



Sources

1a. Chris Bryant's speech (October, 2016) - original text

An extract from a wider speech

“At the start of the 1930s, many MPs and politicians in this country, most of them Conservative—there were not many Labour MPs in the early 1930s—were convinced that Germany was a good country, because it had very liberal attitudes towards homosexuality. Berlin in the early 1930s was one of the best places for a gay man to live—we can think of Christopher Isherwood, “Cabaret” and all the rest of it. One of those MPs was Jack Macnamara, who was elected for Chelmsford in 1935; another was Robert Bernays, a Liberal who had been elected in 1931; and a third was Ronald Cartland, who was elected for Birmingham Kings Norton. They changed their minds when they saw what was happening to homosexuals in 1930s Germany. Originally, they had thought that the Versailles treaty was unfair to Germany and it should be overturned, and that Germany should be able to remilitarise the Rhineland and to change its future. In 1936 Jack Macnamara visited the Rhineland, expressly to support its remilitarisation. When he was there he “accidentally”—that was his word—visited a concentration camp: Dachau, which was the only one that existed at the time. The people who were in Dachau were the politically unwanted—a lot of Jews and some homosexuals. He saw the violence that was being perpetrated against them, and when he came back to this country he and others became the most vociferous campaigners against appeasement in this House.

Robert Bernays, Jack Macnamara, Anthony Muirhead, a junior Minister, Victor Cazalet, Philip Sassoon, Harold Nicolson and Ronald Tree were gay or bisexual, and they campaigned vociferously in this Chamber and around. They campaigned against persecution of Jewish people. Jack Macnamara made a speech here about Jew-baiting and was spat at that evening when he went to the Carlton club—he never went back. Ronald Cartland, the younger brother of Barbara Cartland, was probably the most courageous in the Munich debates, saying that it was terrible that we should capitulate and appease Hitler.

What did the then Government do? What did Neville Chamberlain's cronies do? They called these men the “glamour boys”. They got newspapers to ring them up and ask why they were still not married and why they were bachelors. They had these men's telephones tapped and had them followed, and when these MPs made speeches, they threatened them with deselection—and yet they persisted. It is my very strong belief that had it not been for those

gay and bisexual men, we would never have faced down Hitler and we would not enjoy today the freedoms that we do.

I mention some of those names because of their shields up here in the Chamber. Jack Macnamara desperately wanted to fight in the second world war, because he said, “I’ve argued for this war, I should fight.” Although Macnamara had been in the Army before he came into the House, Churchill wanted him to serve in some capacity on the home front, and not overseas. Jack Macnamara got his mother to write to Churchill, month after month after month, until eventually he was given a posting in the Adriatic and he saw service. He was killed when the Germans bombarded him and his troops in Italy”.

1b. Chris Bryant's speech (October, 2016) - plainer English

An extract from a wider speech

"At the start of the 1930s, many politicians in this country thought that Germany was a good country, because it was a nicer place for gay people. Some of them changed their minds when they saw what was happening to gay people in 1930s Germany.

In 1936 Jack Macnamara visited Germany, and whilst he was there went to a concentration camp, a camp where people were imprisoned and kept in terrible conditions. He saw many Jewish people and some gay people. He saw the violence that was being done to them, and it made him realise that they couldn't let Hitler do what he wanted.

Other people also felt the same way. The British government at the time didn't treat them well. They did things like:

- Gave them an nickname which was meant to make fun of them
- Got newspapers to ring them up and insult them
- Listened in to their phone conversations
- Threatened that they would lose their jobs

Even though all of these things happened to them, they continued to tell the British government that they should do more.

When the Second World War began, many of these men signed up to fight. Four were killed fighting.

2a. Robert Bernays' speech (July, 1933) - original text

An extract from a longer speech

I have just returned from Germany...over and over again, when I was trying to put to the Nazi leaders the feeling in this country aroused by their actions, I was met by the statement: "Your whole country is run by the Jews; your Parliament is run by Jews, your Press is controlled by Jews, your lawyers are Jews, your publishers are Jews,".

I should like to touch upon the point with regard to the persecution of the Jews in Germany. As far as I can estimate, the position of the Jews in Germany is really worse now than it was six weeks ago. There is persecution quite as systematic and cruel as any that has gone before. The persecution is in the actual regulations passed by the Government against the Jewish community. They involve nothing less than the deprivation of the Jews of all hopes of livelihood. It is sometimes suggested that this persecution of the Jews may be relaxed, but I must confess that I saw no signs of it. I would like to join my feeble plea to that of the Leader of the Opposition in asking whether the Government cannot do more than it has already done for the Jewish exiles. I do not speak as a Jew myself; I am not a Jew by religion and only remotely a Jew by race. What has happened to the Jews is surely an outrage on civilisation, and it is for civilisation to show not only that it is shocked, but that it is shocked into action.

I desire to raise the question of German rearmament...I do not pretend that I got anything more than an aeroplane view of the situation in Germany, but I have come back with the profound conviction that, so far as re-armament is concerned in Germany, the situation is profoundly disturbing. I do not suggest that the Versailles Treaty is being violated in the letter, but it is being violated in the spirit every hour.

if this spirit is allowed to continue, war within a generation, is, in my opinion, inevitable.

For years we all believed passionately in disarmament, and it has been urged upon the Government that if we did not disarm Germany would re-arm. Now these words are tragically coming true. This week is the anniversary of the Battle of the Somme. The terrible thing about a visit to Germany is that one feels that all we fought for in the War is slipping from our grip. I have returned from Germany profoundly convinced that all those ghastly sacrifices will have been in vain if the nations of the world do not act, and act quickly.

2b. Robert Bernays' speech (July, 1933) - plainer English

An extract from a wider speech

I have just come back from Germany. When I spoke to Nazi leaders about how English people feel about what they are doing, over and over again they said "Your whole country is run by the Jews; your Parliament is run by Jews, your Press is controlled by Jews, your lawyers are Jews, your publishers are Jews".

Jewish people are treated worse and worse every week. They are treated so cruelly. Germany has made laws which mean they are treated worse than other people: for example, they aren't allowed to get jobs. Some people say this might get better soon, but I disagree. I think the government should do more to help Jewish people who have left Germany. I'm not Jewish myself, but every good person should be shocked and outraged by what is going on.

Germany is creating more weapons all the time. I think that within a ten or twenty years, we will be at war.

We gave up so much in the First World War. It feels like everything we gave up will have been for nothing, if we don't act quickly to stop these injustices.

The German Conquest of Austria.

CAPTAIN CAZALET'S VIEWS

Captain V. A. Cazalet, M.P. for the Chippenham Division, dealt with the Austrian situation in speeches at Box and Sherston on Friday.

He said that the country was getting used to crises over the week-end, and he felt that it would be advisable if all dictators would adopt the English principle of a week-end free from political speeches and a closed time for political action.

He felt it was impossible to exaggerate the gravity of what had happened. He was conscious, as never before, of a real wave of indignation which had swept through every section of the community at the German violation of Austrian territory. This was no peaceable economic union between the German peoples. This was a rude, rough, barbaric conquest of a small independent country by one who had overwhelming military strength.

Why the Force?

Why the Force?

As Herr Hitler said, an overwhelming majority of Austrians were in favour of the Nazi regime, why was this force necessary? Why should Austrian police and customs officials be replaced by Germans? Why was it necessary to darken the sky over Vienna with masses of German bombers?

He imagined that the Germans considered it necessary to convince the Austrians there could be no question of resistance. Minorities were to have no more rights in Austria than they have in Germany. No doubt there was a large element in Austria that welcomed the union with Germany and, for the moment at any rate, had no strong feelings against the Nazi regime. What, however, about the 2,000,000 who had supported Herr Schuschnigg, who had been violently pro-Austrian in their sentiments? What about the 200,000 Jews whose liberty, lives and property would no longer be called their own? What about the vast number of workers who were deadly opposed to the Nazi regime and all that it stood for?

New War Technique.

He wondered how many Austrians to-day who welcomed Hitler with such frenzied acclamation would repent in a few weeks' time. To join up with Germany was one thing; to become a province of Prussia was another.

Apart, however, from the miseries and sufferings of Austria, Captain Cazalet stressed the European implications. Here was a new technique of war—propaganda first, then ultimatums, finally overwhelming military force. Was this to be repeated elsewhere? How soon would it be before the whole of Central Europe was under German domination; and similar language and threats used to England about the Colonies or anything else that Herr Hitler thought Germany ought to possess?

We were certainly faced with very grave decisions. Personally, he believed that a strong front might still save the situation. He thought a definite declaration by the British Government should be made to-day that if Germany attempted any similar action in Czechoslovakia she must expect to find herself opposed with all the force that Great Britain could muster. If such a declaration could be made, he believed it might have a steadying influence on the unbounded ambitions and aggressive attitude of Nazi Germany.

He realised that it was difficult to make such a declaration. Public opinion in this country was not yet sufficiently informed or educated upon the subject.

3b. Newspaper article about Victor Cazalet (March, 1938) - plainer English

Captain V. A. Cazalet made a speech on Friday. He said that:

It is impossible to exaggerate how serious the situation is in Germany.

Germany has taken over Austria by force. Hitler said that the Austrians are supportive of the Nazi regime, but if this is true, why did they need to use force?

Minority groups (like Jewish people) will have less rights in Austria, the same as in Germany. Surely Jewish people would not be supportive, now that their lives and freedom are being taken away?

How many people who have welcomed in the Nazis will regret it in a few weeks' time?

This is a new way of waging war: first you convince people with fake news, then you make demands, then you use weapons and violence. How long until the whole of Europe is under the Nazi regime?

If lots of countries say they are bad, we might stand a chance against them. The British government should make a statement today, which might help to stop them or slow them down. But this will be difficult, because people don't know enough about the Nazis, so they won't support the government saying this.