

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!
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Newsletter from the Movement for SELF-DETERMINATION!

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THIS WEEK:

- More s**t from UNMIK
- Public meeting in Përlepnicë
- The imagination of Veton Surroi
- Denying our right to culture

More s**t from UNMIK

We dumped a toilet wrapped in a pink ribbon at the gates of UNMIK on Friday morning, and then we threw brown paint at the building. Why? Because this weekend UNMIK allowed Serbia to hold a referendum inside Kosova for Serbia's new constitution. This constitution states that Kosova is, and should always be, a part of Serbia. 90% of Serbs in Kosova voted in this referendum, which was permitted by UNMIK, under KFOR protection.

The politicians of Serbia openly planned to use this referendum to give legitimacy to its demands to keep Kosova. Koshtunica, the Prime Minister of Serbia, said, 'I invite all the citizens of Serbia, of whatever religion or people to vote for the new constitution because of Kosova, to display the unanimous will of all Serbia that no one can steal our territory and that no one can divide Serbia.'

UNMIK has so little respect for the will of all the people of Kosova that it allowed this referendum, while at the same time denying us the right to self-determination. This is just more of the excrement that UNMIK, itself no better than institutional excrement, has without any caution, spread all over Kosova since its arrival. We have delivered the toilet seat so that in the future they can relieve themselves in the proper place. The only way to keep Kosova clean is to kick UNMIK out.

Dragisa Mijovic, Mayor of Zveçan, said there was no need to declare a break-away Serb Republic in Kosovo. 'There is no need to declare anything because we are already functioning as a part of Serbia'. (Tim Judah, BIRN report, 27.10.06)

Public Meeting in Përlepnicë

Lëvizja VETËVENDOSJE! held a public meeting in Përlepnicë on Friday in which we gave our presentation about the consequences of decentralization before sovereignty, and

special zones around Orthodox churches and monasteries.

Përlepnicë is currently in the municipality of Gjilan, but under the decentralization plan, it will be moved to the municipality of Artana (Novo Bërdë) which has tripled in size. Practically for these villagers, this means that to travel to their new municipal center of Artana, they will have to not only change buses three times, but also travel directly through Gjilan, their old center. So, decentralization will move government further from the people of Përlepnicë, and not closer.

The first meeting, as planned, was in the Palace of Culture at midday. Then spontaneously, the imam, Abydhakim Shaqirit, invited us to address his congregation.

Since May 2006, 385 former JNA officers have been paid to organize a civil defense force in the north of Kosova. (Tim Judah, BIRN, 27.10.06)

The imagination of Veton Surroi

This is an excerpt from an article by Aida Dërguti in our newspaper.

"With the greatest imagination, I cannot see how an ecclesiastical Orthodox object of the Serb Orthodox Church can be called only Orthodox and not Serb, because there are no Orthodox Albanians here.' This was a statement made by Veton Surroi, member of the Negotiation Team of Kosova and Representative for Minorities, in an interview he gave a few weeks ago.

It is not surprising since your words are usually compatible with the extent of your knowledge. The concept of time and space is confusing for many of Kosova's politicians. Surroi doesn't see any Albanians belonging to the Orthodox religion today in Kosova (although they do exist) and, as there are only Serbs who are Orthodox here, he is offering them the ancient churches and monasteries of Kosova. Thus he 'sees' the problem and its solution. But a politician who does not know the history of his people and 'sees' problems only from today, does not know and cannot build a vision for the future. It seems that the vision of these politicians fits only with what is 'temporary', like the institutions that they represent and the politics they make. Like the solution they are constructing for Kosova through negotiations. Everything starts from the perspective of today. Acc-

ording to them, the history of Albanians began with their collective suffering in Bilacë!

Many Albanian muslims celebrate the night of Orthodox christmas at home (putting the harvest of the year on the table). This old tradition carried on through the centuries . . . represents a collective memory and tells of an earlier religious identity. Often in cases of illness or a childless couple, people went to the churches and monasteries, believing in the strength of their healing power . . .

Surroi is worth millions, in number perhaps more than his age, and with all his impressive 'imagination' I don't know how he can explain them. In the final analysis, he has learnt that no one will ask him about the ancestry of his people, but one day someone will ask for the origin of his wealth, created during the years of economic collapse when the people of Kosova barely survived. Perhaps Surroi should give his millions to the Serbs instead? He is in no position to give so easily to Serbia that which belongs to the people of Kosova: its history and its monuments."

Resolution 1244 allows the return of Serbian police or military personnel to maintain a presence at Serbian patrimonial sites (Annex 2.6). This right is guaranteed even in the event of any agreement on final status (Point 11.a).

Denying our right to culture.

Stating that the Orthodox church in Kosovo is Serbian is a denial of our right to culture. Standard No.6 states that 'Kosovo's cultural heritage is respected as the common patrimony of all of Kosovo's ethnic, religious and linguistic communities.' Arguing that Albanians were also Orthodox, as family traditions, oral history and the frescoes at the Patriarchate of Pejë demonstrate, is not an attempt to Albanianize the Church. It is simply a recognition that throughout the history of Kosova, many of the peoples who lived here worshipped as Orthodox.

After the Reformation in England, most of its catholic cathedrals became and still are today Protestant, but no one suggests they are exclusively part of the Protestant or Catholic heritage. These churches are recognized as the heritage of all the people who built them, prayed in them and lived around them through the centuries. You cannot rip the culture out of Kosova. It belongs to the people of Kosova, and no one else.