

O U R G R E A T T A S K

This is an extract from OUR REVOLUTION, an article written by Paul Petersen, which formed one of a series of lectures he delivered to members of UMKHONTO WE SIZWE units.

"Comrades we are faced with a great task. We live in a period when all mankind is emerging from centuries of strife and conflict. We live in a time when the prospect of peace and happiness has come within the reach of all. But before the dawn of a new life comes over the horizon there is still one battle to be fought. Before mothers may love their children and guide them into a world of peace and plenty, they will first see them being torn away from their homes. There is a bit of the idealist in all of us. Who can resist the temptation to take a peep behind the curtain that divides the present from the bright future? And having seen what tomorrow has in store for us it is hard to be patient, it is hard to wait when the joy of freedom is so near. No one can be blamed for wanting to tear aside that curtain and to step over the threshold into a new life. But we must be careful. Let us not allow tomorrow to be put once more beyond our grasp. It has taken much toil. But the last step will be the hardest of all. It has taken much care and preparation to bring us so invitingly close to victory. It will take more care and hard work to make the promise a reality. It would be a betrayal of those who have struggled valiantly if we should now, in one tragic act of recklessness destroy everything.

THE STRUGGLE GOES ON. Nothing can stop it. Nothing can prevent it. There are many soldiers of freedom. Nothing can stop them from being born. Each of us has his task in the great fight. Let us not despair. Despair is an enemy of the revolutionary. Let us truly believe that victory will come. Let us be eager but let us also take care that eagerness does not endanger the revolution. Above all let us take this business of revolution seriously. Let us take politics seriously because revolution is a political act. It is true that we

may not like politics. But then very few people like politics, many of us here would have preferred to be working in a factory or doing some such useful thing.

Many of us would have preferred to continue our studies. Many of us would have preferred in the arms of a sweetheart. All of us have mothers and fathers and brothers and sisters. Many of us have little ones. But such is the cruelty of revolution. These are the things that we have vowed should never again happen to the youth of our country. Let us not fail them comrades. Let us not act so that the generations of the future may blame their misery on our impatience. Comrades, mankind is about to step out of darkness into the brightness. Now there will be light. We, each one of us will play his part. We are participants in the greatest events in the life of mankind. As one of the greatest martyrs of freedom begged his people from the gallows, we must remind ourselves, "Comrades be vigilant".

"A REVOLUTIONARY DEDICATES HIMSELF TO THE CAUSE OF A BETTER LIFE. IN ORDER TO ACHIEVE THIS, HE WILL SACRIFICE HIS OWN LIFE. A REVOLUTIONARY LOVES LIFE AND HE KNOWS THAT LIFE DOES NOT END WHEN HE HIMSELF HAS DIED. HE KNOWS THAT LIFE, THE LIFE THAT HE LOVED, WILL GO ON IN THE SMILES, LAUGHTER OF HAPPY CHILDREN. HE KNOWS THAT LIFE WILL GO ON IN THE SMILES OF BEAUTIFUL GIRLS FOR THEIR YOUTHFUL LOVERS. HE KNEW THAT LIFE WILL GO ON IN THE HEARTS OF A NATION THAT WILL REMEMBER HIM. THIS IS THE LIFE FOR WHICH HE GLADLY GIVES HIS OWN".

- PAUL PETERSEN (BASIL FEBRUARY) - An Umkhonto combatant who when discovered by Rhodesian armed forces while on his way to South Africa, refused to surrender and fought single-handedly to the bitter end.