

Oil Property Move by Nazi Stirs Protests

Copyright by New York Tribune, Inc.

New York, May 24.—Aroused by the presence in New York of Dr. Kurt Reith, former German diplomat who is attempting to buy American oil holdings in eastern Europe, spokesmen for aid to Britain groups today demanded closer surveillance of Axis visitors and urged the freezing of German assets here in retaliation for the virtual confiscation of American properties in Nazi-occupied portions of Europe.

Dr. Reith failed to emerge from his \$600-a-month suite on the twenty-third floor of the Waldorf-Astoria, but spoke to reporters over the telephone. The German minister to this country insisted that he was here on a purely personal financial mission, that his visit had nothing to do with affairs of the Reich and that he had had no financial or diplomatic conversations in South America while en route here. He arrived in Rio de Janeiro March 6 from Rome aboard a plane of the Axis-controlled air line Luf.

Says It's Purely Personal

"My visit is an entirely personal financial affair," he said. "We expect to have these affairs straightened out within a short time and will then return to Germany."

Dr. Reith entered the United States at Brownsville, Tex., on March 22, after flying from Mexico City. His passport contained diplomatic visas for several South American countries, but it was learned today that his American visa was simply a visitor's visa, affording him no diplomatic immunity.

The Right Rev. Henry W. Hobson, Protestant Episcopal Bishop of Southern Ohio and chairman of the Fight for Freedom Committee, called the presence of Nazi agents a grave threat to national security. To control such agents, the President should declare a national emergency at once, he said.

"Our whole defense program and every event of the last two years indicate that we recognize Hitler and his partners as potential and dangerous enemies," Bishop Hobson said.

"What Reith is doing is an illustration of the work of Nazi agents here."

Dr. Paul Schwarz, who resigned as German consul in New York in 1933 when Hitler came to power, said tonight that Dr. Reith was undoubtedly here as an official representative of the German government. No private businessman would be permitted to come here to conduct such important negotiations, he said.

Recalling that Dr. Reith's father, Heinrich R. Reith, once was a European representative of Standard Oil, Dr. Schwarz said he probably had been chosen because of the family's contacts here.