

Remembering Srebrenica



Next month marks 12 years since the Bosnian town of Srebrenica was seized by General Ratko Mladić. What followed was the worst atrocity on European soil since World War Two – almost 9,000 Muslim men and boys were murdered because of their religion and between 20,000 and 50,000 women were raped.

Last year, along with the other main party leaders, I launched the education resources for the charity Remembering Srebrenica Scotland. They were setup to commemorate the Srebrenica genocide and to help teach us lessons of tolerance by remembering the past. By sharing the stories of the Mothers of Srebrenica and other survivors of genocide I believe we can inspire people in Scotland to tackle hatred when they see it and therefore make our communities safer and more cohesive.

This week I've been in Srebrenica with Remembering Srebrenica Scotland hearing those harrowing stories first hand. From meeting survivors to seeing bullet holes in almost every building you don't have to look hard to see the marks of the horrors.

Next month, Remembering Srebrenica's National Commemoration in Scotland will take place in Glasgow at the Mitchell Library. On Friday the 14th July, you can go along and hear the powerful testimony of the founder of the Association of Women Victims of War, Bakira Hasečić. But no matter where you are next month, I hope you will join me in reflecting on this horrific genocide, and how we can work to prevent anything like this ever happening again.



(This article originally appeared in Kez's Daily Record Column on 13 June 2017)

(Pictures by John Young / www.YoungMedia.co.uk)

There is clear support for a pro-UK,

anti-austerity party

Well, what a result.

Everyone wrote the Labour Party off – both here in Scotland, and across the UK.

But we defied the pollsters, with Labour making significant gains on what will be remembered as a historic election night.

In Scotland we gained six seats from the SNP – nearly a quarter of all the gains across the UK – and today we have a fantastic group of MPs in Westminster who will always stand up for their constituents.

It's been a long time since Labour had much to cheer about in Scotland. But just two years after nearly being wiped off the map, it's clear that we're now back as a political force.

We have seven Scottish Labour MPs, including Ian Murray who stormed his way to the largest majority in the country, and his new colleagues Hugh Gaffney, Ged Killen, Lesley Laird, Danielle Rowley, Paul Sweeney and Martin Whitfield.

And we were so close in many other seats. That's why I am keeping our party on an election footing over summer. Next time there's a General Election – and it could be sooner than we think – we will take even more seats off the SNP.

I always said our recovery will take time. And it will continue to take time.

But we have proved there is significant support in Scotland for a pro-UK, anti-austerity party.

Hundreds of thousands of Scots agreed with our message that Nicola Sturgeon should get back to the day job.

Under the SNP we have 4,000 fewer teachers, unacceptable waiting times in our hospitals, and a £170million budget cut to local services this year alone. I believe this should be the First Minister's priority – and the voters agree.

We have four years until the next Holyrood election, and I will ensure that this SNP government is reminded every day what it should really be focusing on.

That means dropping plans for a divisive second independence referendum.

Nobody gets into the Labour Party to talk about the constitution. We care about tackling poverty and growing employment – not about flags and lines on a map.

However, the constitutional debate about Scotland's future continues to sadly dominate our politics, which is why we have made clear our firm, cast-iron

opposition to another referendum.

Voters who are just as fed up as I am with Nicola Sturgeon's demands for another referendum backed Labour on Thursday.

But voters across Scotland weren't just responding to Nicola Sturgeon's woeful record in government.

They also responded to our positive vision of a country for the many, not the few.

Jeremy Corbyn's uplifting campaign, full of hope and promise, captured the imagination of people here in Scotland and across the UK.

I pay tribute to the fantastic campaign he fought, and the Labour Party is united behind him as we seek to remove this weak and feeble Tory government that is now clinging onto power.

Britain deserves better than this grubby deal between Theresa May and the DUP.

The Prime Minister gambled on this election and she lost. It's time for her to go.

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This article first appeared in the Daily Record on Tuesday 13th June 2017

[Your general election vote is a clear choice between hope and despair](#)

6 July 2017

On Thursday, you will decide the future of our country.

The choice facing you at the ballot box could not be greater.

It is a choice between hope or despair, progress or retreat, growth or decline.

The Labour Party offers a positive vision for the entire United Kingdom. Our government will be for the many, not the few.

We will end failed Tory and SNP austerity and invest in our economy. Our unrelenting focus will be on creating more and better jobs, and protecting and improving our valued public services.

These are not meaningless soundbites. Our manifesto offers a fully-costed program to make the UK a fairer, more progressive country.

By backing Labour on June 8, you can support a £10 living wage and a £250 billion program of investment, which will include at least £20 billion of spending here in Scotland.

Over the past weeks, I have toured the country to see first-hand the differences these policies could make. And by touring the country I don't mean looking down on our country from a helicopter, but actually talking to scores of people on the doorsteps.

And I've spoken to the people who run our small businesses – a butcher in Stornoway, a florist in Edinburgh, a lobster farmer in East Lothian and book club workers in Dunfermline.

They are the lifeblood of our economy and a Labour Government led by Jeremy Corbyn will work tirelessly to ensure our local businesses can grow. In contrast, the Tories offer failure and division.

During this election, Theresa May's shambolic campaign has done nothing but expose her bankrupt ideas and backwards policies.

U-turn has followed U-turn, disaster has followed disaster.

Then there is the SNP, whose only desire is to drag us back to the arguments of the past.

Nicola Sturgeon might talk about progressive politics – but she offers nothing of the sort.

She even had the cheek to again argue for a 50p top rate of income tax across the UK, despite voting against it with the Tories here in Scotland.

The SNP cannot form the next government – and Labour has clearly and repeatedly said it will do no deal of any kind with the Nationalists.

A vote for the SNP is not a vote for anything positive or anything progressive – it is a vote to return us to the arguments of the past.

Scotland does not need or want another independence referendum, but Nicola Sturgeon is determined to have one anyway.

Scotland needs a government focused on improving our public services, not how best to divide us again.

A vote for Labour on June 8 will send Nicola Sturgeon a message to drop her plans for divisive second independence referendum and get on with the day job of fixing the mess she has made of our schools and hospitals.

Only Labour can beat the SNP in seats across Scotland, and only Labour can kick Theresa May out of Downing Street.

On Thursday, vote for your local Labour candidate and help us to deliver a government for the many, not the few.

This article first appeared in the 6 July 2017 edition of the Daily Record

[Our new Election Broadcast: vote Labour on Thursday](#)

Nicola Sturgeon's broken record in government will be exposed today in a new Labour Party Election Broadcast.

The hard-hitting PEB, to be broadcast this evening, accuses the SNP leader of 'playing a broken record' as she continues to campaign for a divisive second independence referendum, rather than fixing our schools and hospitals.

The PEB will highlight:

- We have 4,000 fewer teachers, an attainment gap between richer and poorer pupils, bigger class sizes and declining results.
- More than 90,000 patients had to wait longer than four hours at A&E in 2016, while nurses have faced a real-terms pay cut.
- Local services like care for the elderly and schools will be hit with nearly £170m of cuts this year alone.

Nicola Sturgeon's answer to all these problems facing Scotland is another referendum.

Scottish Labour leader Kezia Dugdale said: "On Thursday, people can send Nicola Sturgeon a message that she should focus on the day job, rather than forcing another independence referendum that people in Scotland don't want.

"After ten years of the SNP campaigning for independence, Scotland's schools and hospitals have suffered. Nicola Sturgeon's answer is another referendum – she is playing a broken record.

"On Thursday, voters can elect a Labour MP who will spend every day fighting for local services, or they can elect an SNP MP who will spend every day campaigning for another divisive independence referendum.

"Only Labour can defeat the SNP in the majority of seats across Scotland, including Edinburgh South, East Lothian, Lanark and Hamilton East, Coatbridge, Chryston and Bellshill, Midlothian, and Kirkcaldy and

Cowdenbeath.

"With a Labour government in Westminster, Scotland will be part of a country run for the many not the few."

[Comment on terrorist attacks in London](#)

Commenting on the terrorist attacks in London, **Scottish Labour leader Kezia Dugdale** said:

"My thoughts and prayers go out to the victims and their families after the horrific terrorist attacks in London last night.

"Once again our nation finds itself under attack from those who hate our way of life and seek to change us. But we will not allow that to happen, because the values that they hate – democracy, the rule of law and tolerance – are what make our country so special. It's why Britain is a beacon for other nations around the world. We will not let the terrorists win.

"We must also thank those in our emergency services who yet again put themselves in danger to protect others. Their bravery and commitment to our safety never fails to inspire.

"London is one of the greatest cities in the world, a place where people from every continent have made their home. One of the most multi-cultural cities on earth will continue to welcome people from different faiths, cultures, races and backgrounds. It will not be cowed. We all stand with the people of London today."