

10/17/2007

GUBIĆ, Milenko
Former Yugoslavia Witnesses Documentation Project
Serbian
RG-50.586*0059

In this interview, Milenko Gubić, born in Draksenic (in present-day Bosnia and Herzegovina), on January 1, 1930, talks about the beginning of World War II and mentions hiding in Kozara and running away from the Ustaše. He describes his life during the war in various places: Ustica (an island off the coast of Sicily), the Jasenovac concentration camp, and Gradiška. He gives details about children dying on top of him in Jasenovac, mentions being in a wagon for two days without food and water. He also explains the eating of human flesh while in the wagon.

Box 1, Tape 1

[00:] 00:15:00 – [00:] 10:25:10
00:00 – 10:10

Milenko Gubić begins by noting his place and date of birth as Draksenic (located in present-day Bosnia and Herzegovina), on January 1, 1930; says that for his village the war began on January 14; remembers his mother waking up and making breakfast; says it was at that time that the Ustaše began throwing grenades from the Jasenovac concentration camp; says they were told that the Ustaše were attacking over the Sava River, and that they should leave for Kozara; remembers the Ustaše killing people and burning down the town; recalls there being nothing to eat in Kozara; explains a situation in which he was attacked by Ustaše from airplanes: he was running away, carrying a pillow with him and at one point decided to lie on the ground; says that Ustaše in planes began to fire bullets at him but luckily he was not hit; notes he was in Kozara from January until the spring; says the entire time the Ustaše were chasing them and that they were running about two kilometers from them every day; remembers it was hard to hide from the Ustaše dogs; notes that the Ustaše finally forced them back to town; says they were arrested and sent to a concentration camp in Ustica, Italy, where they stayed for a few months; remembers sleeping outside; explains how he slept beneath his mother to keep warm.

[00:] 10:25:11 – [00:] 20:14:21
10:11 – 20:00

Gubić remembers when they were traveling in Ustica; says the Ustaše took his father because he was not able to walk and placed him in a house; recalls that at that point his mother gave him some potatoes and asked him to bring them to his father; says that was the last time that he saw his father; remembers that they [*the Ustaše?*] were killing children who were older than 14; recalls being taken to Jasenovac, but there was not enough space for them; says they were then taken to a church in Medjugorje; says they were not given anything to eat, but that they were allowed to beg for food from locals; notes that they went begging for a few days until the locals refused to give them any more food; notes that from there, they were taken to German houses in

10/17/2007

Sunju; says the Ustaše took them to German houses because the Germans had gone back to Germany; says that in **Sunju** they had nothing to eat, but that no one bothered them there; says that from **Sunju** they were able to see Kozara so they decided to go towards the town; says they were stopped by Croatian guards who contemplated either killing or capturing the group, and ultimately decided to have them put in wagons and sent to Gradiška.

[00:] 20:14:22 – [00:] 30:42:12
20:01 – 30:28

Gubić says that when Ustaše took them to Gradiška, they refused to open the doors on wagons for those on board; says people in the wagons were defecating and urinating on one another; remembers that one day the guards finally decided to open the doors, and when they did, they threw cooked human bodies to them to eat; explains that he caught a leg and ate it; notes that human flesh is sweet tasting; highlights that whoever caught a piece, ate, and those who did not catch anything, ate nothing; says they were then taken out of the wagons; remembers being in Gradiška between 10 and 15 days; recalls the day when the Ustaše separated those who were able to work from those who were not; says those who were able to work were taken to Germany; says the elderly returned to their houses, and took children with them so they would not have to fight along with the partisans, and children aged two and under were given up for adoption; says he remained at Gradiška until he was again taken in a wagon and sent to **Jastrebuska**, though he did not know at the time that was their destination; says when they arrived, he saw lots of children and estimates there to be about 4,000 in the camp; says they were given water mixed with little bit of milk as their food but there was never enough of it, and estimates that about half the children would not receive any of it; remembers that near the camp there was a river and when it would freeze, guards would force children to take baths in the river; explains how froth would come out of their mouth, and many children were dying every day; remembers many dead children lying on him; notes that when the majority of the children were dead, the Ustaše decided to close the camp.

[00:] 30:42:13 – [00:] 39:52:13
30:29 – 39:31

Gubić says that when the camp closed, two 15-year old partisan girls came looking for children to take to the hospital; recalls being selected to go and describes his physical condition at the time: his skin was black and broken, there was something sticking out from his skin, he had a high temperature, and there was little to no fat on his body; says that from the hospital they took him to a palace where he was asked questions such as, “Can you tell us about **Jastrebuska**?”; “How many people were in wagon?”; says he explained they were lying on each other, there were dead people everywhere, and that many people passed out; told them that in **Jastrebuska** he used to dig up dirt to find grass to eat; recalls the size of the camp as big, and that they were sleeping on the ground one next to the other, and notes that there was always someone dead in the morning; says the guards would come by every morning to take away the dead.

[00:] 39:52:14 – [00:] 48:21:14
39:32 – 48:07

10/17/2007

Gubić recalls that while in **Jastrebuska**, he would lie in the corner next to a wall, and that when the children would die, they would somehow find their way to that area; recalls a specific time when he was found by two girls; says he did not have enough energy to pull himself up from under the children lying dead on top of him; says that there were no lights in the room, so guards would beat anybody who was in their way; says he was the only one who survived the beating, but that he does not remember much about the beating because he fainted; says his head was the only visible part of his body; talking again about the hospital, where he remained for about four months; remembers being treated by a Doctor **Branko**; recalls an incident in which one day he needed to use the bathroom, and was in such poor health, the only way he could walk to the bathroom was by propping himself against the wall; says when he tried to use the restroom, his intestine came out and he began screaming; remembers it taking a few days for his pain to go away.

[00:] 48:21:15 – [00:] 57:50:12
48:08 – 57:37

Gubić says that in the hospital there were about twelve other children; says that one day partisans came in, told them to turn the lights off, and to be quiet; says the partisans took them to a small truck and drove them to the woods where there were more partisans; remembers that all of them had numbers on their necks; says they were trying to find out where they were from according to those numbers; says the partisans told them to go into town and help locals with farming; remembers people coming and selecting children; says he was selected to assist with pigs, and stayed in that town for about a day and a half; says that when he returned to his own town, he did not find anybody; says he did not find his father or mother, but mentions that two of his sisters survived; on the question about Ustaše airplanes attacking them while they were trying to flee, he explains that when a lot of people were walking together, the Ustaše would notice them and proceed to fire shots from planes.