

# Readers' letters on "The New McCarthyism: the witch-hunting of Ward Churchill"

28 February 2005

It was a disappointment to me that you half-heartedly supported Ward Churchill. You are incorrect in your assumption that the American people do not know what is going on. They know just as all the meat eaters know that animals are tortured and mistreated, and you know what? They don't give a damn as long as they get theirs.

IL

"This is a wrongheaded and deeply reactionary argument, whether it refers to top officials of investment firms or immigrant maintenance workers."

Dr. Churchill clearly states in his article that he is referring to the brokers who worked at the twin tower complex ... not immigrant maintenance workers. Did you bother to read the article you are reviewing?

"Nonetheless, to identify the American people, from whom virtually all knowledge about the consequences of the Persian Gulf war and sanctions has been withheld."

Give me a break ... the people who vote for Bush know what they are doing, and they know what Bush et al stands for. They are not ignorant people, they are people who want the world Bush gives them. It is disingenuous to argue that the American public is not informed. The big non-secret is that a large percent of the American public knows the consequences of the Persian Gulf War ... and the consequences are fine by them.

Sorry, you might find it comforting to think the killing of women and children would bother the American public "if they only knew," but the bad news is ... in the last election 50 percent said they know and don't care. If the other 50 percent were able to understand what Bush stands for, and voted against him, well, then, stop excusing a willingness to horrific behavior on the grounds of "ignorance."

PK

David Walsh is without doubt the best culture critic in the country. (His movie reviews, in particular, lay waste to PR hacks such as David Denby, A.O. Scott, Roger Ebert, Armond White, Peter Travers, Lisa Swartzbaum[!], etc.) Walsh's recent defense of Ward Churchill was superb, but for the central tenet—namely, his labeling of Churchill's labeling of WTC victims as "reactionary," because those workers at the time of their death were basically innocent rubes:

"...from whom virtually all knowledge about the consequences of the Persian Gulf War and sanctions has been withheld."

Huh? Only one word can describe the "spiritual" state of Millennial Manhattan and that word is: knowing. Whether it's roll-top sweaters (as Churchill mentions) or latte flavors or Rudy's favorite restaurant or genocide in Iraq—all is known, was known. (Especially within the cadre of Mutant Elite housed in the WTC.) The ongoing genocide in Iraq was not obscure knowledge known only to a moralistic cognoscenti (aside from the war-criminals conducting it), but to all—even to readers of the *New York Post* and *Daily News*. (Otherwise, would Leslie Stahl have been asking Madeline Albright about it?)

Were the working-class construction workers who built the camps and the ovens as guilty of genocide as those who turned on the gas? Of course they were. Were those workers and soldiers deserving of death? Another question entirely. But the WTC *volken* had every responsibility to know what exactly their work was embodying, especially after the building was already a target of attack. The core of postmodern US "morality" is to divest oneself of all ethical responsibility, and blame others for everything. (This dominates in private life, as it does in public.) That choice should have consequences. I imagine there were some righteous people who died in or around the WTC

that September morning—a tragedy. But those were people who turned green at the sight or thought of the ugly building, long before 9/11. Those who felt at-ease (or proud!) of working there were complicit in whatever emanated from there in terms of consequences. After all, we’re not talking about some 120-floor Denny’s standing in the middle of Idaho. The World Trade Center stood for something very definite: morally, architecturally, and historically. To have been ignorant about precisely what that was in 2001 was an ethical decision, even a lifestyle one.

As Macbeth discovers: “More is thy due than more than all can pay.”

EK



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