

The New Criterion

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Week in review

by Mene Ukieberuwa



George Orwell

Recent links of note:

“The Road to Chappaqua”

Howard Husock, *City Journal*

As liberal opinionators have reckoned with Donald Trump’s electoral rout in the Midwestern states, they’ve been noticeably torn between competing feelings of concern and contempt for the white working-class. Hillary Clinton’s “basket of deplorables” remark crystalized this tension perfectly—she followed up her famous expression of disgust with working-class values with an often overlooked word of sympathy for lower-class circumstances. Writing in *City Journal*, the Manhattan Institute researcher Howard Husock points out that this dilemma is an enduring one for progressives, which was neatly captured by George Orwell’s 1937 study of English coal miners, written by Orwell during his own early days as an avowed socialist. His book *The Road to Wigan Pier* (which was commissioned by a left-wing publisher to make the case for socialism) begins as a conventional look into the working-class lifestyle. As Husock notes, however, Orwell seems to

have awakened to his fellow socialists' hypocrisy midway through the project, and the latter half of *Wigan Pier* instead explores the stark gap between the Left's expressed passion for the "proletariat cause" and their private disdain for real working-class culture.

"François Hollande's Legacy"

Yasmine Serhan, *The Atlantic*

Despite his vanishing approval ratings (which recent polls have pegged at between 4 and 8 percent), the French president François Hollande expressed "no regrets" when he announced his decision not to seek reelection next year, and instead spent the address reminding the press of what he took to be a proud list of his achievements. Chief among these achievements, as Yasmine Serhan notes in *The Atlantic*, were the imposition of a millionaires tax and the legalization of gay marriage—top priorities of France's political class, but which likely accomplished little in the way of boosting the fortunes of the country's floundering middle class. The unambiguous rejection of Hollande, who was elected in 2012 on a platform of "*le changement*" or "Change" which Americans should find familiar, is another fissure in the ongoing crack-up of the political Left on both sides of the ocean.

"Netrebko, Netrebko, Netrebko"

Jay Nordlinger

On Puccini's *Manon Lescaut* at the Metropolitan Opera.

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