More letters on the Ward Churchill question

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The World Socialist Web Site *has received numerous letters from readers responding to David Walsh's "Reply to reader's letters on '*The new McCarthyism: The witch-hunting of Ward Churchill" *To encourage an ongoing discussion, we are publishing a selection of these letters below. Ward Churchill is a University of Colorado professor who has been targeted by the ultra-right. In a response to the September 11 terrorist attacks he enumerated the crimes of US imperialism and added that the "most that can honestly be said about those [suicide bombers] involved in September 11 is that they finally responded in kind to some of what this country has dispensed to their people as a matter of course."*

I would like to express my appreciation of your thoughtful and principled response to some of the letters criticizing your article on Ward Churchill.

Mr. Churchill's muddled thinking certainly speaks to a confused and demoralised section of people on the left of the political spectrum. However, they miss the point. The issue at hand is the attack on Mr. Churchill's fundamental democratic rights, and by implication, the rights of all Americans.

By the tone of some of the responses, it would seem that they would approve of the incarceration, or even incineration of all Americans. Some deeply reactionary and misanthropic sentiments underlie this type of radicalism. To regard the mass murder of US civilians as just desserts bespeaks of a somewhat twisted and diseased mind. This is hardly the mark of a decent human being, let alone a socialist.

EG

South Africa

When I read Ward Churchill's justification of the loss of life inflicted by terrorists, I too was aghast. The pendulum does indeed swing from extreme to extreme in the world of subjectivity. Churchill's comments were quite reactionary; to see such an objectively written review of his words brings the entire socialist view into perspective. Truly we cannot live as a united human race if we are to be governed by reactionary ideas. It is inspiring to see that this web site's many authors are holding true to the idea of a human order.

JH

I take issue with certain evaluations of David Walsh regarding the Ward Churchill issue. Regarding Churchill, Walsh writes, "Apparently, anyone working in the World Trade Center, anyone who voted for Bush, is a vital cog in the machinery of imperialist war." Because we live in a democracy, we have agreed to accept the will of the group. My tax dollars pay to murder people in Iraq, and therefore I consider myself partially responsible for such injustice. Does Churchill advocate violence? NO. One of his central arguments is that violence, in all its forms and incarnations, only begets more violence and madness and illogic. Churchill never said it was a morally justifiable position, that the WTC should have been attacked. What he said is that, according to the standard operating procedure of the US government, it should be expected, and that attackers spoke the only language that the US understands.

Further, Walsh writes, "According to our critics, the American people knew everything and supported every crime of US imperialism; they are entirely willing accomplices." It is not necessary that everyone know everything, but when the majority of voters approve of illegal war and are tacitly accepting of human-rights violations around the world, they are partially responsible. It doesn't matter if they know everything; it matters if they know that it's happening at all. Most WWII Germans probably didn't know everything, but they knew enough. Does that mean all US citizens deserve some degree of physical retribution? Of course not. And I'm sure Churchill would agree: Violence doesn't solve anything.

DH

Boulder, Colorado

Good for you. I think you must be a very wise and good-hearted man, David Walsh. I am most impressed by your call to the "generous impulses" of the people to unite and transform our society.

Having our minds colonized by the worldview that has created the mess we find ourselves in, it's the easiest thing in the world to react with anger, fear and despair to each new challenge in the crisis. We'll get nowhere sniping and blaming each other for insufficient resistance to what is essentially us—our world, our means of relating to one another, our creation.

In order to lose the victim's attitude of blaming each other for our plight—whether it be the State or the "little Eichmanns" that earn their right to live by serving the Great Parasites—we're going to have to learn how to draw from within ourselves the best of our instincts for cooperation, cooperation even with those who are stupidly acting and voting against their own interests.

You do a great service by reminding us that it's not through reacting out of fear and anger, blaming the less aware among us, that we'll stand a chance to wrest our world from the bad guys. We've got to draw up and nourish those "generous impulses" toward solidarity and cooperation that make living so worthwhile.

BM

Denver, Colorado

Wow. I am extremely impressed at the calm, rational, evocative and well argued comments in your piece. I suspect there are many of us, screaming desperately inside, at a loss as to which way to turn—politically and activist speaking—since our choices have typically been the lesser of two evils for so long we've begun to lose sight of the real problems. Thank you so much for returning and honing the focus to those of us who believe the answer is not in the capitalist imperialism that dominates this country and appears to be consuming large portions of the world. Ever considering a run for a national political office? Thanks again for some clarity, rationality and common sense—all things that seem in short supply at our major political institutions around the world.

SS

Reno, Nevada

This is a very good letter since it speaks of our global moral duty not to respond to violence with violence or to explain away violence as a means to an end. We must never cooperate with injustices and we as a global community must develop a consciousness to understand this. The elite have no real intrinsic values save that of maintaining power within their small circles and unless and until that is exposed in all its naked horror as the source of economic, social, environmental and physical devastation, nothing will change.

We must return to the true meaning of socialism, not that as expressed

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by Communism—or State Capitalism—but as to what socialism meant. We cannot allow any more revolutions by the people, for the people and of the people to be financed by Wall Street or any other corporate entity. We must all educate ourselves about this because those entities are often "hidden," and their work is to reestablish some form of system of economic imbalances necessary so the few will always have more than the many.

The best way to combat our present economic imbalances is to first educate ourselves and then others to their true nature, their sources, their causes and their consequences. Even a little at a time. The people of Afghanistan and Iraq did not support Bin Laden's attack and the US retaliated by killing so many of them. The people in the Twin Towers didn't support the killing machine of the US either, and yet they died. But the big money behind Bin Laden and the US (and many others) still manipulates and conducts an assortment of horrors here and abroad, unstopped and unstoppable unless we arm ourselves with the truth.

SN

Canada

Ward Churchill has recently been in the center of controversy regarding his characterization of World Trade Center stock brokers and bond traders as "little Eichmanns." Although the remark was written over three years ago and attracted little attention at that time, it has erupted into a predictable scheissesturm of right-wing recrimination.

Churchill was just recently vindicated. It was a moment of supreme irony. Last week, a news commentator on Fox was excoriating Churchill for the "little Eichmannns" comment, and in the very next segment, Elizabeth Holtzman was being interviewed. She is the chairwoman of the Interagency Working Group (IWG) that is trying to get the CIA to release the rest of their documents about employing Nazi war criminals. She dropped a bombshell: the CIA employed five of Eichmann's top advisors.

There it was, the slithering bowels of the beast laid bare for all to see, and I wondered if anyone else was able to connect the dots. But then I realized that this is America where dot-connecting neurons wither early in life due to excessive exposure to television. You would have to know a few things, like: One of the chief architects of the National Security Act which created the CIA was Clark Clifford, a Wall Street lawyer. Many top executives at the CIA have been Wall Street lawyers, such as Allen Dulles and Bill Casey.

The CIA employed Reinhard Gehlen, the Nazi spy chief, and reconstituted his intelligence network after the war. Gehlen lied about Soviet military strengths and intentions, helping to create the cold war. Nazi war criminals like Klaus Barbie and Walter Rauff somehow escaped hanging at Nuremberg and fled to South America with the help of the CIA where they advised fascist governments that murdered and tortured thousands at the behest of Washington.

As former CIA agent Philip Agee put it, the purpose of the CIA is to maintain optimal operating conditions for multinational corporations. Optimal operating conditions often involve murdering labor organizers as in the Coca-Cola plant in Guatemala, or just generally terrorizing the population so they don't even think about asking for higher wages.

The success of the stock market is built upon the rotting corpses of the victims of American economic imperialism, which number close to 6 million, that iconic number needed to designate mass murder a holocaust. That is all that Churchill is saying with his little Eichmanns comment. He meant it as a metaphor, but the recent revelations of the IWG prove that it is factually accurate.

MB

Hawaii

Congratulations to David Walsh. He has written an excellent article. Ward Churchill reminds me strongly of the Communists and fellow travelers of the 1930s. A high percentage of those that died on September 11 were simply employees of companies who had offices in the buildings. It is disturbing to read such nonsense and Churchill should know it is nonsense.

The Bush administration seems to be plumbing the depths of depravity, but remember that he was elected by a minority of US citizens. All the Americans I meet in Canada are ashamed of Bush, but it is their fault he was elected. The Party system is far too strong.

What we are witnessing is the meteoric rise of Monarchism, "Rule by One Person." It started with Mussolini and progressed through Stalin and Hitler to the present day when a majority of world governments are led by an elected President that appoints the Prime Minister. Unfortunately most human beings are, in the words of my Polish friend, "sheeps."

GW

Ottawa, Ontario

It was with some satisfaction that I read WSWS's analysis of Ward Churchill, as it closely reflects my feelings towards the controversial Professor.

You stated that his view of the September 11 attack was "politically false and reactionary. In part, we wrote, 'to identify the American people, from whom virtually all knowledge about the consequences of the Persian Gulf War and sanctions has been withheld, with the US war machine is a terrible political mistake and writes off the possibility of profound social change in America. Moreover, the essential callousness of Churchill's response to the bombings works in the opposite direction of cultivating humanitarian and generous impulses in the population.'"

I view Mr. Churchill's opinions from a rather cynical position. I, like anyone with eyes to see and ears to hear, am firmly convinced that the attacks of 9/11 were committed by and for the benefit of the politically ascendant Neo-Conservatives, their Oil Baron friends in many countries, and their partners who profit from the excesses of the Military Industrial Complex. With the help of a compliant and complicit corporate-controlled media, they have used their long awaited "Pearl Harbor-style event" as a mass psychological lever to manipulate domestic public support for their nefarious goals.

Hundreds of foreigners also perished in those buildings, and many of these people were working for international charities and NGOs which had offices in the WTC. 100 companies and government offices from 35 countries were tenants at the World Trade Center towers.

And the way the Bush Junta has used 9/11 not only as a justification for a hegemonic foreign policy, but as a pretext to impose anti-Democratic policies on their own people, it doesn't take a rocket scientist to connect the dots.

RBH

Saskatoon, Saskatchewan

Churchill's essay goes to extremes, but like the man in power here, GW, the way to get public opinion aroused is to make inflated statements that hold only a grain of truth. My own opinion is that we do know the right from wrong here, but that the multi-layered government offices exhaust all efforts to reach the core and make changes. We know right, we mean well but every time you think you've won, the game goes into overtime and it's never over.

Our current administration has taken the "double-speak" to a new level and there is the additional burden of unwrapping the real result from the claimed effect. Our national news media is owned by corporate conglomerates that seem incapable of unbiased news reporting. Ward Churchill's essay at least reminds of us that we are capable of seeing and stating the obvious. Were it not for his essay, and his ability to promote it, many of us public would be lulled into complacency by the continual drum-beat of the current administration's furthering of "democracy." And it bodes well that college professors are not so fearful of their tenure that we should be reminded that politico will use any means to create the pacified and trusting public so necessary to keep us uninvolved and uninformed.

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KS
Duluth, Minnesota

I agree with the viewpoint that current American thinking has become psychopathic. Just last week, on a local radio talk show, a caller said he would support our military in any military operation, even if it meant 100,000 innocent people would have to die—his only regret is that this does not happen on a much broader scale! In talking to many Americans I find this shocking lack of moral conscience to have become the norm. Sorry, but like with the animal rights issue, I cannot agree with you on this one. The evidence around me speaks to strongly, and ignorance is *not* an excuse for cruelty!

PM
Utica, Michigan

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