

DT009 - Ian Gow and Ulster integration

The late Ian Gow MP would have been distressed to read the statement in your editorial on his murder (1 August 1990) that 'the full integration of Ulster into the United Kingdom - a perfectly logical option - almost certainly would be unacceptable to British public opinion'. This is to dismiss out of hand the policy Ian Gow believed in, and indeed died for. I do not believe the policy of integration would be found unacceptable. In a talk given at Oxford Town Hall just before Ian Gow's murder (which is to be published in pamphlet form) I argued that integration is 'the solution yet to be tried'. Why should Northern Ireland not be governed in the same way as Scotland, which is its near neighbour geographically and from which many of its people derive? By suggesting that the six counties of Northern Ireland are unfit to be treated as a full part of the United Kingdom (in which they have been comprised without interruption since 1801) you are hinting that at some time they will be handed over to the Republic. We hear a lot about the oxygen of publicity, but this attitude (unfortunately very common today) gives the terrorist a more potent boost. It may be called the oxygen of expectation.