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NEWS RELEASE

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for Convention file
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16/4/75
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RELEASE TIME : IMMEDIATE

16th APRIL, 1975.

THE RT. HON. HARRY WEST, SPEAKING AT THE U.U.U.C. PRESS CONFERENCE
TO-DAY FOR THE LAUNCHING OF THE MANIFESTO

In publishing our election manifesto we want particularly to make clear the spirit in which we do so. We most earnestly desire the success of the coming Constitutional Convention, and we want to contribute all we can to working out, with all who are elected to it, sound principals for our future government, such as are likely, in the words of the Act, "To command the most widespread acceptance throughout the community."

A widespread acceptability throughout the community has been, and will be, our guiding principal. Our manifesto obviously leaves options wide open on very many matters. But we have indicated certain directions in which we are convinced that the road is closed.

That is not because we personally have closed it, but because the great majority of our people are inexorable, and quite understandably, determined not to go that way. That determination of theirs must be taken into account in any realistic effort to work something out for our future within the terms of the Act.

Indeed we are certain that if that determination were to be intransigently ignored, thwarted or cheated in some way, there could be nothing to look forward to in the future but instability and strife. And we believe that, in comparable human circumstances, it would be the same in any other country in the world.

The road that our people are not prepared to tread is that which would lead towards the destruction of the Union and the destruction of our identity. They are not so blind or stupid as not to see that road as having its beginning in the sort of imposed institutional schemes against which they expressed themselves so strongly last year, both through the ballot box and, when that was ignored, in other more direct ways.

Our Ulster political landscape has certain strong and rugged features, and no wise person will try to change them by battering his head against them.

But there is nothing in those features which need prevent us from living a happy, neighbourly life and all of us together building a fair future. In the Convention we want to join with those of every party, creed and complexion who are elected to it in taking the major decisions which can make it once more possible for us to do that.