

= Tom Driberg =

Thomas Edward Neil Driberg , Baron Bradwell (22 May 1905 ? 12 August 1976) was a British journalist , politician and High Anglican churchman who served as a Member of Parliament (MP) from 1942 to 1955 and from 1959 to 1974 . A member of the British Communist Party for more than 20 years , he was first elected to parliament as an Independent , and joined the Labour Party in 1945 . He never held any ministerial office , but rose to senior positions within the Labour Party and was a popular and influential figure in left @-@ wing politics for many years .

The son of a retired colonial officer , Driberg was educated at Lancing and Christ Church , Oxford . After leaving the university without a degree , he attempted to establish himself as a poet before joining the Daily Express as a reporter , later becoming a columnist . In 1933 he began the " William Hickey " society column , which he continued to write until 1943 . He was later a regular columnist for the Co @-@ operative Group newspaper Reynold 's News and for other left @-@ leaning journals . He wrote several books , including biographies of the press baron Lord Beaverbrook and the fugitive British diplomat Guy Burgess . He retired from the House of Commons in 1974 , and was subsequently raised to the peerage as Baron Bradwell , of Bradwell juxta Mare in the County of Essex .

Driberg made no secret of his homosexuality , which he practised throughout his life despite it being a criminal offence in Britain until 1967 ; his ability to avoid any consequences for his risky and often brazen behaviour baffled his friends and colleagues . Always in search of bizarre experiences , Driberg befriended at various times the occultist Aleister Crowley and the Kray twins , along with honoured and respected figures in the worlds of literature and politics . He combined this lifestyle with an unvarying devotion to Anglo @-@ Catholicism . After his death , allegations were published about his role over many years as an MI5 informant , a KGB agent , or both . The extent and nature of Driberg 's involvement with these agencies remain uncertain .

= = Early life = =

= = = Family background and childhood = = =

Driberg was born on 22 May 1905 in Crowborough , a small dormitory town about 40 miles (64 km) south of London . He was the third and youngest of three sons born to John James Street Driberg , a former officer in the Indian Civil Service , and his wife Amy Mary Irving Driberg (née Bell) . The Driberg family had immigrated from Holland about 200 years previously ; the Bells were lowland Scots from Dumfriesshire . John Driberg had retired in 1896 after 35 years in Assam , latterly as head of the state 's police , and was 65 years old when his youngest son was born . For Driberg , growing up mostly alone with his elderly parents was a stifling experience ; he would later describe Crowborough as " a place which I can never revisit , or think of , without a feeling of sick horror " .

At the age of eight Driberg began as a day @-@ boy at the Grange school in Crowborough . In his autobiography he mentions in particular two aspects of his time there : learning the " facts of life " from other boys , with extensive experimentation , and his discovery of what he calls " exotic " religion ? High Anglicanism . These experiences formed what he called two " conflicting compulsions " , soon to be joined by a third ? left @-@ wing politics ? to shape the ruling passions of his life .

= = = Lancing = = =

In 1918 , when he was 13 , Driberg left the Grange for Lancing College , the public school on the south coast where , after some initial bullying and humiliation , he was befriended by fellow @-@ pupil Evelyn Waugh . Under Waugh 's sponsorship Driberg joined an intellectual society , the Dilettanti , which promoted literary and artistic activities alongside political debate . He began to write poetry ; his aesthetic education was further assisted by the charismatic J. F. Roxburgh , " a

magnetically brilliant teacher " who later became headmaster of Stowe School . Lancing 's Gothic chapel gave Driberg the religious atmosphere he sought , though he found the services disappointingly " moderate " . By 1920 he was inclining to the political left and was in rebellion against his conservative upbringing . Finding the Labour Party too dull and respectable for his radical tastes , he joined the Brighton branch of the newly formed British Communist Party .

After Driberg had risen to responsible positions within the school (deputy head boy , head librarian , and chief sacristan , among others) , his Lancing career ended suddenly in the autumn of 1923 , when two boys complained about his sexual overtures . To avoid distressing the widowed Amy Driberg (John Driberg had died in 1919) , the headmaster allowed him to remain in the school for the remainder of the term , stripped of his offices and segregated from all social contact with other boys . At the end of the term he was required to leave , on the pretext that he needed private tuition to pass his Oxford entrance examination which he had failed the previous summer . Back in Crowborough , after several months ' hard application under the guidance of his tutor , the future Lord Justice Pearson , Driberg won a classics scholarship to Christ Church , Oxford .

= = Oxford = =

Oxford in 1924 featured an avant @-@ garde aesthetic movement in which personalities such as Harold Acton , Brian Howard , Cyril Connolly and , a little later , W. H. Auden were leading lights . Driberg was soon immersed in a world of art , politics , poetry and parties : " There was just no time for any academic work " , he wrote later . With Auden , he discovered T. S. Eliot 's *The Waste Land* , which they read again and again , " with growing awe " . A poem of Driberg 's in the style of Edith Sitwell was published in *Oxford Poetry* 1926 ; when Sitwell came to Oxford to deliver a lecture , Driberg invited her to have tea with him , and she accepted . After her lecture he found an opportunity to recite one of his own poems , and was rewarded when Sitwell declared him " the hope of English poetry " .

Meanwhile , together with the future historian A. J. P. Taylor , Driberg formed the membership of the Oxford University Communist Party . During the General Strike of May 1926 , most Oxford students supported the government and enrolled as special constables and strike @-@ breakers . A minority , which included the future Labour Party leader Hugh Gaitskell and the future Poet Laureate John Betjeman , sided with the strikers , while Driberg and Taylor offered their services at the British Communist Party 's headquarters in London . The Party showed no urgency to employ them , and Taylor soon left . Driberg , given a job distributing strike bulletins , was arrested by the police before he could begin and was detained for several hours . This ended his active role in the strike . Notwithstanding his extreme left @-@ wing associations , he secured 75 votes (against the winner 's 152) in the 1927 elections for the presidency of the Oxford Union .

Throughout his time at Oxford , Driberg followed his passion for Anglican rituals by regularly attending Mass at Pusey House , an independent religious institution with a mission to " [restore] the Church of England 's Catholic life and witness " . In spite of the prevalent Oxford homoerotic ethos , his sexual energies were largely devoted to casual encounters with working @-@ class men , rather than to relationships with his fellow undergraduates . He experienced sexual relations with only one don , whom he met outside the university , unaware of the latter 's identity .

One of Driberg 's elaborate hoaxes was a concert called " Homage to Beethoven " , which featured megaphones , typewriters and a flushing lavatory . Newspaper accounts of this event raised the interest of the occultist Aleister Crowley . Driberg accepted an invitation to lunch with Crowley for the first of several meetings between them , at one of which Crowley nominated Driberg as his successor as World Teacher . Nothing came of the proposal , though the two continued to meet ; Driberg received from Crowley manuscripts and books that he later sold for sizeable sums . The consequence of these various extracurricular involvements was neglect of his academic work ; failure in his final examinations was inevitable , and in the summer of 1927 he left Oxford without a degree .

= = Daily Express columnist = =

== = " The Talk of London " == =

After leaving Oxford , Driberg lived precariously in London , attempting to establish himself as a poet while doing odd jobs and pawning his few valuables . Occasionally he had chance encounters with Oxford acquaintances ; Evelyn Waugh 's diary entry for 30 October 1927 records : " I went to church in Margaret Street where I was discomposed to observe Tom Driberg 's satanic face in the congregation " . Driberg had maintained his contact with Edith Sitwell , and attended regular literary tea parties at her Bayswater flat . When Sitwell discovered her protégé 's impoverished circumstances she arranged an interview for him with the Daily Express . After his submission of an article on London 's nightlife , he was engaged in January 1928 for a six @-@ week trial as a reporter ; coincidentally , Waugh had undergone an unsuccessful trial with the same newspaper a few months earlier .

Within a month of beginning his duties , Driberg achieved a scoop with the first national newspaper reports of the activities in Oxford of the American evangelist Frank Buchman , whose movement would in time be known as Moral Re @-@ Armament . Driberg 's reports were generally abrasive , even mocking in tone , and drew complaints from Buchman 's organisation about news bias . The trial period at the Express was extended , and in July 1928 Driberg filed an exclusive report on a society party at the swimming baths in Buckingham Palace Road , where the guests included Lytton Strachey and Tallulah Bankhead . This evidence of Driberg 's social contacts led to a permanent contract with the Express , as assistant to Percy Sewell who , under the name " The Dragoman " , wrote a daily feature called " The Talk of London " . Driberg later defended his association with an inconsequential society column by arguing that his approach was satirical , and that he deliberately exaggerated the doings of the idle rich as a way of enraging working @-@ class opinion and helping the Communist Party .

Driberg used the column to introduce readers to up @-@ and @-@ coming socialites and literary figures , Acton , Betjeman , Nancy Mitford and Peter Quennell among them . Sometimes he introduced more serious causes : capital punishment , modern architecture , the works of D. H. Lawrence and Jacob Epstein , and the lesbian novel *The Well of Loneliness* by Radclyffe Hall , which had been denounced in the Express editorial columns as " infamous " . By prior arrangement with Waugh , the column included a discreet announcement in September 1930 of Waugh 's conversion to Roman Catholicism ; Driberg was his only guest at the service . He further assisted Waugh in 1932 by giving him space in the column to attack the editor of the Catholic journal *The Tablet* , after it had described Waugh 's *Black Mischief* as blasphemous .

== = As William Hickey == =

Sewell retired in 1932 , leaving Driberg in sole charge of " The Talk of London " column . He grew increasingly frustrated with the trivial nature of his work . Following the intervention of Express proprietor Lord Beaverbrook , the column was relaunched in May 1933 as " These Names Make News " , and its by @-@ line changed to " William Hickey " , after the 18th century diarist and rake . Driberg described the new feature as " ... an intimate biographical column about ... men and women who matter . Artists , statesmen , airmen , writers , financiers , explorers ... " Historian David Kynaston calls Driberg the " founder of the modern gossip column " , although it soon began to move decisively away from chit @-@ chat and towards social and political issues . The tone of the column was described by Driberg 's ODNB biographer Richard Davenport @-@ Hines as " wry , compassionate , and brimm [ing] with ... open @-@ minded intelligence " .

Beaverbrook , who had developed a fondness for Driberg , was amused by the disparity between his columnist 's professed left @-@ wing sympathies and bon vivant lifestyle . The proprietor knew of Driberg 's persistent mismanagement of his personal finances , and on various occasions helped out with loans and gifts . During his time in London , Driberg had continued to indulge his taste for rough , casual sex ; his memoir records many such instances . In the autumn of 1935 he was

charged with indecent assault , after an incident in which he had shared his bed with two Scotsmen picked up late one night , in the bohemian district of London which Driberg had christened " Fitzrovia " in the Hickey column . Beaverbrook paid for a leading counsel , J. D. Cassels , and two unimpeachable character witnesses were recruited by the defence . Driberg was acquitted , and Beaverbrook 's influence ensured that the case went unreported by the press . This was the first known instance of what writer Kingsley Amis called the " baffling immunity [Driberg] enjoyed from the law and the Press to the end of his days " .

In the latter part of the 1930s Driberg travelled widely : twice to Spain , to observe the Spanish Civil War , to Germany after the Munich Agreement of 1938 , to Rome for the coronation of Pope Pius XII and to New York for the 1939 New York World 's Fair . After the Nazi @-@ Soviet Pact was announced in August 1939 , he informed his readers that there would be " no war this crisis " . Nine days later , after the German invasion of Poland precipitated the Second World War , he apologised for his mistake , and ended his first wartime column with the words " We 're all in it " . His opposition to the Nazi @-@ Soviet Pact and his support for the war in September 1939 may have been the reason for his expulsion from the Communist Party in 1941 . An alternative explanation , proffered later , is that he was reported by Anthony Blunt for passing information on the Party to Maxwell Knight of MI5 . Driberg and Knight were long @-@ standing acquaintances who met frequently and , among other things , shared a mutual interest in the works of Aleister Crowley .

Driberg 's mother had died in July 1939 . With his share of her money and the help of a substantial mortgage , he bought and renovated Bradwell Lodge , a country house in Bradwell @-@ on @-@ Sea on the Essex coast , where he lived and entertained until the house was requisitioned by the Royal Air Force (RAF) in 1940 . He continued to write the Hickey column , not always to his editor 's satisfaction ; his protestations against indiscriminate bombing of German civilians were particularly frowned on . In November 1941 he went to America and was in Washington on Monday 8 December , after the attack on Pearl Harbor , to report President Roosevelt 's speech to Congress announcing America 's entry into the war .

= = Early parliamentary career = =

= = Independent Member for Maldon , 1942 ? 45 = =

When Driberg returned to Britain in March 1942 he found widespread public dissatisfaction with the government 's conduct of the war . This mood was reflected in a series of parliamentary by @-@ elections in which candidates supporting the wartime coalition government were defeated by Independents ? the major parties had agreed to a pact under which they would not contest by @-@ elections in seats held by their respective parties . Driberg , in his column , generally welcomed this trend , while questioning " the merit of some of the candidates likely to get in if the reaction against the Party machines continues " . On 12 May 1942 the death was announced of Sir Edward Ruggles @-@ Brise , the Conservative member for Maldon ? the constituency in which Bradwell Lodge was situated . Next day , Driberg requested three weeks ' leave from his column to fight the by @-@ election . Contrary to the belief of prime minister Winston Churchill and others that Driberg was being " run " by Beaverbrook , the Express proprietor was unenthusiastic ; an editorial on 25 May drew attention to Driberg 's individual viewpoint and stated that " The Daily Express does not support his candidature " .

Driberg 's campaign slogan was " A Candid Friend For Churchill " , personally supportive but critical of many of the prime minister 's circle . The lacklustre campaign of his right @-@ wing Conservative opponent helped to secure Driberg a wide range of support , from moderate Conservatives , Liberals and socialists . His fame as " William Hickey " , and his stance as the only candidate with a home in the constituency , gave him a strong local profile . His previous Communist Party associations were not revealed . At the poll , on 25 June , he overturned a previous Conservative majority of 8 @,@ 000 to finish 6 @,@ 000 votes ahead of his opponent . In his war memoirs , Churchill called the result " one of the by @-@ products of Tobruk " ? which had fallen to Rommel on 21 June . Waugh ,

in his diary , remarked that the presentation of Driberg during the by @-@ election merely as a journalist and churchwarden gave " a very imperfect picture of that sinister character " .

On 2 July 1942 Driberg cast his first vote in the House of Commons , in support of Churchill against a rebel motion of censure on the government 's conduct of the war . The rebels ' case was put incompetently , which ensured that the motion gained only 25 votes , as against 477 cast for the government . Driberg delivered his maiden speech on 7 July , in a debate on the use of propaganda . He called for the lifting of the ban on the Communist Party 's newspaper , the Daily Worker , which he saw as a potentially valuable weapon of home propaganda .

In the following months he tabled questions and intervened in debates on behalf of various progressive causes . For example , on 29 September 1942 he asked the prime minister to " make friendly representations to the American military authorities asking them to instruct their men that the colour bar is not a custom in this country " . He continued to write the Hickey column , and used his parliamentary salary to fund a constituency office in Maldon .

In January 1943 , while in Edinburgh to campaign in another by @-@ election , Driberg was caught by a policeman while in the act of fellating a Norwegian sailor . In his own account of the incident Driberg records that he escaped arrest by identifying himself as " William Hickey " and as a member of parliament . These disclosures evidently overawed the constable , who took no further action ; indeed , Driberg says , the incident began a chaste friendship with the officer that endured for more than 10 years . Meanwhile , Beaverbrook had become disenchanted with him , and did not intervene when Arthur Christiansen , the Express editor , sacked the columnist in June 1943 over a story detrimental to a government minister , Andrew Rae Duncan . Driberg subsequently signed up with Reynolds News , a Sunday newspaper owned by the Co @-@ operative Group , and undertook a regular parliamentary column for the New Statesman . He also contributed to a weekly BBC European Service broadcast until , in October 1943 , he was banned after government pressure . He reported the post @-@ D @-@ Day allied advances in France and Belgium as a war correspondent for Reynolds News , and as a member of a parliamentary delegation witnessed the aftermath of the liberation of Buchenwald concentration camp in April 1945 .

= = = Labour Member , 1945 ? 55 = = =

In the General election of July 1945 Driberg increased his majority at Maldon to 7 @,@ 727 . Before the election he had joined the Labour Party and had been welcomed by the local constituency party as their candidate . He was thus one of the 393 Labour MPs in the landslide election victory that replaced Churchill as prime minister with Clement Attlee .

Within a few days of his victory , Driberg left for the Far East , to report on the conditions of the allied troops in Burma . The Supreme Allied Commander , Lord Mountbatten , knew him slightly and made him an unofficial temporary special adviser . In this role he met the Patriotic Burmese Forces leader , Aung San , who impressed him as honest and incorruptible , " unlike some of the older Burmese politicians " . Later , he visited Saigon and offered to mediate with Ho Chi Minh , who had recently declared an independent Vietnam state . Driberg later maintained that , had his offer been taken up , he might have prevented the Vietnam War .

Because of his journalism , Driberg was a well @-@ known figure within the Labour Party generally , and in 1949 was elected to the party 's National Executive Committee (NEC) . In the February 1950 General Election he was again elected at Maldon , while nationally Labour lost 68 seats , reducing its parliamentary majority to six . With so small a majority , members ' regular attendance in the Commons chamber became important ; however , in August 1950 Driberg left the country for Korea , where Britain had joined the United States in a United Nations military expedition to repel the North Korean invasion of the South . Driberg and a few other left @-@ wing MPs had objected to British involvement ; In his Reynolds News column , Driberg had written of " Tories (Conservatives) who ... cannot help baying their delight at the smell of blood in the air " , a comment that caused outrage in parliament among the Conservative members . Whatever his reservations , Driberg 's war dispatches to Reynolds News were strongly supportive of the British troops . He participated in several night operations , and won respect from many of the soldiers for his courage

despite , as one Marine put it " being a bit bent " . He was away from parliament for three months , missing many critical House of Commons divisions , and on his return was severely censured by his fellow Labour MPs for neglecting his duties . His general standing in the party was unaffected ; he had been re @-@ elected in absentia to the NEC in September 1950 .

In April 1951 the Labour government was hit by the resignations of three ministers ? Aneurin Bevan , the future prime minister Harold Wilson , and John Freeman ? over the imposition of prescription charges to pay for an increased armaments programme . Driberg was sympathetic to the rebels , though he tried to find a basis for compromise that would avoid resignations . The former ministers strengthened the small Labour group known as " Keep Left " , in which Driberg was prominent ; the group would henceforth be known as " Bevanites " . In the October 1951 General Election the Labour Party was defeated , and Churchill resumed office ; Driberg held on to his Maldon seat by 704 votes . Through the years of Labour government he had neither received nor sought office , having what historian Kenneth O. Morgan called a " backbench mindset " . He still enjoyed aspects of his parliamentary life , such as in 1953 when he showed the American singing sensation Johnnie Ray round the House of Commons ; his attempts to seduce the singer were politely resisted . However , he needed to earn more money , and in the spring of 1952 responded to a suggestion that he should write a biography of Beaverbrook . The press lord was amenable , and work began in the summer of 1953 . The project extended over several years , by which time Driberg was no longer in parliament ; he had announced in March 1954 that he was standing down from Maldon , which at the General Election of May 1955 fell , as he had expected , to the Conservatives .

= = Marriage = =

On 16 February 1951 Driberg surprised his friends by announcing his engagement to Ena Mary Binfield (née Lyttelton) . A former Suffolk county councillor , she worked as an administrator at the Marie Curie Hospital in London and was well known in senior Labour circles ; she had met Driberg in 1949 , at a weekend party given by the government minister George Strauss . According to her son , she was fully aware of Driberg 's sexual preferences , but looked forward to some political excitement , and " thought they could do a useful job as Mr. and Mrs. " Driberg 's motives are less clear , but he told his friend John Freeman that he needed someone to run Bradwell Lodge , to which he had returned in 1946 after its release by the RAF .

At Driberg 's insistence , Ena , a non @-@ practising Jew , was baptised into the Church of England before the wedding at St Mary the Virgin , Pimlico , on 30 June 1951 . The bride entered the church to a chorale arranged from the Labour Party anthem " The Red Flag " ; this was followed by a nuptial mass described by Driberg 's biographer Francis Wheen as " outrageously ornate " . Four hundred guests then attended an elaborate reception at the House of Commons .

In the ensuing years Ena tried hard to adapt to Driberg 's way of life and to control his wayward finances , but with little success . He continued his frequent travels and casual homosexual liaisons , and was hostile to her efforts to control or change any aspect of his life . In 1961 she wrote to him : " I have tried for ten years to make a compromise with you in your extraordinary mode of life and have now given up . " Thereafter they often lived apart , though they never formally separated . Even after a final breach in 1971 , they remained legally married .

= = Later career = =

= = = Out of parliament = = =

On leaving parliament in 1955 , Driberg 's main task was to complete the Beaverbrook biography . Although Beaverbrook had initially promised no interference with the text , he changed his mind when he began to read Driberg 's drafts . In the course of a prolonged disagreement , Beaverbrook accused his biographer of being driven by " malice and hatred " . When the manuscript was finally cleared for publication , much of the objectionable material had been removed ; nevertheless ,

Beaverbrook used the Daily Express to campaign against the book and denounce its hostile tone . Evelyn Waugh , to whom Driberg sent a copy , expressed disappointment that the work was in fact " a honeyed eulogy " .

In an effort to build his post @-@ parliamentary career , Driberg turned briefly to creative writing , but without success . In his more familiar field of journalism he caused a sensation by flying to Moscow in August 1956 to interview Guy Burgess , the former British diplomat who in 1951 had defected to Russia with his colleague Donald Maclean . The pair had emerged in Moscow in March 1956 , to give a brief press conference . Driberg had known Burgess in the 1940s , and the two shared similar homosexual inclinations ; this acquaintance was sufficient to secure the Moscow interview . On his return home Driberg rapidly wrote a book from the interview material , the serial rights of which were sold to the Daily Mail . Critics drew attention to the book 's relatively sympathetic portrayal of Burgess ; some believed the book had been vetted by the KGB , while others saw it as part of an MI5 plot to trap Burgess into revealing secret information for which he could be prosecuted should he ever return to Britain .

In 1956 Driberg convened a group of Christian socialists that met regularly at the Lamb public house in Bloomsbury to discuss issues such as imperialism , colonialism , immigration and nuclear disarmament . The group 's dispatches , Papers from the Lamb , led to the foundation in 1960 of the Christian Socialist Movement . Although no longer an MP , Driberg remained a member of the Labour Party 's NEC and was active in party affairs . In 1957 , in the face of antagonism from trade union leaders repelled by his lifestyle , he became Labour Party chairman , a largely ceremonial role . He travelled widely during his year in office , generally as a Reynolds News correspondent but using the party title to advantage whenever he could . Thus , in a 1958 visit to Moscow to interview space scientists , he obtained two meetings with Nikita Khrushchev .

In his final speech as chairman , to the party conference in 1958 , Driberg angered the Conservatives and their press supporters by referring to the Tory ideology as not essentially different from the German Herrenvolk philosophy . He had been contemplating for some time a return to the House of Commons , and in February 1959 was adopted as a candidate by the safe Barking constituency . In the General Election of October 1959 , which delivered a 100 @-@ seat majority to Harold Macmillan 's Conservative government , he won at Barking with a majority of exactly 12 @,@ 000 .

= = = Member for Barking , 1959 ? 74 = = =

A dominant issue when Driberg returned to Westminster was that of the use or outlawing of nuclear weapons . The Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND) had been launched on 17 February 1958 , though Driberg 's involvement with the issue predated CND by three years . On 2 March 1955 , in an amendment to a House of Commons motion , he had called for Great Britain to " regain the moral leadership of the world by taking an initiative ... that may lead to the outlawing of ... thermo @-@ nuclear weapons " .

In October 1960 he supported the unilateralist motions passed at the Labour Party conference , and fought unsuccessfully in the NEC for them to be adopted as party policy . The conference motion was reversed the following year , but he continued to pursue the matter in parliament . On 29 May 1962 he urged that Britain not be a party to the renewal of nuclear tests , and in a speech on 23 July he said : " The unilateral abandonment of testing ? or , better still , a test ban agreement ? would be the most valuable first step towards general and complete disarmament . "

According to his colleague Ian Mikardo , Driberg was less than enthusiastic about his duties in Barking ? " a very , very bad constituency MP " . Even his strongest supporters acknowledged that he attended as few local events as possible . In the Commons chamber he was a regular speaker on issues that concerned him , in particular disarmament , church affairs and racial discrimination . He supported the lowering of the voting age to 18 , and the broadcasting of parliamentary debates ; he opposed increases to judges ' salaries , and the extension of Stansted Airport . After the General Election of 1964 , which narrowly returned Labour to power under Harold Wilson , he was not offered a place in the new government , and soon found himself in opposition to Wilson 's policies

on Vietnam , the Common Market , immigration and other major issues . He joined with Mikardo and other dissidents to form the " Tribune Group " , with the aim of promoting more left @-@ wing policies . The group 's influence lessened after March 1966 , when in another General Election Wilson increased his majority to 98 .

Driberg embraced enthusiastically the climate of the 1960s and the social and cultural freedoms that the decade introduced . In 1963 he met the Kray twins , prominent London gangland figures , and began a lengthy friendship with them and their associates . In July 1964 two backbench Conservative MPs reported to their Chief Whip that Driberg and Lord Boothby (a well @-@ known Conservative peer) had been importuning males at a dog track , and were involved with gangs of thugs .

At parties which Driberg and Boothby attended at the Krays ' flat , " rough but compliant East End lads were served like so many canapés " , according to Wheen . While Driberg avoided publicity , Boothby was hounded by the press and forced to issue a series of denials . After the twins had been convicted of murder in 1969 , Driberg frequently lobbied the Home Office about their prison conditions , requesting that they be given more visits and allowed regular reunions . Driberg was impressed with Mick Jagger , to whom he was introduced in 1965 , and tried hard over a number of years to persuade the singer to take up active Labour politics . He also began a long association with the satirical magazine *Private Eye* , supplying it with political gossip and , under the pseudonym " Tiresias " , compiling a regular , highly risqué prize cryptic crossword puzzle which on one occasion was won by the wife of the Archbishop of Canterbury .

In 1964 Driberg published a critical study of Moral Re @-@ armament , which brought him attacks from the movement on the basis of his homosexuality and communist past . Although he made money from this book , throughout the 1960s he was beset by financial problems . When Reynolds News , which had evolved into the Sunday Citizen , finally folded in 1967 , he became fully dependent on his parliamentary salary and casual journalism . He had long considered selling Bradwell Lodge , preferably to the National Trust on a basis that would allow him to continue living there . However , the Trust required the property to be mortgage @-@ free and endowed with a substantial fund to cover future repairs , neither of which terms could be arranged . In the event the house remained unsold until 1971 . As the 1970 election approached , Driberg wished to retire from parliament , and asked Wilson to appoint him as ambassador to the Vatican . Wilson refused , citing Driberg 's age ? at 65 he was beyond the retirement age for senior diplomats . Against his will , but with few other sources of income available to him , Driberg fought the June 1970 General Election . He was returned for Barking with a comfortable though reduced majority ; nationally , Wilson 's government was defeated by Edward Heath 's Conservatives .

= = Retirement , ennoblement and death = =

Hampered by age and declining health , Driberg became less active politically , and in 1972 was voted off Labour 's NEC . The sale of Bradwell Lodge to a private buyer removed his main burden of debt , and he rented a small flat in the Barbican development in the City of London . In February 1974 , at the age of 68 , he retired from the House of Commons with the intention of writing his memoirs . Still short of income , he first completed a biography of his fellow @-@ journalist Hannen Swaffer , which was indifferently received ? " a feeble potboiler " , according to Davenport @-@ Hines . Friends organised an elaborate 70th birthday party for him on 21 May 1975 ; " one duke , two dukes ' daughters , sundry lords , a bishop , a poet laureate ? not bad for an old left @-@ wing MP " , Driberg observed to a guest .

In November 1975 he was granted a life peerage , and on 21 January 1976 was introduced to the House of Lords as Baron Bradwell of Bradwell juxta Mare . On 14 April he tabled a motion in the Lords calling on the government to consider the withdrawal of troops from Northern Ireland , but won little support . His health was failing , though he continued to work on his memoirs . His final contribution to the House of Lords was on 22 July , in a debate on entry vouchers for the dependents of immigrants .

Three weeks later , on 12 August 1976 , while travelling by taxi from Paddington to his Barbican flat

, he suffered a fatal heart attack . The funeral was held on 19 August at St Matthew 's , Westminster ; he was buried in the cemetery attached to St Thomas 's Church , Bradwell .

= = Allegations of treachery = =

After the publication of his relatively sympathetic portrait of Burgess in 1956 , Driberg had been denounced as a " dupe of Moscow " by some elements of the press . Two years after Driberg 's death , the veteran investigative reporter Chapman Pincher alleged that he had been " a Kremlin agent of sympathy " and a supporter of Communist front organisations . In 1979 Andrew Boyle published *The Climate of Treason* , which exposed Anthony Blunt and led to a period of " spy mania " in Britain . Boyle 's exhaustive account of the Burgess ? Maclean ? Philby ? Blunt circle mentioned Driberg as a friend of Burgess , " of much the same background , tastes and views " , but made no allegations that he was part of any espionage ring .

In this atmosphere , Pincher published *Their Trade is Treachery* (1981) , in which he maintained that Driberg had been recruited by MI5 to spy on the Communist Party while still a schoolboy at Lancing , and that he was later " in the KGB 's pay as a double agent " . Other writers added further details ; the former British Intelligence officer Peter Wright , in *Spycatcher* (1987) , alleged that Driberg had been " providing material to a Czech controller for money " . The former Kremlin archivist Vasili Mitrokhin asserted that the Soviets had blackmailed Driberg into working for the KGB by threatening to expose his homosexuality .

The weight of information , and its constant repetition , made an apparently strong case against Driberg , and former friends such as Mervyn Stockwood , the Bishop of Southwark , became convinced that he had indeed betrayed his country . Other friends and colleagues were more sceptical . According to ex @-@ Labour MP Reginald Paget , not even the security services were " lunatic enough to recruit a man like Driberg " , who was famously indiscreet and could never keep a secret . Mitrokhin 's " blackmail " story is questioned by historian Jeff Sharlet , on the grounds that by the 1950s and 1960s Driberg 's homosexuality had been an open secret in British political circles for many years ; he frequently boasted of his " rough trade " conquests to his colleagues . The journalist A. N. Wilson quotes Churchill commenting years before that " Tom Driberg is the sort of person who gives sodomy a bad name " .

Pincher , however , argued that as homosexual acts were criminal offences in Britain until 1967 , Driberg was still vulnerable to blackmail , although he also asserted that the MI5 connection secured Driberg a lifelong immunity from prosecution . Driberg 's colleague Michael Foot denied Pincher 's claim that Margaret Thatcher , when prime minister , had made a secret agreement with Foot to protect Driberg if Foot , in turn , would remain silent about the supposed treachery of Roger Hollis , another of Pincher 's recently dead targets .

When asserts that Pincher was not an objective commentator ; the Labour Party , and its supposed infiltration by Communist agents , had been his target over many years . Pincher 's verdict on Driberg is that " in journalism , in politics and intelligence ... eventually he betrayed everybody " . When argues that Driberg 's greatest vice was indiscretion ; he gossiped about everyone , but " indiscretion is not synonymous with betrayal " . Driberg 's Labour Party colleague , Leo Abse , offers a more complex explanation : Driberg was an adventurer who loved taking risks and played many parts . " Driberg could have played the part of the spy with superb skill , and if the officers of MI5 were indeed inept enough to have attempted to recruit him , then , in turn , Tom Driberg would have gained special pleasure in fooling and betraying them " .

= = Appraisal = =

In his will Driberg had stipulated that at his funeral his friend Gerald Irvine should deliver an " anti @-@ panegyric " in place of the normal eulogy . Irvine obliged , with a detailed assessment of Driberg against the Seven Deadly Sins , finding him guilty of Gluttony , Lust and Wrath , but relatively free from Avarice and Envy and entirely untouched by Sloth . Pride , Irvine maintained , was in Driberg 's case mitigated by " the contrary virtue of humility " . Ena did not attend the funeral ;

she gave a single press interview in which she expressed " huge respect for Tom 's journalistic skills , political power and championship of the underdog " . She added that if her admiration for him did not extend to their personal life together , that was a private matter .

Driberg prided himself on being an exception to a rule propounded by Cyril Connolly , that the war between the generations is the one war in which everyone changes sides eventually . Mervyn Stockwood , in his address at the funeral service , praised Driberg as " a searcher for truth " , whose loyalty to the socialist cause was beyond question . This verdict was echoed by Michael Foot , who in a postscript to Driberg 's memoir wrote of Driberg 's " great services " to the Labour Party in the various offices that he occupied . Foot believed that Driberg 's homosexual passion , rather than bringing him fulfilment , had " condemned him to a lifetime of deep loneliness " The Times obituarist described Driberg as " A journalist , an intellectual , a drinking man , a gossip , a high churchman , a liturgist , a homosexual " , the first time , according to journalist Christopher Hitchens , that the newspaper had ever defined a public figure specifically as homosexual .

Nevertheless , Driberg 's incomplete memoir *Ruling Passions* , when published in June 1977 , was a shock to the public and to some of his erstwhile associates , despite advance hints of the book 's scandalous content . Driberg 's candid revelations of his " cottaging " and his descriptions of casual oral sex were called by one commentator " the biggest outpouring of literary dung a public figure has ever flung into print . " The comedians Peter Cook and Dudley Moore depicted Driberg as a sexual predator , wearing " fine fishnet stockings " and cavorting with a rent boy , in a sketch , " Back of the Cab " , which they recorded in 1977 .

More vituperation followed when Pincher 's allegations of Driberg 's links with the Russian secret service were published in 1981 ; Pincher christened him " Lord of the Spies " . However , Foot dismissed these accusations as typical of the " fantasies of the secret service world that seem to have taken possession of Pincher 's mind " . Foot added that Driberg " had always been much too ready to look forgivingly on Communist misdeeds , but this attitude was combined with an absolutely genuine devotion to the cause of peace " .

In his 2004 biographical sketch Davenport @-@ Hines describes Driberg as " a sincere if eccentric Christian socialist who detested racism and colonialism " , who at the same time " could be pompous , mannered , wayward , self @-@ indulgent , ungrateful , bullying and indiscreet " . As to the apparent contradiction between sincere Christianity and promiscuous homosexuality , Wheen argues that " there had been a recognisable male homosexual subculture in the Anglo @-@ Catholic movement since the late nineteenth century " . This theme is explored in a paper by David Hilliard of Flinders University , who maintains that " the [19th century] conflict between Protestantism and Anglo @-@ Catholicism within the Church of England was ... regularly depicted by Protestant propagandists as a struggle between masculine and feminine styles of religion " .

Driberg throughout his life was a devout Anglo @-@ Catholic ; Wheen suggests that Evelyn Waugh , in *Brideshead Revisited* , may have had Driberg in mind when the novel 's protagonist Charles Ryder is warned on arrival at Oxford to " beware of Anglo @-@ Catholics ? they 're all sodomites with unpleasant accents . "

Driberg was the subject of a play , *Tom and Clem* , which was staged at London 's Aldwych Theatre in April 1997 . The action takes place during Driberg 's brief visit to the Potsdam Conference in July 1945 , and deals with the contrast of compromise , represented by the pragmatic Clement Attlee , and post @-@ war idealism , personified by Driberg . Michael Gambon 's portrayal of Driberg , as " a slovenly , paunchy Bacchus with a mouth that can suddenly gape like a painfully @-@ hooked fish " , won special praise from The Times critic Benedict Nightingale .