

= Julia Gasper =

Julia Gasper is a British independent academic specialising in historical literature and a right @-@ wing political activist affiliated with the English Democrats . She formerly belonged to the UK Independence Party ( UKIP ) . A vociferous critic of LGBT rights , she has generated controversy with comments widely deemed homophobic and transphobic .

In 1987 , Gasper obtained a D.Phil in English Literature from the University of Oxford after studying at Somerville College . She converted her D.Phil thesis ? a study of the role of Protestantism in the work of Thomas Dekker ? into her first book ; published in 1990 , it received a mixed critical reception . She has since published two further books on eighteenth @-@ century European history , on Theodore of Corsica and the Jean @-@ Baptiste de Boyer , Marquis d 'Argens respectively .

Involved in local politics within the Oxford area , she serves as a parish councillor for Risinghurst and Sandhills . In 2012 Gasper was selected as UKIP 's Parliamentary candidate for Oxford East . She was scrutinised for her anti @-@ LGBT blog posts by LGBT @-@ themed news service Pink News , whose readers she then asserted were mentally ill . When The Sunday Mirror exposed further anti @-@ LGBT comments that she had made on a UKIP members forum , she was denounced by party leader Nigel Farage and stepped down from her position . Changing her allegiance to the English Democrats , she unsuccessfully stood for them in the 2014 European Parliament election and for Oxford City Council in a local by @-@ election .

= = Academic career = =

In 1987 , Gasper obtained a D.Phil in English Literature from the University of Oxford after studying at Somerville College . Her thesis examined the Protestant plays of Elizabethan English playwright Thomas Dekker . In 1990 , Clarendon Press published Gasper 's work *The Dragon and the Dove : The Plays of Thomas Dekker* . Writing in *The Yearbook of English Studies* , John Stachniewski of the University of Manchester described the book as " trenchant and well @-@ informed " and expressed the view that he found Gasper 's thesis ? that Dekker 's dramatic works subscribed to a militant Protestant ideology ? to be " convincing " . John Harmon of Syracuse University reviewed Gasper 's book for the *English Studies* journal , describing it as " crisply researched " and " eminently readable " although thought that she argued " somewhat defensively " that scholars should take Dekker 's work more seriously . Reviewing the book for *The Review of English Studies* , T. H. Howard @-@ Hill of the University of South Carolina noted that despite the work 's title , it did not examine all of Dekker 's 26 plays but only a selection of them . While noting that the work was " thoroughly researched , well documented , and densely written " , Hill also opined that it was " disjointed , digressive , repetitive , and rambling " and felt that it did not " convincingly illustrate Decker 's militant Protestant orientation " in some of the plays that she had discussed .

In 2013 the University of Delaware Press published her book *Theodore von Neuhoff , King of Corsica : The Man behind the Legend* . Reviewing the tome for the *European Review of History : Revue europeenne d 'histoire* , José Miguel Escribano Páeza of the European University Institute noted that Gasper brought a novel approach to her examination of the Corsican monarch . Although describing the " exciting " work as an " interesting exercise in historical biography " , he noted that Gasper paints a " hagiographic image " of von Neuhoff , for instance by unconvincingly portraying him as a " military genius " and by falling into " the trap of seeing things in black and white by frequently presenting Neuhoff and his followers as heroes ?ghting against villains . "

= = Political activity = =

Gasper occasionally lectured at Oxford University , served as a parish councillor for Risinghurst and Sandhills , and had founded the Windmill Road Residents ' Association and the Friends of Bury Knowle Library . The *International Business Times* characterised her as a " right @-@ wing political activist " .

== UKIP candidacy : 2012 ? 13 ==

In early 2012 , UKIP selected Gasper to represent them as their Parliamentary candidate for Oxford East , while she also began campaigning to be elected onto Oxford City Council . Asserting that " my central message is to take back control of this country " , she campaigned on a platform of promoting the UK 's removal from the European Union , opposing " mass immigration " , abolishing university tuition fees , and increasing the state pension .

During her campaign , a resident in the Oxford area discovered a blog post which Gasper had authored in 2010 ; concerned about its contents , they contacted the LGBT @-@ themed news service Pink News , who reported on it . Stating that homosexuality was not a sexual orientation but a " form of behaviour " , in her post Gasper suggested that same @-@ sex attraction was a choice , before criticising gay people for " complaining constantly of persecution " and being insufficiently grateful to heterosexuals for creating them . Asserting that legal support for LGBT rights had " gone too far " , she condemned same @-@ sex marriage and the adoption of children by same @-@ sex couples as " wholly unacceptable " , and claimed that there were strong links between male homosexuality and paedophilia . Her claims generated outrage , with a UKIP spokesperson commenting that while the party did not endorse Gasper 's views on this issue , it did uphold her right to hold and express them .

Later that month Gasper complained that readers of Pink News had threatened her , declaring that they should be forcibly institutionalised under the Mental Health Act . In doing so , she compared her situation to that of Salman Rushdie during The Satanic Verses controversy . She then claimed that she had received email death threats and was under police protection , assertions that local police refused to either confirm or deny . Commenting to Cherwell , she claimed her views on LGBT issues were " very , very middle ground " and that she had not said anything homophobic , but been the victim of " a malicious witch hunt " . Rowena Russell , former chair of the International Gay Lesbian Bisexual Transgender Youth and Student Organisation , emailed Gasper to discuss the latter 's comments , to which Gasper responded that Russell too should be institutionalised . Russell proceeded to condemn Gasper , stating that " as a long @-@ term political activist I 'm disgusted she used this kind of language . Using mental health as a slur on top of everything else she 's doing is just unacceptable . " Rafe Jeune , chair of Oxford 's Pride parade , characterised Gasper 's comments as " abhorrent " and " disgusting " , noting that there was no evidence to link paedophilia and homosexuality .

In the United Kingdom general election , 2010 Gasper came fifth in her constituency with 2 @. @ 3 % of the vote ( 1 @, @ 202 votes ) .

In January 2013 , The Sunday Mirror revealed that in a UKIP members ' online forum Gasper had condemned LGBT rights as a " lunatic 's charter " , while claiming that some homosexuals prefer sex with animals over that with other humans , and reiterating her belief in a link between homosexuality and paedophilia . The newspaper characterised the comments as " extremist and offensive " and noted that the forum contained many homophobic and racist statements from UKIP members . When The Sunday Mirror asked for comment , Gasper stated that " I 'm not going to talk about them . It 's none of your business . " Political commentator Nick Cohen , commenting in The Observer , described Gasper as an advocate of " dumb prejudice " .

The forum was shut down , Gasper resigned from her position as chairman of UKIP 's Oxford branch , and a number of her supporters were also removed from the committee . A party spokesperson stated Gasper had stepped down " to avoid doing herself or the party any more damage " . Gasper insisted the withdrawal was her own decision , adding that she had been the victim of a " press vendetta " . UKIP stated that her resignation as Oxfordshire branch chair was welcome , but she would not be forced out of the party altogether . However , UKIP leader Nigel Farage condemned Gasper 's " war against homosexuals " as " unacceptable " , while Olly Neville , former chairman of UKIP 's Young Independent wing , tweeted a message of support for Gasper 's removal , stating that " her disgraceful views have no place as a rep [ resentative ] of a mainstream party " .

Gasper later lambasted UKIP as being " plagued with transsexuals " , a reference to the

transwomen Nikki Sinclair and Kellie Maloney , both of whom have served as candidates for the party . Asserting that she refused to recognise transwomen as women , she declared Maloney to be " absolutely grotesque " and added that her transition was " totally barmy ? and how pathetic that he [ sic ] can do nothing better with his life . " In May , a former UKIP activist , Colin Cortbus , also publicly revealed to Cherwell that in emails Gasper had sent to him she had again emphasised a connection between homosexuality and paedophilia , and had described the Quran as a " fascist " book , comparing it to Adolf Hitler 's Mein Kampf and describing Islam as " a severely oppressive ideology " .

In November 2013 , Gasper was criticised for an essay entitled " The Myth of the Homocaust " , which she uploaded to her academia.edu account . It claimed that LGBT rights activists had fabricated the extent of the Nazi persecution of homosexuals . Olivia Marks @-@ Woldman , chief executive of the Holocaust Memorial Day Trust , criticised Gasper 's claims as disappointing : " Whilst it is important to recognise the differences between the ways the Nazis persecuted different groups , this shouldn 't lead us to question the fact that thousands of gay men suffered appalling persecution because of their sexuality . "

= = = English Democrats : 2014 ? 16 = = =

Disillusioned with UKIP , Gasper switched her allegiance to the English Democrats . In April 2014 , she declared there were far too many gay people in the Houses of Parliament , deeming this a " violation of democracy " . Claiming that only 1 @. @ 5 % of the population was gay , she stated this could justify no more than ten gay MPs , far less than the hundreds that she alleged existed . In the same post , she called for the gay networking and dating app Grindr to be banned as a threat to " public health " . Questioned by the BBC , the English Democrats ' party spokesman Steve Uncles defended Gasper 's " personal opinion " , which he claimed was based on a traditional , Christian understanding of sexuality , adding that she was " factually correct " in her claims regarding the number of homosexuals in Parliament . Conversely , her statistics were dismissed as " absurd " by the Oxford University Student Union 's LGBT representative ; they characterised Gasper 's comments as representing evidence of the continuing existence of those with " alarming prejudices " who " wish to actively discriminate against LGBTQ people " .

The following month , Gasper commented on the resignation of Brendan Eich as CEO of Mozilla after it was revealed that he had financially supported a group campaigning to prevent the legal recognition of same @-@ sex marriage in California . Gasper claimed Eich had been " victimised by a queer mafia that takes a vindictive pleasure in bullying and abusing people " and that this " Homo fascism is a threat to fundamental human rights . " Among those she accused of contributing to this campaign were US President Barack Obama , British Prime Minister David Cameron , Deputy Prime Minister Nick Clegg , the Labour Party , the United Nations , the European Union , Amnesty International , the Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby , the Bishop of Buckingham Alan Wilson , Pope Francis , the actor Daniel Radcliffe , all European and American universities , and media such as The Guardian , The Daily Mail , and The Huffington Post . The following day , she condemned World AIDS Day as a celebration of HIV / AIDS and homosexuality , claiming it " congratulates " people for " spreading the disease " . Some days later she claimed that in campaigning for legal recognition of same @-@ sex marriage , " queer thugs and gangsters " had " used violence , threats , censorship , abuse , and every form of dirty tactic " . She hoped that " a twinge of guilt ... kills them " .

In May , Gasper stood as the English Democrats ' candidate for the South East England region in the European Parliament elections , gaining the votes of 0 @. @ 76 % of the electorate ( 17 @, @ 771 votes ) . Following the resignation of the Labour councillor for Quarry and Risinghurst on the Oxford City Council , Gasper stood as the English Democrats ' candidate for the seat , coming last with 43 votes .

After this failure , Gasper returned to her blog to argue there were " far too many homosexual comedians on TV " , focusing her criticism on Graham Norton , " the horrid little Alan Carr " , and " the unctuous Stephen Fry [ ... ] portly , preening and self @-@ satisfied . " She also posted that

homosexuals were not persecuted anywhere in the world and that claims to the contrary , such as those regarding the murders of Matthew Shepard and David Kato , were " fraudulent " . Pink News , she said , operated as a " mafia " and had placed the actor Rupert Everett on its " hit list " , forcing him to obtain police protection . In October 2014 , Pink News founder Benjamin Cohen claimed this constituted libel and threatened legal action against her . Gasper responded that she did not simply stand by what she had said , but that she was " proud of it and I have morality on my side " . Commenting in an article in Cherwell , Samuel Rutishauser @-@ Mills questioned why the media bothered reporting on Gasper 's anti @-@ LGBT comments , noting that as a parish councillor her " political significance is tenuous ... and scarcely newsworthy or interesting . " He warned that excessive coverage of such opinions was counterproductive to the advancement of LGBT rights , by making " extreme homophobia " seem more commonplace than it really is .

Gasper retained her seat as parish councillor for Risinghurst and Sandhills at the United Kingdom local elections , 2016 .