

A Period of Correction

By Andrea Brookes, May 2025

I read an article this morning from Kayda on Medium and I would like to copy it here as I think the warning is very important for us all and one key point that needs to be reinforced: we are in this together, this affects us all either directly or peripherally but each and every one of us. *The highlighting is from the original article.*

“Trans people will have to give way... It can’t be helped,” I read this morning in The Guardian. “... there has to be a **period of correction**, because other people have rights,” the article went on, quoting barrister Naomi Cunningham and EHRC commissioner Akua Reindorf. (Emphasis added.)

Following the UK Supreme Court’s ruling that “woman” in the Equality Act refers only to “biological women,” I expected setbacks for trans people in the UK. But what I read this morning went far beyond legal interpretation - it was chilling in its casual cruelty. It frames the restriction of an already marginalized group's rights as something normal, even necessary, in a so called "first-world", formerly EU, Western democracy.

No transgender people were invited to the debate when that ruling was made. No one asked how these rulings would affect their safety, dignity, or well-being. Instead, the conversation centred entirely on the hypothetical discomfort of the majority – and on fear-mongering narratives that transgender women pose a threat to cisgender women, despite there being absolutely no proof of this being the case.

For those who have studied history, these motifs ring a bell — a big, red, clanging alarm bell. Because whenever the rights of a small minority are reduced for the supposed benefit of the majority, the process seldom stops there.

Repression always starts with a targeted group, but it rarely ends with them.

The Language of “Correction”

This is far from the first time minority rights have been restricted under the pretence of “protecting others.” History is littered with examples where one group’s safety, dignity, or existence was sacrificed to preserve the supposed comfort of the majority.

In the UK, the now-infamous Section 28 was justified as a measure to “protect children.” In practice, it did nothing of the sort. Instead, it silenced LGBTQ+ voices, erased their existence from schools, and institutionalized bigotry — harming an entire generation of queer youth.

In the United States, the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) claimed to defend “traditional marriage.” In reality, it legislated exclusion — denying same-sex couples access to spousal rights, survivor benefits, and legal protections that heterosexual couples could take for granted.

In Russia, the so-called “gay propaganda” laws are framed as safeguarding morality and protecting children — but they function as a tool of state repression. These laws rely on vague, elastic definitions to criminalize visibility itself — turning LGBTQ+ people into political scapegoats and social outcasts.

The pattern is always the same: legal language used to launder repression, with claims of “correction” or “protection” masking a systemic campaign to exclude, silence, or erase.

The Dangerous Framing of Competing Rights

Figures like Reindorf, Cunningham, Conservative Party leader Kemi Badenoch, Labour-turned-independent MP Rosie Duffield, and loud public transphobe J.K. Rowling insist that trans rights infringe upon the rights of women — as if human rights are a zero-sum game. But is their intent truly to protect? Or is this, once again, a case of “protection” being wielded as a weapon — a justification for exclusion, dehumanization, and discrimination?

The hatred harboured by many in the gender-critical movement toward transgender women runs so deep that they’re willing to scorch the earth to erase us — regardless of the collateral damage done to cisgender women.

And the damage is real.

Tall women, muscular women, gender-nonconforming women — those who don’t conform to rigid, outdated ideals of femininity — have already found themselves interrogated and humiliated in public spaces. The controversy surrounding Algerian boxer Imane Khelif, whose athleticism led to suspicion and invasive scrutiny, is just one prominent example of how easily this ideology turns on the very people it claims to protect.

And what about transgender *men*? For the gender-critical crowd, they are rarely acknowledged as men at all. More often, they’re framed as “brainwashed victims of patriarchy” — supposedly so scarred by misogyny that they chose to escape it by becoming men. But how does that argument hold up under even a moment’s scrutiny? If misogyny is the problem, why punish the person trying to survive it? Why strip them of dignity and agency?

Non-binary people fare even worse. They are often rendered invisible, written off entirely for the simple reason that they don’t fit into the gender-critical binary at all. Their existence challenges the core assumptions of that worldview — a worldview that only recognizes two sexes, and demands two fixed, immutable genders to match.

As for intersex people, the consensus among gender-critical voices is murky — or perhaps wilfully ignored. But if their logic holds, then intersex people, too, would be expected to conform to the gender assigned to them at birth, regardless of their identity, biology, or whether they underwent invasive and non-consensual surgeries to “_x” their bodies. The reality of variation doesn’t fit the gender-critical script — so it’s sidelined or erased.

In short: **it is not about rights**. It’s about **control**. It’s about **policing** the boundaries of identity so narrowly that only a chosen few get to be seen, heard, and protected.

The Ripple Effects

“But Dayna, why does this concern you? You’re not even in the UK,” some might argue.

Well — yes and no.

I’m not a UK citizen or resident, but I do own a UK-based business and pay taxes there. So yes, I care very much about the decisions its government makes — especially when those decisions concern the dignity and rights of people like me.

More importantly, I live in one of the EU member states with low scores on LGBTQ+ rights (under 25 points on the ILGA Europe Rainbow Map). In my country, trans rights are next to non-existent — and there are no legal protections from discrimination. I'm not afraid that my government will take my rights away — because there's nothing to take. I'm afraid they'll use the UK's example to justify *never granting* those rights in the first place.

When a country that once held itself up as a global human rights leader begins saying things like “trans people will have to give way” and calls for a “period of correction,” that language doesn't stop at the border. It echoes. It ripples outward. And it hands a ready-made script to every anti-trans politician looking for cover: “We're not being cruel. We're just doing what Britain did.”

That's why this matters. Because the UK isn't just backsliding — it's showing other governments how to do it, and how to sell it to the public as something reasonable, necessary, even progressive.

Our Own Fault?

Of course, some people — even within the transgender community — will say this is our fault. That we were too loud. Too visible. That some trans activists pushed too hard or made demands that the public wasn't ready to accept. That some among us didn't try hard enough to blend in — and in doing so, made the cishet majority uncomfortable. And now, look what that brought.

You're entitled to that opinion. But let me remind you of something: ***we're all in this together, whether we like it or not.*** Trans rights — like LGBTQ+ rights, like women's rights — ***are human rights.***

No one wins when another group loses their rights. Rights are not finite. Dignity is not a luxury good. And hatred, bigotry, and systemic discrimination have never produced justice — only more suffering.

We may disagree on strategy, on tone, even on priorities. But now is not the time to fracture and turn on each other. Because what we're facing is bigger than any one subgroup or philosophy — it's a well-organized movement determined to legislate us out of public life.

When rights are under attack, silence won't save you. Nor will respectability. Nor will throwing each other under the bus.

We Must Not Go Quietly

We are living through a time when institutions that once claimed to defend equality are now rewriting their mandates to exclude us. When legal language is being bent not to protect the vulnerable, but to justify their erasure. When the silence of those in power speaks louder than ever — and their words, when they do come, are colder than law books and sharper than any knife.

And yet, we are still here.

We have always been here — through silence and shame, through exile and suspicion, through history books that forgot us and courtrooms that misnamed us. We have survived policies meant to disappear us. We have survived systems built on the assumption that we shouldn't exist.

So no — we must not accept a “period of correction.” We must not “give way.” We must not apologize for taking up space, for living authentically, or for daring to believe we deserve the same rights and safety as anyone else.

We are not asking for special treatment. We are demanding what should have been guaranteed all along: ***dignity, safety, recognition, and freedom from institutionalized cruelty.***

We do not need to be perfect to be protected. We do not need to be palatable to deserve peace.

And we are not alone.

If you have a voice — *use it*. If you have a platform — *raise it*. If you have the ability to stand up, even quietly, even just once — *please, do*.

Because *this* is how the rollback stops: not all at once, not in one sweeping act of resistance — but person by person, word by word, refusal by refusal.

We must not go quietly. And we are not done yet.