

Transcript of the English
Translation of the speech
made on 3rd November
2007 by:

Lord Dafydd Elis-Thomas
Llywydd of the National
Assembly for Wales

at the Unveiling of the
Memorial to the victims of
the Armenian Genocide at
the Temple of Peace in
Cardiff



"I am greatly honoured to be here today at the kind invitation of the Wales-Armenia Society to accept this marble cross – the khatchkar – on behalf of the people of Wales, and in order to dedicate the cross to the memory of those people of Armenia who were killed in one of the biggest genocides the world has ever seen when, in 1915, one and a half million Armenians were massacred by the Turks."

"It gives me great pleasure also to welcome to Wales Mr. Vahe Gabrielyan, the Armenian Ambassador to the United Kingdom, and Bishop Nathan Hovhannissian, the Primate of the Armenian Apostolic Church in the United Kingdom."

"The fact that the funds for this fine memorial have been raised entirely by the Armenians who live in Wales and that it will occupy a special place here in the Temple of Peace, reflects the vibrant interest in the history of Armenia."

"Ever since it was founded following the First World War, this building – the Temple of Peace – is a

symbol of Wales's desire and ambition to be heard in international affairs."

"I am pleased to say that Wales, as a nation, has acknowledged Armenia's right to self-government and to have the suffering of her people recognised by the world."

"And it is not merely a case of sentiment that Wales can identify with a small country with its own unique language; characterised by a religion which has its roots in the oldest Christian Church in the world; and the experience of living next door to a powerful and imperialistic neighbour."

"The story of Wales's relationship with one of the oldest states and the oldest Christian Church in the world can be traced to the end of the nineteenth century and the massacre of the Armenian people in Sassoun in 1894."

"Llewelyn Williams, a Liberal MP from Wales, wrote a volume on the history of Armenia and the infamy of the Sassoun massacre."

"When this dreadful event occurred, protest meetings were held, money raised to alleviate the suffering and the Wales-Armenia Society formed."

"But the support for the people of Armenia has not been confined to the realms of history."

"In March 2000, a majority of Assembly Members voted in support of a motion by Rhodri Glyn Thomas AC, the current Heritage Minister ,

- acknowledging the verity of the Armenian genocide which happened under Turkish rule in 1915
- Calling on Turkey to cease the economic blockade of the Armenian republic

- And exerting pressure on the British Parliament to refuse to support Turkey's application for membership of the EU until they acknowledge the truth about the genocide in 1915, in addition to ceasing the economic sanctions."

"To this end, a majority of Welsh MPs have also signed motions in the House of Commons. In 2001, Wales's First Minister presented a wreath to commemorate those who suffered in that genocide and, this year, Armenians were included alongside Jews and the people of Darfur in a ceremony where genocides were the subject of recollection."

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