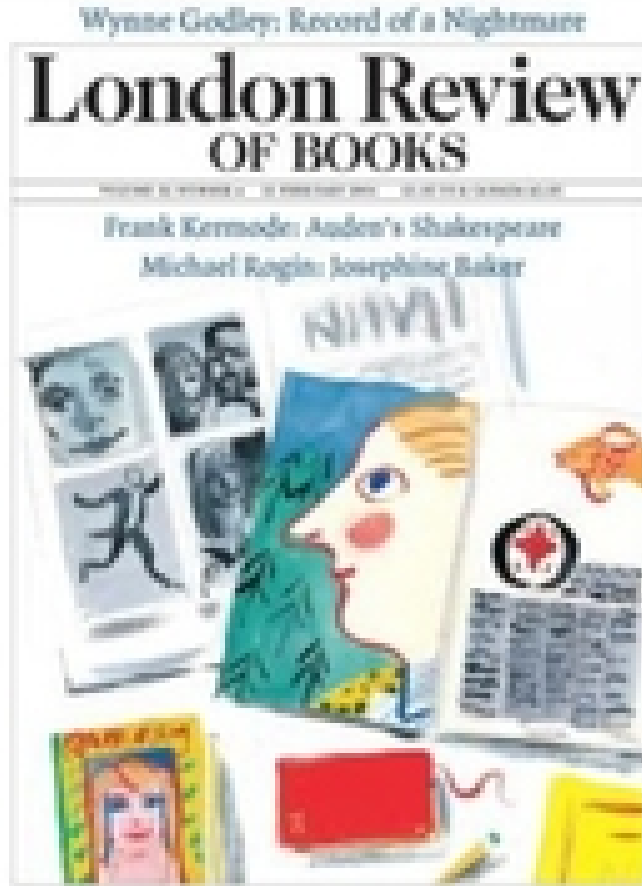


INTERESTING EXCHANGE

Posted on April 19, 2014 by Keghart



Category: [Opinions](#)



In its Dec. 19, 2013 issue, "The London Review of Books" (LRB) published an article about  German government pressure on Hollywood studios not to make negative references to the Nazis, to Adolph Hitler, and to Germany. Keghart.com Editor Jirair Tutunjian wrote to the LRB, pointing out similar pressure on MGM studios by Turkey not to produce "The Forty Days of Musa Dagh". Below is the correspondence.

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11 January 2014 18:12

Re "**Business as Usual**" (Dec. 19, 2013) about Nazi pressure on Hollywood film makers:

In the early '30s Austrian novelist Franz Werfel wrote "The Forty Days of Musa Dagh" epic about a small community of Armenians who, during the First World War, resisted rather than succumb to genocidal Turkey. The book was a bestseller in Germany and in Austria. It was translated into many languages, including English.

In the mid-'30s MGM bought the movie rights, did its own translation of the novel, and even went into pre-production, with Clark Gable as the lead. The studio shuttered the movie soon after when Turkey's ambassador to the US Mehmed Ertegun threatened that if the movie was made Turkey would launch a global boycott against MGM. Since then several Hollywood personalities (Sylvester Stallone, for one) have expressed interest in filming the novel and then withdrawn from the project. It wouldn't be much a stretch to suspect that Turkish threats have dissuaded them from filming Werfel's action-packed (love story, too) novel.

Where are you Steven Spielberg when we need you?

Jirair Tutunjian, Toronto

March 20, 2014

Hollywood Caves in

Jirair Tutunjian tells us that in the mid-1930s Turkey's ambassador to the US, Mehmed Ertegun, told MGM that if it made "The Forty Days of Musa Dagh", the novel about the Armenian genocide, into film, 'Turkey would launch a global boycott against MGM' (Letters, 6 March). If that is indeed the case, the ambassador's sons Sesuhi and Ahmet made cultural redress by founding Atlantic Records, which nurtured such musicians as Ray Charles, Charles Mingus, John Coltrane, the Modern Jazz Quartet, Big Joe Turner, the Coasters, the Drifters, Aretha Franklin and many more.

Mat Snow, London

25 March 2014 01:38

Dear Myerscough,

Mat Snow trivializes ("Hollywood caves in", Letters, p. 5, 20 March, LRB)) the genocide of the Armenians when he tries to establish false equivalency in the founding of Atlantic Records and Turkey's continued suppression of the facts about the genocide of 1.5 million Armenians. The mind reels at the superficiality and crassness of Snow's "response".

While it's commendable that Ambassador Mehmed Ertegun's sons established Atlantic Records, that fact has nothing to do with the Turkish government's continued campaign (stopping the production of MGM's The Forty Days of Musa Dagh) to erase the memory of its horrendous crime against its innocent Armenian citizens--the first genocide of the 20th century. Among those slain by Turkish soldiers were my grandparents, aunts, uncles and extended family. Practically every Armenian I know has a similar tragic story to tell. Turkey's Prime Minister Recep Erdogan insists that there was no genocide because "Muslims don't commit genocide." Erdogan obviously hasn't heard of Darfur, where his friend, the Sudanese dictator, committed genocide against fellow Muslims.

Jirair Tutunjian, Toronto

