

## **Brexit—An Unlikely Getaway**

**by Joseph B. Baity**

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On June 23, 2016, the voting citizens of the United Kingdom (UK) were given a choice to remain as members of the European Union (EU) or to exit the union to function as a fully independent, sovereign nation, ruled only by its own elected government. The referendum came to be known as “Brexit.”

With much of the entire globe, including most of the other 27 member nations of the EU, slipping rapidly into economic and political turmoil, the outcome of Brexit was anxiously anticipated, not only by the citizens of the UK and EU, but also by watchful persons everywhere.

The campaigns for and against the British exit were characterized in a multitude of fashions by citizens, politicians, and pundits, but the most common starting point pitted a resurgent nationalism against the globalist vision of a vast, centralized mega-state. In fact, many observers viewed this as a sort of international proxy vote, providing mankind a glimpse into the cauldron of worldwide sentiment, which would answer many questions as to the political future of either movement—in essence, the old world order versus the new.

However, at the time of this writing, the outcome in favor of the UK exit has seemed to uncover more questions, while revealing more instability than it was ever intended to resolve. Author Charles Hugh Smith, in his article entitled, “A Precarious State,” writes, “Brexit reflects a precarious state of shifting political tectonics that threatens the status quo.” To try to make sense of it all and for the purposes of looking ahead, let us first take a look back at the events that led up to the history-making vote.

The UK joined the European Economic Community (EEC), a predecessor of the EU, in 1973. The roots of the EEC were founded in the Continental desire to reconcile the traditional or historical adversaries of past conflicts and to make provisions for maintaining peace, which is a nice way of saying that there was a need to prevent Germany from rising again to dominate Europe. In 1975, the UK held its first voter referendum on remaining within the EEC, which was approved by a nearly two-to-one margin. However, the first seeds of the Eurosceptics, those critical of and opposed to the EU, were planted.

While various exit movements were easily defeated by the UK Parliament over the next two decades, the EEC, in the meantime, was transitioning into a more political union, and in 1993 it adopted its current moniker, the EU, with the signing of the Maastricht Treaty. That same year witnessed the birth of the UK Independence Party (UKIP) (out of the Anti-Federalist League, established in 1991), dedicated to the exit of the UK from the EU. Billed as a racist and populist party by its detractors, the UKIP has also suffered from extensive and venomous infighting throughout the twenty-plus years of its controversial existence.

Despite the political turbulence, the UKIP successfully framed its campaign for “Brexit” within the context of a rising resurgence of British nationalism. Concern had been growing in the UK that the EU, attempting to morph into a mega-state, would soon erase the distinctive character and independence of all its member states, usurping control over their borders, immigration, economies,

currencies, trade, militaries, and justice systems. In addition, Germany, which was supposed to be “controlled” by the very existence of the mega-state, was instead dominating it in all aspects.

When the Great Recession of 2008 reached the EU, its greatest weakness—a cold and rigid incompetence to manage economic crises of its individual member-states—was exposed. And the UK, along with the rest of the world, took notice. On the heels of the economic woes, the Syrian immigration crisis, exacerbated by international terrorism, further strained the nationalistic leanings of the UK. Both of these crises helped to fuel the further growth and popularity of the UKIP and its call for leaving the EU. Under much political pressure, UK Prime Minister David Cameron finally agreed to hold a referendum to allow the citizens to decide their future.

While we know the outcome of the vote was for the UK to leave the EU, its long-term impact is still being debated while its short-term impact is being felt worldwide and analyzed *ad infinitum*. In the next issue, we will take a closer look at some of the responses to the Brexit result and analyze the future impact it may have on a world that is teetering on the edge of greater global conflict.