

OF YOUTH

It is only in the spring time every year, on 9th May, that people stand in a queue to lay flowers on the grave of the Unknown Warrior at the Kremlin wall in Moscow. What do we of Umkhonto we Sizwe do on 16th December every year? We go to the graves of those who fell and remember the part they played in the struggle. We pay respect to the memory of our fallen heroes in the struggle for our freedom and "died for life on earth forever", as Alexander Tvardovsky, a great poet said, and continued:

I know, of course,
No fault lies at my door
That others did not come back from the war...

Why did this poet bring this up after so many years since World War II? Below we publish "Of Youth" by this great poet of the Soviet Union. We do this so that the young men and women who have been swelling our ranks since 1976 should look about themselves and understand this noble cause they are serving. You, young men and women, are the living. We hope you will always remember and take stock of what you are in order to shape your future.

Editors.

We treasure the future
And know youth will win -
But not as young grass wins,
When, pushing up through the snow
at winter's end,
It crowds out the old grass.

No, youth's purpose is different.
Youth steps into our still warm tracks
And takes up our cause,
For it has the same cherished goal in sight.

It is for youth to walk on, down
our chosen road -
To walk farther than we -
And to achieve that
Which we have not had the time to achieve.
From the heights of the Five-Year Plans of the future

It may - who knows! - remember us,
Remember with a smile
Our heroes, our poets, our ministers.
But as it scales those soaring peaks -
And it will scale them swiftly
Let it not be carried away,
Let it not judge us, its fathers, too severely.

Let it instead

Understand,

Let it sense with its heart
That we too did our bit
In helping it reach those coveted peaks
And that we knew years ago
That it would reach them.

We knew and dreamt of the fame and glory
The youth of our land would attain,
And our fathers before us
Knew and dreamt of it too,
For, like we, they saw far ahead.

The exploit of our fathers, veiled by time,
was o u r exploit
As ours was theirs.

They took the Winter Palace without us,
We took Berlin with them still beside us.

We built Kuzbass - that giant complex -
Without the young of our land,
But it is together with them
That we harness the Volga.

Let our youth not forget
That in its wake
The young of future years will come,
Born to do great things of their own.

We see them coming,
And we welcome them without envy,
For we are no older than they.

- ALEXANDER TVARDOVSKY