

Mr. David Ignatius, Editor, Outlook  
The Washington Post  
1150 15 St., NW  
Washington, D.C. 20071

9/26/89

Dear Mr. Ignatius,

I want to be sure that you did not misunderstand me in your letter of the 22d. It was John Foster Dulles, not Allen, who announced on his return from visiting Nazi clients just before Hitler invaded Poland that Hitler was a man of peace.

You are correct, I think, in describing the days of my youth as "remarkable." They were, in many ways, beginning with The Great Depression, which I recall very well.

They were in Washington, too, in the New Deal days, when people like me, possibly predominantly young people, flooded in, anxious to both help and have work. I fear that if today any government employee worked the unpaid hours of overtime I put in voluntarily he'd be regarded as a nut. But we were motivated, many of us, to help bootstrap the country. That was the time, I think, of the beginning of modern society and its concepts.

Unpaid overtime was not uncommon on the Hill, where I was first an investigator and then editor of the Senate Civil Liberties Committee. I have the volumes I published, by the way, if you know anyone interested in civil liberties and labor matters of that era. We investigated labor spies and strikebreakers, too. Bloody times!

If you'd like to come up here - it hasn't been safe for me to drive to Washington since 1977 - I'm almost always home. It is an hour or less from northwest, not much over an hour except at rush hour from the Post building.

Going along with what the Nazis had been up to here was a kind of what amounted to native nazism. One aspect, of extreme conservatism, was investigated by a Senate committee headed by Hugo Black, later of the Supreme Court. It was largely propaganda and lobbying. On the other side, there were plots to overthrow the government. One I recall because in those days I was an avid reader of the Post and of the Philadelphia Record, which I got when I left the Wilmington Morning News (it had a bulldog edition), cost Record reporter Paul Comly French his job, after all the accolades, and a House investigation by the fore-runner of the Dies committee on UnAmerican Activities. One of the big New York banking houses planned to finance a revolt in which a former Marines general they misunderstood and misread, was to lead the revolt on a white horse. He was Smedley Butler, the director of public safety or chief of police in Philadelphia. French was his friend and got an exclusive by working with him. Last I saw of French he was working on a WPA project in Philadelphia. Great reward! WPA or Works Projects of Progress Administration, was one of FDR's earliest efforts to put people at useful work. This extended to the arts. It is where Orson Wells got his start (Mercury Theater.) The future Librarian of Congress Luther Evans had a WPA project I got to work on, an index of the volumes I published for the Senate.

I'm glad you realize I was not criticizing your article. It was good and useful.

But I do regret that younger Americans know so little about aspects of that period.

The president of local Hood College, where all my materials will be a free public archive, has wanted to do oral histories but all her staff stay too busy.

It was a time of ferment and some of the yeast made a glorious brew.

Please excuse my typing, I have to type sideways to the machine, with my legs elevated.

Sincerely,



Harold Weisberg

# The Washington Post

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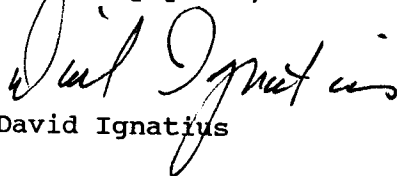
Dear Mr. Weisberg:

Thanks for your wise and informative letter about BSC. I suspect you're right in saying that my treatment of this subject didn't do justice to the motivations of many of the people who worked with the British. I did try to say that I regarded the British operation as a whole as part just cause -- and that it helped win the war.

What interested me especially in your letter was the discussion of what the Nazis had been up to in the states -- and the extent to which supposedly responsible people like Allen Dulles expressed sympathy for them. Amazing!

In any event, thanks for supplying some of the context material which I am indeed too young to remember. I would enjoy meeting you some day and hearing more about those remarkable days.

Sincerely yours,



David Ignatius

DI:prm