

2. Statement of General Winter on the History of the Organization [undated]

Statement of General WINTER on the History of the Organization

Between 26 April and 2 May 1945 (exact date no longer certain), R. GEHLEN (until 9 April 1945 Chief of the Division Fremde Heere Ost) came to me at Königsee near Berchtesgaden for a private conversation. I myself was then a Lieutenant-General and Chief of the Führungsstabes Süd of the combined OKW/OKH. General GEHLEN requested a strictly confidential conversation and revealed the following to me:

He was of the opinion, as I was, that active warfare would end in the course of the next few days. As a result of the clearly put challenge for an unconditional surrender, the valuable and irreplaceable records on the USSR in all probability either would fall into Soviet hands or would be destroyed as a result of local action which would be taken in the future by the West and which could not be foreseen by the German leaders. In view of our complete agreement that the next phase which necessarily would evolve out of the European catastrophe would be conflict between the Soviet system and the Western concept of freedom, he (GEHLEN) considered it his duty to preserve every valuable German Army record on the East for the sake of the jointly-held Western concepts. He intended, therefore, first of all to move to positions in the mountains, with these records and key personnel of the Division Fremde Heere Ost, in order in this way to bridge the first days following the capitulation and to try to preserve both men and materials of the FHO during the first period of violence. His further intention was to try to establish contact with the West, according to developments in the American Army front lines, in order to follow through on his line of thinking. He was ~~very definite about it~~, that he and his co-workers, if he succeeded in his aims, would have to push back all feelings of hostility and make themselves available to serve a Western concept; in so doing, he believed, he would above all be serving Germany in the best possible way.

✓ General GEHLEN mentioned to me in this connection that he had already discussed the above mentioned basic intentions with Brigadier General GUDERIAN, who in the meanwhile had been relieved as Chief of the General Staff of the Army, and had found him to be in basic agreement. *Colonel*

For my part, I was in full agreement with the intentions of General GEHLEN and parted from him with the assurance that ~~as~~ had the same opinions about the broader developments, as well as on our own ultimate actions. I expressed the hope that it might be possible, in spite of the difficulties of foreseeing the events of the interim period, to again work together within the frame of reference of the plan roughly sketched by General GEHLEN.

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