



My Political Race: An Outsider's Journey to the Heart of British Politics

Parmjit Dhanda

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As Labour MP for Gloucester, when things were good for Parmjit Dhanda they were very good. He was rolled out for Labour conferences and media appearances as a poster boy for the party - a shining example of a new Britain, where white constituencies chose ethnic minorities as their candidates and then elected them as their MPs. It was the ultimate political fairy tale. However, the other side of Parmjit's story remained hidden for years. Its exposure threatened to undermine the received political narrative and neither Dhanda nor his colleagues were comfortable addressing the issues it would inevitably bring to light. Then something life-changing happened. As Parmjit and his family strove to remake their lives in the wake of Labour's 2010 general election defeat, there came a knock on the door of their Gloucester home one Sunday morning. A frightened-looking lady stood there shaking and distressed, her dog pulling her by its lead towards one of the cars parked outside. In the middle of the drive was a pig's head. To experience this kind of racism so close to home and so close to his young family left him feeling demoralised and isolated. After Parmjit's nine years of service to the local area, the perpetrators hadn't even realised the difference between a Sikh and a Muslim. Comprising unique insights, witty anecdotes and thought-provoking critique, this is the extraordinary tale of how a 'foreigner' in the Westminster village upset the odds - despite Britain's failure to address issues of race within its own Parliament. Speaking out for the first time about the uncomfortable truths he faced during his time in politics, Parmjit Dhanda hopes he can help present a smoother path for others in the future, as well as encouraging those currently in the game to speak out for themselves.

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