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29th May 1972

Text of statement issued by the Executive of the Northern Republic Clubs announcing that the Official I.R.A. was suspending all armed military actions (as reported in the United Irishman of June 1972).

The Executive of the Northern Republican Clubs has met with the leaders of the I.R.A. over the weekend. The Executive proposed to the I.R.A. that in view of the growing danger of sectarian conflict, the I.R.A. should immediately suspend all armed military actions. The I.R.A. has agreed to this proposal, reserving only the right of self-defence and the defence of areas if attacked by the British Military or by sectarian forces.

The overwhelming desire of the great majority of all the people of the North is for an end to military actions by all sides. While recognising the justification of the I.R.A.'s past policy of defence and retaliation, we feel at this stage that any military actions can only help to inflame the situation even further. The Republican Clubs therefore feel that this suspension of hostilities by the Official IRA is an invaluable opportunity for us to avoid sectarian civil war which the Provisional campaign is threatening to provoke.

The Executive of Republican Clubs sincerely hopes that this proposal agreed to by the I.R.A. will be met by genuine responses from all the forces involved in the situation. We firmly believe that the only talks that can be of relevance at this, or any stage, are those between groups of Irishmen and to this end we ask representatives of the Protestant community to consider these proposals seriously.

We feel that peace in the present situation can only be found if full democratic rights and equality are instituted in the North, and will continue our political struggle and the civil disobedience campaign until our immediate demands are met. These include:-

- (1) The release of all internees;
- (2) A general amnesty for all political prisoners in British or Irish jails, for men on the run and for all those against whom charges are pending as a result of their involvement in the civil disobedience campaign or because of resistance to British troops; and a write off of all debts incurred as a result of the civil disobedience campaign;
- (3) The withdrawal of troops to barracks pending their ultimate withdrawal from the country, and an immediate end to military repression;
- (4) The abolition of the Special Powers Act in its entirety;
- (5) Freedom of political expression must be immediately established; the Republican Clubs in particular demand their full democratic rights of political existence. The open convention we held in Belfast during April showed our determination to establish this right, and we will continue to pursue it.

As the dangers of sectarianism threaten so gravely at this moment we call on all sincere people to support these proposals, which we consider essential if we are not to be plunged into sectarian war. They are vital if we are to build the mass movement that will bring about a true revolutionary situation and create a socialist republic. The I.R.A. has agreed to them and has accepted our suggestion. Now let all other forces respond in the same way, and we may yet save the possibility of eventually building a new free and prosperous Ireland in a democratic socialist republic.