In Nice Work, David Lodge describes Robyn Penhurst’s failed efforts to obtain a job at Cambridge University, her alma mater. Peter, a mediocre Ph.d. candidate plays it safe in a tight academic job market by writing a dissertation on the Romantic Sublime in Literature, while Robyn’s post-structuralism so threatens her colleagues that she is dismissed. Lodge based the novel on a well known incident (the MacCabe affair) in which a young lecturer, Colin MacCabe, was denied the Cambridge equivalent of tenure in 1981 in a standoff between F.R. Leavis’ acolytes and Frank Kermode. The two-day debate in the University Senate that followed this affair was only exacerbated by Margaret Thatcher’s cuts to university research funds and tenure appointments.2

Two books came out the same year as David Lodge’s portrait of Thatcher’s England: Malcolm Kelsall’s Byron’s Politics (1987) and Michael Foot’s The Politics of Paradise: A Vindication of Byron (1988). These books I will argue, were no less determined by the particular conflicts and tensions of Thatcher’s England, in particular the fight between labor and laissez faire economics. Michael Foot was the leader of the opposition Labour party from 1980-1983, a period in which he spoke on nuclear proliferation, at Kelsall’s own university in Cardiff, Wales. Foot opposed Margaret Thatcher’s efforts to break up trade unions that governed mining in Wales, a constituency (Ebbw Vale) Foot represented in Parliament. This essay links Foot’s socialist stance in support of unions to Byron’s maiden speech in the House of Lords (1812) on the frame-breakers. I read Foot’s efforts to vindicate Byron in 1988 as an indirect justification for his own political stances in the 1980s. Malcolm Kelsall’s opposing claim that the life of...
Byron was of “no political significance” (that there was, perhaps, nothing to vindicate but an empty legend) can similarly be traced to the 1980s, when Reagan, Thatcher and the rise of Cold War politics made liberalism a dirty word.

Michael Foot’s first venture into national journalism was an April 4, 1934 article for the News Chronicle of London entitled ”Why I Am a Liberal.”\(^5\) “Foot argued that Liberalism was a bulwark against war and fascism and called for a Rooseveltian New Deal for Britain. But he was not destined to remain a Liberal much longer. In 1934 he took a job in Liverpool, where he was appalled by the poverty and unemployment he saw around him. As a result he joined the Labour Party and met, for the first time, Aneurin Bevan, whose close friend, coworker, and biographer he was later to become.”\(^6\) Foot rejected the Plymouth liberalism of his father Isaac Foot, who “supported Asquith in the wartime coalition”,\(^7\) and became a socialist, but liberalism remained an important influence.

Foot was an indifferent politician and he seemed intent on living his life out as a book reviewer for the New Statesman; but to the surprise of almost everyone, he became leader of the Labour Party the very year after Margaret Thatcher was elected Premier of England in 1979. Foot charmed the political left in England partly through his scholarly works such as \textit{Guilty Men}, an attack on Chamberlain’s appeasement that made him famous. R. Edwards called it “probably the most powerful anti-Tory tract ever published.”\(^8\), \textit{The Pen and the Sword, a study of Jonathan Swift}, a 2 volume biography of Aneurin Beavin, a Welsh socialist leader; \textit{Debts of Honor}, \textit{Loyalists and Loners}, and, after Labour suffered its greatest defeat in the polls since 1918, \textit{Byron and the Politics of Paradise: A Vindication}. Foot offers a balanced view of Byron’s politics, comparing
Byron to William Hazlitt and quoting passages that highlight Byron’s political complexity. Foot takes issue with Malcolm Kelsall in one extended footnote, with whom he disagrees so profoundly about Byron that it would be too distracting to refute points one by one.

Malcolm Kelsall’s book on Byron saw the poet as a Whig who hid behind vacuous terms such as “freedom” and “liberty”. Foot, still smarting from his trouncing in the polls in 1983, may have taken Kelsall’s cynicism about Byron Whig politics personally. When asked whether “your book on Byron's Politics might be seen as a response to Thatcher's policies and the dead-end of leftist, socialist politics in 1988,” however, Malcolm Kelsall responded: “no Thatcher and Foot are far too late. I used to begin my lectures (when the allusion might still be recognised) with the statement, 'You are looking at a man who was bombed by the Luftwaffe.’” So both Foot and Kelsall, it seems worth emphasizing, were shaped by World War II moment, Foot by the extensive bombing of Plymouth, and his famous book, Guilty Men, and Kelsall by his own upbringing. “I am a child of the 1940s and of the age of tyranny in Europe,” Kelsall explains. “1945 merely scotched the snake, not killed it. There was a spectre haunting Europe -to use Marx's expression-and that spectre was Marxist Communism. It was not confined by Iron Curtain or Berlin Wall. By the 1960s, when I began teaching, it was extending its insidious presence into the English university world. In that atmosphere the word 'liberal' was a term of abuse.” So a spirit of opposition initially drew me toward Byron, that opposition to every form of tyranny over the mind of Man which is inscribed on the walls of the Jeffersonian Pantheon in Washington, D. C. -and I emphasise not only
the conjunction of the names Byron, Jefferson and Washington, but also the significance of a temple dedicated to the inclusion of all the Gods--e pluribus unum."

"Much of what was said about [Byron] was still involved with the myth of the hero poet and used, for instance, in Greece and by a certain tendency in British Socialism as a political stick to assault, for instance, the Turks or the Tories," Kelsall explains. "In that context I thought that Byron needed liberating from the Byronists." In support of Kelsall’s view of Marxism’s “insidious presence into the English university world,” one can cite Tony Blair; "I can’t help feeling the continual association of Marxism with socialism is to blame," he wrote in a letter to Michael Foot; “for me at university, left-wing politics was Marx, and the liberal tradition was either scorned or analyzed only in terms of its influence on Marx. It is so abundantly plain to me when I read Debts of Honour that there is a treasure trove of ideas that I never imagined existed." Blair, as I will argue, promised a third way between Foot’s Marxism and Kelsall’s Whig liberalism. But how had two Englishmen come to such different views of the same man?

To understand the controversy of 1988 about Byron’s political significance, one must return to 1924. That year Thomas Hardy, Rudyard Kipling and three Prime Ministers: Balfour, Asquith, and Lloyd George failed in their efforts to honor Byron with a plaque in the Poet’s Corner of Westminster Abbey. The plaque would not come until 44 years later. What changed?

In the 1920s the Earl of Lovelace damaged Byron’s reputation by reviving Harriet Beecher Stowe’s 1870 portrait of Byron as a bad husband in Lady Byron Vindicated. The Earl of Lovelace focused attention on Byron’s private life, even as his public example of political support for liberal causes was receiving renewed attention.
John Drinkwater published his *Byron: Pilgrim of Eternity, a Conflict* (1925) the very next year, which painted Byron in a positive light.\(^{15}\)

A key moment in Byron’s political rehabilitation, however, appears in three brilliantly researched essays published in *PMLA. In the 1930s, David V.* Erdmann presented Byron as a committed parliamentarian who took a vigorous interest in social injustice.\(^{16}\) Erdman read Byron’s speeches with approval, even as Stalin was busy transforming Marxist theory into a freedom-threatening version of fascism. Erdman found that Byron took the side of the underdog, and explained how important it was to not set parliament against Britain’s own laboring classes. Byron’s framebreakers were the miners of Aneurin Bevan’s time and of Michael Foot’s. “Are we aware of our obligations to a mob?” Byron asked in 1812. “It is the mob that labour in your fields and serve in your houses.”\(^{17}\) Byron accused England of engaging in foreign wars while ignoring its own poor.

If the 1930s was the socialist cauldron in which Byron’s political reputation was revived as a bracing tonic, the 1940s saw Byron included in Bertrand Russell’s *Short History of Western Philosophy*, as a voice against fascism, the only romantic poet to be so honored.\(^{18}\) This tension between Byron the private scoundrel/libertine of 1924 and Byron the public minded liberal with a sharp eye out for hypocrisy and tyranny in 1944, continued up until 1950. [That year, the literary critic Lionel Trilling asserted "the plain fact" that there were no conservative ideas "in general circulation. Trilling reminded readers that liberalism reigned in the American academy uncontested as surely as socialism reigned in the British.\(^{19}\) William Buckley responded in 1958 by writing *Up From Liberalism*, a title that puns on Booker T. Washington’s *Up from Slavery*:\(^{20}\) for
Buckley as for Barry Goldwater, Margaret Thatcher, and Ronald Reagan, Keynesian economics was a road to serfdom, mapped by F.A. Hayek and adumbrated by Alexander Solzhenitsyn, one of Thatcher’s favorite writers.21

But Trilling and Buckley were beside the point, as far as Byron’s reputation was concerned. For Byron to enter Westminster Abbey, he still needed to pass through the needle of Christianity. G. Wilson Knight tested the waters of critical opinion enough to publish *Lord Byron: Christian Virtues* in 1952; then Leslie Marchand presented Byron as a man of the world Puritanical America might be ready to embrace in his 1957 biography.22

Of course, Marchand downplayed important aspects of Byron’s personal life, as he admitted in his 1971 *Byron: a Portrait*. With the rise of New Criticism and T.S. Eliot’s influence over the American academy, it hardly mattered: Byron still failed to find a central place in the field of Romantic studies. True, George Ridenour, 1960’s *Style of Don Juan* showed the poet’s complex wit and irony (a New Critical virtue) to good effect and argued for Byron’s obsession with the Christian fall of man, but the tide was still going against Byron, even though Doris Langley Moore did her best to stem it in three important books.23 Yet the dean of Romantic studies in the U.S., M. H Abrams, left Byron out of their history of romantic aesthetics entirely. Not one but twice: *Mirror and the Lamp* (1953) and *Natural Supernaturalism* (1973).24

Abrams’ second omission was particularly noteworthy, for by 1967, Robert Gleckner had already published *Byron and the Ruins of Paradise*.25 The book might have been titled *Byron and the Ruins of Empire*, for Gleckner’s work came at a time when awareness of the US role in Vietnam had reached a crisis, and the country, and
intellectuals generally, were becoming aware of a certain moral burden that accompanies empire, one far removed from George Washington and Thomas Jefferson’s notion that the US should avoid European and world conflict, even those of the Barbary pirates during Jefferson’s administration when the US navy was drydocked for insufficient funds. “I ain’t got no quarrel with them Viet Cong,” Muhammad Ali stated in 1967 when he refused drafting into the US army; in doing so, he was probably more American than Robert McNamara.  

He thus side-stepped one of the atrocities of the 20th century. Incidentally, Michael Foot debated Henry Kissinger at the Oxford Union in 1965 on the merits of U.S. involvement in Vietnam. Though Kissinger was flanked by two self-professed liberals, Lawrence Tribe and Robert Shrum, all three accepted the clichés of anti-communism which Foot carefully exposed. “He had fluent command of the facts,” Bromwich says of Foot, ”and he showed how the conduct of the war failed to match the principles invoked in its support.” The Labour party backed the Vietnam war; in Byronic style, Foot spoke for himself at this debate. In later years, Foot meet with McNamara and both become fervent advocates of nuclear disarmament.

In the U.S. many academics proceeded with little sense that Vietnam was a war that one might compare to England’s reactionary campaign against France. Most of the debates regarding Byron criticism focused on Byron’s style and tone. Reviewing Gleckner’s book in 1968, Jerome McGann found that Gleckner left out Byron’s levity and wit, the comic side of the poet. In shrewd readings of Byron’s plays, particularly Marino Faliero, McGann implicitly rebelled against a generation of scholars (Trilling, Abrams, and others) who preferred a quiescent, cold war version of Romanticism that venerated Wordsworth’s political quietism in the French Revolution and praises Keats’
craft (following Swinburnes’ criticism against Byron as poetic maker). Poems like “Darkness” and *Don Juan* led one to uncomfortable consideration of such topics as genocide, thermonuclear war, imperialism, and queer studies in 1968, the year of Stonewall (when a gay bar was attacked by police in New York’s Greenwich village and the denizens fought back). In an email to me, however, McGann disavowed any direct influence between the Vietnam War and his 1968 monograph on Byron, begun in 1964.28 His direct opposition to the Vietnam war occurred the same year the book was published.

In the 1970s, Christopher Lasch used the phrase, “the culture of Narcissism” to define a generation, and perhaps Peter Manning reflected that decade by putting Byron on the analyst’s couch, exposing the Freudian underpinnings of many of Byron’s tales.29 A decade later, Daniel Watkins’ *Social Relations in Byron’s Eastern Tales* focused on Byron’s historical poetry—which both Kelsall and Malcolm Foot did so much to illuminate.30 So Watkins takes us back to the 1980s in my quick sketch of Byron criticism.

I have mentioned that 1983 saw the demise of Michael Foot’s political career. His vindication of Byron’s political life,31 I would argue, was an attempt to vindicate his own, though his courageous protests against the nuclear arms race shows his good standing as an ethical politician who championed many of the positions Byron himself took up. Byron, Hazlitt, Swift, and H.G. Wells wrote the white paper for Foot’s political career.32

How interesting, then to turn to Margaret Thatcher’s assessment of the problems facing England in 1979. In her memoir, the path to power, she stated that “the main cause of the public’s increasing alienation from political parties, was too much government. The belief that government could deliver ever higher degrees of economic growth
provided the socialists with an opportunity massively to extend state control and intervention.”  

Thatcher rejected the New Deal socialism that Michael Foot had defended in his essay, “Why I am a Liberal.”  

With relish, Thatcher set about denationalizing industries and destroying the trade unions, as well as the coal mining industry that Michael Foot and his hero Aneurin Bevan did so much to defend. Even a coal mine in Byron’s beloved Nottinghamshire district was closed under Thatcher’s policies, as were most of those in Wales (despite Foot’s protests), bringing us full circle to Byron’s frame breaker’s speech and Foot’s use of Byron as a proto-socialist guide. If Byron was celebrated in Greece and throughout Europe as a champion of freedom (despite academic critics who find such terms vacuous), Foot also played such a role in England. David Bromwich called Foot the “soul of the Democratic Left in England” when he died on March 3, 2010; Mervyn Jones’ Guardian obituary was titled, “Principled leader who held Labour together in the early 1980s, and a writer devoted to the cause of freedom.”

Bernard Beatty, whose published work also achieved prominence in the 1980s, concurred with Thatcher’s view that socialism had crippled British industry: “I don’t think that the collapse of Britain in the 70s and 80s much affected my views on Byron,” Bernard Beatty writes. “I shared the general view at the time that Britain was doomed--the trains (which I used every day to go to Liverpool) broke down regularly and were full of fumes, sometimes they were cancelled and replaced by buses (now the service is twice as frequent and twice as good), England seemed ungovernable (the railway unions were part of the problem) and the country lacked will and self-belief. I thought of voting for Callaghan rather than Mrs Thatcher (whose election as leader of the Tory party I strongly
supported) simply because he would manage decline quite well but voted for her. I have always been a Tory (though a left wing one at one stage where I supported Nuclear Disarmament for a while and queued up outside the US consulate to protest at Kennedy's standoff with Khrushchev over Cuba). I have always thought that Byron was a Tory in some respects (the view of the world he shared with Walter Scott), a Liberal in nearly all respects, and attracted to the Revolutionary Left both because of his hatred of injustice and because of a sneaking liking for the unexpected and even violence. He disliked the Radical reformers and distanced himself from them though he knew them and sometimes supported their positions. In other ways, he was not political at all (no political theory other than Pope's what e'er is best administered).”  

Beatty distinguishes between what Byron actually called himself as a member of the Cambridge Whig Club; the periodical he quite deliberately named *The Liberal* and statements such as “—politics with me is a feeling, and I can’t Torify my nature” (Jan. 22, 1814). Flying in the face of such evidence, Beatty relies on his own perception of the cumulative impact of Byron’s ideas and writings to call him a Tory in the Scott mold. He rejects Kelsall’s interpretation of Byron as a Whig, but I’m afraid I reject Beatty’s view though he is a nice man for all that. (As Ronald Reagan once said, I paid for this microphone, and I think Byron an erotic liberal, as I’ve tried to explain elsewhere).

The very year Michael Foot was about to hand the Labour party their biggest loss since 1918, clobbered by Margaret Thatcher’s new conservatism, Tony Blair wrote a fan letter to Foot, questioning Tory politics: “The first thing that struck me about *Debts of Honour,*” Blair wrote to Foot, “was the prison of ignorance which my generation has constructed for itself. How many of us have read Hazlitt, Paine, Brailsford or even Swift
(apart from *Gulliver’s Travels*) in the original? ...what is startling to me, reading *Debts of Honour*, is that your writers have something so enduring and enriching to say. I actually want to go out and explore these people first hand. It has shown me how narrow is our source of modern political inspiration. Look at Thatcher and Tebbit and how they almost take pride in the rigid populism of their political thought,” Blair wrote. “There is a new and profoundly unpleasant Tory abroad—the Tory party is now increasingly given over to the worst of petty bourgeois sentiments—the thought that there is something clever in cynicism; realistic in selfishness; and the granting of legitimacy to the barbaric idea of the survival of the fittest. Even in our own party (though to a much lesser degree) there is a tendency against letting the mind roam free.”

Blair’s prescription for the Labour party (though he seems hardly to have followed it) was more reading in the great liberal tradition Byron represents.

In 1998, J. M. Coetzee published *Disgrace*, as if to prove true Tony Blair’s critique of a modern university dumbed down by the radical left. Modern languages have been eliminated as part of the great rationalization as David Lurie puts it, and he now teaches in the Communications department despite the fact that his specialty is Victorian and Romantic poetry—Lurie, who is writing an opera on Byron, seduces and then rapes his student Melanie in the name of eros. He defends his point of view that what he has done is not rape but attraction between teacher and student yet the modern academy has no place for Lurie’s prevarications. Though he thinks of himself as a victim of political correctness and sexual McCarthyism, he is a victim of self-pity and emblematic of his time: Bill Clinton was impeached for the Monica Lewinsky scandal the same year Coetzee’s novel was published and Alan Dershowitz published *Sexual*
McCarthyism defending Bill Clinton. Yet Coetzee had bigger fish to fry: Lurie is a Byronist, and the study of Byron seems part of a lost world, not unlike the world of Michael Foot, in which “love,” romance, and opera still mean something, however perversely twisted by the middle-aged and somewhat pathetic narrator of Coetzee’s novel. The real Lord Byron built a monument to Boatswain; David Lurie euthanizes dogs. “Because they are too many,” to quote Lurie. Thomas Hardy, by contrast, would never have given a plaque to such a watered down Byronist; perhaps Foot’s most Byronic gesture is love for and photographs with his dog Dizzy, named after Disraeli.

Three years after Coetzee’s novel, Christine Kenyon Jones wrote Kindred Brutes: Animals in Romantic Period Writing, which treats Byron’s therafilia or love of animals. The two works by Coetzee and Jones, I would argue, are not unrelated. “I did become to some extent politicised about animals as a result of my researches” as Jones admitted, although I can’t claim that I began with this attitude. Byron too viewed animals as part of the political spectrum, and his responses to animals were much more like those of the 21st century than of his own time. In particular he recognised the SIMILARITY between human and non-human animals, rather than focusing on the differences. Like other political radicals of his time, he commented on the uneasy relationship between the treatment of animals and of slaves, and, like Shelley, he experimented with vegetarianism. The Animal Welfare Act of 2006 was the first major piece of animal welfare legislation in the UK since 1911, which made animal owners actively responsible for the welfare of their animals. It is a pity Coetzee never spoke out directly on animals rights in his own voice,
Kenyon added, noting that women were particularly sensitive to the marginal status of animals. Elizabeth Costello is a fictionalized account of an animal activist, and Coetzee, as Jones rightly suggests, takes an ironic view of her radical lectures.

Ten years later Byron was subject to another set of concerns. 2012 saw the publication of *Byron and the Politics of Freedom and Terror*. Grene and Lapinski were responding to the Patriot Act which expanded the Secretary of the Treasury’s authority to regulate financial transactions, detain and deport immigrants suspected of terrorism-related acts and pursue instances of domestic terrorism. Obama extended this legislation and kept Guantanamo bay open, much to the embarrassment of liberals who thought he would make a clean break with the policies of Republican Defence Minister Robert Gates, who he kept in his administration. Green and Lapinski remind us that we still need to be theoretical about what led to September 11. Sadly, few critics in the mainstream media have felt qualified to read both Byron and the political scene of September 11 as Grene and Lapinski have done (Rachel Maddow and Erin Burnett notwithstanding). Yet Byron helped to prophesize the Wahhabi sect of Islam of Saudi Arabia from which Osama Bin Laden hailed. Christopher Hitchens quoted a key stanza from Child Harold II in the Atlantic Monthly in 2002 and is an eloquent exception to this rule; but he is dead. In 2012, Naji Oueijan showed us that Byron cannot be reduced to a simple orientalist, for his actual writings show him to be at variance with prejudices against Muslims. Naji Oueijan lived through the politics of freedom and terror in Beirut and emerged resilient and hopeful about what Byron has to teach future students.
Byron could barely find burial in Westminster, where he now has a plaque—he spoke against CANT and therefore hypocrites have demonized him, as they have done to erotic liberals such as Bill Clinton, Martin Luther King, Robert Kennedy, and others. With Foot no longer around to vindicate Byron, a new generation of Byronists will need to think about issues more compelling than celebrity if his political example is to be appropriately honored. Roddy Beaton’s book on *Byron and the Greece Revolution*, with its important asides about the current Greek austerity crisis suggests that Byron’s politics will continue to reflect the decade in which it was written.

Thanks to the broad reach of the Byron society, Byron has been and will continue to be read by politicians like Denis Healey, Michael Foot, Neil Kinnock, Tony Blair, and others looking for a platform upon which to stand.—whether in World War II, Vietnam, the Falkland Islands, Iraq, or Afghanistan. His poetry might even be richer than the lyrics to *The Red Flag*, which was sung by Neil Kinnock at Michael Foot’s funeral. In any case, Byron was against funerals that covered up the sins of George III, Lord Castlereagh, Samuel Romilly or others: what would he have thought of the funerals of Nixon, Reagan, Foot, or Thatcher? He provides an extreme example of free speech and thought—who has had such courage since?—for “Our right of thought—[is]our last and only place Of refuge” as Byron wrote in *Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage, IV* and he fosters the Enlightenment values his letters and poetry exemplify, and which Malcolm Kelsall’s *Byron’s Politics* still wonderfully conveys.

---

Francis Mulhern, “The Cambridge Affair,” *Marxism Today* (March 2001), pp. 27-29. Mulhern notes that “long before his career was derailed by a hostile appointments committee, MacCabe’s book James Joyce and the Revolution of the Word was scandalously treated in sections of the London literary press.” (28). Frank Kermode and Raymond Williams were his defenders; F. R. Leavis and traditionalists fought his tenure. He is now Professor at Exeter University.


Michael Foot, *News Chronicle*, April 4, 1934 (commissioned by newspaper’s editor, Aylmer Vallance). Foot’s liberalism was international, determined by Liberal support for the League of Nations and international peace: “I am a Liberal, first of all, because of the unflinching resistance which liberalism is pledged to offer to those twin dangers of fascism and war.”


David Bromwich, “Michael Foot, 1913-2010”, *Dissent* 57.3 (Summer 2010), 1913, p. 92.


Malcolm Kelsall, email to author, June 30, 2013.

Malcolm Kelsall, email to author, June 30, 2013.

Malcolm Kelsall, email to author, June 30, 2013. This line is taken up by Peter Cochran’s *Byron’s Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Press, 2012).

Kenneth Morgan, *Michael Foot: A Life* (London: Harper, 2007), p. 417; on modern politicians, ignorant of history and literature, see Anthony Howard, “Michael Foot, the last of a dying breed,” *The Telegraph*, 2010. See also Francis Beckett, “Supping with the Devil: Review of Kenneth Morgan’s Michael Foot: a Life”, *Guardian*, March 30, 2007: “Our politicians have looked more and more like grey-suited purpose-built machines ever since Labour’s image-makers forced Neil Kinnock to throw away his houndstooth suit. The bibliophile leader seems increasingly anachronism, though Gordon Brown is a historian by training and a reasonable writer. Tony Blair dimly realises what he does not have: he has expressed regret that he read law instead of history at Oxford.” Bromwich (cited above) notes that “Tony Blair was, in a sense, Michael’s protégé, and Blair’s progress in the late 1990s and 2000s, to become the technocrat who purged the working-class traces from Labour and the apostle in foreign policy of the North Atlantic world order, was a deep disappointment to him” (93).

reminder that Byron ever lived. Recently, however, a plaque was unveiled there to
the memory of Keats and Shelley. Perhaps another hundred years will wash Byron’s
memory as white as that of Charles II” (Byron: a Life, 3 volumes (New York: Alfred
on May 8, 1969, a “Ceremony of Dedication of a Memorial to Lord Byron’ was
solemnly held in the Abbey under the auspices of the Poetry Society. William
Plomer, President of the society, said appropriately at the unveiling. “One can
imagine that Byron’s shade, if present here today, may be wearing a slightly
478.


15 John Drinkwater, The pilgrim of eternity, the life of Byron; Byron--a conflict, (London,
1925; Garden City, N.Y., Garden City Pub. Co., inc. 1925; [1937]).

16 David V. Erdman, “Byron's Stage Fright: The History of His Ambition and Fear of
Writing for the Stage.” English Literary History 6 (1939): 219-33; “Lord Byron as
Rinaldo,” PMLA, v57 n1 (Mar., 1942): 189-231; “Lord Byron and the Genteel
Reformers”, PMLA, v56 n4 (Dec., 1941): 1065-1094; “Byron and Revolt in England,”
Science & Society, v11 n3 (Summer, 1947): 234-248. For an interesting discussion of
Erdman’s own politics, see Morris Eaves, David Erdman and Virginia Erdman “Bread,
Politics, and Poetry: Interviews David and Virginia Erdman” Studies in Romanticism 21
(Fall 1982), 277-302.

17 Byron’s First Parliamentary Speech, in Lord Byron: The Complete Miscellaneous

18 Bertrand Russell, Byron: Short History of Western Philosophy (New York: Simon and


21 William Buckley, Up from Liberalism; introduction by Barry Goldwater, foreword by
John Dos Passos (New Rochelle: Arlington House, 1968). On her reading of
Solzhenitsyn’s The First Circle, purchased at the airport, see Margaret Thatcher, The
Path to Power, p. 386.

22 G. Wilson Knight, Lord Byron: Christian Virtues; Byron: A Life, by Leslie Marchand, 3

23 George Ridenour, The Style of Don Juan (Yale University Press, 1961). Doris Langley
Moore, The Late Lord Byron: Posthumous Dramas (Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1961),

24 M.H. Abrams, Mirror and the Lamp: Romantic Theory and the Critical Tradition
(Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1953; 1971) and Natural Supernaturalism: Tradition


26 As Robert Lipsyte wrote in the New York Times, “Ali will probably remain, for a long
time, the most controversial and complex figure in modern American sports history.”
Perhaps his most memorable and audacious action was his decision to refuse induction
into the United States Army during the Vietnam War. He considered himself a conscientious objector and. As the New York Times headline read on March 17, 1967, “Clay Prefers Jail to Army. Champion Risking Prison and Fine.” When questioned why he refused to serve, he famously remarked “I ain’t got no quarrel with them Viet Cong…they never called me nigger.” The statement sent shockwaves around the world. Never one to hesitate to elaborate, Ali explained exactly why he was refusing to serve. “You want me to do what the white man says and go fight a war against some people I don’t know nothing about-get some freedom for some other people when my own people can’t get theirs? We’re over there so that the people of South Vietnam can be free. But I’m here in America and I’m being punished for upholding my beliefs.” Cited in http://sfstatejournalismhistory.blogspot.com/2009/05/i-aint-got-no-quarrel-with-them-viet.html.

27 David Bromwich, “Michael Foot, 1913-2010”, Dissent 57.3 (Summer 2010), 1913, p. 91
28 Email of 1968, Jerome McGann to author. “i didn't begin working on byron (in 1964) in any spirit of politics at all. vietnam had yet to hit me. so i wrote the dissertation -- that would be all of _fiery dust's CHP materials, at least in their initial form -- with no thought of 60s politics. but when i got to chicago in '65 things changed radically and pretty quickly. i was greatly swept up in the events of 67-69, but i've always felt it took me another 5-10 years to come to terms with what those events meant. it's actually a more complicated subject than i can explain here, because the U of C sit-in, which i was also much involved with, was terrible for me, so many of my students were involved in it.” (email of June 20, 2013)
32 Michael Foot, H.G.: The History of Mr. Wells; Mervyn Jones, Michael Foot (London: Gollancz, c1994).
33 The Path to Power, p. 148.
37 David Bromwich, “Michael Foot” Dissent 57.3 (Summer 2010), pp. 91-94.
38 Email of 5/28/2013.
40 Morgan, Michael Foot, p. 418.
41 Morgan, Michael Foot, p. 418


Christopher Hitchens, “The Misfortune of Poetry”: Byron's dramatic life has become indissoluble from his work”, Review of *Byron: Life and Legend*, by Fiona MacCarthy, *Atlantic Monthly* (October 2002). The passage is as follows: “Re-reading Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage recently, I came across this verse in the second canto, where the contest between the Muslim and Christian worlds, in Constantinople and in Athens, is evoked.

The city won for Allah from the Giaouir,
The Giaour from Ottoman’s race again may wrest;
And the Serai’s impenetrable tower
Receive the fiery Frank, her former guest;
Or Wahab’s rebel brood, who dared divest
The prophet’s tomb of all its pious spoil,
May wind their path of blood along the West...
The takeover and desecration of Mecca by the ultra purist Wahhabi sect was then just a decade old. Byron's registering of this event—and his identification of a faction that now troubles us all--
Is the first literary mention that I know of.”


“The people's flag is deepest red,
It shrouded oft our martyr’d dead
And ere their limbs grew stiff and cold,
Their hearts' blood dyed its ev’ry fold.
Then raise the scarlet standard high,
Within its shade we'll live and die,
Though cowards flinch and traitors sneer,
We'll keep the red flag flying here

Look round, the Frenchman loves its blaze,
The sturdy German chants its praise,
In Moscow’s vaults its hymns were sung
Chicago swells the surging throng.
Then raise the scarlet standard high.
Within its shade we live and die,
Though cowards flinch and traitors sneer,
We'll keep the red flag flying here.”
Accessed
For information on the Red Flag recited at Michael Foot’s funeral, see, ‘Red flag’ waves a final farewell to Michael Foot, Camden New Journal, 2010 March 18, 2010; the author notes that “I shuddered with disbelief at the full-throated version of this revolutionary hymn”; Tom Foot, “Sail into Rest” notes that ”Former Tribune editor Mark Seddon quoted Lord Byron… and I read Wordsworth’s sonnet to Toussaint L’Ouverture, which Michael read at my father Paul’s memorial. “There’s not a breathing of the common wind that will forget thee,” it goes. Lord Kinnock started the singing of The Red Flag.” Chicago is mentioned because of its history of trade unionism after the Haymarket riots.” Accessed September 3, 2013./ http://www.camdennewjournal.com/news/2010/mar/%E2%80%98red-flag%E2%80%99-waves-final-farewell-michael-foot