

News

Writers protest at book by Trump cheerleader

Two authors have threatened to leave Simon & Schuster in protest at its decision to publish the autobiography of a provocative British writer who is a hero of America's alt-right movement (Greg Hurst writes).

Milo Yiannopoulos, right, is said to have negotiated an advance of \$250,000 for his book, to the dismay of critics.

Yiannopoulos, 33, is a prominent supporter of Donald Trump and lionised by some anti-establishment conservatives in the US. However, he is hated by many feminists, black people, Muslims and liberals. Karen Hunter, a

black US radio talk show host and bestselling author, said that she was "rethinking" her relationship with the publisher.

Danielle Henderson, a black American television writer and author,

tweeted: "I have calls in with my editor, agent, and lawyer. This is too personal for me to ignore."

Leslie Jones, who starred in *Ghostbusters* and was subjected to abusive tweets that led to Yiannopoulos being banned from Twitter last year, also criticised Simon & Schuster, accusing it of letting people like him "spread hate". And the comedian Sarah Silverman attacked the



Leslie Jones, left, and Sarah Silverman say that Milo Yiannopoulos should not be given a platform to "spread hate"

publisher for giving him "a platform".

Last night *The Bookseller* reported that Simon & Schuster's UK arm would not be publishing the book.

The *Chicago Review of Books* called the decision to publish his book "a disgusting validation of hate" and announced that it would not review any titles published by Simon & Schuster this year.

But criticism of his publishing deal appeared to have backfired with his book, entitled *Dangerous*, propelled to Amazon's bestseller list two months before its publication.

Yiannopoulos said: "I'm hugely indebted to the small but vocal band of agitators in the publishing industry absurdly trying to suggest I'm some kind of far-right bigot. I wonder what free marketing these idiots have planned for me when the book hits the shelves?"

Simon & Schuster has appealed to critics to withhold judgment until they have read the book.

Singer's barbed snub to the inauguration

Jack Malvern Arts Correspondent

The question of who will sing at Donald Trump's inauguration looks ever more vexed after a British singer announced that she would perform for him on one condition.

Rebecca Ferguson, who was runner-up on *The X Factor* in 2010 and then secured a record deal, said she would only sing *Strange Fruit*. The protest anthem about lynchings of black people was made famous by Billie Holiday. Its lyrics, including evocations of, "Black bodies swinging in the southern breeze/ Strange fruit hangin' from the poplar trees," may not conjure the kind of mood that team Trump is seeking.

Ferguson suggested that she had been approached by saying that if she could sing the song that is "a reminder of how love is the only thing that will conquer all the hatred in this world, then I will graciously accept your invitation and see you in Washington."

Elton John, Andrea Bocelli, Garth Brooks and Kiss have refused to sing at the ceremony.

Tighter press controls not priority, say 99% of voters

David Brown

The political establishment's appetite for further press regulation is not supported by the public, with only 1 per cent believing that it should be a priority for the government, a survey has found.

Further controls on newspapers came bottom of a list of 16 topics when voters were asked to say what the government should be focusing on over the next few years.

The findings are published today as the government prepares to conclude its consultation on punishing newspapers that fail to sign up with an officially recognised regulator and to reopen the Leveson Inquiry into press standards.

The survey, commissioned by the News Media Association (NMA), which represents Britain's newspaper publishers, found that young voters, who are the least likely to read newspapers, were the most concerned about regulation.

Three per cent of those questioned aged between 18 and 24 said that press regulation should be one of the government's top four priorities over

the next few years. Labour voters were three times more likely than Tories to consider regulation a priority. The top priorities across all voters were Brexit (53 per cent), health (48 per cent), immigration and asylum (45 per cent) and the economy (44 per cent).

Karen Bradley, the culture secretary, is due to make a decision on implementing Section 40 of the Crime and Courts Act 2013 after the consultation.

Section 40 would require newspapers that are not members of the officially approved regulator to pay all legal costs of those who take cases to court even if they lose.

Lynne Anderson, the NMA's deputy chief executive, said: "It is abundantly clear from the poll that there is absolutely no public appetite for further activity from the government in this area, such as the reopening of the Leveson inquiry, when there are other much more pressing priorities at hand."

Half of the 1,632 people who responded to the YouGov survey believed that the newspaper industry should fund the press regulator while

a quarter believed that taxpayers should foot the bill.

The poll also found that more than half of people believed that Facebook should have the same level of regulation as newspapers following complaints about "fake news" on social media.

Concern about the impact of deliberately misleading stories shared online before the Brexit vote and US presidential elections have highlighted the lack of controls over online news sources.

One in ten voters believed that news on Facebook should be more tightly regulated than that in newspapers. A similar proportion said that the traditional press should have tougher controls.

Lord Justice Leveson's 2,000-page report into press standards in 2012, which recommended tough new laws for newspapers, devoted a single page to social media, saying that it existed in an "ethical vacuum" and was beyond regulation.

If you wish to write a response to the government's consultation, which ends on January 10, visit www.research.net/r/9WH5LV3.

Complaints scheme 'will close papers'

David Brown

Local newspapers face closure if forced to pay the costs of defeating complaints under a scheme operated by the state-sponsored press regulator, publishers warned yesterday.

Newspapers will have to pay up to £3,500 for an arbitrator to rule on a complaint and would not be able to recover their legal costs even if successful. In contrast, victorious complainants face no charges and could claim up to £300 an hour — to a maximum of £3,000 — for their lawyers.

As arbitration is less risky for claimants than pursuing an expen-

sive libel action in the High Court, there are fears the scheme could mean many more cases being brought against newspapers.

Max Mosley, whose family trusts are the main financial backers of Impres, the only regulator approved so far by the Press Recognition Panel, claimed yesterday that its arbitration scheme "cost nobody anything".

News Media Association, which represents hundreds of national, regional and local newspapers, said that Impres's scheme could lead to massive costs for publishers fighting unwarranted complaints.

Lynne Anderson, its deputy chief

executive, said it would have a chilling effect and lead to local newspapers being put out of business.

Dominic Cooper, chief executive of the Chartered Institute of Journalists, said: "Cheap arbitration may just encourage a proliferation of claims from disgruntled members of the public. Even the so-called low-cost arbitration would be a significant cost to a local newspaper."

Ed Procter, chief operating officer of Impres, said it had a £50,000 fund to cover the arbitration costs for publications with a turnover of less than £1 million and that publishers could also buy insurance to cover costs.

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