

## HUMAN EVENTS

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**A New Security Scandal?**

The case of Otto Otepka, the security expert fired by the State Department, has still not been resolved as he awaits Department hearings. But insiders in Washington last week focused attention on what they believe is a new security expose brewing within the Administration.

The story behind this potential scandal dates back to March 1964 and was first bared by the American Security Council's special *Washington Report*. That report detailed the story of how several associates of Otepka, now dubbed "the Otepka men" for supporting him against the department's charges, were reassigned from the State Department's Office of Security to the Bureau of Inter-American Affairs in mid-March 1964.

At first blush, this transfer seemed an obvious attempt to demote the Otepka-ites and a number of them complained to the Civil Service Commission. But the department assured these men they were to be put on a highly sensitive assignment. The job, as outlined by John Drew of the department's Office of Personnel, was to come up with information regarding some 40 Latin Americans working for international agencies in Washington.

These employees were suspected of being Communist agents and many currently hold key positions with the Organization of American States, the Pan American Union, Pan American Health Organization and other agencies.

Reports of Communist infiltration of these organizations were known to the State Department as far back as 1952, but no thorough investigation had ever been made. Then, in 1961, the case assumed new and startling importance.

A President of a Latin American country warned President Kennedy that this infiltration was very serious and that he should give it top priority. JFK turned the matter over to the State Department which in turn handed it over to the Office of Security. In 1964, with Otepka having been fired, the Otepka men were assigned to the task at the Bureau of Inter-American Affairs.

While it is not generally known, of the six Otepka men assigned to ferret out the Communists, the State Department has now taken four of them off the job. Raymond Loughton has been given an overseas assignment. Frank Gardner has dropped from the case. The department has ordered John Norpel to El Paso, Tex. and Howard J. Shea to Denver, Colo. Both are to be gone from their Washington offices by April 1. Only Harry M. Hite and Edwin A. Burkhardt remain.

Moreover, the evidence is that the State Department sabotaged the investigation from the moment it put the Otepka men in charge. For one thing, these investigators were barred from obtaining essential material which could corroborate existing data on the suspected subversives. The State Department would not forward certain security files considered essential for determining the background of suspects.

The Otepka men were also limited to record checks and were not permitted to develop new information on their own initiative. Contrary to the job description, the investigators were not allowed direct contact with the CIA.

Moreover, these men feel they shouldn't have been assigned to this job in the first place because these cases required a political decision at a higher level than the Security Office, which is not equipped to conduct full field investigations of foreign nationals in countries of their origin.

If the State Department was out to sabotage the investigation, why did it assign these probes to the job? According to one security official, State Department personnel hoped to clear their own skirts by saying they assigned Otepka to the case but even these "hard-liners" in the department couldn't develop anything.

At any rate, four years after strong warnings about Red infiltration in important international agencies in Washington the problem remains.

A suggestion is made that a committee of intelligence experts, drawn from the FBI, the Department, the Pentagon, the CIA and the like, be established to weed out the subversives. But so far the Administration appears willing to drop the entire matter.