

DREW PEARSON

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Dirksen Becomes Rightwingers'

Patsy

WASHINGTON—One of the most significant operations of the secret neo-Nazi movement in the United States is a plan to establish a press ethics committee to rate newspapermen and broadcasters and to censure those who embarrass "the movement."

Director of this committee is Frank Kluckhohn, who has been close to Willis Carto, chief main-spring of the neo-Nazi underground and organizer of the Liberty Lobby. Carto helped raise \$90,000 that was distributed to Conservative congressional candidates last year.

Chief danger of the neo-Nazi underground is its influence with a long list of congressmen to whom it contributed heavily. The situation is analogous to that in Germany when nobody took the Hitler brown shirts seriously until they enlisted the support of a few key industrialists and Field Marshal von Hindenburg.

One of those whom the neo-Nazis enlisted was the sonorous, oratorical, naive Sen. Everett McKinley Dirksen of Illinois, Republican leader in the Senate, who has played directly into the hands of the underground.

Dirksen did exactly what Kluckhohn and the Liberty Lobby have been hoping to do, by attacking The New York Times and its reporter, Neil Sheehan, for digging into the

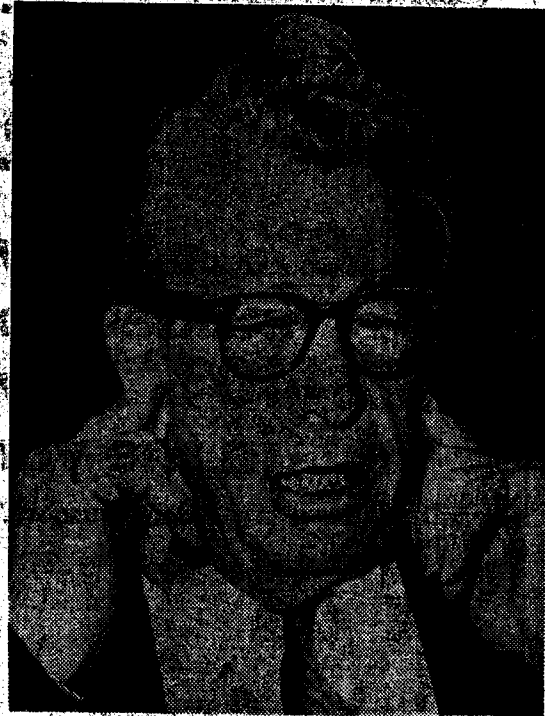
manner in which Otto Otepka raised the money to pay his attorney, Roger Robb, plus other defense expenses in his battle against the State Department. The department, under Dean Rusk, had dropped Otepka for leaking classified information on Walt Rostow and others to Sen. Tom Dodd, D-Conn. Rostow was the national security adviser to

President Kennedy and Johnson.

President Nixon now has promoted Otepka from his former \$14,000 job in the State Department to a \$36,000 job on the Subversive Activities Control Board. By so doing, Nixon rebuffed his own secretary of state, William P. Rogers, who refused to reinstate Otepka. Robb, Otepka's attorney,



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—AP WIREPHOTO

Columnist Drew Pearson claims SEN. EVERETT DIRKSEN has played into the hands of the neo-Nazi underground by criticizing news reports on controversial Otto Otepka.

ney, has been promoted by Nixon to the U.S. Court of Appeals, one of the most important judicial appointments in the nation.

WHEN the New York Times dug into the John Birch Society and other right-wing sources from which Otepka had raised his legal defense fund, Sen. Dirksen took the unusual step of denouncing The Times and threatened to denounce on the floor of the Senate the reporter who wrote the story. It was The New York Times, incidentally, which fired Kluckhohn. And it was Dirksen who urged President Johnson to save the Subversive Activities Control Board, to which Otepka has now been appointed.

What The New York Times did was a straight piece of reporting, which every newspaper has a right and obligation to do in order to keep the public informed. Reporter Sheehan showed how Otepka had been palsy-walsy with the John Birch Society and had raised at least \$22,000 from its members or its fronts.

Sheehan quoted Mrs. Harold N. McKinney, a John Birch chapter leader, as saying Otepka had "been very helpful" in arranging speakers for the annual John Birch meeting in Boston. He quoted Julius Butler, a John Birch chapter leader in Oak Brook, Ill., as saying Otepka had spoken to Birchite groups in Butler's home four or five times.

"He comes here whenever he comes to Chicago," Butler said.

Sheehan quoted Jerome F. Coniker, a Birch chapter lead-

er in Deerfield, Ill., to the effect that he had heard Otepka speak "a few times" at the homes of friends. The New York Times also reported on Otepka's attendance at various big John Birch rallies and how he autographed 8-by-10-inch glossy photographs of himself at a John Birch meeting at Washington's Statler-Hilton Hotel.

Sheehan queried Otepka about these activities. He declined to discuss them.

THOUGH The Times did a thorough job of probing Otepka's ties with the John Birch Society, it did not go into the equally significant manner in which the Liberty Lobby and the neo-Nazi movement has backed Otepka.

If Sen. Dirksen's angry blast at The New York Times stands as a precedent, it means newspapers cannot report on the activities of a presidential appointee facing Senate confirmation without risk of being attacked in the Senate. This is exactly what Willis Carto and Frank Kluckhohn, with their press ethics committee, are trying to accomplish. They want to hamstring critical comment by newspapers.

For instance, the Abilene Reporter-News in Texas recently exposed the John Birch Society connections of certain candidates running for mayor and city council of Abilene. The background of these candidates was relatively unknown to the electorate prior to the Abilene Reporter-News' expose. As a result of the Birchite slate was defeated badly.