

G. O. P. Leader Pleads Innocent in Nazi Propaganda Case

Ohio Attorney Indicted For Failing to Register As German Agent

Frank B. Burch, Akron (Ohio) Republican leader and a member of the Akron bar, pleaded innocent today when arraigned in District Court on a charge of failing to register with the State Department as a secret propagandist agent of the German government.



Mr. Burch was indicted yesterday by a District Court grand jury as an outgrowth of a Justice Department investigation of publishing houses suspected of being financed and controlled by the Nazis.

Justice Jesse C. Adkins allowed Mr. Burch 20 days in which to contest the legality of the indictment and set his bond at \$1,000. Arranging bail immediately, Mr. Burch was released in the custody of his attorney, former United States Attorney John E. Laskey. Mr. Laskey said he was representing Mr. Burch only temporarily until the Akron lawyer could arrange for counsel.

According to the complaint, the Ohioan, acting at the instance of Karl Kapp, German consul at Cleveland, served the German government as "public relations counsel, agent, representative and attorney," from January 1, 1940 to July 15, 1941. With \$10,000 obtained from the consul, the indictment states, Mr. Burch bought and circulated propaganda pamphlets and publications.

He campaigned against the lease-lend bill, it is contended, and compiled a mailing list of 30,000 industrialists and political leaders for the German consul.

Mr. Burch was subpoenaed to testify at the grand jury inquiry.

Charge Called "Absurd."

Before he left Akron to come here to answer the charge Mr. Burch told the Associated Press the charge was absurd. "Certainly as I read the law," he said, "I could not be required to register as a foreign agent and I have been so advised by my attorneys. I have never done anything against national defense—I am as strong as any other man in the belief that our country should be defended. But the lease lend bill, in my opinion, was an act on our part toward engaging in a European war, and some of our leading Ohio statesmen agreed with me on this."

Mr. Burch said he was prepared to show that the money for material he sent out came from American citizens, and added:

"There are many people in the groups that sent out material against our entering the war. That doesn't make them foreign agents."