

OUR GENERATION'S RESPONSIBILITIES

By Emmett O'Connell

Demosthenes once said; "The time for extracting a lesson from history is ever at hand for them who are wise." Among the many lessons to be learned from history, particularly Ireland's is that each generation must be willing to accept the responsibilities which are uniquely theirs. They must have the wisdom and the courage to strike boldly for their goals, for if difficult problems are pushed aside the generations that follow will surely pay the price.

The story of a nation's moral decline has almost always been chronicled by its refusal to face

reality. Time and again the choice has been made of an apparent easy way out. People have been misled by an innovation of government, by a misguided leader or simply through accepting the belief that critical decisions will solve themselves if ignored.

Down through the centuries we see each succeeding generation of Irishmen embrace the legacy of responsibilities given them by their forefathers. "They always went forth to battle, but they always fell", wrote Yeats; but theirs was the duty to strike for Ireland's cause. To accept this task was but right, to renege was wrong. This century has seen the doctrine of Republicanism written once more in the blood of the 1916 martyrs. More blood was to flow in the 1920-'21 war; and on this sea of blood Ireland sailed to within sight of liberty. Yet when the goal was within grasp, the Republic was compromised. Under the threats of Lord George, Collins and Griffin took what appeared to be the easy way out. However earnestly they may have believed that the treaty gave them the "freedom to achieve freedom", once they veered

from the true Republic they passed on to a future generation the task of defending it. No man has the right to vote, either directly or indirectly, another person or generation into slavery.

Likewise, when De Valera became dissatisfied with the Irish Republican Movement and left with an opportunist faction he repeated the error of the earlier compromisers and eventually became an English tool. We find him as late as 1935 admitting that the legacy of defending the Republic lay with Russell, then leader of the I.R.A.

That legacy was accepted by the men of the Republican Army from 1936 to '46. But by this time the bastard of English diplomacy, the Free State, had grown into a many headed monster devouring its own children and their efforts failed. The following sixteen men met their deaths at the hands of the Free State government for their beliefs in an all Ireland Republic.

Sean Glynn, Limerick, died from the effects of ill-treatment and brutality at Arbor Hill Prison, Dublin. 13 September, 1936.

Peter McCarthy, Dublin, shot by Special Political Police, in Clonbrassil St Dublin, 15 June, 1937.

Christy Bird, Dublin, shot in myster-