

# What One American Found in His FBI File

by Robert Walters

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**S**anford Gottlieb is one of thousands of Americans who recently have exercised their rights under a pair of new federal laws—the Freedom of Information Act and the Privacy Act—which, for the first time, allow citizens to examine the files the government has compiled on them.

Because more and more Americans are availing themselves of this right—18,000 asked the FBI and another 8000 asked the CIA for their files during the past year and a half—PARADE obtained Gottlieb's permission to use his case as an example by examining the material he received from the government.

Gottlieb was chosen because the 49-year-old political activist has been fighting for one cause or another during most of his adult life. For the past seven years, he has been executive director of "Sane," a 20,000-member, Washington-based national organization founded in 1957.

## Reputable citizens

The group has opposed atmospheric nuclear testing, excessive military spending and the war in Vietnam—but no responsible authority has ever accused either Sane or Gottlieb of subversive or illegal activities.

Throughout its existence, Sane has been a middle-class organization whose best-known members included reputable clergymen, academic leaders,

artists, writers and physicians.

Television star Steve Allen and the late actor Robert Ryan have, in past years, solicited money and members for Sane in Hollywood. Kingman Brewster Jr., the president of Yale University, and Rep. Otis G. Pike, the New York Democrat who recently headed the House investigation of federal intelligence agencies, are among those who have praised its work.

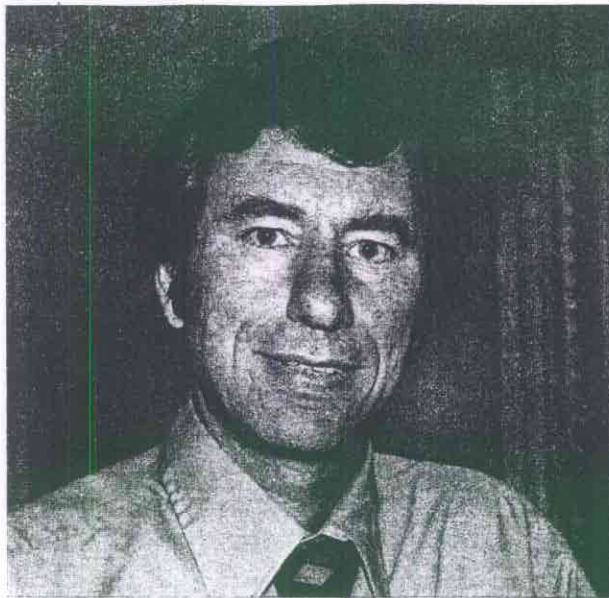
Sculptor Alexander Calder, poet Robert Lowell, sociologist David Reisman, psychoanalyst Erich Fromm, Congressman Andrew Young, retired Gen. Hugh B. Hester and a host of other leaders in various professions are among Sane's official sponsors.

## No illegal acts

Indeed, nothing in the hundreds of pages of hitherto secret data given to Gottlieb even hints that either he or his organization conspired to violate any laws, sought to overthrow the government or acted illegally in any fashion.

In fact, several documents give precisely the opposite impression. One FBI memo quotes Gottlieb in 1970 as telling University of Missouri students protesting the Vietnam war that they "must be patient, for change is slow."

A 1966 State Department cable signed by William P. Bundy, a leading architect of the Vietnam war policy, de-



Sanford Gottlieb, director of "Sane," a moderate antiwar group, obtained his FBI dossier and shared its contents with PARADE.

scribes Gottlieb as "one of the more responsible critics of U.S. policy."

But those credentials did not deter a small army of federal investigators from intercepting Gottlieb's mail, infiltrating private meetings and maintaining a ceaseless surveillance of his legal political activities.

- The FBI files contain summaries—often little more than rewritten versions of newspaper stories—of his antiwar speeches.

- When Gottlieb reserved a room at a Washington hotel for a meeting of an antiwar group, the FBI made a note.

- When a letter-to-the-editor he had written was published in The Washington Post, a copy was placed in his file, as was a New York Times "Man in the News" profile of Gottlieb.

- Some of the documents in the files involve thoroughly legitimate activities relating to a citizen's traditional right to participate in electoral politics. The FBI, for instance, had an unexplained interest in a Chicago meeting of reform-minded Democrats held shortly before the 1968 national convention.

- One secret State Department memo discussed, in somewhat sinister terms, a 1960 effort by Gottlieb that had "the avowed purpose . . . to influence the Presidential election campaign."

Other documents hint of questionable activities on the part of govern-

ment investigators. One FBI memo reports on a Sane meeting at a private home in Skokie, Ill., presumably attended by a government informant.

The files turned over to Gottlieb by the CIA include two letters written to him by other antiwar activists, with no indication of how or why the mail was intercepted.

The FBI file also seems to indicate inept intelligence work. For example, it contains a copy of a 1964 Drew Pearson column that favorably describes a trip to the Soviet Union made by Gottlieb and 68 other Sane members.

But an FBI report on that trip says "four members of Sane toured Russia." According to Gottlieb, Pearson's count was wrong by one. A total of 68 men and women made the trip.

Gottlieb went to work for Sane as a full-time, paid employee in February, 1960, but six months later the CIA apparently was unaware of that affiliation. An agency memo written in August says he "had an interest" in Sane "but nothing is known of this interest."

And in 1969, an FBI memo erroneously reported that he had severed his connection with the organization. A



People such as TV personality Steve Allen have solicited "Sane" funds.



Otis G. Pike (D., N.Y.), who led the House CIA probe, praised "Sane."

report on an antiwar meeting in Annandale, Va., a Washington suburb, incorrectly described Gottlieb as "the former director" of Sane.

Finally, there are questions about the materials provided to citizens exercising their right to see what information the government has collected on them.

In theory, the two laws require full disclosure, but they contain loopholes. The CIA, for instance, gave Gottlieb complete copies of 14 documents and partial copies of five others—but it refused access to 18 other memos and reports.

### **Unnecessary, inefficient**

Others who have obtained copies of their files from the government say Gottlieb's experience was quite typical to the extent that they find federal agencies indulging in unnecessary snooping but not terribly efficient or consistent in their intelligence activities.

"The government has no right to be placing under surveillance groups and individuals who are doing nothing more than exercising their right of freedom of association guaranteed under the First Amendment," says Gottlieb.

"But a look at the files shows that when they do so, they reveal their incompetence," he adds. "They make errors in fact, they record useless trivia and they rarely show any ability at political intelligence."

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