Priest Testifies As FBI Agent

Special Correspondence

HARTFORD, July 31.—A Greek Catholic priest, Father Aleksi Pelypenko, startled a courtroom yesterday when he testified that he was an employe of the Federal Bureau of Investigation and had been engaged for months in counterespionage among spies for Germany and Japan.

Attired in a clerical robe and speaking Russian to an interpreter, Pelypenko was put forth as the Government's star witness in the trial of the Rev. Kurt E. B. Molzahn, Philadelphia Lutheran minister, accused of aiding Gerhardt Wilhelm Kunze, chief of the German-American Bund, in his flight to Mexico.

Molzahn is being tried alone, because Kunze and three others accused of transmitting military information to the Axis have pleaded guilty.
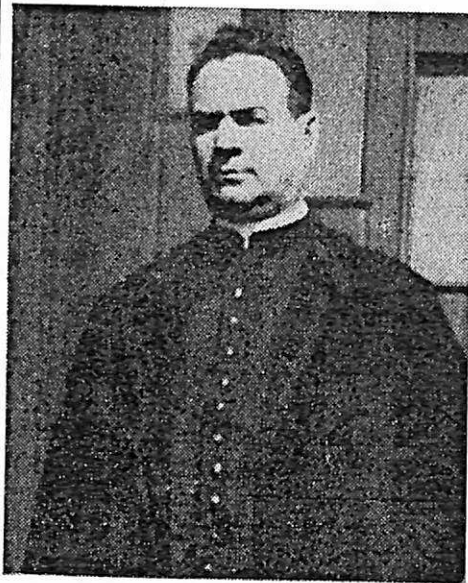
Pelypenko said he met Molzahn in Philadelphia in May, 1941, after obtaining a note of introduction from the German consul. They discussed, he said, ways and means of "furthering Ukrainian independence" by supplying "information on American factories and military equipment."

Linked to Kunze

In July, 1941, Pelypenko said, he was in Chicago where Kunze told him to visit Molzahn to get a "document" which would enable Kunze to leave the country.

Pelypenko said he showed Molzahn a letter from Kunze with Molzahn's return address on the back. He said the minister tore off the envelope flap and "told me to be very careful with it."

When he wanted to get in touch with Kunze again, Pelypenko said, Molzahn gave

Father Pelypenko

him the address of Dr. Wolfgang Ebell, in El Paso, Tex.

Pelypenko also involved two other defendants, Count Anastase Vonsiatsky and Dr. Otto Willumeit, Chicago Bund leader. He described a meeting at which, he said, Vonsiatsky reported on a fruitless trip to San Francisco where he tried but failed to get in touch with a Japanese agent.

Pelypenko related that he was born in the Ukraine and became a priest in 1925. He was in Germany from 1933 to 1937, he said, teaching in a Munich seminary, and from 1937 to 1941 was in Buenos Aires as a missionary.