past ten years, he visited two times his sister in Nikšić in Montenegro.

Nemanja says peace represents “the greatest treasure in the world”.

**V.A.**

*(1950), pensioner, Rahić*

What is the meaning of peace for you?

**Peace is the greatest thing that can exist. I respect any person that is for peace.**

## DŽERALDINA

"I finally have my home and quietness", says Džeraldina Marijanović when she remembers the day when she moved from Split to Mostar, after the Dayton Peace Agreement was signed. There she got a job in the Office for Refugees and Displaced Persons. In the same period, her husband also got a job, and her son enrolled in 5th year of the elementary school.

She lived in Sarajevo before the war.

"I was very happy when this bloody war stopped, in which there was no winner. We were all losers in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Mostar, as well as the whole B&H, was destroyed by war. There were destroyed bridges and houses. People were killed, souls were killed too..." remembers Džeraldina.

Bridges and houses will be reconstructed in peace. However, easily destroyed bridges of friendship would be difficult to reconstruct again. She says, during that period she did not live badly as other people did, because both her husband and she had a job. She was planning to visit cousins and friends that moved with war to Canada, Croatia, and Austria. She visited some of them, but she still did not manage to travel to "distant and cold Canada".

She accomplished her wish to be active in women's associations, and help them and youth people to overcome more easily psychological problems after the war in Mostar.

As the most beautiful events in the past ten years, she remembers work, friendships, concerts, poetry' evenings, and "magnificent reconstruction of old bridge in Mostar, which was awaited for a long time by all citizens of Mostar, in the homeland and worldwide." Džeraldina likes to dance very much, but, as she says, she rarely has the opportunity for that.

She talks with her friends very often about fashion, children, better earnings...

She knows her neighbors, and she helps some of them when they need to buy something, or go to the hospital. "I am visiting two old ladies that do not have any relatives. I talk with them, or I take some presents for them", she says. She is not religious, but, "I respect all people that believe in God, I believe in humanity, although is the most difficult to be and stay a human." "Religion teaches a human to respect their as well as other people's tradition. My religion is to do good for other people, so I can expect good things to become truth for me as well," explains Džeraldina. She expect from a future to bring her good health and nice life with her family and friends, as well as for her son to finish the university, get marry, and have children. She expect for us to have better standard, and for B&H to enter the European Union.

Peace for her represents "a hand offered to you and precious people that want more from the life". Peace cannot be appreciated enough, until a human loose it. "I wish for peace to be everywhere in the world, and not to have war ever again," says Džeraldina.

## MARKO G.

*M* arko says 50% of his plans became reality, and if he accomplishes another 50%, “that would be great.”

In the moment of signing the Dayton Peace Agreement, Marko Glavina was in Jajce. As he says, he was just happy when he heard the news. Anyway, Marko lives in Mostar, and he is a mechanical technician by profession. He has daughter Barbara, and expects newly born child this December.

Marko says he is not sure if he lives better today. “I do not know what to tell... it is the same, there is no hunger.”

To the question, if he remembers when was the last time he danced, he responded, “Here I am dancing now with a waitress.” Marko believes in God, and knows his neighbors, “there are people of different nationalities among them, Croats, Serbs, Muslims, and Jews”, and he talks only about football, and nothing else.

## MATIJEVIĆ

*M.* Matijević from Široki Brijeg, “works and does not talk, as usual.” He believes in God, Saint Anton, and his grandson Stipe. Nowadays, Stipe is three years old. For Matijević, a birth of Stipe was the most beautiful event in the past ten years. Last time he danced with his wife Marica on grandson’s christening and his “grandma” is his most faithful conversationalist. He traveled to the seashore in “my beautiful Croatia”. He remembers the concert of Thompson, and he lives “neither good nor bad.” He says that every peace is welcomed, and he expects only “peace for his grandson” in a future.

## FUAD PODRUG

*(1975), professor of sociology, Sarajevo*

What do you expect from your future?

**To accomplish my plans in scientific sense, to give my contribution to the sociological science, finish my postgraduate studies, and learn another foreign language.**

## KATA ŽIVKOVIĆ

(1951), agricultural technician, Donja Mahala

What is the meaning of peace for you?

**Peace is not only a ceasefire. Every human should feel it inside. We do not have it because there is no pleasure among people, and dissatisfaction and unrest originate from disfunction of the state, and lack of essential life conditions.**

What do you expect from your future?

**I do not expect anything for myself. As everything progresses slowly, I am doubtful as well in a better future of my children.**

## ADILA



In the question what was the most beautiful thing that happened to her since the Dayton, Adila, forty-seven years old woman from Zenica readily responds, “Daughter in love.”

She did not accomplish majority of her plans in the past ten years. As she admits, this is because their own laziness. Adila firmly believes in a future.

She does not have prejudices toward people. She believes in those who believe in love, friendship, and, “do not envy others”, as she does as well.

She believes the peace is necessary for all people. However, first, each person should find peace in himself or herself.

She finds her happiness in small things, in conversation with neighbors, which she knows well, and visiting her cousins.

## ZDENKA

*I*n November 1995, Zdenka was a returnee from Croatia in Jajce. “I felt great, satisfied. I hoped it would be better”, she says. During the wartime, she lived with her son without pension. They did not have “neither one mark<sup>17</sup>”. This cook from Jajce cannot remember anything nice in the past ten years. Her son did not get a job - he got two rejections. Zdenka did not travel after the war, and she never attended a concert or some theatre performance. She said, “Never in my life, although this costs two marks. This is still the price of half fresh bread in four days”, she explains. In conversations with other people, she noticed everyone has been occupied with their own problems. She knows her neighbors, majority of them are Muslims, but they are predominantly good people. “They come to my house on Christmas, I go to see them on Bairam,” she adds. Zdenka believes in God and good people. She says it is difficult for her to respond to the question what the peace means to her. “You cannot buy peace. We need to fight together for it”, says Zdenka.

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17 Mark - referring to convertible mark (KM), official currency in Bosnia and Herzegovina.



**R.H.**

*R.H.* from Bihać is a homeless person. His house was burned in 2001. Nowadays, as he says, he wanders from one place to another. “I stay wherever I can. I stay a little bit with one person, and then I move to another. This country is mediocre. My rahmetli<sup>18</sup> brother was killed at least. I am suffering”, says this man from Bihać. He does not attend concerts, “What are you talking about!” To the question if he traveled to the seashore or aboard in the past ten years, he said, “I did not. River Una is my seashore. I do not have money to buy a piece of bread. I am at a loss.” Dancing also represents a foreign word for him, “Oh my God, my dear brother. Last time I danced forty years ago.” He says he believes in Allah, “although I did not see him.” He does not expect anything from the future, “only a shovel”.

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18 Rahmetli - Turkish expression for deceased.

**K.DŽ.**

*(1975), mechanic master, Bihać*

How did you feel when you heard the peace was signed?

**I felt good. It was nice to hear that people are not dying.**

What is the most beautiful thing that happened to you in the past ten years?

**The most beautiful thing that happened to me? Nothing. A good thing - there were some good things.**

**RADMILA VASILIC**

*(1967), student, Doboј*

How did you feel when you heard the Dayton Peace Agreement was signed?

**I do not know what to say. I felt indefinite in that moment. I could not believe in it, after so many years. I was indifferent a little bit. After all - nothing special. We paid a high price, so there was nothing about to be too happy.**

What do you expect from your future?

**To help my daughters to choose the right way in life, and to live better than today - so I can pay my bills, and to be paid for my work. I would like people to be more happy, content, and not to have another idea to start a war again. For all people to have normal life, and not to be denied of anything.**

**BAHRUDIN NUSTIĆ,**  
*(1970), merchant, Sarajevo*

What is the peace for you?  
**Rahatluk**<sup>19</sup>

## TIJANA

*T*or Tijana Arambašić - Živanović from Modriča, the peace represents “pleasure, calmness, and relaxation.” In 1995 this twenty-seven years old woman was in school in Novi Sad, and she did not even know what the meaning of the Dayton Agreement is. However, she was happy that peace finally came. “During that time, I lived from day to day. It was difficult in students’ housing. I was living between two ends. I planned to finish my high school, and enroll to the university,” she says. She accomplished all of her plans. As the most beautiful days in the past ten years, she remembers births of her niece and nephew, the day when she met her husband, and her marriage. Tijana traveled abroad and attended several concerts, and she remembers especially the concerts of Goran Bregović and Zabranjeno Pušenje. Nowadays, as she says, she lives “certainly better”. In her future, she expects to be able to live nicer through every day, make it more interesting, and to be maximally creative.

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19 Rahatluk - Turkish expression for being content with everything in life, having pleasure and enjoyment in everything.

## EMIR

Emir Karača is an attorney, and he lives in Sarajevo today. He was also there when the peace was signed. He felt “tired” when he heard the news.

At the end of war, Emir lived “military life”, and the only plan he had was to stay alive. To the question if he accomplished his plans, he shortly responds, “I am alive.” He lives better nowadays. He often goes skiing and scuba diving. He does not travel abroad because he “does not have cousins there”. He attends all cultural events in Sarajevo. However, last time he danced with his ex wife, fourteen years ago. He believes in Bosnia. Peace for him has “several aspects - I sleep, mostly in my bed, I travel, I work, and I take care of my children...”

## SHOEMAKER

*(1963), Bugojno*

How did you live in that period? What kind of plans did you have in 1995?  
**I lived better than I live now. That was the end of the war. I thought life would be better. However, I made mistake.**

What is the peace for you?

**Now when I look through everything, I really do not know.**

## MIRO

*M*iro is a taxi driver from Trebinje. He had “great feelings and big expectations” when the Peace Agreement was signed. He hoped life would be better, “salary, apartment, job, and whole life. However, frankly saying, it happened much less than I expected.” Despite all of that, the most beautiful events in the past years where he got married and the fact all members of his family are in good health. Miro travels to the seashore when it is on the way, when he drives his customers. He talks most often with them about everyday things. Miro believes in himself, and a little bit “in some other people”. How Miro sees his future? “I think I had a nice life before. However, if this situation continues, I am doubtful that my children would have the same opportunity.”

## JASMIN

On the question if he lives better today, Jasmin Batić responds shortly, “God forbid. Nowadays, I work for daily wage of 10 – 15 KM.”

He hoped life would be better after the peace was signed. However, as he says all of his hopes failed. He did not travel abroad “because of money shortage”, and he had no time for concerts and theater performances.

For this forty-four years old worker from Bugojno, the most beautiful thing that happened to him was a birth of his little daughter. This brought back his faith in better life.

## MIRJANA GALIĆ

*(1952), technician, Sarajevo*

During the past ten years, did you travel abroad, on the seashore, skiing, shopping, and visiting cousins?

**Yes, I did, but everything was on someone else’s account (cousins).**

Do you live better today?

**No! It is 100% worse than before.**

## DRITA

*I*n November 1995, Drita Toljanović from Sarajevo stepped into the first day of peace with great expectations and faith for better future. However, ten years after, these better days did not come. Out of many plans, the only thing that became true was that shell bombing stopped. Eight years after, she reunited with her brother that lives in America, and this was the most beautiful event for her in the past ten years. Drita attended concerts of Dino Merlin and Bijelo Dugme, and she has unforgettable memories from these events. This forty-three years old woman from Sarajevo believes in God, and does not loose hope for better future. For her, peace is equal to the freedom of life and expression. Drita's expectations from the future are directed toward her children. She wishes them a happy life and all the best, "and I wish the same also for all people in the world."

## RATKO

Ratko Cvijanović was born in 1943, and he is a pensioner now. When the Dayton Peace Agreement was signed, Ratko was in Banja Luka, and “lived in someone else’s deserted house”. He felt relieved when he had heard the peace was signed, “Free from expectations what kind of news I would hear, where and what kind of evil has happened.” Nevertheless, comparing to other people, Ratko lived good during that period, since he had a job, and his cousins from abroad were helping him. He was thinking where and how he would start to live again. He secured a place for living in Banja Luka.

He is happy because he does not need to return to a place from which he ran away, “so I do not need to live under pressure.”

Ratko has three grandchildren, and they are the most beautiful thing that happened to him in the past ten years. He went to the seashore, and traveled abroad. He visited his children. He went to theater and on concert of “Vrapčići” with his grandchildren. Last time he danced on the wedding of his son.

He would change his place of living if “I could have my relatives and former neighbors close to me. They all dispersed everywhere during the war. To the question if he lives better today, he says decisively, “No”, and explains, “I believe I would feel better if I stayed in my patrimony. There I accomplished better life conditions.”

He does not communicate much with his new neighbors, “It is difficult to find a topic for conversation, and they do not make any efforts to be close to me.”

He says he believes in truth and sincerity. Peace for him does not represent only “cessation of war hostilities, here you can add also freedom of movement, freedom of speech, and generally freedom of choice where and how you would live”.

“There is no true peace, even ten years after the end of war in B&H”, believes Ratko.



## DŽEVAD

On the day when the war officially stopped in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Dževad, a harvester by profession, was in Bugojno. He was happy because the war stopped. When he remembers these war years, he says, “It was better during that time than it is now. Everything is worse now.”

His two grandsons, “two golden apples” are the best thing that happened to him in the past ten years of peace. His most distant travels were “to Travnik”, and he danced the last time in 1972 on his high school graduation prom. He did not watch any theater performance, except “on TV.”

From his future, Dževad “does not expect anything special. I cannot see a future, neither for youth people.”

## SAVO PETKOVIĆ

*(1958), electro technician, Teslić*

What is the most beautiful thing that happened to you in the past ten years?

**Premature retirement.**

## MILANKA

*I*t is true happiness to welcome the peace, and if you have a newborn, you have additional reason to hope for better future.

When the Peace Agreement was signed, Milanka Mudrenović was in Banja Luka with a newborn son. Đorđe was born on October 7, 1995. Despite all, Milanka was anxious, even a little bit apathetic when she heard the news that the peace was signed. The only “light in a tunnel” was her little Đorđe, and she devoted all of her time to him.

She was happy because she could finally see her family from Zagreb the normal way. She remembers secret meetings on floats or beneath overpasses. “We looked as some criminals, moving from one car to another, in order to be able to see dearest members of my family.”

After the war, her life started to be normal: she found a job, and solved her housing issue, “which is really rare among youth people, and represents real happiness.” Furthermore, she uses her annual vacations to travel to the seashore and to go skiing, visiting cousins. For her, shopping is obligatory. Milanka attends concerts and theatre performances, and especially remembers the concert of Masimo Savić in Banja Luka. Naturally, she travels abroad, which “unfortunately starts only 50 kilometers from here<sup>20</sup>”.

Milanka Mudrenović dances every day. She believes in God, and herself, and talks with other people about art of living.

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20 Banja Luka is settled approximately 50 kilometers from the state border with Republic of Croatia.

## AMER

*A* or Amer Krupalija from Sarajevo, the peace signed in 1995 represents only “continuation of war criminal and rule of war profiteers, nothing else.”

He and his friends do not live better. They also do not believe in future. Most common topic of conversations among his friends is kokuzluk - poverty.

However, not all is black in Amer's life. During the past period, he met his soul mate, and, “if God wills it”, they will get married soon.

## MIRJANA P.

*M*irjana P, was born in 1960. She lives in Trn, near Banja Luka. She is a civil servant by profession.

She says she was happy when the Peace Agreement had been signed, especially because of the thought she would never hear alarm signal again.

During 1995, she lived very difficult, in fear, without electricity. However, she succeeded to accomplish some of her plans during the past ten years. She does not live as subtenant any more, she traveled abroad several times, and generally, she lives better today.

Mirjana knows her neighbors, “they are very nice people”. She believes in God.

For this woman, peace represents the greatest human treasure. “Faith, love, and hope - that is something every human should have. When you have good health and love, everything else looks less important.”

## BRANKA PULJETA

*Mostar*

What does the peace mean for you?

**The most important for me is the peace in my family. I cannot influence much the other types of peace.**

## MUHAMED

*I*n November 1995, Muhamed Huskić was in Travnik, and he felt “all the same” when he heard the news that the Peace Agreement was signed.

He wanted to leave for Canada or America. Out of his plans, Muhamed accomplished “almost everything and almost nothing”. During the past then years, he succeeded to travel to the seashore, and he spent two days in “lijepa naša<sup>21</sup>”. He does not dance, and does not keep in track with cultural events. “Not me”, says Muhamed.


He lives better today, and talks about economy with other people. To the question if he knows his neighbors, he responds, “I know them. My neighbors are Serbs, Croats, Bosniaks, and some Roma wanderers.”

He believes in one God, and thinks, “Peace is everything and nothing, because we are all followers of both peace and war.”

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21 Lijepa naša -literal translation would be “beautiful our...” It has been commonly used in informal communication as alternative symbol for Croatia, as it represents first two words of Croatian national anthem.

## LJILJANA

 On the question how she felt when she heard the peace was signed, Ljiljana Šćekić, an administrator from Teslić says, “After everything that happened I was not aware what it really means. I did not believe shootings and shell bombing would stop. I forgot what the peace really means.”

“During that period, I lived very difficult. I was poor, suffered from hunger and coldness. I was full of fear. For a long time after the war I did not have any plans, I needed to adjust again to have a “normal” life, with plans and wishes”. While I was learning how to live without fear, first I wished to provide my children as much as I can in any form, from traveling to the seashore, to new clothing, and everything else. I live much better financially, but it is still far from what I expected”, says Ljiljana.

The most beautiful thing that happened to her in the past ten years was employment of her daughter.

For this fifty-one years old woman, peace represents safety, harmony, and joy of waking up in a morning without fear for tomorrow. She expects from future to bring her good health, “to live enough to retire, without fear that I will stay without job with thirty years of accrued time. Slowly getting up, walks, to live long enough to see my grandchildren. That is not much. It is just what every modest and normal person would expect.”

## PETAR

*"*From 1992 until 1996, my only plan was to survive," says Petar Mitrić. He was on Manjača mountain when the war ended. After the war, Petar married, and got two children. This is the most beautiful thing that happened to him in the past ten years. Petar says he does not live much better in comparison to the past period. He talks very often with his wife, friends, and cousins "how to overcome this difficult situation". "After four years of war, and current hard life, I do not know what peace is," says Petar. His greatest wish is to pay back his loans. "I expect from my future to pay back my loans, and see brighter future for my little children."

## A WOMAN FROM MOSTAR

After she found out the Peace Agreement was signed, her first thoughts were “to go back to my home country, and town where I was born”.

This twenty-two years old merchant returned to Mostar, and she says she does not live better today. She is the only person in her four - members’ family that has a job, and earns money.

However, they all are still hoping for better tomorrow, and talk about it most often. “We hope for better life, for all people to have jobs, and peace, to bring back our pre-war happiness and freedom.”

This young woman from Mostar says she believed in God before. However, she adds, “It seems that God gave up from us because people became imprudent.”

She is pessimistic about the peace in this region, “It will not be real peace here for a long time. As long as people do not have jobs, and until factories start to work, this would be mere surviving.”

**MIKA NINKOVIĆ**

*(1965), food technician, Glamoč*

How did you live during that period? What kind of plans did you have in 1995?

**My life was very difficult because I was in someone else’s house, and in a foreign town. My plans were either to go abroad or to return home.**

Where are you living today (did you change a place of living)?

**I am living today in my hometown Glamoč. However, I would like to leave it, because nothing is the same as it was before the war.**



**M.Č.**

*F*or nineteen years old M.Č., relationship with his girlfriend Milica is the most beautiful thing that happened to him in the past ten years. M.Č. traveled to the seashore in Greece, and visited his cousins in Sweden. He attended concerts of Metallica in Belgrade, and Marilyn Manson in Zagreb. He talks most often about girls with his friend Milan.

The last time he danced yesterday in discotheque!

This high school student from Trebinje believes in God, and he hopes in future to have a lot of money, love, and happiness. As he says, peace is “when two countries are not in war”.

## EMIR KERIĆ

*1969, civil servant, Sarajevo*

Do you live better today?

**Of course, 500%!**

With whom do you talk the most often and what about?

**I talk about chicks with my good friends.**

I what do you believe?

**I believe in Allah and money.**

What is the meaning of peace for you?

**All of that how it was before 1992.**

## STUDENT

*(1983), Banja Luka*

How did you live during that period? What kind of plans did you have in 1995?

**I lived as all other normal people. I was making ends meet, and eating cans from humanitarian assistance.**

Do you know who your neighbors are?

**Of course, I know who my neighbors are. It is better to have good relationship with a neighbor than with a closest relative. Often, people are not aware how much a good neighbor means in a life. I can praise I have good neighbors.**

What is meaning of peace for you?

**We all need less demagogy and more work and jobs. This is meaning of peace for me. It is not peace if you do not risk your life any more. Peace is much more than that!**

## DUŠKO

*I*n 1995, Duško Kondor, professor of sociology from Bijeljina had very difficult life. He did not believe that the Dayton Peace Agreement would bring something good. However, as he says, he felt better and happier than ever when the peace was signed. Nowadays, he is disappointed in everything. He has freedom of movement, but “greatest tragedy is that all actors of war and evil stayed on power, and continued to implement their war objectives through other, more perfidious means”.

He did not dance during the past ten years, but he traveled mostly tanks to his job. He is trying to avoid conversation about current situation in the country, but “after all, this is unavoidable topic”.

He says he certainly does not live better than he lived during the war period. “Look in you pocket, and you will know what kind of life standard you have.”

For Duško, peace simply means, “to live a life worthy of human being.” To the question what he expects from his future, he laughs, “Ha, ha, ha, although I am big optimist, rule of nationalism imposed hit song of the day, “Sleep peacefully mommy, everything has been robbed.”<sup>22</sup>”


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22 There is a popular folk song with a verse, “Sleep peacefully mommy, everything has been locked.”

## SENIJA

Seven years ago, Senija was only thinking how to save her life. She was engaged in army, on logistic tasks. When she heard the news that the peace was signed, Senija felt, “as the entire world is mine.” “Peace means a lot to me, but I need to live of something,” says Senija Kontić today. She lost her job in the meantime, and has no income. She does not comply with requirements for retirement. “I am only surviving nowadays. I am talking most often with my neighbors about difficult life,” says sixty-one years old Senija. She does not expect anything from her future, “because I cannot see that something gets better here.”

## OBRAD

brad Piljak is an artisan and professional driver. He was born in Glamoč, but he went to Canada before the war. “I was in Canada when they were signing a destiny of my people and me, which was desperate and abnormal. My life in Canada was very difficult. I did have neither plans nor stable life in foreign country”, says Obrad.

Although he was very happy when he returned to Glamoč, he was disappointed with what he saw there, “My house, building, land, and all my property - everyone uses more than we as owners.”

He talks most often about, “life and problems, since everything was burned and robbed in Glamoč”. Despite all of that, he still believes that better times would come.

To the question what he expects from his future, Obrad says, “Things are looking bad, I am getting older every day, situation here is bad. Everything was burned and robbed, and it is happening even today. It is evil. People are taking freedom to steal, lie, and destroy everything...”

## JASMINA

(1965), *veterinarian technician*

What do you expect from your future?

**I expect to return to my home definitely, and hope that war would not repeat again, because people are wiser today.**

N.N.

*F*ifty-three years old mechanic technician from Mostar was on the front line when he heard the news that was stopped.

As he says, at the beginning he felt great, but disappointment came soon after because he realized that Croats get out of the story “deceived and without an entity”.

Because of that, there is no wonder why he identified the news that Dayton Peace Agreement could be changed, as the most beautiful thing that happened to him during the past ten years.

“Unfinished politics” as he calls it, is the key topic of his conversations with his good friends and neighbors. His faith in God and “true peace” is what gives him energy for life.

He regularly attends concerts in Mostar, and he is not of those who do not dance at all. He dances sometimes, and he truly enjoys life.

## S. ČARDIĆ

*W*hen the Peace Agreement was signed, S. Čardić, thirty-one years old man was a member of B&H Army, and he could not believe the news.

As he says, during that period he did not have a life and he was only surviving.

Past ten years did not bring anything good, except, “divorce and several parties with friends”.

For this man from Sarajevo, peace as such does not mean a lot, “without equality between citizens.”

He does not see his future without “change of government”.

## ZDRAVKO KOZAREVIĆ

*(1964), teacher, Prnjavor*

What is the most beautiful thing that happened to you during the past ten years?

**This is a question with no answer.**

During the past ten years, did you travel abroad, on the seashore, skiing, shopping, and visiting cousins?

**No. No. No. No.**

What is most common topic of your conversations with other people?

**I talk very often with my friends about how to pay all bills to the state, and how to educate children.**

## DRAŽENKA

**D**raženka Lisičić says that Christianity promotes hope, but “our reality of life kills any optimism.”

Draženka was walking down the street when she heard the news that the Peace Agreement was signed. She remembers that she heard shootings from surrounding hills of Doboj, where they were positions of Army of Republika Srpska, and there was general happiness among people because of signing of the Peace Agreement.

Draženka felt also happy and distressed in the same time. “I felt great happiness, because those four years under grenades were the most difficult in my life. I also felt great sadness because so many people died, but I also hoped life would be better in future.”

In that time, she did not have some special plans. She says life was very difficult, without electricity, water, music, and all those things that are necessary for normal life. “I did not have plans. I was just very happy that closest members of my family survived this horrible period.”

To the question how she lives today, this forty years old civil servant responds, “Nowadays, ten years after war, I live from my salary, which is 371 KM. Every day, I am wondering how my life looks miserable and humiliating. I am educating my two children, and I am teaching them to be honest and humane people.”

Draženka spends most of her time at work. She talks with her colleagues about everyday topics - struggle for surviving, politics, Srebrenica, injustice in all fields of life, Kosovo, Jasenovac.”

She believes in Jesus Christ, because, as she says, only He makes miracles.

At the end, on the side of the questionnaire, Draženka wrote, “Thank you for asking me how I feel.”



## BRANISLAV

*B*ranislav Bajić, forty-five years old man from Banja Luka was happy when one “meaningless” war ended. During the past ten years, his initial happiness was replaced with disappointment.

Although he acquired his place of living, and his wife got a job, he feels unbearable insecurity and fear “he would not be able to earn enough for essential life needs of his family”.

He lives in a constant cramp, and it does not allow him to relax more often in the company of his friends and family, because regardless what kind of conversation they start, it always goes back to discussion about “survival”.

Despite that, he makes occasional “excursions” from everyday life, and goes to the theatre, where he recently saw some contemporary performances.

As the time passes, there is less and less things, he believes in. This is probably the reason why he does not expect much from his future.

However, he hopes that life would bring better chances for his children to have a life worthy of human beings.

## EMINA

Emina was happy when the war ended. “It was a high time for us to have peaceful life and possibility to work. Although we still do not have a real peace,” she says. During that time in Donji Vakuf, she could not plan her life much, and she lived day by day. She does not live better today, “It was easier when we were receiving lunch packages and Merhamet<sup>23</sup>.”

As the most beautiful events in the past ten years, this woman, a fashion designer, remembers finishing her school, and getting a job. She hopes in a future she will be able to organize fashion shows also in bigger cities in B&H, but she needs someone to help her to accomplish this plan. “I think I am young and talented. I believe in my creations and myself”, says this twenty-three years old woman. She talks most often with her sewing machines, because, “poor them, they are forced to listen me because they cannot talk”.

To the question if she traveled abroad, she says, “my wishes are one thing, and possibilities are something else.” For attending concerts, she says, “Whatever happens in Donji Vakuf - I am there!” She danced with Emir two nights ago.

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23 Merhamet - Muslim Humanitarian Association active in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Used in this context, it refers to humanitarian assistance that was distributed by this Association to the people during the war.

## ĐOJO

(1952), *agricultural technician, Brčko*

Do you remember when the last time you danced with someone was?  
**I feel like I never did that.**

## SEAD

 On November 21, 1995, Sead Smajić was in Sarajevo, and he says he would need to think about how he felt that day when he heard the news that the peace was signed. He remembers he did not have any plans during that period. “What kind of plans could I have when I had two heart attacks?!”

Ten years after, Sead, forty-seven years old man has solved his hosing issue, and this is the most beautiful thing that happened to him. He does not attend concerts and theatre performances, and he dances “on parties in a court”.

He does not know much of his neighbors, “because I am the new one.” He has most frequent talks with his friends about sports, “and most often about basketball”.

He believes in work, and from his future he expects, “to live enough to retire, having in mind my fragile health”.

**O.S.**

*(1948), locksmith*

What is the most beautiful thing that happened to you during the past ten years?

**The war stopped.**

What do you expect from your future?

**I expect freedom to move everywhere, as every civilized man.**

**NADA**

Nada Stanković, fifty-five years old teacher from Prijedor, expects to have peaceful old age, and wishes all the luck for her children. When the peace came, she was in her house in Prijedor, “I was happy. Beside the war, I had many problems. My husband was sick, and my son was unemployed. I was happy because of peace, because this meant a possibility for me to solve my problems easier.”

Nada’s husband died in a meantime, and her son immigrated to America. “There was no way out here. None. Some people cheated my son. I know he lives well now,” she says. Among nice things that happened to her during the past ten years, she mentions finding a new love, when she could not be alone anymore. She also got two granddaughters when her daughter got married.

Comparing to the situation in 1995, she lives better now, “but everything goes better very slowly.”

She knows her neighbors, and all of them are jointly solving the common problems in the apartment building.

## FARUK

*F*aruk Bihorac, twenty-five years old man lives and works in Sarajevo nowadays. He is a preschool education professor. Ten years ago, he lived in Zenica, where he fled from his hometown Jajce. He was happy when the Peace Agreement was signed, because shell bombing, shooting, anxiety, and fear stopped. He says he lived modestly during that time, “I worked all kinds of jobs to survive.” He talks with his friends and family about everyday topics, such are the situation in the country, music, movies, and sport. For Faruk, peace represents “normal life.” However, he is also asking himself what is a normal life in our country.

## ANDRIJA

*(1951), worker, Jajce*

Did you accomplish some of your plans?

**I bought a house, without any help and donations. I still work on repairing it.**

Do you live better today?

**We live better now, but I suffer more. I am working on hard jobs.**

A. Ž.

During the past ten years, he experienced many nice things: many friends, and many love. He quit smoking. On the day when he heard the news that the war stopped, A.Ž. was in Banja Luka with his friends, and he was trying to sell a video recorder. “We mostly tried to save our heads from bullets that were flying through the air, because people were shooting out of happiness.”

As he says, it was bad situation for him during that year. “Oh my dude, it was ugly! I was lucky they let me to enroll to the university. Otherwise, I could easily get jammed in Agino Selo, on the front line. That summer was really bad, and my only wish was to be demobilized from the army.”

And he was demobilized. A. Ž. Lives better today, but not much better. He attends concerts, but he does not go to the theater, “Because you cannot catch the place, too many usurers, and aunties with big hats.”

He talks most often with his friends about some nebulous things, nothing concrete. He says he believes in people, and he would like to have five children, in other words, to have enough courage to have five children.

To the question what is the peace for him, A.Ž. responded, “It is pretty important thing - after the war. It is because when you have something you do not think about it, and you start appreciating it only when you loose it.”

## **DRAGICA OLJAČA**

*(1950), unemployed economist, Novi Grad*

What is the peace for you?

**Only those people who survived war, and who were waiting their closest ones to return from the war, can know what the meaning of peace is. When they worry constantly what could happen to them when there are shootings. Peace means a lot to me!**

What do you expect from your future?

**I wish not to live enough to see another war, and I wish that for our children as well. There is no bright future for any nation in this area, having in mind the fact that nobody learned any lessons from many wars during the previous period.**

## **MILOŠ KAŠIĆ**

*(1947), professor of psychology and pedagogy*

How did you feel when you heard the peace had been signed?

**I felt empty, and had a lot of mistrust in myself.**

Where are you living today (did you change your place of living)?

**Banja Luka - Novi Sad - Donji Vakuf.**

Do you know who your neighbors are? Do you know who lives in your apartment building/neighborhood?

**Yes. I believe that good relationships with my neighbors are strengthening me, and bring back my confidence in life.**

## DIJANA

**D**ijana Dukić is a craftswoman. She was born in 1973. She says, “she was not interested much” in information about signing of the Peace Agreement, and she did not “believe much in the agreement.” During that time, as she says, she lived from day to day, and her only plan was “to leave Bosnia as soon as possible, and never to return.” Dijana’s plan did not become true. She says she “still lives in Tomislavgrad, unfortunately”. To the question if she traveled somewhere abroad during the past ten years, she responds with a big NO. She can see concerts and theatre performances “only on TV”, and she does not know what event in her life would be special in the past decade. To the question if she lives better today, Dijana responds, “Yes. But I can only thank to myself, and usurers’ loans.” She talks most often with her friends about “depression, unemployment, educational system, (un)developed municipality, thieves from the local administration, and various local official institutions...” For Dijana, peace represents “a job, content people around me, dying of nationalism, racism, and other ‘isms’, and especially nepotism.” Dijana does not expect anything more from her future, “she just hopes”.



**S.E.D.**

*S.E.D.*

, a man from Zenica felt bad when the peace was signed, because “Bosniaks just had a good start during that period”.

The only plan he had during that time was “to defeat aggressors that destroyed everything to us”.

He experienced many nice things during the past ten years. His son got a job, he repaired his favorite Golf, and he finally whitewashed his apartment.

He traveled several times to the seashore in Neum, and shopping in FIS trade center is regular thing in his life.

He hopes that “Čelik”<sup>24</sup> would regain its old fame, and would be a champion again. He expects from his future only sweat, tears, pain... until he move to Ahiret<sup>25</sup>.

## **FADILA MUHAREMOVIĆ**

*(1969), traffic police officer - currently private entrepreneur, Srebrenica*

What is the meaning of peace for you?

**For me, peace means to send my child to a school, day care center, park, playground... and not to worry if someone would consciously hurt him.**

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24 Čelik - local football team from Zenica

25 Ahiret - in Islam refers to another world, where people go after they die

## LJILJANA

*Lj*iljana was in Belgrade when she heard the news that the Peace Agreement was signed. She was surprised and happy, and she hoped she would start a normal life, and come out of misery she had felt in that period.

She accomplished a big part of her plans, but she expected more regarding improvement of her financial situation. Nowadays, Ljiljana Čičković lives in her hometown Trebinje, works 18 hours per day, and this is the only reason why she lives better today than she lived ten years ago. “I live better, but not because it is better situation in the state. It is because I work hard, but I do not earn neither close enough that I should earn for a job I work on.”

She believes in God and herself, and peace for her represents a freedom of speech, freedom of movement, liberation from fear, security, and peaceful sleep.

Ljiljana expects from her future “more than it has been offered to us, and I am afraid that I lost hope that I could accomplish that in this country.”

Z.G.

When he remembers November 21, 1995, when the peace was signed in Ohio, Z.G. from Mostar still feels disappointed. He was a member of HVO<sup>26</sup> unit that were just near Banja Luka, and “that signature ruined everything”. Because of that, he believes this peace represents “the worst peace in history”, and the state that came out of it represents “a foolish state.” He says, our question if he lives better today than he lived in 1995 sounds “silly” to him. He concludes that in the country governed by worldwide mafia nobody could live better. He is an economist by profession. He does not attend concerts since beginning of 90-ties, and he spends his time with his family and neighbors. He appreciates and respects his neighbors, regardless of their religion and nationality.

MIRJANA GRBIĆ  
(1952), teacher, Prijedor

How did you feel when you heard the peace was signed?

**I was happy. I saw we could easily loose ourselves. All people were already reduced to zero, but they were refusing to admit that. They knew we all had lost everything essentially. People went to war because they were forced to do that. It is a human anathema.**

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26 HVO - abbreviation for Croatian Defense Council, army of Bosnian Croats during the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

## SELMA

Selma Ramić from Prijedor asks herself very often, “What expects us in future? What we can do to improve it? However, she worries the most how she will educate her children. Selma could not find an answer to the question what the most beautiful thing that happened to her during the past ten years was. She says there are no nice things in the country with a difficult economic situation.

Ten years ago, Selma made decision to return to her home country from Switzerland, where she fled during the war with her family.

During that period, she lived well, and she did not have any financial difficulties. Her family was overjoyed when they returned to Prijedor. They were full of expectations, and had numerous plans, but they did not accomplish almost anything. However, Selma still has positive thoughts about life, and she only believes and hopes for “better tomorrow”.

## DRAGO JOVANOVIĆ

*1965, worker, Teslić*

Do you remember when the last time you danced with someone was?  
**I danced with my wife when we got our granddaughter.**

In what do you believe?

**I believe in consciousness of this tormented people.**

**D**oko Ivanković was not “especially satisfied” with signing of the Dayton Peace Agreement, “because we lost more territories with signing this so-called peace in the war”.

In 1995, his only plan was to repair his family house in the village Liješće “the house, which was burned by Croatian - Muslim military forces in May 1992”. He succeeded to reconstruct his house with the assistance of the Norwegian Government.

To the question what was the most beautiful thing that happened to him during the past ten years, Đoko responded, “There are many nice things that happened to me. I cannot think about some special event, except that I was honored to serve the Army of Republika Srpska.”

Đoko attends concerts and likes to dance. He says he uses every opportunity to “stretch his bones a little bit”, and dance with his wife.

He says he lives well today, “but much worse than he lived five years ago”. He talks with his friends and colleagues most often about “great injustice that happened to Serbian people, and the fact that nobody cares for Serbian truth about the past war, and sufferings of Serbs in former B&H. Of course, unavoidable topic is also a new brand of rich people.”

This twenty-eight years old man from surroundings of Srpski Brod says he believe in, “God, his parents, Ratko Mladić and Radovan Karadžić - four sacred things in my life.” He also says he does not believe “in this kind of peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina”.

“Only if we start to live as neighbors we would have real peace”, says Đoko Ivanković. He adds he does not expect anything from his future, “If situation in this country stays as it is. I expect a lot, if RS unites with Serbia.”

**CAMERAMAN**

*(1975), Banja Luka*

What does the peace mean for you?

**The situation we live in certainly does not represent a peace. It more looks like a falsehood. Peace for me represents traveling, a river, not watching TV. Less politics means more peace.**

What do you expect from your future?

**I expect my children would not grow up in this ruined state.**

**ALMA MARIĆ**

*cleaning lady, Mostar*

In what do you believe?

**I believe in God. I also believe in former Yugoslavia.**

What is the peace for you?

**Everything to be as it was during Tito's regime - to have more jobs. My past was much better than everything we have now.**

## NINA

Nowadays, Nina Malović lives and studies in Sarajevo, where she moved four years ago from “Western” Mostar.

The most beautiful things that happened to her during the past ten years are her independent life, and many new experiences.

Nina was fourteen years old when the Dayton Peace Agreement was signed. She hoped for the reconstruction of the country, and having a chance finally to have a normal childhood and education, because prior to that year, she lived in basements, in very difficult conditions, and, “the worst thing I lived in fear.”

Nowadays, Nina attends concerts and theatre performances, and she dances with her friends almost every weekend in a nightclub, discotheque, or cafe. She did not travel yet, because of “strict visa regime, lack of financial possibilities, and because a life standard in which we live in cannot compete with European standards”.

Nina expects from her future “to finish school, find a job that will allow me to live decently, to travel to countries that I dream about, and establish my family, sometime in a future”.

**M.F.**

**A**lthough she had a fever, and her four-year-old son Ahmet constantly dragged off her attention, M.F, thirty-five years old woman did not hesitate to answer our questions. She was born in Srebrenica, but she lives in Zenica for many years now.

While dusk was coming, I saw enormous sadness behind a clear and beautiful face of this young woman. However, I also saw indestructible faith in better life and God.

She was sad when she heard the news the peace was signed, because she lost her father and brother in Srebrenica. Regardless to that, she was ready to, “fight for peace in her heart and better life in future”.

Judging the way she answered our questions, it seems she succeeded to accomplish this.

She was one of the rare people that confirmed she lives better today than she lived during 1995. She also believes the peace signed in Dayton is durable, and that Bosnia and Herzegovina and its citizens have a future.



## EDINA

*E*dina Đogo, twenty-seven years old woman welcomed peace with happiness and a lot of hope in better future. Ten years ago, as every young person, she lived with great optimism and a lot of faith. She wished to return to her hometown.

As she says, she “did not accomplish anything - only 30% of her plans”. As the most beautiful event in the past ten years, she mentions opening of the mosque in Brčko.

She is concerned about corruption and discrimination of Bosniak’ citizens.

For Edina, peace represents a possibility for accomplishing better life conditions, economic progress, better life standard, and better future for her children.

To the question what she expects from her future, she responds, “I expect I would be able to do as much as I can for myself, my people, my city, my country, and would keep my identity, and fight for more rights.”

## LJILJANA MANOJLOVIĆ

(1956), accountant, Teslić

How did you live during that period? What kind of plans you had in 1995?  
**We had difficult life, without water and electricity, and in fear for our own life, and life of our family members. My only plan in 1995 was to start with a normal life.**

In what do you believe?

**I believe in justice.**

## CVIJETIN

**C**vijetin Živanović was born in 1975, and he lives in Bijeljina now. He is a technician of electro/energy by profession. In November 1995, he was a prisoner of war in Novi Travnik. He was not happy when he heard the news that the peace was signed.

“I felt miserably. Red Cross did not register me. I only wanted to reach a free territory in RS.”

To the question what is the most beautiful thing that happened to him in the past ten years, Cvijetin responds, “They did not catch Radovan and Ratko<sup>27</sup>”.

He travels to the seashore regularly. He lives very difficult, but he hopes it would be better in future. He talks most often about women - “there is no better topic than this one.”

Cvijetin believes in, “God, an honorable cross and golden freedom.” He expects to “finally settle down” in a future.

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27 Referring to Radovan Karadžić and Ratko Mladić  
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## JELENA

*J* or Jelena Jurošević from Zvornik, the news about peace meant that her father would not go to battlefield again. “I felt nice. In that moment, I realized my father would not go to battlefield any more. We lived lousy, and plans of one seven years old child were to enroll to a first year of elementary school,” says Jelena, nowadays a high school student.

During the past ten years, she met many friends, and spent wonderful moments with them. She talks most often with them about philosophy, sports, movies, and music. She knows all of her neighbors in her apartment building.

Jelena attended many concerts, and she has the most beautiful memories about the concert of “Negative” band. To the question if she remembers when the last time she danced was, she responds, “Of course I remember. It was ten days ago.”

Jelena was born in Sarajevo, and she lived in Banovići before the war. To the question what the peace means for her, she says, “Opposite from peace is war, so if the war stopped, and there is no war action, it certainly means peace.”

She expects to accomplish all of her plans in the peace, and to have fewer obstacles that she could not affect. “I believe everything goes on better in my life, and what is great - that is exactly happening,” says Jelena.

## EDIB

Edib from Donji Vakuf spent a year in Iraq with British organization, and succeeded to build a house. As he says, only thanks to that he lives better nowadays. His other plans did not become true. Traveling to Iraq was the only journey abroad he had in the past ten years. He was happy when the war stopped. However, To the question what the peace means for him, he responds, “This peace in Bosnia means corruption and robbery. I do not expect much in this state.” Edib believes in God and himself. He talks most often with his wife about possibilities for employment.

## PERO VUKOVIĆ

*(1963), mechanic technician, Sarajevo*

During the past ten years, did you travel abroad, on the seashore, skiing, shopping, and visiting cousins?

**It is difficult to get visa for traveling abroad. All the rest is fine.**

**TATJANA K.**

*(1977), pharmaceutical technician, Drvar*

In what do you believe?

**I do not know whom I could trust, because everything changed during the past ten years, and nothing is as it was before.**

What is the peace for you?

**It means everything. There is no life without peace, as there is no anything else without peace.**

**DRAGAN**

○

On the question how he felt when the peace was signed, Dragan Ćorić from Mostar responds openly, “I had no feelings about it”, and he adds, “I do not know who signed it and why.”

As he says, he believed in future during that time. However, he lost hope that there is a future for him and other middle-aged people in this region.

Despite this, he hopes that all of his three children would finish schools, and “leave far away from here.”

However, he does not think about emigrating somewhere abroad, because in early 90-ties he made decision he would stay home, and he would defend it.

Days in his hometown Mostar are passing slowly, almost with no events. He rarely talks with his friends, and he tries to avoid concerts and other events “because Al Qaida has been very active.”

Although he lost faith in everything, he unconditionally believes in God. Sometimes, he forgets his worries with a good drop<sup>28</sup>, and dances.

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28 A good drop refers to alcoholic beverage

## JOVANKA

Jovanka Erceg lost her husband and property during the war. As she says, she had a cramp when she heard the peace was signed. “After I lost my husband and property, nothing could fascinate or disappoint me, not a peace, which sounds nice, but only for happy people.”

Jovanka lived great before the war. “I thought I would reach the Moon. All of my nice dreams were destroyed in a second.”

Yet, she is alive, she is working, and has wonderful grandchild that keeps her going.

Jovanka is a teacher by profession, and nowadays lives in Banja Luka. She says it might sound nice, but it is “sad, because my heart stayed in my home.”

She does not live better in any sense. “I could only remember how it was before, because it is very difficult to have a lot, and lose it.”

She says she knows only her closest neighbors, because they have similar destinies as she has. “I am not interested in other people, because they would not help me. Unfortunately, this is how it is.”

Jovanka is fifty-seven years old, and she believes in destiny. “You have to live through what belongs to you, a little bit of nice things, a little bit of ugly things, and - say goodbye at the end.”

For her, peace represents “a life driving force, and who does not have it, lives miserably forever.”

## FADIL

Fadil Stahović believes in people, and real peace means everything for him. In the time of signing of the Peace Agreement, in American Military Air Base “Right Peterson”, Fadil was in Brčko with his wife. He was happy when he find out the war will stop.

“My people were born here for the past five hundred years, and I stayed here during the war as well”, says Fadil. He did not have any plans, except to go back through time, and reduce his sixty years of life to ten years.

“The only thing that happened is that I gained weight. Poor people eat starch a lot, therefore they gain weight easily”, says Fadil. The most important event for him during the past ten years was that his wife survived clinical death.

He does not travel anywhere, and he forgot even how his river Sava looks like.

The last time he danced for a birthday of his wife. As he says, “she had good medical findings”.

Fadil knows his neighbors, and expects that his health would serve him well. He talks most with his friends “about idiots who did all of this to us”.

## BOJANA

*B*ojana Medić from Bijeljina believes she was not aware what was happening when the war in B&H ended, but “I was happy, because my mother laughed after so many years. We lived decently during that period, and about plans... I think we did not have it than. Even if we had plans, it would not mean anything, because we could not accomplish them.” The event that marked a past decade of Bojana’s life was seeing her dad after fifteen years, but she also fall in love.

Since 1996, she travels to the seashore, thanks to her mom. Her mother is also her best friend, and she talks with her about everything. Beside her mom, Bojana has other friends she grew up with, and lived through war.

Latino dances are the greatest love for this nineteen years old girl. She dances constantly. Bojana believes in God, good people, and better tomorrow. She does not expect anything from her future, “but I expect a lot from myself, because I will build my future alone!”



## PETAR

*I*n November 1995, Petar Grubišić from Široki Brijeg was in the “Storm.”<sup>29</sup> He did not have plans during first few years after the war, and he lived on social welfare. To the question what is the most beautiful thing that happened to him during the past ten years, Petar says, “I slept with one lady, and we are still together.” He talks most often with his colleagues about the past war.

In his life, Petar only believes in “Roman Catholic God.”

He expects from his future “a peaceful death and a nice gravestone with a lot of roses.”

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29 “Storm” refers to military action of Croatian Army in Krajina.

## **JOKA VAVAN**

*(1957), economic technician, Potkozarje near Banja Luka*

How did you feel when you heard the peace was signed?

**I was happy. I thought all misfortunes and sufferings of people ended, so they would be able to return their homes, their native towns and places, their companies, their jobs. However, nothing happened. Only enormous grief.**

How did you live during that period? What kind of plans you had in 1995?

**I lived with pain and grief. I lost my only brother, my home, peace in my soul, my great temper, serenity, smile on my face, people I liked, worshiped and highly valued, as much as they valued me. There is one big nothing out of my plans.**

## ELVIRA

**E**lvira Berberović was a refugee in Germany when she heard the news about signing of the Dayton Peace Agreement. She felt happiness and peace in her heart, and she wanted to return to B&H immediately. During that period, she lived nicely. As she said, her parents did everything they could so Elvira and her brother would not feel consequences of war. “I was disappointed when I returned to Bosnia. In 1997, I came to Tuzla. People would rarely speak with me, because my dad ‘ran away’, and their fathers died in war. During 2000, I returned to my hometown Bijeljina, where I faced even greater intolerance, because I belong to minority population.”

One of the most beautiful moments in Elvira’s life was return to her home, which she left on her sixth birthday.

Today, Elvira is nineteen years old girl. She talks most often with her friends about all kinds of problems, and she says, “I believed in all kinds of things when I was a child, but today, I am trying not to lose my faith in people.”

For Elvira, peace is something she would wish for every human being to have. “Nowadays, peace represents utopia in the whole world, but we can make an effort to have peace in our hearts.”

## STIPE

While he insists for me to drink with him one authentic loza<sup>30</sup> from Herzegovina, and “kill viruses”, Stipe Madunić says he does not believe in a future with “imposed peace” in this region. “Only wolf and viper, as well as local criminals that are well connected with world-wide mafia have a future here,” says Stipe, while he kills the time in local bar in Tomislavgrad.

With bitterness, he says that Dayton peace represents “an occupation, similar like the one Turks did in B&H in 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> century. The only difference is that new occupiers are using more subtle methods and tools.”

Stipe got married after the war. He tried to get a loan to build a house, but he did not succeed, because he stayed without job. To the question what is the most beautiful thing that happened to him in the past ten years, he responds, “healthy children”, although he thinks this question is a bit stupid “as foreigners prepared it.”

A year after the war, he was in opera in “Kosača” in Mostar for the first time in his life, and he was impressed.

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30 Loza - brandy made of grapes

## NEFIZA

*I*n 1995, Nefiza Dautović was in Drvenik in Croatia, and her first wish was to find out if her family and friends are alive. She was happy because the sufferings of people in B&H ended, and she wanted to return to Stolac.

“I established contacts with my relatives and friends, but I still did not return”, says Nefiza. Nowadays, she lives in Sarajevo. Maturing of her son, regaining her property and professional successes are the most beautiful things that happened to her in the past ten years. She lives better today than she lived ten years ago, but she lives worse than she lived before the war.

Nefiza believes in people and those humane characteristics that many people have. She also believes in responsibility, work, and vision for a future. For her, peace means satisfying rights and needs of people. She expects good health for her family and herself in a future.

## ANA

*(1949), clerk, Doboj*

Did you accomplish some of your plans/expectations?

**I accomplished only small part of it. It is as if a good fortune is running away from me.**

## ZORAN

Just several days before signing of the Peace Agreement, Zoran Jokanović lost his uncle in the war. He could not be “especially happy” when he heard the news that war stopped. In 1995, a life was “quite good, but only thanks to the pre-war reserves”. As he says, he lived as displaced person in Srpski Brod. He hoped he would get a job, which he accomplished - he got a job in oil refinery. The most beautiful event in the past ten years is that he got married, and got a daughter. Last time he danced on his wedding. Three years ago, he traveled abroad to visit his sister, and two years ago he was on the seashore. “My life is little bit better today, but there is still uncertainty about a future”, says Zoran. He talks most often with his colleagues about salaries. Zoran believes in better tomorrow, and he expects to have more children, more peace, good health, and regular salary in future. “Peace for me means everything positive, and it represents security, life without turbulent changes, rises and falls, which come with the war”, he explains.

**MAJDA V.**

*(1971), receptionist, Mostar*

With whom do you talk the most often and what about?

**I talk about problems and current situation in the country, which goes worse and worse every day. It is bad for people that live here, as they would never have a social consciousness.**

What is the peace for you?

**It is certainly not this we have in B&H.**

**BRANKA**

*W*hen the war ended, Branka Čeremidžić was in Pale where she lived before. “I was happy, only that killing of people stopped,” says Branka. For her, peace means freedom. She slowly accomplished her postwar plans - she built a house, and her children are finishing school. However, she could not find a job, “Since 1992, I am without a job, when I got fired in Sarajevo because I was not able to come to work.” Branka talks most often about survival and possibilities for creation of better future for children. She believes in her family and friends.

**H.E.**

*W*hen the war stopped in B&H, H.E. from Bugojno was in her first year of high school. She cannot remember how she felt when she had heard the news, “It was long time ago. Ten years is a long period for me. I guess I was happy that I would attend school normally, not under grenades.” For her, peace represents, “a lot of things, it was signed, but not on the way I would want”.

During that period, she had many plans for her future, but until today, she did not accomplish almost anything. “I do not expect something better, at least for now. Perhaps it would be better five or ten years from now. Today, I just pray God not to be worse.”

Nowadays, she feels sorry because she did not “leave Bosnia” during the war. She believes her life would be completely different. She did not dance since her graduation ceremony, because “concerts are organized in Bugojno rarely, theatre performances as well, on dissatisfaction of all citizens of Bugojno”.



## DRAGIĆ

When he heard the news that the war stopped, Dragić Glišić thought his decision to stay in the country, and continue with his studies was correct.

In November 1995, Dragić was a student in Užice, and lived as “every average student”.

“I thought I would start to work in my profession - mechanics.” However, he accomplished that ten years after - in 2005, eight years after graduation, “and I graduated with highest grades on new production technologies”.

To the question what was the most beautiful thing that happened to him in the past ten years, this thirty years old man responds, “I married, got two children. Through NGO sector and ‘seminar tourism’ I met hundreds of youth people from former SFRY.<sup>31</sup>”

He attended many concerts (Balašević, Hari Mata Hari, Zabranjeno Pušenje), and as he says, he saw more than twenty theatre performances.

He talks with his friends about how to “establish their families here, or run away abroad, as long as they are not apathetic.”

For him, peace means, “period between wars in this region, as history has been teaching us”.

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31 SFRY - Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia

**RASEMA KOVAČEVIĆ**

*(1956), hairdresser, Glamoč*

With whom do you talk the most often and what about?

**I talk with my customers, all three nationalities, in my hairdresser shop.**

Do you know who your neighbors are?

**My neighbors are Serbs. We still live in a city suburb, and situation is OK.**

What do you expect from your future?

**I expect better. I live with my three children. I did not get any donation to fix my house. I have a son, he is disabled, and he lost his father when he was five years old. I asked for help from our authorities, but in vain.**

**MARIO ZELENKA**

*(1974), electrician, Mostar*

Do you remember when the last time you danced with someone was?

**I danced with my Mia recently.**

With whom do you talk the most often and what about?

**I talk about politics and those people across river Neretva.**

What do you expect from your future?

**I guess I expect to have children.**

## KELIMA

**K**elima Hadžić was a refugee in Zenica when she heard the Peace Agreement was signed. In 1995, she did not have any plans, except one - returning to her hometown Novi Grad. Kelima's wish became true. Beside that, her son graduated from the university, and her daughter finished high school. These things were the most beautiful events for her in the past ten years.

Kelima rarely travels. Sometimes she goes to visit her cousins in Prijedor and Banja Luka. She has several women friends in her city, and together they remember how they worked, traveled to the seashore, and had fun with their friends. Although she believes in a better future, Kerima does not live better. "I do not live better, I have no job. I am receiving 100 KM of family pension." For her, peace represents freedom. She does not expect anything from her future. "I expect better life for my children, nothing for myself."

**M.M.**

*M.M.* is an economist. As he says, nothing nice happened during the past ten years, and he did not accomplish any of his plans. He was satisfied when he heard the peace was signed, "Peace represents everything in life, symbol of beauty and good life." M.M lives in Brčko. In 1995, he lived lousy life, and the only plan he had was to get a job. He forgot how it looks like to attend concert or see theatre performance. "Before the war I was attending cultural events regularly, in the past ten years - never. I live 100% worse today than I lived before the war." It is the same with traveling abroad, to the seashore, or skiing. "I am not working - How can I go anywhere?!" He talks most often about finding a job. He believes in God, and he does not expect "anything nice" from a future.

A.O.

A.O. is a merchant. She hoped life would be better when the war stopped.

She was on the edge of existence, and she hoped she would regain and sell her apartment, get a job, and make more money.

She moved three times in the past ten years. She does not remember last time when she attended concert, and when she danced with someone. To the question what the most common topic of conversation with other people is, A.O. forty-two years old woman says, "I am gossiping, and complaining about different things." She believes in God, and His justice. For her, peace is only "when there are no shootings".

She does not know who her neighbors are, and she is not interested to find out that. She expects from a future "to endure this life rhythm, and to settle somewhere".

AZRA CERIĆ

(1969), merchant, Kozarska Dubica

Do you live better today?

**I do not live better.**

In what do you believe?

**After everything that happened to us there are only few things I could believe in.**

## BRANE

*B*rane Savić is convinced the peace could be signed earlier, “If the West wanted that.”

During that period, Brane lived in Serbia, and he lived out of his work. And then he lost a job. He lost his plans too. However, he says he still lives OK, “I only hope not to be worse.”

To the question, what he most often talks about, Brane responds, “About lost ten years.” For him, peace is a normal situation, and as he says, future must be built.

## BELKISA KULENOVIĆ

*(1957), merchant, Bihać*

What is the peace for you?

**Something nice. Something ideal. However, we cannot see that beauty anywhere.**

## ASIMA

**A**sima Majanović was skeptic when she heard the news that peace was signed. “I could not believe that happened.”

Asima lived in Bihać, and as she says, her life was very difficult. “If I could only find a job”, that was Asima’s only wish during that period. “I started working, and I am going back to normal, because it was very difficult for me during the war. I did not have help from anyone”, says forty-four years old Asima. One of the rare bright things that happened in her life was a birth of male child in her family. “I got a nephew. After twenty-two years, we got a male child in our family. Isn’t that the most beautiful thing?!”

Asima has a small salary, but she learned to live modestly.

She chats most often with her friend, “about common women’s topics and housework”. She believes in God and her work. For her, peace represents, “better future when innocent people would not die.” To the question what she expects from her future, Asima responded, “I do not know really, because every day is the same for me. You live from today until tomorrow only for food, and no one build anything.”

N.N.

*I*n November 1995, when the Dayton Peace Agreement was signed, N.N, sixty-seven years old man from Sarajevo, did not have any plans. He feels good because he did not plan anything, “because all of those people with big hopes and plans are now really disappointed because they realized that all those stories about happy and prosperous future - lies.”

Sometimes, when he attends concerts, such was the one of Đole Balašević, when he enjoyed a lot - he feels a spirit of time when people lived better and more relaxed. Thanks to his cousins, he visited Czech Republic several times.

He believes in God, and hopes peace in this region would be durable.

**DRAGAN BUKIĆ**

*(1965), innkeeper, Široki Brijeg*

What is the most beautiful thing that happened to you in the past ten years?

**Victory. When we won the war.**

With whom do you talk the most often and what about?

**About the war.**



S.Č.

"*F*or traveling abroad, beside visa you need also cousins, which I don't have. So I reattached foreign countries for our hills and rivers." This is how S.Č. from Banja Luka explained why he did not travel abroad in the past ten years.

In the time when the Peace Agreement was signed, he was in a military unit in the area of Teslić. He says he was happy when he heard the news, because "military obligations stopped". He did not have big plans, "beside a wish to improve my life standard."

"Through my job in a private company, I improved my life standard, and I can live normally and modestly with my earnings", says S.Č. He still lives on the same address, but without former neighbors and friends. "Now here are some new neighbors and new friends. Majority of them I know only superficially, and I do not make close contacts, because all of them have their own problems."

This forty-two years old man is a mechanic engineer by profession. He talks most often with his friends "about job, sport, daily politics, survival of our nation in this region, and inappropriate pressures of the international community representatives on all areas of our life."

He says that peace means "ability of those who govern not to use non-violent means for accomplishing of their interests."

"Peace represents freedom of individuals and nations to enjoy common life with other individuals and nations, without fear for their existence," says S.Č. From his future, he expects, "improvement of life standard and possibility for traveling across peaceful world."

## FAKETA

*F*aketa Avdić from Dobož expects to accomplish her human rights - to return on her working place, or to connect her accrued time, and realize her pension. She was happy when the war ended, because she was “under pressure” during the war as a member of minority community. “I experienced real humiliations and ugly events, which I do not like to remember”, explains Faketa. The most beautiful event for her in the past ten years was when her son graduated from the university. As she says, he unfortunately lives now in Malaysia, in Kuala Lumpur. For her, peace represents something most beautiful in the world, happiness that cannot be described.

**R.N.**

*(1934), pensioner, Sarajevo*

What do you expect from your future?  
**To live easier with all diseases I have.**

## BOJANA

**B**ojana Lazendić is twenty- four years old woman, and she lives in Teslić. Although she was a child, she remembers she was happy when she heard the war stopped in B&H. She lived lousy during these war years. “In 1994, my father was wounded, and we did not have any income”, remembers Bojana.

She says that nothing especially nice happened to her in the past ten years. She accomplished her only plan from that period, and she enrolled to the university.

“I can say I live better only for 10% because I still did not solve my housing issues. I still live with my parents as subtenant”, says Bojana. Until now, she traveled to the seashore in Croatia, and went on excursion to Greece. Last time Bojana danced on a wedding four months ago. She attended concert of “Bijelo Dugme” in Belgrade. She believes in herself, her parents, and God.

For her, peace means, “freedom of speech and movement, a stable state, good job, income enough for good life (traveling to the seashore at least once a year, excursions, celebrations...)”

After she finishes her school, she expects to, “find a good job with good salary, to have my own family (husband, children, dog, cat,...) to have sincere friends, a good health for my closest ones, and a happy old age.”

**DALMIR JAŠAREVIĆ**

*(1980), student, Bihać*

Do you remember when the last time you danced with someone was?

**I danced with my girlfriend, but we are not together anymore.**

With whom do you talk the most often and what about?

**About cars and sex.**

What does the peace mean for you?

**Freedom of citizens, and their social security.**

What do you expect from your future?

**I expect to get a job, and earn good money.**

**Ž.S.**

*(1972), physician, Bijeljina*

Did you accomplish any of your plans?

**I accomplished small part of my plans - greater part of my plans was changed violently. However, at least some things went well at the end.**

In what do you believe?

**I follow the saying that you never know why something is good. However, justice must be satisfied.**

What is the peace for you?

**Peace is life without any kind of aggression, and freedom of choice.**

## JOVICA

Jovica Todorović will never forget smiles on faces of his fellow soldiers and singing trenches “somewhere in Posavina” in November 1995. Not only that the peace came, which everybody was celebrating, but it also meant he finally got a chance to go home and see his newborn son for the first time.

“I got a child, and I could not see him. It was because of my obligations toward Army of RS. Those war years where the worst years in my life. If I stay alive, my plans were to devote myself to my family, and become valuable member of this society,” says Jovica.

In the years after demobilization, Jovica became a father again, he built a house, and he lives “modest and honorable life.”

“I have many friends, we spend time together, and they have confidence in me. No one can say I am dishonest, and I do not owe anything to anyone”, says this thirty-six years old merchant.

To the question what is the most beautiful event for him in the past ten years, Jovica responded, “I lived enough to see a sun of freedom. I have a wife and two wonderful children. I am attending sports’ competitions in Serbia and Montenegro for past four years.”

Although he is an optimist, and he did not lose faith in God, Jovica is a little bit skeptic about a future.

“I do not expect anything good from the people in government”, says Jovica. He says he tries not to be occupied with politics much. He enjoys sport much more than that.

## MARINA

**D**uring the past ten years, Marina from Široki Brijeg found something that many people search for - an inner peace. After the peace was signed, her life guided her several times abroad, where she honestly earns her piece of bread as a season's worker. She sincerely welcomes every day, and enjoys attending frequent concerts and dance with her boyfriend. She does not think about future, because she believes future is "in God's hands, and my family and me are faithful to God, until the end".

**BELMA ŠKERIĆ**  
*(1982), Bihać*

Where have you been when the Dayton Peace Agreement was signed in November 1995?

**I was in Germany.**

How did you feel when you heard the peace was signed?

**I felt nice, finally I could return to my homeland.**

What is the most beautiful thing that happened to you in the past ten years?

**I finally have some friends with whom I can talk on my mother language.**

## A.T. STUDENT

*W*hen the peace was signed, A.T. from Sarajevo was in Germany. She was a child then, so she cannot remember everything in detail, but she knows she was happy because the war ended. She always wanted to go back to Sarajevo, to be with her father and family, and her wish became true. In the meantime, A.T. finished a high school, and enrolled to the university. Nowadays, she does not live better than she lived ten years ago.

“Peace for me represents agreement, good life, and prosperous state, not the government that robbes us more and more every day,” says A.T. She does not expect anything from the future if the state continues to go backward.

## MARICA BAJA

*(1939), pensioner, Glamoč*

Do you live better today?

**Here and there, it is almost the same. I am going to public kitchen every day, they give us to eat, as a good deed.**

Do you know who your neighbors are? Do you know who lives in your apartment building/neighborhood?

**There is one old woman Serb, and rests of the people are Croats - I do not know them well.**

What do you expect from your future?

**I expect Glamoč to be Serb town again, and to be healthy as long as I am alive.**

## ZAGORKA

When she heard the war ended in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Zagorka Pralica from Kozarska Dubica was “as resurrected and indescribable happy”. “Millions of prayers for a light on the end of a tunnel were granted. I cried of great happiness, because I knew my children, and all other children would not be in danger to get killed any more, and I knew I would be able to see many people laughing again”, says this teacher. She expected her and her husband to have normal life and regular salaries, so they can educate their children, and secure their life “with normal children joy”.

“My salary was regular to a certain degree. However, it was burdened with many loans, so my debts, especially toward ‘our dear state’ were increasing every day”, explains Zagorka.

The most beautiful events in the past ten years for Zagorka were graduation of her daughter, and her employment, “although without social and health insurance”. “I am also happy because my son returned to a right track, because he went astray.”

She goes shopping “to the boutiques of our Chinese friends. God bless them!” She watches concerts mostly on the TV. She was overwhelmed with emotions when she saw the concert of “Bijelo Dugme”.

She likes to dance, and last time she danced on graduation party of her last generation of students in elementary school. “I danced with a whole generation of students and my female colleagues. Those small groups of men are not dancing. They are solving bigger, world problems,” she remembers.

She talks most often with herself and a paper, “about vulgar capitalism, about ways for preventing disappearance of life visions I have had



all my life, about ways to stay normal, and to keep my job”. Zagorka believes in love, kindness, and cosmic justice that good would be returned with good, “sooner or latter”, but also evil would be returned with evil. She believes in one God, without a name, and without laying different claims on Him.

She expects youth people would know how to preserve love, overcome hate, and hopelessness, and bring back a good life on this planet. For her, peace represents meaning of life and inner peace, people that laugh, make jokes, and sing, people that love and respect each other. The peace is when you do not walk on fingers, and you do not whisper your thoughts. The peace is when you are not just a subject, but you are a human with your place under sun, when you are free, and you do not ask yourself as Meša Selimović “If you are afraid ram, if you are afraid of ex.....when will we live then?”

She expects from her future to regain her human dignity, for her children to find jobs, for her daughter and son to get married, and for her to get an opportunity to play with her grandchildren, and not to spoil them. She also expects that nothing would prevent her to finish her working age, and successfully pay back her loans, and than to sing her favorite song “Zajdi, zajdi”<sup>32</sup>.

N. N.

*N.N.* thirty-one years old man from Mostar is content with life in B&H. He is full of optimism and wiliness for life.

“I am happy that the war ended, and that killings of innocent people stopped”, says this man from Mostar. In 1995, he planed to finish his education, stopped by war, to find a decent job, and create his own family. Without any help, he succeeded to employ himself, and secure his existence. “I will accomplish all my plans in a near future,” he says. He does not say that without a reason, because he just met “one wonderful person,” they started seeing each other, and he wishes to stay with her until the end of his life.

In relation to travels - he visited cousins to buy a car for himself. He attends theatre performances and concerts, and he especially liked the concerts of Zdravko Čolić in Mostar and Čapljina. He likes to dance, and there is no problem for him to remember when the last time he danced was - on one wedding celebration, you already guess who was a partner.

He did not change a place of living in the past ten years. He knows all of his neighbors in his apartment building, whatever that means.

He talks most often with his girlfriend, “about common things that are important for a future”. He believes in God and better tomorrow. For him, peace represents, “love, common life, kindness toward all people, tolerance, and all positive characteristics that good people have”.

At the end of conversation, he says we should observe a life with optimism, “because that is the only way for all of us to succeed”.

**MURATAGIĆ JASMIN**

*(1983), student, Sarajevo*

What do you expect from your future?

**I have no idea. I guess I would like to find a great wife, which would make me running home from work.**



## ON THE OTHER SIDE OF HOPE

Ten years ago, I was happy because the war ended. Extensive sufferings of people and destructions of our souls stopped, as well as destruction of everything created by human hands for many years in this region. I am not even sure that was happiness, it was more as relief. One deep relief that we finally experience peace, after one tragic period of five years. In that period, I thought we are at the beginning of reconnection of broken ties of our lives.

This thought gave me hope that we would leave this tragic experience behind us. Naively or not, I believed that all of us who passed through horrors of war would deeply value peace, and have responsibility for it that much that we would never lose it.

What else I believed during that time? Well, simply saying, I believed in one better life - we would reconstruct everything that was destroyed, we would start factories, we would return to places we were forced to leave, our children would finish small, and big schools, we would build one new society for new people... I truly saw a light somewhere at the end of a tunnel we were in. I also believed this light could not only light up our future horizons, but also help us to heal more easily the lost of our closest ones.

Not without nostalgia, I even believed in regaining closeness of those things that became almost endlessly distant with this unfortunate war - that one day we would be close with the streets and squares of Zagreb, Belgrade, Skopje, Podgorica, and Ljubljana ... and people that live in these cities, for sure.

In November 1995, I was forty-five years old, and I felt like I have half less than that.

A man always gets older in war. We are going out from war with more visible wrinkles, and deep scars in our souls, which are not visible for other people. At least not at the first sight. I was receiving knowledge about it from a various literature before. Now I can sense it from my personal experience. This is because a war, as one abnormal and unnatural situation, is condensing, gathering, and curdling a time - in one day, hour, one single moment a whole life could easily fly through us.

From the other hand, it seems the end of war rejuvenates us. It fills with peace an air we breathe in, and spaces we walk through. Naturally, doing this, peace also fills us in, and than we become younger. It is as if we become some new people.

I felt like this on day when the peace arrived here. Despite my age, I felt young. As the peace came with some strange alchemic power, some elixir that makes old people young again.

As every young person, I was full of faith and hope for better tomorrow. I was convinced that better times simply must happen to us. Not only in the sphere of material reconstruction of life, but also in renaissance of a soul.

I remember I was just recalling my own youth, friendships, talks... and love, of course. I was recalling plans for future, which we were developing and changing in our twenties, and we sincerely believed they would become true. I recalled all dear and familiar pictures of school days, excursions, graduation parties, first relationships, wedding, birth of my children, their maturing, but also their youth. It was as if I lived through all of that again.

As if a life could also repeat again, not just renovate.

My words might sound pathetic, but they are sincere. Because I truly was - and I certainly was not the only person - filled with these feelings.

However, years that came showed my feelings are one thing, and everyday life something different. Instead of developing life in the line with these hopes that we deeply had in us - every year we were facing with new obstacles that were destroying our hopes.

In the economic sense, life is much worse than it was ten years ago. Economy is not working, and many people are jobless.

In fact, many people are just surviving. Our society divided in small number of rich people, and all other people that live in poverty, not only in economic sense. Extensive tragedy reduced human needs on the level of animal. Entire postwar life has been marked with essential logic of having a head on our shoulders and having something to eat. Looking generally, all spiritual, cultural, and basic human needs are pushed aside, or even eliminated.

As if a life, passes by people, or people pass by a life.

This can be seen with the naked eye. It is visible that we are not living, but only vegetating, imprisoned in our ethnic communities, apartments, houses, woods, or fields of our nation... Those who were lucky to get a job, work in companies of their people, they educate their children in Serbian, Croatian, or Bosniak schools, and - naturally - following the curricula that are in line with vital national interests for first, second, or third nation. Because we are trained to be cautious of those others, because we are endangered, and we can survive exclusively with our kind.

Our local politics and politicians, but also their partners - meaning institutions of the international community are training us for this. All of them say we have chances for a future only if we follow these tribal rules.

Those chances for a future are identical as our recent past and present reality. Meaning - no chances.

Of course, this counts only if we do not change something drastically.

As for now, there are no changes. It is because some people do not find changes suitable to their interests, some people who could change the things are hesitating too much - they are waiting. Or perhaps, everybody is waiting.

And this is quite enough for resignation. Or for hopelessness, you should take it as you like.

At one time, experts and wise men said hope is for hopeless people. I guess they were right. However, with us, things are opposite (as in many other situations) - hopelessness is for those people who has a hope once.

Regardless how difficult, or too difficult this statement is, it tackles the center of our life and our feelings. This statement also warns us that nothing important is happening to us, and nothing important would happen, at least not in a near future.

I belong to those people that consider this statement quite logical, having in mind our current life situation, and as things are now, it will stay like that for a long time.

And those I belong to really share my believes. The research conducted by the Helsinki Citizens Assembly Banja Luka, and its results presented in this book are confirming my thoughts. I am not quite sure if we can call this research results in narrow scientific sense. I would rather say it reflects sensitive listening of experiences, and feelings of our people related to the period when the Dayton Peace Agreement was signed, how they lived, and what they were doing in past ten years, how they are living now, and what they expect from future.

Asking human questions - we received also human answers. And this dimension of humanity might represent most valuable thing recorded between covers of this book, and all those people that will read this book would certainly recognize it.



If I would, as every other professionally deformed professor of philosophy, search for so-called common characteristics of things that people wrote on their questionnaires, I could say all of them experienced happiness, relief, and prediction of some new time with arrival of peace. That experience was filled with hope and sincere expectations those future days would be different of those that passed.

However, research also show years of peace did not bring many things those people expected, believed, and hoped. With every day, hope was weakening, and expectations were more and more failing. Those people who lost the closest members of family really believed this new life would bring at least some satisfaction. People who fled their hometowns and left their houses also had similar expectations.

However, monotony of everyday life - many people without job, without essential means for life and education of their children, people with cramp of struggle for bare existence on one side, and power of policy manipulators, criminal, corruption, and extreme richness on the other side - all of this shadowed the sky, and hid sunlight of peace, which started to show on our horizon.

As if, the peace became pungent and heavy, brutal, so to say.

It sounds almost tragic, words of those people who were humiliated and deprived of rights, who were deceived and left alone. Only some of them, and only sometimes, say that something nice happened to them during past ten years (weddings, birth of children or grandchildren, love...)

In reality, everything is gray. Whole life. Our mornings, afternoons, and evenings are grey. Friendships we have or do not have, talks, parties we attend.

In this grayness, we started to withdraw, to close ourselves in our own worries and misfortunes, to hide ourselves from other people. Almost in the same time, we installed a new code in our souls - autistic code. And than, as people suffering of autism, we do not communicate with our environment. If we communicate with other people, we do that indirectly, through endless and always too smart talks about politics

and politicians, and about this and that scandals. As if we somehow left aside our real, authentic contents of life, like they are grains of sand that can easily slip through our fingers, and we cannot take them back... We have almost empty hands, perhaps some grains of sand are still left there, and they are endlessly lonely.

Therefore, as if there is no optimism. Extremely rarely, here and there, someone mentions faith in better future.

Life is somewhere else - this is the message of our collocutors, both younger and older people. Those who are even older are almost nostalgically calling for pieces of life from prewar period, recalling their youth, but also various human dimensions that were part of everyday life. They also remember quite big security provided to the citizens by social institutions.

From the other hand, life is insecure today. Perhaps everything is part of the lottery today - brilliant but also cynical statement of our fellow citizen, which says she traveled to the seashore only once in the past ten years - she was in Bečići, Montenegro, as a winner of Bingo Lottery.

Naturally, uncertainty destroys foundations of life, but it also destroys hope. This gives me a reason to say we are living on the other side of hope.

Every life on the other side of hope is dangerous, not only in physical sense, but also spiritual - this danger is threatening our most intimate parts we are carrying in ourselves. More precisely - as we do not trust in things that are surrounding us in everyday life, and we do not trust other people, our neighbors, authorities, and we do not even trust the nature that appears to us as unstable, similar like a time we live in.

This is the reason why majority of our collocutors, I guess with a good reason, claim they still believe only in God. We should devote ourselves to Him, and direct our thoughts and feelings to Him. Attitudes that we should believe in human, in our ten fingers, in love - are in the range of exceptions. Of course, I do not have a right to judge if faith in

God represents only way out from dark vilayet in which we are living, or the only solution for extensive misfortunes, or only salvation. However, I believe it would do no harm if we have a little bit more faith in our common life.

I believe one more thing is worth mentioning. Certain number of people, who were asked to fill in the questionnaires, returned them without any comments. In fact, not quite without notes. They wrote their name and surname, and instead of answering, they drag a line below every question. I personally assume this empty line represents an answer, which shows us that these people do not have to say anything about all of these questions.

I was thinking to write a separate story about this, because I think the answers that are directing us on nothing also deserve our attention. However, I was afraid, it would be inappropriate for this occasion, perhaps too philosophical, and as such, distant from a life. Because of that, I gave up from this intention, and I decided to conclude my modest remarks with something else. Therefore, with paraphrase of the title of this truly remarkable and valuable book, with warm human stories - Thank you fir giving me an opportunity to write this text!

*Miodrag Živanović*

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## HOW DID WE DANCE WHILE WE WERE DYING?

There is no doubt nothing bothers me more than a topic "Ten Years After Dayton" in a season Autumn/Winter 2005. Every domestic and international "šušā i marušā"<sup>1</sup> felt invited to explain thoroughly to these common people, and other as well, what are our gains/profits/losses under the umbrella or in a cradle of the paper that was signed in Military Base Right (Wrong) Paterson, under aggressive twist of hands. Culmination of cynicism, which we are adjusted as coached cattle, is that powerful and "genius" designers of this "Agreement", say without any hesitation - it was a mistake!!! Everything that happened was the only possible solution in a technical sense, and Frankenstein' consequences are collateral damage.

"Dayton" brought PEACE. Bingo! You alone, should solve everything that comes after that. "Only citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina should and must decide about their present situation, and well placed future." It is not up to us. Perversity of this message comes with an assumption that the same citizens of B&H were deciding where and how a horror would begin (slaughtering, raping, deportations, destructions (physical) dissolution (social, but also psychological). Moreover, after this "bloody feast", when will "people in black", enjoying desserts and cigarettes, comfortably decide it was enough? Dictum: If there is a time for something to happen, it should happen.

Yes, and?! We should live with that, we want to see it or not. And we saw it, if we did not close our eyes like people with autism do, or we did not suffered from certified depression, and pulled quilts over our heads not to enter a new morning, for every single day in a past ten years. If there is a God or not, these "ten years" are not small piece of time. Similar like Dayton's sarcastic percentages 49/51 - that is 10/20% of our lives.

I could talk resignedly like this for a long time, so I will shorten my story. Text-confession you are lucky or not to read between two covers of this book represents most authentic testimony about the saddest ten years, after "hardest ten years."

It is a cosmic question how do we succeed to survive at all, do we really know our neighborhood, or just passively watch people near us, do we have faith, or hope at least. Fortune wheel does not turn. Everyone who saw Peter Bruce or listened U2 deserves to be examined. Everyone who danced ritually because of pain or traditional pressure deserves admiration.

At least we danced.

Thank you for not asking me how I feel.

This people will live!

Zdravko Grebo

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<sup>1</sup> "šušā i marušā" - referring to insignificant person



THANK YOU FOR ASKING HOW I FEEL