

Sibyl Ruth

Editor and author

“It almost feels like an ownership of the soul. If you have one incorrect thought, it’s like it’s a virus and your whole personality is contaminated.”



The cancellation

Sibyl Ruth’s contract as an editor was effectively terminated after she posted on social media about her lawfully held beliefs. She was told that her client no longer needed her to work for them, and her name was quietly removed from the company website. A subject access request later revealed that a member of staff objected to Ruth’s belief that sex is real and cannot be changed. Ruth brought a legal case against her former company, who settled before it went to court.

“I thought there would come a point where it was established that the organisation had acted wrongly. At that point, I thought people would say: ‘I’m sorry. Welcome back. Let us shower you with projects.’ It’s not what happens.”

The effect

After Ruth’s editing work was cut off, she moved out of it altogether. “There is a lot of risk-averse behaviour going on,” she says. “Even if someone heard you might be involved [in a cancellation], you are not wanted.” Instead, she increased the hours that she spent working in libraries, her alternative career, where she chose not to speak about what had happened to her with people she did not know and trust fully. “How do you tell new colleagues that you are involved in an employment dispute?” she asked.

“One of the most frustrating things for me is that I wasn’t being judged as a person with experience and professionalism – when I diverted from the ideology, then I was immediately framed in a particular way and pushed out.”

Morale was low in libraries and she chose to stop working when she turned 65, without the financial backstop that her editorial work would have offered. Being able to continue working within the sector would mean she had a resource available to her if she needed to continue working in retirement or faced an unexpected bill. This is no longer available to her.