

CRISIS OF THE BRITISH EMPIRE

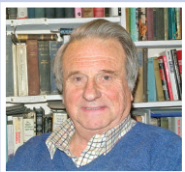
TURNING POINTS AFTER 1880

David Nicholson

In 1880 the British Empire was at its peak of stability. No other people – not Rome, nor Spain nor Russia – had spread their power so substantially over all five continents. And yet within less than a century, the vast imperial system had crumbled leaving the Commonwealth as the mere ghost of its predecessor.

In this groundbreaking new study, David Nicholson asks if this decline was inevitable, or – had Britain's rulers taken different decisions, encouraged trends or sought to prevent them – whether the strength and cohesion of the Empire could have been maintained. He examines, in particular, a series of turning points which he believes to have been crucial to this process: the failure to deal with Irish Home Rule; over-extension in Africa; the failure to adopt Tariff Reform; the British inability to reach an accommodation with Germany before the First World War; the strategic and tactical mistakes of the Great War culminating in over-extension in the Middle East and ignoring of warnings about a one-sided interpretation of the Balfour Declaration; the errors in the build-up to the Second World War and its opening phase, especially those leading to the break with Japan and Italy. David Nicholson traces the real damage done by the 1939-45 War, leading to the final collapse of British power in India, then the Middle East and finally in Africa, as well as the weakening of the links with the "Old Commonwealth". He asks, provocatively, if the Empire had not failed would Britain have been so attracted by membership of the European Community.

Crisis of the British Empire: Turning Points After 1880 is a significant contribution to Imperial Studies and should be required reading for anyone wishing to understand Britain's position in the world on the brink of Brexit.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

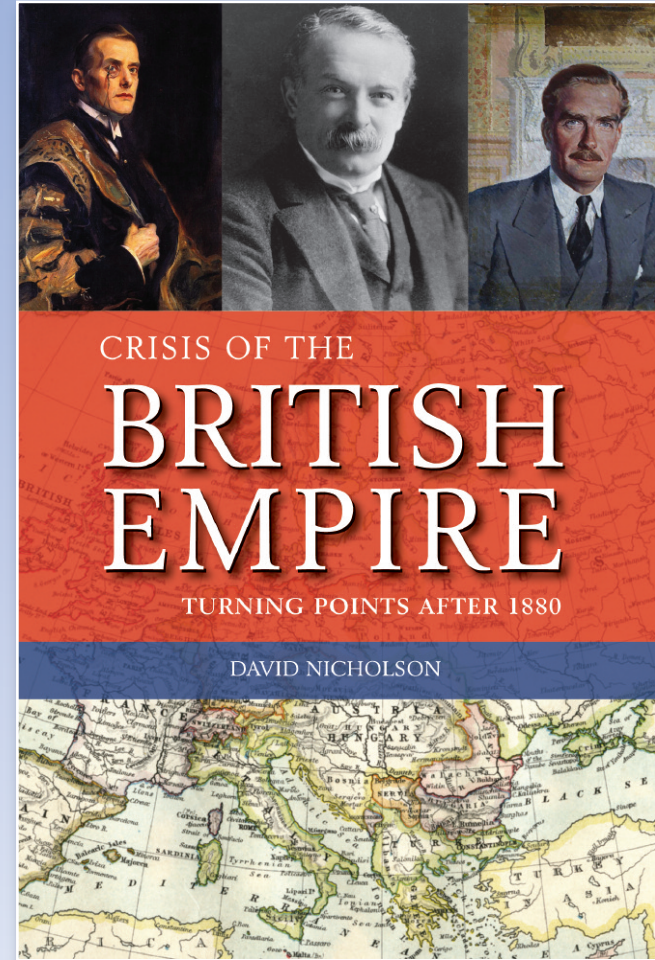
David Nicholson has spent his career in or on the edge of politics, but describes himself as a historian manqué: over fifty years ago, at Christ Church, Oxford, he took a First in Modern History. He worked for ten years at the Conservative Research Department, briefing Ministers/ Shadow Ministers, and for another ten was MP for Taunton until the 1997 landslide

Tory defeat. Married, with three grownup children, he lives on the edge of Exmoor. He co-edited the *Leo Amery Diaries* Vol I (Hutchinson, 1980), Vol II *The Empire at Bay* (1988), and contributed a number of entries to *The International Encyclopedia of Military History* (Routledge, 2006, two volumes).

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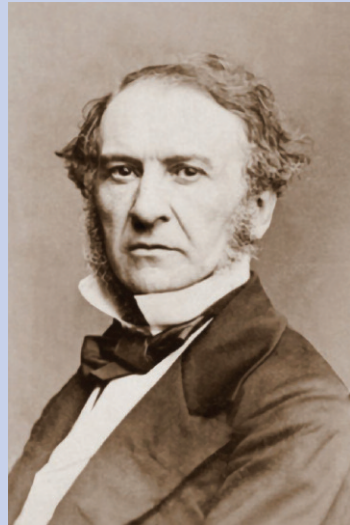
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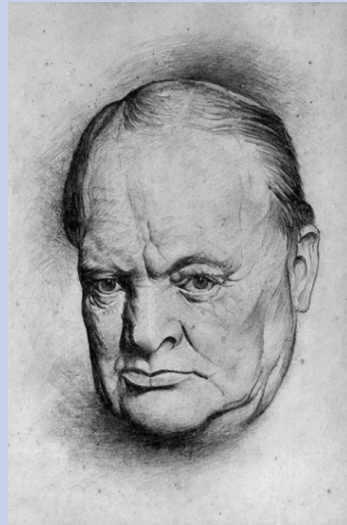
CRISIS OF THE BRITISH EMPIRE TURNING POINTS AFTER 1880



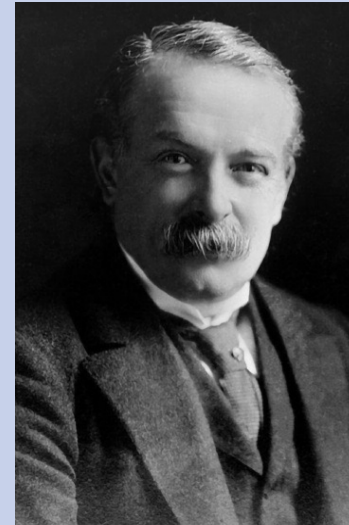
Benjamin Disraeli



W. E. Gladstone



Winston Churchill



Lloyd George



Above: Joseph Chamberlain (and Jesse Collings) from *Struwwelpeter Alphabet*
 Below: The world in 1914, showing the British Empire

Example of a double page spread

