



MEMORIAL SERVICE OF RANDOLPH VIGNE

Remarks by

Hon. Prof. Peter H. Katjavivi, MP
Speaker of the National Assembly of the
Republic of Namibia

On the occasion of the
Memorial Service of James Randolph Vigne

LONDON

22nd July 2016

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**A Message from the Government of the Republic of Namibia delivered
by Hon. Prof. Peter H. Katjavivi, MP, Speaker of the National Assembly
of Namibia, at the Memorial Service of James Randolph Vigne**

London

22nd July 2016

**Mrs. Gillian Vigne, your children, grandchildren and the rest of the
Vigne family,**

Distinguished Invited Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I and my wife, Jane, stand with you here today to represent ourselves, the National Assembly of the Republic of Namibia, our President, His Excellency Dr. Hage Geingob and our country Namibia, as we remember and celebrate the life of our dear friend Randolph Vigne, who left us a few weeks ago.

Indeed, Randolph was a very special friend to many of us in Namibia and beyond the borders of Namibia. We learnt with great sadness about his passing on. However in life, there are things that are beyond us in this world and death is one of these things. It is a road meant for all of us at some point during the course of our lives.

We are gathered here to celebrate Randolph's life because he made a great impact on all of us who knew him and appreciated what he stood for. Personally, I remember Randolph as a compassionate person, who gave himself for the cause of freedom and independence of both Namibia and South Africa. Towards this end, he actively devoted his time to assist the struggle for the freedom and liberation of Namibia by working with Namibians particularly in the area of solidarity and public



awareness in the United Kingdom. He provided a dedicated leadership for the 'Friends of Namibia' Committee, which was later transformed into the 'Namibia Support Committee'. This committee dedicated itself to promoting the support and solidarity for the liberation of Namibia. The grouping enlisted a number of men and women of various ages, of goodwill, who promoted the cause for Namibia's self-determination. I worked closely with Randolph, along with many of our international friends in the solidarity movement, during my time as the SWAPO Chief Representative of its UK and Western Europe Office in the late 1960s-70s.

Indeed, we lost a dear personal friend to many of us and a friend of the Namibian nation, who stood for what he believed in. The Founding President of the Republic of Namibia, Comrade Sam Nujoma, described the Randolph Vigne as, "*a fearless fighter for freedom and justice*". Randolph was known to many Namibians particularly those who were based in Cape Town in the 1950s-60s. One of these being the Hon. Andimba Toivo Ya Toivo, who even named one of Randolph's grandchildren, *Hanganeni*, which literally translates into '*let us unite*'.

Let me now take this opportunity to read to you a personal message from the President of the Republic of Namibia and President of the SWAPO Party of Namibia, His Excellency, Dr. Hage Gottfried Geingob:



His Excellency, Dr Hage G. Geingob, President of the Republic of Namibia and President of the SWAPO Party, message at the memorial service of the late James Randolph Vigne

James Randolph Vigne was a man who gave up his comfort to help those who lacked comfort in their lives. It has been said that *Great achievement is usually born of great sacrifice, and is never the result of selfishness.* Because of his unwavering sense of justice and his commitment towards safeguarding the dignity of his fellow human beings, James Randolph Vigne accomplished a great achievement through great sacrifice. A man such as him, coming from a good upbringing and having a stellar educational background, could have easily succumbed to selfishness and ignore the plight of others. However, due to his brave and unselfish character, he has immortalized himself as one of the gallant heroes of the struggle against the Apartheid Regime.

Though he faced vilification from those who believed in white supremacy, James Randolph Vigne never buckled under the onslaught of hatred. He stuck to his egalitarian principles, founding the African Resistance Movement (ARM), an organisation which aimed to sabotage the apartheid government. This was a bold move, because in being part of such a movement, he was putting himself and his family at risk. This was a sacrifice he was prepared to make for the sake of justice and the freedom of others.



As members of SWAPO, we share very fond memories of James, who visited our offices and camps in Tanzania, Zambia and Angola. These were dark days, fraught with great peril but the character of the man and his dedication to the cause of freedom was palpable to all of us.

His is a story that parallels the story of our own lives as former freedom fighters. Like many of us, he was forced to flee his country of birth, escaping arrest in 1964 spending 30 years abroad, campaigning against the Apartheid regime in South Africa and the occupation of Namibia where he also chaired the Namibia Support Committee and became a member of the Anti-Apartheid Movement.

James Randolph Vigne's life can be summed up by these moving words by Martin Luther King who said, "Human progress is neither automatic nor inevitable... Every step toward the goal of justice requires sacrifice, suffering, and struggle; the tireless exertions and passionate concern of dedicated individuals."

Humanity is grateful for James Randolph Vigne, a man whose dedication and passionate concern for those who were oppressed drove him towards a life of sacrifice, suffering and struggle. His undeniable heroism has helped contribute to human progress in Namibia, South Africa and the African continent as a whole.

May the soul of this great man, this gallant son of Africa, rest in eternal peace.