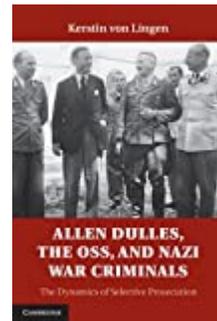


**Kerstin von Lingen.** *Allen Dulles, the OSS, and Nazi War Criminals: The Dynamics of Selective Prosecution.* Translated by Dona Geyer. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013. ix + 328 pp. \$99.00 (cloth), ISBN 978-1-107-02593-6.



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*Allen Dulles, the OSS and Nazi War Criminals: The Dynamics of Selective Prosecution* does not fit into a single category of historical analysis. It is in part a military history of the final stages of World War II; it is intelligence history of the early Cold War with strong focus on the United States's Office of Strategic Services (OSS); and finally, it is a part political, part social history of Germany's ambiguous postwar attempt to come to terms with its recent past (*Vergangenheitsbewältigung*), including the contentious issue of re-integrating former Nazi functionaries and members of the Wehrmacht. Above all, however, it is a case study that seeks to analyze and bring into context the story of SS General Karl Wolff (1900-84).

At the end of World War II, several German Nazi Party and military officials made overtures to negotiate an early surrender with the West. In 1943, however, the Allies, including the Soviet Union, had agreed to require an unconditional surrender by Germany, ruling out any bilateral agreements. When Karl Wolff, higher police and SS leader in Italy and responsible for the SS and police units in Italy fighting an antipartisan war, however, made such a proposition to the Americans, Allen Dulles, head of the OSS office in Berne, Switzerland, received a positive response from Washington to look further into this

matter. Operation Sunrise, the ensuing secret deal that was forged between Wolff and the United States, represented by Allen Dulles, came into effect, after several delays, on May 2, 1945, days before the official end of World War II in Europe.

Von Lingen's aim then is to contextualize Operation Sunrise and bring its political repercussions on subsequent war crime trials into a larger context. Through a case study of Karl Wolff, the author aims at finding an explanation for the clemency for Wolff and his staff in the Allied war criminals program after 1945 (p. 2). It is the author's argument that Operation Sunrise was a turning point in East-West relations and the first of a bundle of measures that sought to reward German negotiation partners for their actions because the early surrender in Northern Italy had benefited the Western powers on the eve of the Cold War as they attempted to push back, specifically to the Yugoslavian border, the Soviet sphere of influence in central Europe.

Not only was the United States interested in saving time needed in a race to increase its military and political presence in Northern Italy vis-à-vis a feared spread of communist influence in the region; but the United States reasoned that avoiding an unnecessary mil-

itary confrontation with the Germans in the mountains and bypassing the German "Alpine Fortress" could save American lives. It is for these immediate military, geopolitical, and ideological goals that Operation Sunrise, at the instigation of Karl Wolff and upon recommendation by the OSS office in Switzerland, received a green light from Washington.

Following a chapter devoted to a comprehensive analysis of Operation Sunrise, the author moves on to examine Wolff's privileged treatment by the Allies after the war. The author relies on circumstantial evidence, as no clear written statement that agreed to protect Wolff from legal prosecution exists. With numerous agencies, offices, and ministries from different countries all trying to collect and analyze incriminating evidence in 1945, it is striking that Wolff, whose name at first appeared on the list of potential war criminals to be sentenced at the Nuremberg Military Tribunals, did not end up on the defendants' bench. Von Lingen infers that through the protective hands of Dulles and his associates, Wolff was shielded from prosecution. It was "the anticommunist motives that served as the cement holding together the secret deal between Wolff and Dulles" (p. 156). At the same time, Wolff was such a prominent SS general that his public abdication would have raised some suspicion; instead, Wolff remained in Allied custody—against his will—and was eventually transferred to a mental hospital, away from the international limelight in Nuremberg. Dulles made sure that Wolff was prevented from having a platform to reveal critical details about Operation Sunrise and thus embarrassing the United States internationally. Wolff was also protected from extradition to other countries that intended to put him on trial, including Italy. In 1948, in Wolff's denazification trial, a German court sentenced Wolff, based on Western pressure, to five years in prison, of which four had already been served and the remainder turned into parole. The strategy of extolling Wolff's virtues as the "good German," a gentleman officer who brought about the much-awaited end to Hitler's horrendous war and who thus saved many German and American lives, worked. The supporting affidavits submitted by important American officials, including Dulles, allowed a public, one-sided image of Wolff to emerge that was positive and blind to the general's other "deeds" during the Third Reich.

Only in the 1960s, thanks to private initiatives by Nazi war-crime hunters like Tuvia Friedman, who discovered new incriminating evidence that linked Wolff to the deportation of 300,000 European Jews to the extermination camp Treblinka, and a simultaneous, newly ignited

interest among German society in desk-perpetrators (such as Adolf Eichmann), did Germany's state attorneys re-open the Wolff case. In 1964, Wolff was sentenced to fifteen years in prison as an accessory to murder. Even though this time the Dulles circle (which had fallen into disgrace in the United States as a result of the Cuban fiasco in 1959) was at first unable to influence matters behind the scenes, it was pressure on the Bavarian justice minister to pardon Wolff that eventually led to his release on "medical grounds" in 1969. With a shattered reputation but largely left untouched, Wolff lived quietly off his pension until his death in 1984.

Von Lingen's stimulating case study of a SS general, his involvement in bringing World War II to an expedited end and his subsequent shielding by United States authorities adds significantly to our understanding of the political processes that governed the victor's justice over former Nazi Germany. Her commendable research based on declassified sources at various national archives in Germany, England, the United States, and Switzerland as well as university libraries and newspaper archives has resulted in a meticulously detailed and well-written work of scholarship. Successfully interconnecting different historical themes, von Lingen is convincing in her argument that "political considerations that foreshadowed the coming of the Cold War began to dominate as the war ended" (p. 287). War criminal policy, despite the noble goals formulated in Nuremberg to bring justice to the horrors of World War II and the Holocaust, could be, as this study proves, secondary to political considerations. Von Lingen's study shows how a few intelligence officers around Allen Dulles could influence war criminal policy on the ground at various levels to their own and their government's interests.

From a more critical point of view, the reader might find the English title of the monograph slightly misleading—after all, the book's central subject of historical analysis is Karl Wolff and his name should have been included in the title. Furthermore, some additional information on Wolff's earlier career in the Third Reich, when he was Himmler's chief of staff for instance, and his rise in the SS state apparatus, including his participation in the preparation and facilitation of the Holocaust, would have helped the reader obtain a more comprehensive and well-rounded understanding of the protagonist. It would have also been interesting—but likely infeasible due to restricted access to sources—to learn more about the Soviet Union's understanding of Operation Sunrise at the time of the negotiations. Von Lingen states that information about a separate surrender leaked when Win-

ston Churchill revealed details to the public. The Soviets, understandably irritated about this breach of the Casablanca Agreements, demanded the immediate cessation of negotiations (to which the Americans, of course, agreed, but which Dulles ignored). Further clarification of these Cold War intrigues of international politics is warranted.

Nevertheless, the reader is left with the important lesson that not only had the alliance between the East and West crumbled before the war even ended, but that the United States went so far as to negotiate a separate, secret surrender agreement with the enemy, Nazi Germany, which in turn resulted in the complicated conundrum for the United States of protecting, instead of bringing due punishment to, a high-ranking SS general.

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