

VAREIKIS, Viktoras
Lithuania Documentation Project
Lithuanian
RG-50.473*0054

In this interview, Viktoras Vareikis, born on March 18, 1927, a craftsman and resident of Dunkstyna, a village outside of Ukmergė, describes the killing of four Jewish victims on the road near his home. Vareikis witnessed how “white stripers” selected four victims from a large column of Jews, took them to the forest, and killed them. He went to the killing site and saw the victims and brought water to a female victim who was injured but not killed. After the woman was later killed, Vareikis was sent to dig a grave and bury, and then rebury the victims after they were dug up. Vareikis also describes the beating and torture of Jews in the Antakalnis prison yard in Ukmergė. The interview takes place outdoors in front of Vareikis’s home and also at the site of the massacre and burial of the victims.

Box 1, Tape 1

[01:] 00:40:21 – [01:] 07:15:12
00:42 – 07:33

He introduces himself as Viktoras Vareikis, born on March 18, 1927, in Dunkstyna, a village outside of Ukmergė (in central Lithuania, about 70 kilometers northwest of Vilnius); says that when the Germans arrived at the start of the war, the Jews were destroyed; states that the Jews fled Ukmergė and then were brought back by the “baltaraiščiai” (white stripers) or the “Šauliai” (Lietuvos Šaulių Sąjunga (LŠS) – Lithuanian Riflemen’s Union: a nationalistic paramilitary civilian defense league, hereafter referred to as “Riflemen”) [*points to his home and the stairs on which he was sitting when he saw the “white stripers” lead the Jews down the road, select a few of them, take them to the forest and kill them*]; adds the names of two of his friends who also witnessed the event: **Viktoras Sakalauskas**, deceased, and **Petras Petrulis**, deceased; [*camera pans to show Vareikis’s home*] describes how the “white stripers” rode on bicycles as they drove the Jews in columns from Ukmergė; further recounts how they stopped the march and selected four people from the group and took them over to the forest; says that then he heard shots being fired and that afterwards he saw that the “white stripers” had killed four people on a path in the forest; reveals that one of the victims, a woman, was not yet dead but was still moving and that an old woman who lived nearby named Mrs. **Levanavičienė [Levenavičienė]** (wife of Mr. **Levanavičius [Levenavičius]**) told Vareikis and his friend to bring the woman some water; [*camera moves to show the surrounding area*]; explains that when he went to look at the victims in the forest there were four bloody male corpses [*the number of male victims is inconsistent throughout the interview*] and one injured woman who was still alive; says that it was frightening so they ran away; recounts that he and a few others were made to dig a grave and bury the victims the next day but that the grave was dug up a few days later; repeats his explanation of the column of Jews being taken down the road, that the “white stripers” who drove them were on bicycles, that they stopped the march and selected a few people from the column and took them

to the forest; when asked to discuss the reason for selecting and killing these individuals, says that this act was incomprehensible and despicable and that he cannot even begin to provide an explanation; in order to illustrate the violence of the times, mentions a man named **Banionis** who was killed in the village by German in accordance with an official execution order.

[01:] 07:15:13 – [01:] 14:09:59
07:34 – 14:45

He asserts that the “white stripers” or the “Riflemen” were all Lithuanians, dressed as civilians, and that there were no Germans present; states that he did not know any of the “white stripers” because he was still relatively young; explains that the Jews fled Ukmergė, where there had been many intense battles during the war and much of which had been burned down; says that the Jews returned to Ukmergė a week later and that they walked in columns for about a week, led by the “Riflemen”; states that there was a ghetto in Ukmergė; explains that the singular killing of the four victims in the forest occurred in the early evening, about four or five o’clock and that the “Riflemen” walked down the column of Jews and selected the victims; says that the “Riflemen” selected the victims, took them over to the forest, that they heard shots fired and a while later a group of people went over to take a look, that they saw four dead male Jews and one injured but alive female victim who was screaming and asking for water; repeats that Mrs. **Levanavičienė** told him and his friends that she would give them each a few cents if they brought water to the woman; recounts how they brought water to the victim and that she drank it with shaking hands; explains that a local resident named **Katinas** stopped the “white stripers” as they were going down the road after the incident the next day and told them about the woman; states that the “white stripers” went back and killed the woman; talks again about what he saw when he went to look at the victims: how the corpses were covered in blood; says he does not know where the woman was injured; also says that the woman spoke Lithuanian and asked for help and that she was young and fair; admits that he does not know if she was in fact Jewish; talks about the “white stripers”: there were four of them, they were armed with automatic weapons, they first fired a series into the air; remembers that Mrs. **Levanavičienė** told him that the female victim had been carrying a child in her arms in the column and that the “white stripers” took away the child and handed it to another woman; states that the victim was resistant; confirms that Mrs. **Levanavičienė** lived near the road and would have been able to see this.

[01:] 14:10:00 – [01:] 23:34:05
14:46 – 24:32

[New scene: Vareikis and the interviewer are walking and talking about politics; a dog is barking; then, the camera shows a road and a person standing in the road] Vareikis says [showing the location] that the victims were lying next to the road and that they dug the grave on the road and placed them in the grave; [camera moves to show the location]; explains that because the grave was dug on the road, as people drove down the road, the ground eventually sunk in; further explains that the men were dressed in suits and the woman was well-dressed, and that there was a wad of Soviet money sticking out of one of the victim’s pockets but no one took the money and that the victims were wearing shoes; [the camera shows the road where it intersects the path] explains again that when he came over with his friends to look they found three murdered men and one injured woman who asked for help and water; states again that they

brought water to her; explains that the village elder named **Katinas** told him and a few other boys to bury the corpses; adds that when they returned to the killing site, the injured woman had been killed but her body was in a different location; states that he and the others dragged her by the feet into the grave [*he points to the location of the grave*]; says that **Katinas** ordered them to dig the grave on the road and not in the wooded area so that the digging would not be impeded by tree roots; when asked by the interviewer about the depth of the grave, he points to his waist to show how deep it was; says that the grave was dug up after a few days and that **Katinas** ordered them to rebury the victims; explains that when they went back they saw two corpses on top of the grave and two inside; adds that the victims were undressed and ravaged; describes how they put the victims back in the grave and covered it again; explains that people walk and drive their horses or cars down this road and that he has driven down this road; says that his father used to comment that they were driving over people; says that he never felt comfortable driving over the grave but that there was no other path; laments this kind of murder.

[01:] 23:34:06 – [01:] 35:43:07
24:33 – 37:13

He says that many people came to look at the victims after they were shot; names a few of the people: **Kaušas**, Mrs. **Levanavičienė**, and **Pūrimas**, all currently deceased; affirms that no Germans were present and that the shooters returned and killed the woman; states that he assumes that the killers lived nearby [*camera shows the ground and the road while he again indicates the location of the grave*]; [*Vareikis and the interviewer are walking down a different road*] names the men he knew who were “white strippers”: **Imbrasas** from Nuotekų village, **Kuzmickas**, **Šopis** [**Šuopis**] and the two **Zabulėnas** [**Zabolėnas**] brothers, who were the leaders; explains that wealthy Jews were held at the Antakalnis prison (in Ukmergė) and that the other Jews were held in the ghetto in Užupis (an area in Ukmergė); talks about a day when he and his friend **Zinkevičius** saw Jews being tortured and hung in the Antakalnis prison territory; recalls how the perpetrators beat the Jews in the prison yard and demanded their gold; remembers one Jewish man he knew named **Ezras** [**Ezra**], a pharmacy owner, who was beaten in the prison yard; lists the names of the men who tortured Jews in the Antakalnis prison yard: **Šopis**, the two **Zabulėnas** brothers, and a man named **Paškevičius**; says that they all demanded that the Jews give them their gold; says that all of the perpetrators looted Jewish goods and then when the Soviet Union was established in Lithuania, they all escaped to America, England, and Australia; goes on to say that none of the perpetrators stayed in Lithuania because they had money from looted Jewish property that enabled them to leave; confirms that all of the perpetrators, those who drove, killed and tortured the Jews at the prison were all Lithuanians and that they were not dressed in uniform; [*smokes a cigarette; talks with a cigarette in his mouth*] says that looted Jewish belongings were taken to a brick home on Vytauto Street where they were sold; states that there were very many buyers and that goods were sold at auction; adds that his family did not buy anything; explains that there were four brothers in his family, that they all worked as craftsmen, and that they lived entirely from their earnings.