


need to be forcefully reasserted. The alternative is a further slide into the grip of terrorism and the increasing public acceptance of an intolerable society built around rival killer gangs and a sectarian apartheid. If the chances of building such a consensus seem remote, then the prospects of living a decent life in Northern Ireland without it are certainly grim. Whatever difficulties stand in the way of peace and progress are as nothing compared to the nightmare of a society dominated by endless cycles of savagery. 

There are many indications that people do want to express their rejection of terrorism and their commitment to Peace in a practical and positive way. The Peace Train Organisation has just held a very successful and encouraging rally in Portadown. We have seen public demonstrations against terrorist violence by Trades Unionists at the Royal Victoria Hospital and by people moved by the recent deaths in Derry.

It is the duty of public representatives in this community, - political, religious, industrial, social and cultural - to shoulder this responsibility and come together publicly to sponsor a Democratic Convention.

The time is right, if people are prepared to seize it.



WHAT CAN I DO TO SUPPORT THE DEMOCRATIC CONVENTION ?

Contact any individuals or groups active within the community with whom you are associated or have influence.

ARE YOU A MEMBER ?

of a Trade Union; of a cultural or sporting organisation; of a business group; of a community group; of a church or other religious body; of a political party ? Raise the issue of the Democratic Convention within these bodies and ask that they sponsor its aims.

CONTACT

your local M.P., M.E.P., Councillor, minister of religion, community worker; and urge them to make a commitment to this initiative against terrorism and for democracy in our society.

ORGANISE

a group in support of the Democratic Convention within your own area or circle of influence.

We all know how the genuine and strong public emotions generated by atrocities have, in the past, dissipated and faded, due largely to a sense of futility. It is vital for our society that we grasp this opportunity to channel the present mood of "savage indignation" into constructive action, and assert the overwhelming demand of our people for a decent, democratic and peaceful society.

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The Workers Party


against **TERRORISM**


A DEMOCRATIC CONVENTION

*In Defence
of*


PUBLIC LIFE




Are all those who act as representatives of the public interest in Northern Ireland prepared to continue as powerless spectators and side-line commentators while gangs of vicious psychopaths dominate our society and create a terror-laden climate against public life here ? 

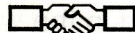
That question is dictated by the sense of helplessness and genuine despair evident in the comments of so many public figures in the aftermath of the horrors perpetrated by terrorists during the past weeks. The Workers' Party is not alone in saying that simple denunciations of violence are not enough, but we do say that it is essential to look beyond condemnation to a positive programme of action for peace, rather than retreat from it into a gloomy attitude of futility and inaction. 

The murders and bombings of recent times, which have disgusted and repelled the vast majority of our people, are not acts of isolated insanity or random criminality, like the murder rate in some American cities, for example. The terror here stems from groups grounded within this society; vicious gangs who draw the inspiration and motivation for their terrorism from sectarian preoccupations and priorities long established as


acceptable within Northern Ireland. That is why the call for firm effective action by the police against the terrorists must be coupled with a concerted community effort to isolate them and destroy their framework of support. 

The Workers' Party in the past has called for the formation of a Democratic Convention: - a body which could give practical public expression to what is undoubtedly a great surge of revulsion against the sickening cycle of murder, and could channel it into productive and effective action against the terrorist groups operating within our community. It has not been possible for the Workers Party to organise such a body unilaterally. By its very nature, such an initiative needs a wide and influential base if it is to succeed. It requires the committed involvement of a broad range of political figures and groups, of trades unions, of the different churches, of people active in social and cultural fields within the community; of all who accept that they can no longer close their eyes to the damage being done by terrorism in this society. 

Now, more than ever, the opportunity - the necessity - exists for the coming together of such people to generate a consensus on the crucial points of an end

to the killings and support for the principle of democracy. Whatever differences exist on matters of politics or on issues of nationality and loyalty, the unifying rejection of terrorism, which we have heard in the heartfelt condemnations from so many disparate voices recently, should be given its true priority as having first call on the allegiance of every citizen of this society. 

There are a number of basic principles to which a democratic peace initiative could ask all its adherents to subscribe :-

- * The outright rejection of legitimacy for any terrorist act - no excuses for murder.
- * The fullest encouragement for every one in the community to support the police in the struggle against the terrorists - a recognition that this is a struggle on behalf of all democrats.
- * The necessity of opposing all forces in our society which promote prejudice and sectarian hatred.
- * An acceptance that the only path to any political development or progress must be through the consent of the people - recognition of the democratic principle as the foundation of our society. 

These are basic principles and should, in any healthy society, be taken as read. Here they are flouted daily and