

# The Posh Versus the Blokes in the UK

by **George Friedman** - December 17, 2019

I arrived in London on Saturday afternoon. Traffic was heavy and it took nearly two hours to reach my hotel, giving ample time to speak to my driver. It was time well spent. He was a Scotsman who had been living and driving in London for a long time. We discussed the election, of course, and the devastation of the Labour Party and the rise of the Conservatives. He had voted for the Tories. He explained that this was because of his loathing for what he called the “posh in London” and their hatred of England while enriching themselves shamelessly and despising anyone who doesn’t worship as they worship.

By “worship” he was not referring to religion, but their belief that Britain is corrupt and demands ruthless reform. He particularly was enraged that the playing of “Rule Britannia” was seen by the posh left as disgraceful, because it paid homage to an evil that Britain ought to apologize for over and over: the British Empire. The loss of empire didn’t bother him. What bothered him was that the posh left was unwilling to respect that whatever faults Britain might have had, Britain was a great moment in human history, and he as a British subject and as a Scotsman was not prepared to be ashamed about it.

What has happened in Britain is something that can be seen elsewhere. The left-wing party has become the party of the well-to-do and educated elite. The conservatives have become the party of the workers. The former demand the right to hold on to their status but also to redefine the meaning of a nation’s history, and use their power to force moral principles on a society not prepared to respect them. England’s Labour Party had been the party of the working class but seems to a great extent to have turned on the workers.

The European Union question is mixed in with this. The posh (I will use this name for them) supported EU membership eagerly. According to my driver, the left-wing posh are all involved in finance, and they saw EU membership as beneficial to them. But there was another aspect he did not mention. If one of the things you wish to do is take ownership of British history and deny the British the right to admire the greatness and forgive themselves what harm they did, then the EU is the perfect vehicle. In announcing and trying to impose a European identity, devaluing one's own nation, the EU gave the posh a powerful tool with which to subordinate the brilliant, dark and beloved history of Britain.

The desire of this class to make more money is easy to understand. Harder to understand is this class's desire to redefine British recollection of their past. When voters opted to leave the EU, this class was both dumbfounded and enraged. You could read many times about how the people who voted to leave were considered to be uneducated, lacking all understanding of what they were doing. The posh wanted to delegitimize the election and insisted that it be replayed. The desire for a do-over was in their rational interest, but more was going on. The posh believed they had a right to rule, and that those who voted against them were illegitimate pretenders. As the struggle to reverse Brexit intensified, the battle to delegitimize the enemies of the EU also intensified. Having opened by declaring the voters ignorant, they extended their assault to include a range of other values, such as patriotism, and the right to preserve and celebrate British culture. The struggle over Brexit did not start the culture war, but it pushed the industrial working class into an uprising against the posh and their belief.

There was of course a massive economic dimension. The industrial working class of the Midlands were not experiencing the benefits of the EU. The posh of London were. The EU played a major role in this. Britain is the second-largest economy of the EU, and its loss would be extremely painful. The EU had two possible routes. One was to reach a redefinition of the relationship with Britain. The other was to be utterly rigid in finding a resolution. The EU assumption was that rigidity was more rational, since it would force a shift in the British political alignment that would reverse Brexit. It did everything it could to make Brexit appear a disaster, and it convinced all those who already believed it, while building rage against the EU in those who didn't. The political collaboration between the posh and the EU drove a further wedge between the two English classes and strengthened the belief that rational acceptance of the EU was being blocked by primitive and ignorant nationalism. Thus the economic and financial battles merged.

The British political structure has now massively shifted. The Labour Party had been the party of the

industrial working class and aligned with their culture, unlike Marxists who wanted to transform it. The Conservative Party was the party of the well-to-do and of empire. Today, Labour is the party of the posh, demanding cultural shifts, while the Conservatives are the party that lost posh London and took a huge chunk out of the industrial Midlands. It should be noted that the major shift was cultural and not economic. Labour was unclear on the EU and shared with the posh the desire for moral reform. The Conservatives sided with the working class on both economic and cultural matters.

The British realignment is something we also see more broadly in the Euro-American world. Parties that were formerly working-class parties have shifted to supporting the well-to-do and focusing on cultural change. Parties that were formerly the parties of the wealthy are now speaking for the workers, and particularly for their cultural views. This isn't particular to Britain at all. The desire to protect traditional cultural values is powerful among working classes, who see the assault on their values by former allies as a betrayal. Thus the Labour Party became the party of the posh, and the Conservatives speak for my driver.

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