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9th August, 1971

Statement issued by the Social Democratic and Labour Party regarding the introduction of internment without trial in Northern Ireland.

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We express our total opposition to internment and regard it as further proof of the total failure of the system of Government in Northern Ireland. We also condemn outright the British Government's action in clearly taking a course of repression, and its support for the discredited Unionist regime, a course which has failed before and will fail again.

We have taken the following decisions and call for the full support of the people in their implementation.

- 1) We call on all who hold public positions in Northern Ireland, whether elected or appointed, to express their opposition to internment by immediately withdrawing from these positions, and to announce their withdrawal publicly without delay, to give clear evidence that the system of Government set up by the 1920 Act has failed.
- 2) We call on the general public to participate in this protest by immediately withholding all rents and rates. We expect 100% support from all opponents of internment and all who are opposed to the Unionist regime.
- 3) We will give full support to all organisations who call meetings to oppose internment, and appeal for complete unity in every area.
- 4) We demand that the military resume the task for which they were sent here, namely the protection of people and areas against sectarian attacks in their homes pending a political solution.
- 5) We call on the Westminster Government to suspend immediately the system of government in operation in Northern Ireland in view of its absolute failure to provide peace, justice and stability in Northern Ireland, and to commence immediately talks on new political and constitutional arrangements.
- 6) We will send immediately representatives to Westminster and to Dublin to express our views.

At this time of grave crisis, in order to prevent any further serious loss of life, we call on all who support us to stand firm and disciplined behind us. We emphasise the need for absolute unity in all areas, and we pledge ourselves to firm and determined leadership in order to provide once and for all a political solution to the problems of this country.
