

THE ULSTER COVENANT AND EVENTS, 1912-14

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Who do you think you are? Currently, there are a number of fascinating programmes on television which explore people's background and discover what their ancestors did in the past. Fortunately for us, there are very good records for the early part of the last century, such as census returns and army records. In the case of the Ulster Covenant of 1912, the names of nearly one half a million persons who signed has been computerised and can be searched at the website of the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland. Recently I have conducted research into my own family, which revealed connections with political events in the first two decades of the twentieth century. In this talk I shall deal briefly with what I discovered about my people and then turn to examine political developments, 1912-14, paying special attention to the Ulster Covenant and events in Ulster. I shall look not only at northern unionists but also at the response elsewhere, including Cork, to their actions.

First, I want to mention some special connections between Belfast and Cork, which I have come across recently and which, I suspect, few people in Cork know about. During this month of November 2013 we have been marking the 50th anniversary of the death of C.S. Lewis. He is a very famous, and extremely widely read, author of religious works and childrens' books. His books continue to be published in hundreds of thousands of copies every year and his childrens' books have been turned into major successful box office films. Last week a plaque was unveiled to him in Westminster Abbey. At the same time one of his books was read on BBC Radio 4 during the week. In a major biography published this year, the author Professor Alister McGrath has commented that Lewis has become 'that rarest of phenomena-a modern Christian writer regarded with respect and affection by Christians of all traditions'. You will probably be aware that Lewis was born in Belfast in 1898. You will probably be unaware that Lewis has important family connections with Cork!!

Both parents of C.S. Lewis were born in Cork, city or county. His paternal grandfather, Richard, whose family came originally from Wales, moved to Cork with his wife Martha in 1853 to work as a master boiler maker with the Cork Steamship Company. In 1863 Albert Lewis, father of C.S.Lewis, was born and a year later the family moved to Dublin to work for

another shipping company. In 1868 the Lewis's moved to Belfast where Albert became a partner in the ship building company, Lewis and McIlwaine. One of the ships they built was a 1600 ton vessel, called the Titanic, the name immortalised by the second ship called the Titanic, constructed by Harland and Wolffe. Albert Lewis, however, did not enter his father's business but qualified as a solicitor and in 1884 established his own law practice in Belfast. Lewis's mother, Florence, was born in Queenstown/Cobh in 1862, the daughter of Rev. Thomas Hamilton, a Royal Naval chaplain. On her side there was a series of Church of Ireland clergymen stretching back to 1729. In 1870 the Hamilton family went to Rome where Florence's father served as curate at Holy Trinity Church. In 1874 the family moved to Belfast when Thomas Hamilton became rector of the recently created parish of Dundela in East Belfast, where the fine new church of St Mark's opened in 1878. Florence Hamilton and Albert Lewis were married in 1894, and on 29 January 1899, Clive Stapleton Lewis was baptised in St Mark's by his grandfather.

The piece of my own family history which I discovered about this period of the early twentieth century related to John Lonsdale. Growing up, I heard from my mother and my grandmother, Edith Lonsdale Mercer, that we were related to John Lonsdale, M.P. for Mid Armagh, 1900-18. Later on,

however, I could not work out this connection. Lonsdale was a man of considerable wealth and high political and social position, unlike my mother's people who were just comfortably off farmers. Only recently, after considerable research, was I able to confirm that my grandmother's father, Robert Orr, was first cousin to John Lonsdale. I came across an account of Robert Orr's funeral in 1908 and this provided my evidence. Another daughter of Robert Orr married into the local Carroll family who were connected eventually to the Hazleton family, one of whose members was Richard Hazleton, M.P., secretary of the Irish parliamentary party, in the early twentieth century.

Who was John Lonsdale? Today, he is largely unknown, even in unionist circles. He was the eldest son of James Lonsdale, a prosperous farmer from Loughgall, Co. Armagh, where my mother's family came from. His father, however, in the 1860s decided that rather than just producing butter and selling it locally, it was a better idea to buy other farmers' produce and export it to the English market. Eventually he established butter depots in many parts of Ireland, including Cork. Around 1880 he moved the centre of his operations to Manchester where, with the help of his sons, he imported produce from the empire and established a very successful international commercial business.

In 1900, his son John, at the age of 50, returned to become M.P. for Mid Armagh, one of the new breed of businessmen, like James Craig, who now played an influential role in northern unionism. In 1903 Lonsdale became secretary of the Irish unionists at Westminster. When Long stood down as leader in 1910, it was possible Lonsdale could have become leader but in the end he was the person delegated to ask Carson to fulfil this role. Lonsdale took a leading part in subsequent proceedings, becoming leader, 1916-17, when Carson joined the British war cabinet. In 1918 Lonsdale gave up his seat and moved to the House of Lords as Lord Armaghdale. He died in 1923. He was a very successful businessman. He left nearly a third of a million pounds, Carson left about 150,000 pounds and Craig under 30,000 thousand pounds. Unfortunately, none of his money came our way. I say that for fear that after this meeting people will try to borrow money from me! I am the son of a Church of Ireland rector, a very honourable gentleman but with little money!

1

This evening I want to speak about the signing of the Ulster Covenant on 28 Sept. 1912. In the first half I plan to make some general points about the background to this event, describe the covenant and happenings on 28 Sept. 1912, and next consider its consequences for Ulster unionism. In the

second half I want to look at how others saw this event, looking at Cork unionists, the nationalists in general, the Cork based All for Ireland League, and finally the Rev. John L. Mac Neice, the remarkable father of the poet Louis MacNeice. To begin with, I want to spell out some dates and facts. At the 1911 general election to Westminster a total of 83 nationalists, 19 unionists and 1 liberal were returned for Ireland. All the unionist M.P.s, except the 2 Dublin University M.P.s, were from Ulster, although there was a sizeable unionist population in the other three Irish provinces, but because they were widely spread, could not elect M.P.s. A Liberal government was returned at Westminster once again but with a reduced majority and dependant on labour and nationalist votes. In 1911 the government passed the parliament act which meant that the House of Lords could no longer block legislation. The cause of this act was to do with the liberal budget, to which members of the Lords had objected, but it had clear implications for Ireland. In 1893 the Second Irish Home Bill had passed the Commons but not the Lords. Dependent on the Irish nationalist vote, the government introduced the third home rule bill in April 1912. The bill now progressed through both houses and in June 1914 received the royal assent but was suspended until the end of the war in Europe which had recently broken out. This act proposed a

parliament and government in Ireland but with limited powers which excluded defence and taxation.

What about the reaction in Ireland? Immediately following the government's intention to introduce the home rule bill, strong opposition to the measure was declared by unionists whose new leader was the Dublin born Edward Carson, one of the two Dublin university M.P.s. From the speeches of men such as Carson and John Lonsdale we can get a good idea of their objections in 1912. In the first place, they believed that this piece of legislation had come on the statute books because of a deal between the liberals and nationalists which kept the government in power. Liberals had a majority in parliament, 1906-10, but only moved to introduce home rule when they were dependant on the nationalist vote at Westminster. They saw the bill as undemocratic and called for a general election. In the second place unionists believed strongly in the union between Britain and Ireland and they saw this link in serious jeopardy. They were enthusiastic supporters of the British crown and empire. They feared that this home rule measure would not satisfy nationalists and the end result would be separation. Thirdly, many unionists had strong religious concerns about a government based in Dublin under nationalist control. The Ne Temere decree of 1908 on mixed marriages, issued by the Vatican, had raised great alarm in the protestant community

throughout Ireland. Fourthly, unionists in Ulster had enjoyed major economic success with the Belfast shipyards and linen mills, and believed that this success would be jeopardised by new arrangements under a home rule parliament.

At the same time, we should note that in 1912 most unionists still saw themselves as part of an all Ireland unionist community. They were Irish and British, just as Scots were Scottish and British. In 1912, an editorial in the *Irish Times* refuted the claim that there were two nations in Ireland, and argued that there was one Irish nation, which, although divided, 'yet the spirit of our nationhood can and ought to be satisfied with Ireland's present position in the Union and the Empire'. For example, in June 1915 the board of governors of Campbell College, in East Belfast, a school briefly attended by C.S. Lewis, passed a resolution on opposition to the headmaster's attempts to run the school on the lines of an English public school. The resolution began by stipulating that 'Campbell College, founded by an Ulster merchant, is essentially an Irish institution and should primarily aim at satisfying Irish wants and ideals'. We can detect elements of an Ulster identity before 1912, as in the formation of the Ulster Unionist Council, but Unionists generally still saw themselves as Irish unionists.

The year 1912 witnessed some very important developments in Ulster. In early April 1912 a massive unionist demonstration was held at the Balmoral grounds, attended by 100,000 unionists. Those present heard strong condemnation of home rule not only from leading unionist figures, such as Edward Carson and James Craig, but also the British conservative leader, Bonar Law. Later that month Asquith introduced the Home Rule Bill to parliament. Furious debate ensued but the bill was carried through its first and second readings by the government majority. In June an amendment was introduced by a liberal member, Agar-Roberts, to exclude the four counties of Antrim, Armagh, down and Londonderry from the bill. This was the first public mention of separate treatment for any part of Ulster. It was voted down. The Ulster unionist M.P.s supported this measure but primarily as a tactical move.

Ever since the Balmoral rally, however, the unionist leaders had discussed the idea of some sort of oath or covenant to rally their supporters, based on the Scottish covenant of 1580. The task of devising the actual words fell to Thomas Sinclair. Eventually in August the press reported that Saturday 28 Sept was to be 'Ulster Day', when Ulster unionists would dedicate themselves to a solemn covenant, although the actual words had not yet been finalised. It was left to Craig to organise a massive campaign of meetings in

September which would conclude with the mass signing of the Covenant. On 18 September then this programme of meetings began with a major demonstration in Enniskillen attended by Carson.

The next day Carson returned to Belfast to attend a meeting of the unionist leadership to make public the wording of the Ulster Solemn League and Covenant. There is a famous picture of all the unionist leaders at Craigavon House on 23 Sept. 1912, when Carson had just read out the covenant for the first time, and Lonsdale is seated at his right hand. The words were as follows: *Being convinced in our consciences that Home Rule would be disastrous to the material **well-being of Ulster as well as of the whole of Ireland**, subversive of our civil and religious freedom, destructive of our citizenship, and perilous to the unity of the Empire, we, whose names are underwritten, men of Ulster, loyal subjects of His Gracious Majesty King George V., humbly relying on the God whom our fathers in days of stress and trial confidently trusted, do hereby pledge ourselves in solemn Covenant, throughout this our time of threatened calamity, to stand by one another in defending, for ourselves and our children, our cherished position of equal citizenship in the United Kingdom, and in **using all means which may be found necessary** to defeat the present conspiracy to*

set up a Home Rule Parliament in Ireland. And in the event of such a Parliament being forced upon us, we further solemnly and mutually pledge ourselves to refuse to recognize its authority. In sure confidence that God will defend the right, we hereto subscribe our names. And further, we individually declare that we have not already signed this Covenant.

The above was signed by me at _____

"Ulster Day." Saturday, 28th September 1912.

Women signed a different version;

We, whose names are underwritten, women of Ulster, and loyal subjects of our gracious King, being firmly persuaded that Home Rule would be disastrous to our Country, desire to associate ourselves with the men of Ulster in their uncompromising opposition to the Home Rule Bill now before Parliament, whereby it is proposed to drive Ulster out of her cherished place in the Constitution of the United Kingdom, and to place her under the domination and control of a Parliament in Ireland. Praying that from this calamity God will save Ireland, we here to subscribe our name.

Over the next nine days parades and meetings were held in towns in many parts of Ulster. At these occasions the determination of Ulster men and women to resist home rule was stressed. At the same time, we should note a declaration by Carson, following a meeting of the UUC on 23 Sept, that they

did not seek separate treatment for Ulster, but rejected the measure for all of Ireland and were conscious of unionists in the south and west whose best protection lay with the Westminster parliament. At this stage, unionists in Ulster and elsewhere, including their Dublin leader, saw these developments not as an effort to get separate treatment for Ulster, but as part of a programme to stop home rule for the whole of Ireland. Elaborate arrangements were now made through the unionist party organisation so that by Covenant Saturday on 28 September at dozens of centres there were books of ten sheets of foolscap size, each of which provided space for ten signatures. There were also copies of the covenant printed on cardboard which people could keep as souvenirs. The largest numbers to sign the covenant were in Belfast where tens of thousands of people signed in the city hall. This scene, however, was repeated at centres all over Ulster. In Dublin the covenant was signed by 2000 men who gave proof of their birth in Ulster and signatures were also collected in London, Glasgow, Manchester and Liverpool. When the lists were closed a few days later, it was found that in Ulster 218,206 men and 228,991 women had signed. Another 19,162 men and 5055 women signed elsewhere. It is reckoned that three quarters of adult protestants signed the covenant or declaration. Unionists later pointed out that in contrast to these 461,414 signatures, 7 men signed the

Proclamation of the Republic in Dublin in 1916, while the American Declaration of Independence of 1776 had 56 signatories

Subsequent events can now be briefly outlined. In early 1913 the home rule bill received its third reading in the house of commons. At their annual meeting in January 1913 the UUUC decided to establish the Ulster Volunteer Force. On 30 Sept 1913 UUUC delegates approved the setting up of a provisional government if home rule became law. In April 1914 large quantities of arms were imported to arm the UVF. Meantime political negotiations had proceeded between the British government and the unionist and nationalist leadership to seek a compromise. We witness a movement to achieve a special arrangement for Ulster, no longer just to prevent home rule for all of Ireland. One option that was now seriously considered was the exclusion, temporary or permanent, of all or part of Ulster, but agreement was not achieved. By summer 1914 armed confrontation in Ireland between the Ulster Volunteers and the newly formed Irish National Volunteers was a real possibility. This was avoided by the outbreak of the war in Europe and the leaders of the various sides agreed to suspend matters until the war was over. Large numbers of Ulster unionists now joined the ranks. The sacrifice of members of the Ulster Division at the Somme, in particular , was of great significance and helped to develop a stronger sense of Ulster identity. In

political negotiations which followed the Easter Rising, Unionists moved decidedly for separate treatment for Ulster. Originally this was for all the Ulster counties but eventually the UUUC decided to back the inclusion of only six counties. The Government of Ireland Act of 1920 led to the establishment of Northern Ireland in 1921 .

2

So far, I have sought to describe and explain the Ulster Covenant and consequent events from the Ulster unionist perspective. How did others respond to these matters? Let us look first at Cork unionists. My main source is the *Cork Constitution*. Its pages during September 1912 reflect support for the actions of the Ulster Unionists. There are reports of the various meetings and rallies in Ulster. On 21 Sept. the paper's editorial argues that the government, for a 'mess of pottage', is supporting home rule to remain in power. This bill will betray Ireland and endanger the empire: they seek to retain their 'right to British citizenship': the Ulstermen 'were fighting for the whole of Ireland'. The paper expresses concern about home rule leaving them 'to the tender mercies of the United Irish League and the secret lodges of the Board of Erin'. The Monday after the signing of the Ulster Covenant,

which gets reasonable but not massive coverage, the paper says it is clear that the home rule bill cannot be forced on the statute book by coercive means and then goes on to say: 'If any such legislative change is ever to be brought about, it can only be brought about by means such as Mr William O'Brian and those associated with him are advocating-by conciliation and compromise and due regard for the conflicting interests which require to be dealt with'.

On 21 Oct 1912, Cork unionist, Lord Middleton wrote to the *London Times*: 'Ulster holds the field, but unionists outside Ulster have rallied as they have never done before' and claimed that they had catholic support. It is not clear this support was widespread, but it showed the southern unionists had not the religious concerns of northern unionists. At the outbreak of the war, southern unionists enlisted in large numbers and some of their leaders called for co-operation with Irish National Volunteers. In Cork unionists and nationalists co-operated in the City of Cork Volunteer Training Corps. The recommencement of negotiations on Ireland's political future after the 1916 Rising witnessed important changes in the attitude of many southern unionists. Led by Lord Middleton, a section came out against partition, as did a number of Church of Ireland bishops, and called for negotiations with the constitutional nationalist party. At the Irish convention, which met 1917-

8, Middleton put forward compromise proposals which envisaged an Irish parliament, with extensive minority rights, but this was rejected in the end, by the Ulster unionist leadership and some nationalist leaders.

3

What about the attitude of nationalists to these events? In 1912, the constitutional Irish Parliamentary Party, under John Redmond, dominated Irish nationalism. At the 1910 Dec. general election, the IPP had won 73 seats, while there were another 8 seats held by William O'Brien and his All for Ireland League Party, plus two independent nationalists. The IPP welcomed the decision of the liberal government to introduce the third home rule bill. As there was a majority for this proposal in parliament they believed it should become law. They argued that Ireland was a nation and entitled to home rule. They rejected the arguments put forward by the unionists. As Geroid O Tuathaigh has pointed out, from the very outset of the home-rule campaign from the 1880s, the leadership of Nationalist Ireland chose, for the most part, 'either to ignore or to totally play down the intensity of unionist opposition to home rule'. It was repeatedly asserted that once a home rule assembly had been given sufficient time to work, unionist hysteria and militancy would quieten down. Initially the nationalist press and leadership

referred to Ulster Day and the Ulster Covenant as ‘Orange Bluff’, ‘a silly masquerade’ or ‘an impressive farce’. Irish nationalist leaders preferred to deal with London rather than Ulster politicians.

Subsequently, however, the actions of the Ulster Unionists, with the forming of the UVF, brought another response in nationalist circles. Following an article by Eoin MacNeill, ‘The north began’ in November 1913, the Irish National Volunteers were formed in Dublin. In July 1914 guns were imported through Howth to arm the National Volunteers. With the outbreak of war, the home rule act was suspended and the nationalist leadership urged the support of the Irish Volunteers for the war effort, which resulted in large numbers enlisting. A small section of volunteers, however, declined to accept this advice and remained in Ireland. With leadership from the secret and revolutionary Irish Republican Brotherhood, a rebellion was staged in Dublin at Easter 1916 by a number of Irish Volunteers. In the aftermath, following the execution of the leaders, Irish Nationalist opinion swung away from the Irish Parliamentary Party to Sinn Fein which now adopted a radical republican position. Efforts at negotiations between unionists, nationalists and the British government failed. In 1918 Sinn Fein won all but six of the nationalist constituencies in Ireland and established Dail Eireann. The Irish War of Independence broke out between the IRA and crown forces, which

ended with a truce in July 1921. Six months later there followed the Anglo Irish Treaty which established eventually the Irish Free State. Internal divisions over this treaty would lead to the Irish Civil War and peace would not be established until 1923.

4

Mention has been made of the All-for-Ireland League, under William O'Brien, M.P. for Cork. This movement must be examined not only because it had a wide Cork base, but because it had an important alternative view on these matters. I must acknowledge the work of Sally Warwick Haller on O'Brien and the Ulster crisis, 1912-4. William O'Brien was a committed, veteran Nationalist politician who had fallen out with the leadership of the Irish Parliamentary Party. Part of this conflict between O'Brien and John Redmond, may have been personal but it also arose from the new political approach taken by O'Brien. Inspired by the success of the Irish land conference of 1903 O'Brien sought reconciliation of unionist and nationalist, and in 1910 he established the All-for-Ireland League which gained particular support in Cork city and county. He was very critical of the Irish Parliamentary Party which he believed to be under the influence of the northern Joseph Devlin and the Ancient Order of Hibernians. He argued that for home rule to work the 'consent' of all parties was required. O'Brien was

one of the first people to use this term in relation to any future settlement in Ireland. He believed that a conference of the interested parties could thrash out this issue as they had done in 1903 over the land question.

On 20 Sept. the London Times O'Brien carried correspondence between O'Brien and with Lord Dunraven on the political situation. On 23 Sept the All-for-Ireland League held a conference at Cork. O'Brien's aim, as repeated at this time, was to forestall objections to the third home rule bill by various strong measures to protect the unionist minority. He urged that unionists should have the power of veto over legislation for a number of years, have weighted influence in the senate and elections should be by proportional representation. Any of these measures, he believed, were preferable to partition, which he believed would be very damaging. He backed federalism. O'Brien's views, however, received little support, at least outside his Cork circles. Many nationalists thought that he was giving away too much and in the early years they still hoped to see the third home rule bill pass into law. Most unionists, north and south, were not impressed, and they still planned to defeat the home rule bill. In parliament in June 1912, Carson had commended O'Brien for his views on conciliation but stated it was too late for accommodation with Irish nationalists. Later some of O'Brien's views resurfaced at the Irish Convention but to no avail. Patricia Jalland has

argued that unionist fears could have been allayed: an early concession over Ulster inserted in the original bill could have seriously undermined unionist objections. Sally Warwick Haller casts doubts on there ever really being a chance he would be listened to. At the same time, we should acknowledge that O'Brien's ideas of consent, minority rights and vetoes, and proportionality are at the heart of the Belfast Agreement.

5

When my grandfather, Carlisle Walker, put his name to the covenant in Carnmoney, East Antrim, I have no idea what he thought that he was signing up to. On the same day, however, a few miles away in Carrickfergus, in a brave and very perceptive sermon, the rector, Rev. Frederick Macneice, explained why he could not sign the covenant. Much later, his son, the poet Louis Macneice, claimed that his father was a home ruler. In fact, as David Fitzpatrick has shown in his brilliant new biography of the father, he was an ardent unionist, but an all Ireland unionist, and he was very concerned about possible consequences of the covenant for relations within Ireland.

In his sermon, Macneice acknowledged that the covenant could be seen in different ways, particularly the reference to use 'all means necessary'. Some saw the document as simply a protest against home rule, others believed that the threat of force would help avert violence, while others again believed that

the use of force was justified to defend the unionist position. In his sermon in Belfast, Bishop D'Arcy rejected the idea that violence or civil war would result. He said: 'Let us bind together in perfect union and war becomes impossible'. MacNeice's view, however, was that it could lead to bitterness, violence, counter violence and even civil war, and, as a Christian, he could not condone such a policy. He stated that he was not persuaded by anything he had heard that 'the Church of Christ, because faced with difficulty and danger, should, for the maintenance of her life, resort to weapons which the Founder and her Lord did not'. He was also concerned that this Ulster movement left out southern unionists.

The words of Macneice, ignored by most of his parishioners, proved prophetic, although even he could not have appreciated the particular train of events which now ensued. These later events can be linked to the Ulster Covenant. It is possible to claim that the Ulster covenant served to protect the interests of Ulster unionists in the six counties of what became Northern Ireland. All this, of course, was very different from what had been envisaged originally in 1912. As Alvin Jackson has pointed out, for unionists 'Ulster' became more important than 'Ireland'. It meant that unionists in the south and west were abandoned. Unionists asserted their right to the use of force to protect their rights, but nationalists also took up arms in response.

Unionists in 1912 had opposed the home rule bill for Ireland but 26 counties of Ireland in 1922 obtained a much greater degree of self-government than sought for in 1912.

These events of 1912-14 did not bring the gun into Irish politics for the first time as republicans had always backed the use of force. Nonetheless, in some ways the Easter Rebellion became more likely because guns had come into the situation after 1912 in such a major way. These events helped to justify the threat or use of force which led to the rise of armed resistance and Irish separatism in the rest of Ireland. In this way, it can be argued that the covenant was damaging in the long run for unionists, not least for their supporters in the new Irish state. Within Northern Ireland the early years would be marked by violence.

While it can be argued that the decision to sanction the threat of force or the use of force in 1912 had damaging consequences for unionists in the long run, it can also be argued that the response by nationalists and republican was also very detrimental to their cause in the end. For over a year, nationalists resisted the challenge to resort to counter-force. Eventually they did and the Irish Volunteers were formed. In the end this gave a special invitation and opportunity for 'those Irish separatists who would countenance the use of physical force', and so eventually destroyed the Irish parliamentary

Party. The decision to meet the unionist challenge of armed opposition by similarly adopting the threat or use of force led eventually to the 1916 Easter Rising, the War of Independence and then the Anglo-Irish Treaty. The republican leaders of the 1916 Rising had their own justification for the use of violence and these events have been seen by many as part of a legitimate revolutionary war. No doubt, for many republicans this outcome was to their liking. However, the Anglo-Irish Treaty was followed, inevitably, by terrible civil war.

Because the 'gun' was now at the centre of Irish politics, it meant that people resorted to violence to settle their differences over the treaty. During the War of Independence, hundreds of Irish people were killed, but during the Civil War the figures of those killed, by other Irish people, were in their thousands. Nationalists had sought home rule for all Ireland but by 1922 were in control of only the 26 counties. Nationalists had moved from seeking home rule to wanting a republic. In 1922 divisions over these goals would lead to a bloody civil war, in some ways more likely because of the armed rising in Dublin in 1916. Southern nationalists/republicans would now become absorbed in their own affairs in the 26 counties and northern nationalist would be largely abandoned. None of all this could have been envisaged in 1912.

No one could have forecast these outcomes. John Frederick Macneice, however, understood that violence begets violence. He was very wary of its consequences. Few in Ireland in 1912, unionist or nationalist, were willing to listen to his words. In conclusion then, I hope that my talk tonight has cast some light on these events of 100 years ago. I have sought to explain how unionists saw these events. Of course, the other part of the story is how nationalists saw them. We then heard alternative voices. Over the next decade we will remember a number of other key events. We can seek to understand better the challenges faced by our ancestors. Such efforts at understanding the different strands of our past , as seen in your series of lectures, will help us deal with the future.

Select sources:

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Sandy Smith, *C.S. Lewis and the island of his birth* (Belfast, 2013)