



## Story of The Blue Book on Genocide told in documentary

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Oxford University Armenian Society and Aegis Society just hosted the screening of 'The Blue Book, Witnessing History', a new observational documentary examining Turkey's efforts to deny Armenian Genocide.

The film focused on Ara Sarafian's campaign to reject a petition by Turkish Grand National Assembly sent to the British Parliament in 2005 asking the UK Parliament to repudiate the veracity of the 1916 Blue Book, a collection of eyewitness accounts on the genocide.

Sarafian has been working with British parliamentarians since 2005 to reject the Turkish position. As part of this campaign in 2006 he took part in an Istanbul University conference on Turkish-Armenian relations. While there he appeared on a mainstream Turkish television current affairs programme, where he was able to draw frank admissions from his Turkish counterpart. The film completes in 2009 with the release of Turkish translation of the Blue Book in Ankara.

Following the film, there was a discussion of issues raised by the film, most notably the contemporary significance of genocide denial by Turkey. On the panel were Professor Theo Van Lint, Mr. Ara Sarafian and the filmmaker Mr. Gagik Karagheuzian.

Professor Van Lint of Armenian Studies at University of Oxford, complemented the film on being able to capture the significance of genocide recognition, the absurdity of its denial, and the satirical moments that arose. One such episode was an incident at an academic symposium when Sarafian had to remind the participants that 'it is not the cover of the book that is important but what is inside it.'

Professor Van Lint went on to comment on the lamentable moments in the film when Ara visited the killing fields and valleys of 1915, relating what he saw to eye witness accounts of the local American consul and missionaries. Prof. Van Lint completed his thoughts by saying that he felt the ending of the film depicted the tragedy of this issue strongly, by exposing the facts of denial with such clarity, while parliamentarians in both the UK and Turkey found the Armenian Genocide so easy to simply ignore.

The filmmaker Gagik Karagheuzian commented that for him the most overwhelming discovery was the importance of Armenian historians spending time in Turkey, learning how to deal with their Turkish counterparts and Turkish people, while raising awareness the Armenian Genocide.

Ara Sarafian also discussed the significance of raising the Genocide issue in Turkey. He argued that taking part in symposiums, not only with denialist, but more importantly with human rights activist and dissident historians empowered the latter to engage the issues head on within Turkey.

The Oxford screening was a powerful reminder of the relevance of the Armenian Genocide issue in Turkish-Armenian relations.

For more information about "The Blue Book: Witnessing History" visit [www.anisounds.com/bluebook.html](http://www.anisounds.com/bluebook.html) email: [bluebook@anisounds.com](mailto:bluebook@anisounds.com).

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