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The Supreme Court of Statistics

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The Supreme Court of Statistics

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In the United States, the Supreme Court is one of three branches of the government. Though members of the court are appointed and approved by the other two branches of the government (the President and Congress), the court operates as an independent body with the idea that no government body is above the law. In the same way, no government body is “above” the gathering and publishing of statistics. Unfavorable statistics that show poor economic results are regularly published regardless of possible political consequences. The decision as to the kind of statistics that are to be gathered is decided upon by Congress, and thus ultimately by the American people. The gathering of statistics is regarded as a science and much effort is expended toward insuring that the data collected reflects reality.

The newly independent Lithuanian Statistical Committee must operate as a “Supreme Court of Statistics” in that it must be independent of both the legislative and executive branches of government. Specifically, this would entail periodic publishing of high quality data on the state of the Lithuanian economy even if the data show such dramatic events as the halving of exports due to the economic blockade. As the first issue of the magazine “The Economist of Lithuania” indicates, publishing of some new types of statistics has already begun in the form of sociological surveys. This is a start towards the goal of eliminating the Marxist-Leninist influence on statistics and the research utilizing these statistics. Until recently, statistics on the Lithuanian economy could usually only be found in various annual handbooks published by the Lithuanian branch of the Soviet State Statistics Committee (formerly the Central Statistical Administration). More detailed data were available, but were published in limited issue statistical handbooks that were “for official use only”. A separate card catalog exists at the library where these limited issue books were kept and only “officials” had access. One sure sign of Lithuanian independence is that access to these “secret” documents at the central library is now open to anyone, though the possibility that some of the materials were removed cannot be discounted.

The first job of the independent Lithuanian Statistical Committee should be the publication of the methodology underlying the Soviet era statistics. Though it is perhaps politically expedient to characterize all Soviet statistics as of poor quality and express the desire to start all statistical series from 1988, world experience shows that effective policy making requires long time series and cross-sectional data. If the series are indeed of poor quality, then publication of the underlying methodology will shed light on this problem and indicate how the data can be adjusted to be comparable with that of such organizations as the United Nations. Western literature on the Soviet economy already contains numerous methods used in making these adjustments. Once made, these adjustments will insure that the policies of the new Lithuanian government will be based on fact rather than fiction.

Lithuania’s Most Popular Politicians
The Top Ten

The LITHUANIAN REVIEW, November 21, 1990

The joint statement

The joint statement

by the Presidium of the Supreme Council and Government of the Republic of Lithuania

Recently the Army of the USSR, illegally dislocated in Lithuania, is once again demonstrating its will to do as it pleases and its attitude of being above the law, is using new acts of force; this once again is erupting as psychological warfare in the Baltic region. This is the way in which the brutal taking of citizen Arintas Zibuda on October 31, 1990 in Druskininkai and the show of military force in Vilnius on November 1 (All Saints’ Day and day of observance of the dead) must be evaluated. The planned mobilization of the Army in Vilnius on November 7 is not in line with the statutes on permission to organize military parades of the local governments or the State government of the Republic of Lithuania. The center of the city of Vilnius will experience a break in the rhythm of transportation and work at city offices, hardships will be placed on the residents. All of this cannot be tolerated. Arintas Zibuda, who was taken by force, must immediately set free, while punitive action must be taken against those in charge who gave the orders and those who fulfilled them (a private hospital in Lithuania and when a neighbor, citizen O. Kupurkienė, arrived, she was injured). Although the actions of the soldiers also have more dangerous aspects of their terrible behavior.

Military units, in ignoring Lithuanian laws and reforms of the government, wish to display that they are an omnipotent occupational force and hope to provoke actions in answer from citizens. Another possible goal is to torpedo the planned beginning of negotiations between the USSR and the Republic of Lithuania. In either case the issue of Soviet military subordination and responsibility arises, an issue which the Presidium of the Supreme Council of the Republic of Lithuania addresses to USSR President M. Gorbachev, USSR Minister of Defence D. Yazov and USSR Head of Military Forces in the Baltic General M. Kuzmin.

The Supreme Council Presidium and Government of the Republic of Lithuania once again state:

- refusal to serve in another country’s army is justified by law of the sovereign Republic of Lithuania and personal civil or other views, and is the absolute right of each citizen of the Republic of Lithuania, as are universally recognized human rights,
- the constant unwillingness of the USSR military forces to seek a status of its presence and behavior in Lithuania as other than occupational has already been made evident by a mass petition in the summer of 1989 in which a united demand of the Lithu-