

Leonard Weinglass on The Patriot Act



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



DID NOT HAPPEN OVER NIGHT ON 9-11

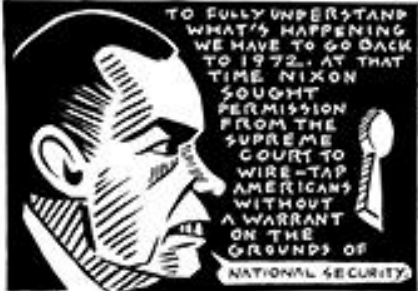


A graphic of a tall, modern building with a spire on top, rendered in a simple line-art style.

THE PATRIOT ACT IS A MONSTER BILL... 342 PAGES... INTRODUCED WITHIN WEEKS OF SEPTEMBER 11TH. VIRTUALLY OVERNIGHT THIS ENTIRE PACKAGE BECAME THE LAW OF THE LAND. IT COULD NOT HAVE BEEN WRITTEN IN SO SHORT A PERIOD OF TIME.

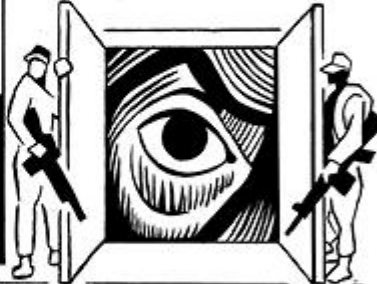


WHAT IT ACTUALLY WAS, IN THE MAIN, WAS A COMPILATION OF VARIOUS DISCREDITED PROPOSALS THAT HAD BEEN REJECTED BY CONGRESS FOR VIOLATING FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS.





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



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

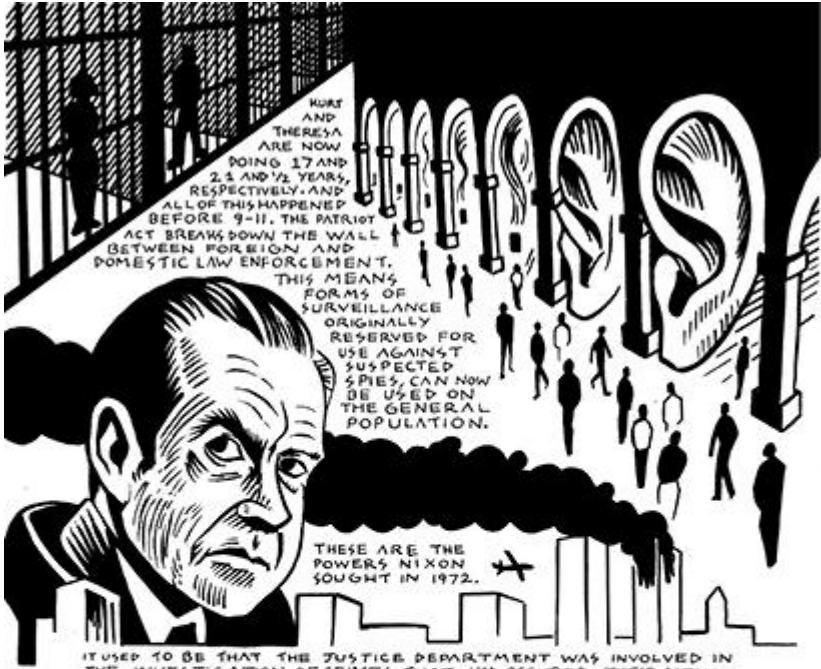
A MARRIED COUPLE WITH CHILDREN. KURT WORKED FOR A LABOR UNION. THERESA WORKED AS A LAWYER FOR THE PENTAGON. THE FBI FALSELY SUSPECTED THEM OF BEING SPIES.



BUT THEY FOUND NO EVIDENCE OF WRONG DOING.







KURT AND THERESA ARE NOW 17 AND 21 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