

Back to McCarthy-McCarran

The Otto Otepka case has taken on a new dimension that makes it even more essential for the Senate to reject his nomination to the Subversive Activities Control Board. Right-wing Senators evidently will not be content simply to "rehabilitate" Mr. Otepka by confirming him for a \$36,000-a-year job on an inactive and worthless Federal agency.

Instead, Senators Eastland, Dirksen, Thurmond and others are bent on erecting an entirely new security superstructure for the Federal Government. This monstrosity, to be called the Security Administration for Executive Departments, would be linked to the SACB but subordinate only to the President.

An unusual subsection of the Senate bill to establish the new agency provides specifically that its Administrator may also be chairman of the Subversive

Activities Control Board—that he may hold both jobs simultaneously. This extraordinary provision seems to have been written into the bill with Mr. Otepka in mind, even though his pending nomination is only to be a member of the SACB, not its chairman.

The Administrator under the new bill would find himself disposing vast authority over security cases, not merely for State Department personnel—the job from which Secretary Rusk demoted Mr. Otepka and to which Secretary Rogers refused to reinstate him—but over the entire Government. The Subversive Activities Control Board all by itself is an utterly superfluous but potentially dangerous agency that was saved from extinction only by a cynical deal between President Johnson and Senator Dirksen in 1967. But the Administrator of the proposed new agency would be riding high at the top of a pervasive new Federal security structure, wielding powers the Senate bill describes as "coextensive with," and "exercized in the same manner as, the power conferred upon the Attorney General of the United States in the SACB Act.

This monstrous bill would threaten to yank the United States back to the excesses and hysteria of the McCarthy-McCarran period if not to the climate of the Alien and Sedition Acts. It is difficult to believe that some Senators listed as co-sponsors have even read the measure.