

Why Self-determination?

Self-determination is the right of all colonized peoples. The absence of preparation in the fields of politics, economics, society or education cannot be used as a pretext to delay independence. (UN SC Resolution 1514, 1960)

VETËVENDOSJE!
<http://www.vetevendosje.org>

Newsletter from the Movement for SELF-DETERMINATION!

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THIS WEEK:

**Meeting with students
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'status'
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from the people
Selling our culture**

Meeting with students at the University of Prishtina

On Wednesday 8th, beginning at 8pm, Lëvizja VETËVENDOSJE! held a public meeting with students arriving at the start of the new semester. Glauk Konjufca and Albin Kurti spoke to the students, giving a presentation outside that was projected onto one of the dormitory walls. After the talk and questions, a group of activists put up one of our maps that illustrates the impact of decentralization on Kosova on the dormitory wall.

Glauk painted a broad picture of why we oppose the negotiation process, outlining the dangers inherent in the process of decentralization and the creation of special zones around Orthodox churches and monuments. Albin went into detail regarding each of these processes, presenting a series of maps of the special zones and the progression of the compromise over decentralization.

After the meeting, small groups of activists and students remained arguing, and over 100 students joined as members.

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Exhibition in Skënderaj

This week our photographic exhibition went to the town of Skënderaj in the central part of Kosova. Over 350 people came to see the 280 photographs that depict our actions over the last year and a half. In addition to this, after seeing the exhibition, 12 people became members of our Centre of VETËVENDOSJE! in Klinë.

Petition in Gjilan

Lëvizja VETËVENDOSJE! is not a member of the group organizing a

petition in Gjilan against decentralization. This is because we do not agree with some of the statements in the pre-amble.

First, the pre-amble states that the petition opposes only 'ethnic decentralization'. Lëvizja VETËVENDOSJE! is opposed to all forms of decentralization before Kosova is a sovereign state. We are also against the false 'multi-ethnic' decentralization in which the population is manipulated so that Albanians are a minority and thus threatened by the parallel structures of Serbia.

Second, the petition does not oppose the negotiation team of Kosova who are responsible for these decentralization plans.

Third, the petition leaves open the possibility of decentralization after 'final status'. This term can mean anything from conditional independence to autonomy within Serbia. For Lëvizja VETËVENDOSJE! decentralization can only be implemented after the realization of the will of the people through their right to self-determination.

The petition in a word does not oppose negotiations with Serbia. Decentralization is a fundamental product of negotiations with Serbia. Thus it is impossible to oppose decentralization without also opposing the negotiating group of Kosova who are making deals with Serbia over our future.

Gazimestan

The monument at Gazimestan, built in 1953, is on the list to become a 'special protected zone' of serbian cultural heritage. Yet it marks the site of a battle in which a coalition of christians, including both Albanians and Serbs, fought together against the Ottomans.

Hypocrisy of delaying status

The utter hypocrisy of Javier Solana is quite breathtaking. This week he argued that the definition of the 'status' of Kosova should be delayed until both the elections and the referendum on the new constitution of Serbia have taken place. If not, he argued, a new radical right government might be elected in Serbia.

The message is staggeringly clear. Kosova should wait for the people of Serbia to exercise their democratic rights, but should not expect any democratic rights itself.

First, Kosova should wait for the people of Serbia to elect a new government, whilst having its own elections delayed until after 'status'. And second, Kosova should wait for Serbia to hold a referendum on a constitution that in its pre-amble reconfirms Kosova's position as an integral part of Serbia!

No one has even considered asking the people of Kosova if they are content to wait yet another 6-9 months for their future to be decided. But then they have never considered asking the people of Kosova to decide themselves about their own future, by recognizing their right to self-determination.

It is time to end Serbia's influence over Kosova's future. And it is time to end the farce of a negotiation process that is prepared to wait for Serbia to reconfirm its claim to Kosova in its constitution. A negotiation process that is clearly leading to a 'final status' that is anything but independence.

Moving government further from the people

Përlepnice is an Albanian village on the outskirts of the town of Gjilan which is being moved into the serb majority municipality of Artana to make it more 'multi-ethnic'. To reach their new municipal centre, instead of one short bus journey to Gjilan, the villagers of Përlepnice will now have to take a total of 3 buses to reach Artana. So, decentralization is taking government further from the people, not closer to them.

Selling Our Culture

Two weeks ago on TV21, Sanda Rashkoviç-Iviç said that as a result of the negotiations the cultural heritage of Kosova is now called the cultural heritage of Serbia. Without even contesting this baseless claim, the Kosova negotiation team has allowed the entire Orthodox heritage in Kosova to be called Serb.

Serbia is trying to claim that Albanians are immigrants here, and thus have no right to self-determination. It is also trying to create an image for outsiders of a conflict based on religion, when its root is political. The war in Kosova was and is about the struggle for decolonization, neither ethnic nor religious.