



CITIZENS AND STATESMEN IN CHURCHILL'S

*THOUGHTS AND ADVENTURES*¹

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...Churchill devoted much of the 1930s to literary endeavours. [...] In the intervals between writing history and making it, he poured out a stream of articles for the press...

Paul Addison, *Churchill : The Unexpected Hero*

More than half a century after his death, as personal memories of Winston Churchill's statesmanship grow rarer and dimmer, the books he wrote afford a window into his soul, allowing us to recover his understanding of the world he experienced. Successive decades of his life, as he recognised, ushered in enormous and momentous changes, both in politics and in science and technology. As a scion of one of Britain's most prominent aristocratic families, Churchill lived to see the disappearance of aristocratic privilege and the transformation of Britain's government into a democracy. Born into the Victorian world before the invention of the internal combustion engine, he also lived to see the beginning of the atomic age and the diplomacy of mutual assured destruction.

The First World War was in many ways the turning point of these changes. In his autobiography, *My Early Life : A Roving Commission* (*MEL*), Churchill tells us that in 1920, he invited Paul Cambon, before he retired after twenty years as French ambassador to the Court of St. James's, to luncheon at his house. They talked about 'the giant events through which we had passed and the distance the world had travelled since the beginning of the century' [*MEL* : 104–105]. The ambassador told him that over the past two decades he had 'witnessed an English Revolution more profound and searching than the French Revolution itself. The governing class have been almost entirely deprived of their property and estates; and this has been accomplished almost imperceptibly and without the loss of a single life' [105]. Recalling this observation in

¹ An earlier version of this essay was presented to the International Churchill Society's related group panel 'Winston Churchill on Democracy and Its Discontents' at the annual meeting of the American Political Science Association in Boston, August 31, 2018.

My Early Life a decade later, Churchill found that in writing an account of his youth and early manhood, with a focus on the years in his early twenties between 1895 and 1900 which he called 'the staple of this story' [74], he had indeed 'drawn a picture of a vanished age', looking back on changes he 'should not have believed possible in so short a space without any violent domestic revolution' [9].

These two revolutions, in science and in politics, were the focus of the books he wrote in his middle period as an author, in the years between the two world wars. In the preface to a book of his essays published in 1932, *Thoughts and Adventures*,¹ Churchill remarks on 'the extreme diversity of event and atmosphere through which a man of my generation, now in its twelfth lustre, has passed and is passing' [T&A : 1]. He warns of 'two alternative Infernos' – 'two nightmares' – that may come upon us, 'if Civilisation cannot take itself in hand and turn its back on those Cities of Destruction and Enslavement to which Science holds the keys'. Churchill tells us he has 'tried to adumbrate' these Infernos in two essays toward the end of the book, 'Shall We All Commit Suicide?' and 'Fifty Years Hence' [2].

In 'Shall We All Commit Suicide?' Churchill apprehends the coming of a City of Destruction, a term that he borrows from the Old Testament prophet Isaiah, who foresees such a city in Egypt [Isaiah 19:18], or from the seventeenth-century author John Bunyan, whose protagonist Christian begins his journey in *Pilgrim's Progress* there. In both of these cities, citizens' faithlessness to God causes their destruction. Churchill's City of Destruction is distinctly modern. As our author explains it, 'the story of the human race is War'. Yet up till now, human beings have been spared the ability to destroy their own species, not for want of ferocity but because 'the means of destruction at the disposal of man have not kept pace with his ferocity'. His needs 'to live and hunt and sleep' fortunately distracted him from the 'murderous strife' that 'was universal and unending' in prehistoric times, preventing anything like 'reciprocal extermination'. The human race stayed alive, gradually developing 'tribes, villages, and governments' [T&A : 259]. With their aid, roads were built and considerable armies assembled, who attacked their enemies with deadlier weapons. But governments remained insecure, armies were riven by violent struggles, and it was difficult to feed so many men concentrated in one place – all of which hampered men's efforts to destroy each other.

Therefore, Churchill argues, 'it was not until the dawn of the twentieth century of the Christian era that War really began to enter into its kingdom as the potential destroyer of the human race'. He gives eight reasons for this change: (1) Great states, empires, and nations could wage bigger and longer wars. (2) Individuals' 'noblest virtues' were combined in 'the destructive capacity of the mass'. (3) Finance, credit, trade, and capital reserves allowed men to concentrate on devastation. (4) Democratic institutions reflected the will of millions. (5) Education explained war to everyone and helped everyone wage it. (6) The press unified and encouraged the people. (7) Religion

¹ Winston S. CHURCHILL, *Thoughts and Adventures* (London: Thornton Butterworth Limited, 1932). The current edition cited here is Winston S. Churchill, *Thoughts and Adventures : Churchill Reflects on Spies, Cartoons, Flying and the Future*, ed. James W. MULLER (Wilmington, DE: ISI Books, 2009), hereafter referred to as T&A. In fact, although Churchill approved of the book's preface, it was written not by him but by his former secretary Edward Marsh, since Churchill was recuperating from illness [T&A : 339].

provided encouragement and consolation. Finally, (8) 'Science unfolded her treasures and her secrets to the desperate demands of men, and placed in their hands agencies and apparatus almost decisive in their character' [260].

These changes came together in the great climacteric we know as the First World War. Europe, much of Asia, and then North America as well were wrenched into a new kind of struggle in which not just professional armies but whole peoples were subjected to all the rigours of war. Churchill points out that technological innovations would have made the unfought 1919 campaign even more destructive than those of preceding years [260–262]. Nor were the grievances that provoked war put to rest by peace settlements afterwards: he refers to 'fires of hatred burning deep in the hearts of some of the greatest peoples in the world, fanned by continual provocation and unceasing fear, and fed by the deepest sense of national wrong or national danger!' [265]. Russia chafed under the loss of 'her Baltic Provinces' – Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania – under the 1918 Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, and 'intense hatred of France' was even more potent in Germany [263]. Hence Churchill calls what we know as the interwar years a 'period of Exhaustion' rather than one of 'Peace'. But he tells readers they have at least at present 'an opportunity to consider the general situation':

Certain sombre facts emerge solid, inexorable, like the shapes of mountains from drifting mist. It is established that henceforward whole populations will take part in war, all doing their utmost, all subjected to the fury of the enemy. It is established that nations who believe their life is at stake will not be restrained from using any means to secure their existence. It is probable – nay, certain – that among the means which will next time be at their disposal will be agencies and processes of destruction wholesale, unlimited, and perhaps, once launched, uncontrollable.

In the first of the two 'nightmares' that Churchill mentions in his preface – as this essay's startling title 'Shall We All Commit Suicide?' makes clear – mankind, having 'got into its hands for the first time the tools by which it can unfailingly accomplish its own extermination', actually does use them to destroy the human race [262].

Churchill indicates that this nightmare is still a few steps away from being real. Although he acknowledges that human 'virtue' or 'wiser guidance' might help prevent human beings from destroying themselves and claims that is now among 'their new responsibilities', he cannot realistically expect nations to shrink from any extreme if they 'believe their life is at stake' [262]. How acute that danger is may be judged from two observations he makes.

First, he foresees new, more powerful weapons of all kinds – metallic [steel or aluminum], electrical, explosive, poison, chemical, and biological. He brushes aside the forlorn hope of developing some universal remote-controlled detonating ray to set off dangerous explosives in the hands of aggressors before they could use them against

others [265]. Instead, he imagines ‘methods of using explosive energy incomparably more intense than anything heretofore discovered. Might not a bomb no bigger than an orange be found’, he asks, ‘to possess a secret power to destroy a whole block of buildings – nay, to concentrate the force of a thousand tons of cordite and blast a township at a stroke?’ If we are not quite there yet, he observes that ‘military science is remorselessly advancing’ [264], its march ‘unfolding ever more appalling possibilities’ [265]. The weapons of the future ‘will be incomparably more formidable and fatal’ than those which laid so much of the world in waste after the Great War [262].

Second, he observes that, unlike the ‘superior martial virtues – physical strength, courage, skill, discipline’ – that allowed ‘the best and fittest’ to prevail ‘in barbarous times’, the scientific knowledge required to gain ‘supremacy’ over one’s enemies may belong to ‘a base, degenerate, immoral race’ [264]. Thus even ‘the liberties of men are no longer to be guarded by their natural qualities, but by their dodges’, through some scientific artifice that is no respecter of morality or justice [265]. Whereas classical magnanimity, self-respect, or Christian mercy might cause men possessing these traditional virtues to forbear from iniquity, modern science in the hands of base men might allow them to prevail over ‘an enemy far above them in quality’ [264]: Churchill warns that ‘superior virtue and valour may fall an easy prey to the latest diabolical trick’ that has no relation ‘to any form of human merit’ [265]. Therefore the science and technology of warfare, especially new developments that might upset the balance of power among nations, must be carefully studied by decent statesmen as well as arrant aggressors – as he did throughout his career. Otherwise ‘possession by one side of some overwhelming scientific advantage would lead to the complete enslavement of the unwary party’, since those who got the jump on the others could reduce ‘their opponents to absolute helplessness’ [264].

To be sure, Churchill concedes that ‘the blessed respite of Exhaustion’ after the Great War [265] – which might produce no more than ‘a sullen passivity’ arising from ‘the horror of war’ and subjecting the human soul to ‘stupor’ and ‘collapse’ [262] – offers ‘the nations a final chance to control their destinies and avert what may well be a general doom’ [265]. Yet the inexorable grinding mechanisms of mobilising and deploying huge armies that went into motion after the assassination of the Archduke Ferdinand in Sarajevo, which Churchill describes in the final volume of his memoirs of the First World War, *The World Crisis: The Eastern Front*, tracing the outbreak of the unknown war on the eastern front, prevented statesmen from stopping that war. Indeed, the sudden subjection of decent, well-meaning men to imperious necessities, so that the war escaped from human ability to guide and control it, is a central theme of Churchill’s memoirs, *The World Crisis, 1911-1914*.

It is not given to human beings to have certain knowledge of the future. Readers seeking respite from the apocalyptic tone of this essay's title may protest that, despite their firm intentions, future combatants in a scientific war may fail to exterminate the entire human race. If a diabolical opponent secures an iniquitous advantage over a more decent nation, Churchill writes, the loser faces 'complete enslavement' as the ignoble alternative to personal suicide – an enslavement tantamount to the suicide of the nation. To exchange liberty for a life not worth living is a hard and poor bargain. On the other hand, the hopeful reader may reply that asymmetric warfare or the unpredictable chances of war might produce a lesser punishment for one side or both – at least an incomplete extermination of the human race. Churchill admits this possibility, which anticipates only 'the ruin of the world' and 'an immeasurable diminution of the human race' [T&A : 264]. This lesser disaster would 'shear away the peoples *en masse*', if not *tout entiers*, and would 'pulverise, without hope of repair, what is left of civilisation' [262].

What Churchill means by civilisation is mankind's success in forsaking the violence and insecurity of primitive barbarism by founding cities and eventually nations that allow people to live in liberty and safety. While civilisation does not guarantee that justice will be achieved, it is the indispensable condition for pursuing that human aspiration. The preservation of some men on one side or the other, or even both sides, after an apocalyptic future war, leading lives not worth living in a ruined world with no civilisation left, so far from affording solid consolation, is a very bleak alternative to complete extermination.

Readers who are hopeful, rather than simply exhausted, may persist in believing the world has left these dangers behind by the armistice and the peace settlements ending the war to end all wars and by founding the League of Nations to preserve the peace. 'Surely', Churchill agrees, 'if a sense of self-preservation still exists among men, if the will to live resides not merely in individuals or nations but in humanity as a whole, the prevention of the supreme catastrophe ought to be the paramount object of all endeavour' [265]. He does not turn up his nose at the League: on the last page of the essay he calls it the only 'path to safety and salvation', so that 'to sustain and aid the League of Nations is the duty of all' [266].

Yet Churchill combines this exhortation on behalf of the lone choiceworthy alternative to the two Cities of Destruction or Enslavement with a douche in ice-cold water for anyone who trusts in the League to achieve it:

Against the gathering but still distant tempest the League of Nations, deserted by the United States, scorned by Soviet Russia, flouted by Italy, distrusted equally by France and Germany, raises feebly but faithfully its standards of sanity and hope. Its structure, airy and unsubstantial, framed of shining but too often visionary idealism, is in its present form incapable of guarding the world from its dangers and of protecting mankind from itself. [265-266]

The League, which can boast neither the armed force of the powerful nations that might break the peace nor the long-sustained allegiance of the citizens of those nations, is too weak a reed to uphold mankind's hopes for maintaining liberty, civilisation, and peace. Churchill argued that only support of the League's aims by the prudent efforts of the strongest nations in the world, including application of their armed forces against potential aggressors, could preserve civilisation and enable the League's aims to be achieved.

After the next war and its defeat of inhuman tyrannies with the eventual explosion of the atomic bomb, in his last prime ministry he had to come to grips with the invention of the far more powerful hydrogen bomb that brought the world still closer to the destruction he had foreseen in this essay and its possession by hard, brutal men who held captive the people of Russia and the eastern half of Europe. Lest his nightmare come true, Churchill sought to open a dialogue with the Soviet rulers, arguing that the communists' denial of liberty was unnatural and that Russians would eventually turn their back on communism if the peace could be preserved, but that the world could not afford a nuclear war that threatened, if not to destroy the human race, at least to kill hundreds of millions and to destroy civilisation.

The danger comes from the increase of human power without a corresponding increase in human virtue or wisdom: moral and political progress has not kept pace with scientific progress in the power of human beings to destroy or enslave their fellows. Human beings have always been subject to death and capable of killing each other before death would catch up to them after the span of years allowed by nature. The power to master nature, even if it has not enabled human beings to overcome death, has enabled them to inflict death on whole cities and peoples: 'mankind has never been in this position before', but 'that is the point in human destinies to which all the glories and toils of men have at last led them'. Churchill observes this awful power in the hands of 'a frail, bewildered being' [262], whom he endeavors to guide to prudent preservation of the civilisation mankind has achieved up till now.

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In the second of the two essays exploring the nightmares of Churchill's preface to *Thoughts and Adventures*, 'Fifty Years Hence', we learn more about the possibility that

we might find ourselves in a City of Enslavement, which he briefly mentions in ‘Shall We All Commit Suicide?’ Churchill began thinking about this essay with the aid of a memorandum written by his scientific adviser, Professor Frederick Lindemann of Oxford University (afterwards Lord Cherwell), whom he had asked to speculate on advancements in science and technology to be expected in the next half-century.¹ Noticing that the twentieth century ‘has witnessed an enormous revolution in material things, in scientific appliances, in political institutions, in manner and customs’, Churchill argues that ‘the greatest change of all’ is ‘the far greater numbers which in every civilised country participate in the fuller life of man’. The world of aristocracy, in which ‘England was for the few and for the very few’ [T&A : 283] in words he quotes from Disraeli,² has been replaced by a new world of democracy, in which life in Britain ‘has become larger, safer, more varied, more full of hope and choice’ for ‘many millions’. This democracy is even more advanced across the ocean in the United States, where ‘scores of millions have lifted themselves above primary necessities and comforts, and aspire to culture – at least for their children’. Across the Channel, Europe has experienced ‘a similar if less general advance’, although a continent ‘stunned and lacerated by Armageddon’ [T&A : 283].

Churchill explains that in modern times ‘we assume that progress will be constant’. If it were to stop now or be reversed, we could not maintain the comforts or even the existence of everyone who depends on it. Science, with ‘a vast organised united class-conscious army’ which cares nothing for our laws, customs, beliefs, or instincts, has caused our pace of life to increase. When it comes to making prophecies about the future, Churchill denies that the historians’ method of likening our situation to a similar period in the past is of any avail [288], since the changes during the last century ‘have been so sudden and so gigantic that no period in history’ is comparable [286]. Only through the scientists’ method of ‘observing all that Science has achieved in modern times, and the knowledge and power now in her possession’, can we foresee inventions and discoveries that may be coming next. Churchill wonders ‘what reactions these discoveries and their applications will produce upon the habits, the outlook and the spirit of men’ [288].

He expects science to advance even more quickly, increasing man’s power over nature and allowing ‘schemes of cosmic magnitude’, so that ‘geography and climate would obey our orders’ [289]. He predicts we will have ‘materials thirty times stronger than the best steel’, new forms of transportation and communication by land, water, and air,

¹ For a description of this memorandum, see T&A : 360.

² Churchill gives no source for the quotation, and I have never been able to trace its origin.

and wireless telephones and television. Claiming that ‘civilised races’ have learned to get all the food they need [290], he imagines new kinds of synthetic food and underground farms where food can be grown without sunlight [291].

Just over the horizon he espies ‘startling developments’ in breeding human beings and in shaping human nature [291]. After seeing the Czech playwright Karel Čapek’s play *Rossum’s Universal Robots* in London, which pioneered the idea of robots, Churchill thought they might be among us within fifty years. More than eighty-five years later, we hear plenty of breathless talk about the internet of things – computerised speakers, refrigerators, automobiles, and whatnot, sometimes with minds of their own, or with native mechanical cussedness not so different from our own – but Churchill’s prophecy is more ominous. He imagines the production of ‘beings specialised to thought or toil’ – creatures of ‘admirable physical development’, but ‘with their mental endowment stunted in particular directions’. Such a creature might be willing to spend its life taking care of a machine, without having any other ambition. While Churchill is confident that ‘the laws of a Christian civilisation’ will prevent ‘such fearful eventualities’ among us, he is not so sure about other regimes:

[M]ight not lop-sided creatures of this type fit in well with the Communist doctrines of Russia? Might not the Union of Soviet Republics armed with all the power of science find it in harmony with all their aims to produce a race adapted to mechanical tasks and with no other ideas but to obey the Communist State? The present nature of man is tough and resilient. It casts up its sparks of genius in the darkest and most unexpected places. But Robots could be made to fit the grisly theories of Communism. There is nothing in the philosophy of Communists to prevent their creation.

He fears that ‘despotisms and tyrannies will be able to prescribe the lives and even the wishes of their subjects in a manner never known since time began’ – in short, that science will show iniquitous rulers how to usher not only defeated enemies but even their own citizens into modern Cities of Enslavement. Observing that ‘one of the most powerful reigning governments’ has leaders with ‘pitiless sub-human wickedness’ [292], he asks, ‘who shall say that the world itself will not be wrecked, or indeed that it ought not to be wrecked?’ [292–293]. A tough and resilient man might prefer death to slavery: ‘There are nightmares of the future’, Churchill writes, ‘from which a fortunate collision with some wandering star, reducing the earth to incandescent gas, might be a merciful deliverance’ [293].

Thence he comes back down to Britain to consider the effect of these impending discoveries ‘upon the structure of Parliamentary institutions’, admitting that it is ‘a descent almost to the ridiculous’. In a blunt, uncompromising critique, Churchill states

that 'democracy as a guide or motive to progress has long been known to be incompetent'. He finds it simply unimaginable that 'the whole mass of the people' could decide by their votes in an election 'the right course to adopt amid these cataclysmic changes'. Britain as he wrote was in the depths of the Great Depression, which by 1931 had crossed the ocean from America and was causing a worldwide economic decline. Churchill tells us that 'Parliaments of every country' have been at a loss to find their way out of this crisis [293]. Among earlier essays in *Thoughts and Adventures* is 'Parliamentary Government and the Economic Problem', which he had delivered as the Romanes Lecture at Oxford in 1930, arguing that people wanted 'more prosperity', yet 'neither the electors nor their representatives' knew how to achieve it [254]. He recommends establishment of 'an Economic sub-Parliament' of experts to advise the parliamentarians [255].

In the face of still greater challenges from 'the tremendous and terrifying discoveries which are approaching', Churchill dismisses as inadequate 'the claptrap of the hustings and the stunts of the newspapers'. Nor does he think any of the 'legislative assemblies of the great modern states' possess, in the new era of universal suffrage, 'even a fraction of the strength or wisdom of the community'. In an argument reminiscent of Alexis de Tocqueville's assessment of popular government in *Democracy in America*, he rues the fact that

Great nations are no longer led by their ablest men, or by those who know most about their immediate affairs, or even by those who have a coherent doctrine. Democratic governments drift along the line of least resistance, taking short views, paying their way with sops and doles and smoothing their path with pleasant-sounding platitudes. Never was there less continuity or design in their affairs, and yet towards them are coming swiftly changes which will revolutionise for good or ill not only the whole economic structure of the world but the social habits and moral outlook of every family. Only the Communists have a plan and a gospel. It is a plan fatal to personal freedom and a gospel founded upon Hate. [293]

In this argument we discern the human attributes that Churchill considers qualifications to rule: ability, expertise in a nation's immediate affairs, and possession of a coherent doctrine. The attributes are in descending order. A ruler with knowledge limited to immediate affairs will be incapable of handling wider questions, and a coherent doctrine all by itself may take a nation the wrong way in immediate affairs or in larger challenges. The line of least resistance, short-sightedness, sops, doles, and plausible platitudes characterise rule by those with none of these attributes, resulting in a lack of continuity or design. Having to face swift, revolutionary change makes such absent-minded rule all the more dangerous. Democratic governments are at a loss not only in coping with this change, but also in competition with communists, who have at

least a coherent doctrine. The trouble is that their plan and gospel makes life not worth living.

An able ruler might be able to lead fellow parliamentarians toward better comprehension of the nation's good. An able man who was not a ruler might be less able to do so. That may be why Churchill, taking his bearings from the effect of the approaching changes caused by science on the habits and outlook of every family, turns in the rest of 'Fifty Years Hence' to 'the moral philosophy and spiritual conceptions of men and nations', since he might have the opportunity to influence his countrymen's thinking. Here he argues that the modern increase in scientific knowledge and power has not improved men's virtues and wisdom:

The brain of a modern man does not differ in essentials from that of the human beings who fought and loved here millions of years ago. The nature of man has remained hitherto practically unchanged. Under sufficient stress, – starvation, terror, warlike passion, or even cold intellectual frenzy, the modern man we know so well will do the most terrible deeds, and his modern woman will back him up.

Churchill observes that man's weapons and powers have outstripped his intelligence and his intelligence has outstripped his nobility, so that, in the words of Thomas Babington Macaulay, we have civilisation's strength without its mercy. Hence it is crucial for our moral philosophy and spiritual conceptions to hold their own against all these scientific changes, lest we be enslaved 'by our own apparatus and the forces which it directs'. The danger is that, 'without an equal growth of Mercy, Pity, Peace and Love, Science herself may destroy all that makes human life majestic and tolerable'. Churchill emphasises the importance of expressing 'the inherent virtue of human beings' strongly and confidently in our daily lives, disdaining 'earthly power and achievement' and hoping for immortality for the sake of our safety [294-295].

It turns out, he concludes, that 'material progress, in itself so splendid, does not meet any of the real needs of the human race'. Churchill suggests why by appealing to a science fiction book he had read 'the other day' [295] about the 'far future' of the human race.¹ The book told the story of mankind 'from the birth of the solar system to its extinction', tracing human history through 'fifteen or sixteen races of men' over 'tens of millions of years'. Eventually they learned to master nature:

A state was created whose citizens lived as long as they chose, enjoyed pleasures and sympathies incomparably wider than our own, navigated the inter-planetary spaces, could

¹ He does not name the book, but it was Olaf Stapledon, *Last and First Men: A Story of the Near and Far Future* (London: Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1930).

recall the panorama of the past and foresee the future. But what was the good of all that to them? What did they know more than we know about the answers to the simple questions which man has asked since the earliest dawn of reason – ‘Why are we here? What is the purpose of life? Whither are we going?’ No material progress, even though it takes shapes we cannot now conceive, or however it may expand the faculties of man, can bring comfort to his soul. It is this fact, more wonderful than any that Science can reveal, which gives the best hope that all will be well.

While modern science concentrates on ministering to the material needs of our bodies, Churchill reminds us that our ‘tough and resilient’ human nature has made us beings who have souls. Whatever changes may come about in the future to our material surroundings or even to our bodies, the human nature that gives us souls is enduring. Our souls have needs of their own; and Churchill foresees that, despite the material powers that science may eventually vouchsafe to our descendants, ‘their hearts will ache, their lives will be barren, if they have not a vision above material things’. Long ago Moses offered the Israelites a choice between life and death, between blessing and cursing. Churchill tells us that mankind is facing that choice again, and ‘never was the answer that will be given harder to foretell’ [295].

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Our author recognises in the preface to *Thoughts and Adventures* that he has tucked his ‘two nightmares’, the two essays we have considered here, into a book full of papers many of which ‘touch on the lighter side of grave affairs’. Yet he writes that he ‘should be sorry if on this account’ anyone took them ‘merely as the amusing speculations of a dilettante Cassandra’, imagining that his prophecies about the two ‘alternative Infernos’ of destruction and enslavement might not find readers who were willing to consider them seriously. Churchill assures us that he means them ‘in deadly earnest as a warning of what may easily come to pass’ [2]. The lapse of nine decades since he wrote them has made them not a whit less timely. May this essay help them find new readers.