*(translation sample by Darius Sužiedėlis, dsuzi@me.com)*

**P. 83–84**

In his speech, Mečislovas Gedvilas (unsurprisingly) identified as victims of the Hitlerites “people of all social ranks and ethnicities”, “men, women, the elderly, children, workers, peasants, professors and priests, Jews, Lithuanians, Poles, and Russians [emphasis mine – Z. V.] – all had been heaped into a common grave by the Hitlerite beasts.” Those listening to Gedvilas’ remarks, like the readers of Jonas Dovydaitis’ article, were meant to get the impression that all these people had been murdered in Paneriai “out of pure hatred”, rooted in the “savage Hitlerite ideology”. This depiction was in line with the general view of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolshevik).

Analysing the draft of Gedvilas’ speech, what is intriguing are the numbers written in pencil above the listed victims. The figures scribbled (most likely by the author himself) above the words suggest that the author had considered changing their order. In the draft typewritten version, the first in the list of victims were Jews, followed by Lithuanians, Poles, and Russians. In the notations, Lithuanians were pencilled in first, followed by Russians, then Poles, and in fourth place – Jews. Apparently, some thought had been given to arranging the victims so that Lithuanians, as the “titular” nation of Lithuania, would come first. In the end, however, Gedvilas chose the original version.

When considering the reasons for the list’s ordering and rearranging, it is likely that this was not done solely for rhetorical emphasis, but was also the result of the author’s self-censorship in deciding on the “proper” way to write. Sensing the prevailing ideological line about not singling out Jews (even if they constituted the majority of victims), Gedvilas apparently considered levelling the field, placing Jews “after the comma”, so to speak. We might speculate: Perhaps he actually didn’t want to emphasize the Jews, but maybe as he delivered his remarks at the gravesite, knowing that hundreds of Jews were gathered there, he didn’t dare pushing them to the end? Even so, Jews were only mentioned in his remarks within a larger context, as was typical of other speeches of that period.

**P. 82**

The following day, journalist Jonas Dovydaitis wrote in *Tiesa:*

“A bright sun shone on the golden sand mounds of Paneriai. The green peaks of the wonderful pine forest swayed gently and the magnificent landscape of the Vilnius region unfolded before our eyes, as thousands of people emerged from train carriages, cars, trucks, and dismounted from bicycles placed against trees, and made their way to the entrance entangled with barbed wire. Men, women, and children walked through that gate, past a German sign still hanging there, its forbidding message threatening even German officers with death. The inhabitants of Lithuania were brought here to Paneriai, shot, and buried.”