

Leonard Weinglass on The Patriot Act

January 24, 2017



The pages that follow are taken from Seth Tobocman's new graphic biography of the radical lawyer Leonard Weinglass, *Len: A Lawyer in History* (AK Press). This particular section is based on a transcript of a talk that Len Weinglass gave at the 2002 Left Forum on the relationship between Nixon-era encroachments on civil liberties and the Patriot Act.

The combination of Weinglass's informed critique and Tobocman's striking visuals provides an unusually effective example of political cartooning. As it happens, this is not the first time that *New Politics* has featured artwork by Seth Tobocman: The Winter 2007 issue included six of his pages on the impact of Katrina and neoliberal public policy on the people of New Orleans. In addition to *Len*, Tobocman's books include *Understanding the Crash* (2010), *Disaster and Resistance* (2008), and *War in the Neighborhood* (2000), which is about to appear in a new edition. He is also a founding editor and regular contributor to *World War 3 Illustrated*.

KENT WORCESTER

IN 2002 LEONARD WEINGLASS EXPLAINED

THE PATRIOT ACT





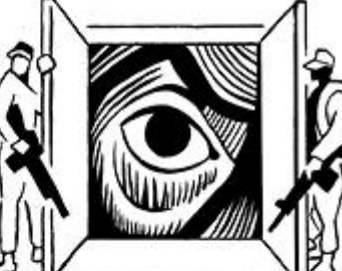
BUT THE COURT MADE ONE EXCEPTION. THEY ALLOWED THE EXECUTIVE TO ENGAGE IN ELECTRONIC SURVEILLANCE TO GATHER "FOREIGN INTELLIGENCE". IN 1978 CONGRESS SEIZED ON THIS RULING TO PASS THE FOREIGN INTELLIGENCE SURVEILLANCE ACT THAT AUTHORIZED SURVEILLANCE IN ONLY THOSE CASES DEEMED TO INVOLVE SUCH FOREIGN INTELLIGENCE.

THIS BILL CREATED THE FISA COURT.

THE FISA COURT RECEIVES APPLICATIONS FROM THE GOVERNMENT SEEKING AUTHORITY TO SPY ON PEOPLE IN THE U.S. IT DOES NOT MEET IN OPEN COURT BUT SECRETLY IN AN OBSCURE OFFICE WITH GUARDS AT THE DOOR.



JUSTICE DEPARTMENT ATTORNEYS APPEAR IN THE PROCEEDINGS WITHOUT OPPOSITION. OF THE FIRST 10,000 APPLICATIONS FISA RECEIVED, NOT ONE WAS REJECTED.



FOREIGN INTELLIGENCE TURNS OUT TO BE A VERY FLEXIBLE AND EXPANSIVE CONCEPT. IN THE '80s FISA AUTHORIZED WIRE TAPS OF THE COMMITTEE IN SOLIDARITY WITH THE PEOPLE OF EL SALVADOR (CISPES), A GROUP INVOLVED IN LEGAL POLITICAL ADVOCACY.



ANYTHING THAT SMACKS OF "FOREIGN" QUALIFIES.

HOW DOES THIS IMPACT OUR RIGHTS? LOOK AT THE CASE OF THERESA SQUILLACOTE AND KURT STAND.

A MARRIED COUPLE WITH CHILDREN. KURT WORKED FOR A LABOR UNION. THERESA WORKED AS A LAWYER FOR THE PENTAGON. THE FBI FALSELY SUSPECTED THEM OF BEING SPIES.



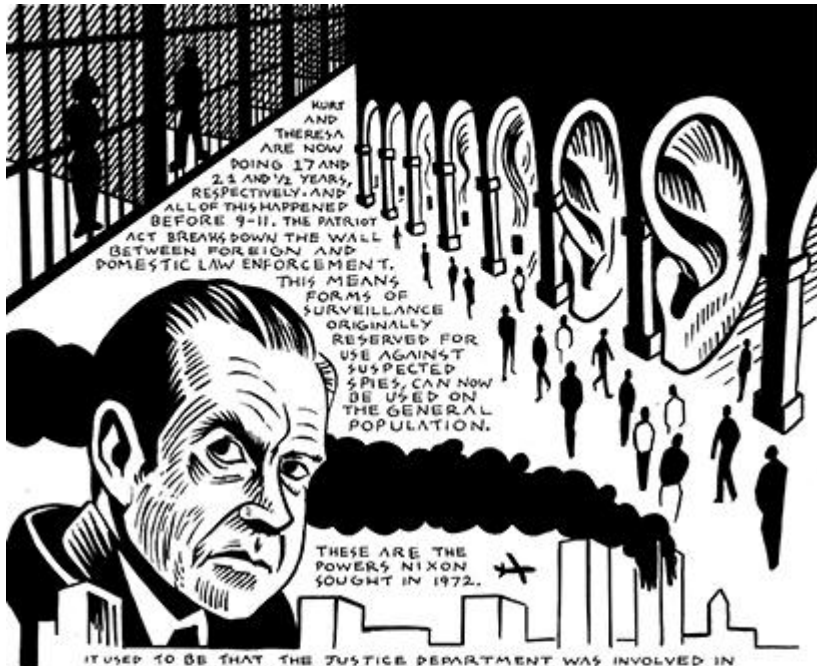
BUT THEY FOUND NO EVIDENCE OF WRONG DOING.





THE REPRESENTATIVE WAS AN FBI AGENT WHO'D BEEN INSTRUCTED BY PSYCHOLOGISTS AS TO THE MOST EFFECTIVE WAY TO CONVINCE HER TO TURN OVER SECRET PENTAGON DOCUMENTS.





KURT AND THERESA ARE NOW DOING 17 AND 2 1/2 YEARS, RESPECTIVELY. AND ALL OF THIS HAPPENED BEFORE 9-11. THE PATRIOT ACT BREAKS DOWN THE WALL BETWEEN FOREIGN AND DOMESTIC LAW ENFORCEMENT. THIS MEANS FORMS OF SURVEILLANCE ORIGINALLY RESERVED FOR USE AGAINST SUSPECTED SPIES, CAN NOW BE USED ON THE GENERAL POPULATION.

THESE ARE THE POWERS NIXON SOUGHT IN 1972.

IT USED TO BE THAT THE JUSTICE DEPARTMENT WAS INVOLVED IN THE INVESTIGATION OF CRIMES THAT HAD OCCURED. THEIR NEW MISSION IS TO PETER CRIMES BEFORE THEY ARE COMMITTED.



WHICH MEANS SPYING ON "POTENTIAL WRONG DOERS"

SUCH AS ACTIVISTS OR THE IMMIGRANT COMMUNITY.



MOREOVER, THE LOSS OF BASIC FREEDOMS TO AN ABUSIVE AND ENCROACHING BIG BROTHER. CANNOT HELP BUT BUILD THE



Footnotes