

Mumia Abu Jamal

This is in defense of Ward Churchill, historian. As rabid right-wing talk bird's cackle for the firing of University of Colorado based historian Ward Churchill, the very controversy echoes an earlier meaner age. That of the Cold War period of the 50's, when the state, through the FBI and various other government agencies ran riot over the rights, livelihoods, families, and lives of ten's of thousands of people, simply because of their different political opinions, or because they were suspected of being communists. Churchill, an Ethnic Studies Professor at UC, knows a little something about that era. He was co-author with Jim Vanderwall of the now classic and authoritative studies of the now infamous COINTELPRO or counterintelligence program of the FBI, against radical movements. Their books are: *Agents of Repression: The FBI's Secret Wars Against the Black Panther Party and the American Indian Movement* and *The COINTELPRO Papers: Documents of the FBI's Secret Wars Against Dissent in the United States* both published by South End Press. Both works, together over 900 pages are exhaustively footnoted and documented, and provide chilling insights into how the state used illegal, unconstitutional, and out right criminal tactics to neutralize, disrupt, and indeed destroy social and political movements for decades.

Churchill is now under fire for an essay penned shortly after the events of September 11th, 2001, where he reasons that to anyone knowledgeable about U.S. foreign affairs the attack could have hardly been surprising. As knowledgeable as he is about U.S. domestic affairs, he's equally knowledgeable about U.S. foreign affairs, and he knows all too well that many people in foreign lands have grievances against the U.S. In his 2002 essay, *Some People Push Back: On the Justice of Roosting Chickens*, Churchill recalls the famous comment by Malcolm X after the assassination of President John F. Kennedy, "It was but a case of Chickens coming home to roost". Both Malcolm and Churchill know something about U.S. actions abroad, its export of violence abroad, and its demonstrated hatred of dark peoples the world over. He recounts how American armies and agents have wreaked brutal havoc all around the world, killing almost countless innocent civilians, in their efforts to ensure continued imperial rule. For example, he mentions the CIA's "Operation Phoenix", where the U.S. government, the Navy Seals, Army special forces, South Vietnamese Rangers, and the Australian SAS neutralized people named by CIA snitches as Vietnamese guerilla's. Churchill writes, "upwards of 40,000 people, mostly bystanders as it turns out, were murdered by Phoenix hit teams before the guerilla's stronger than ever, ran the U.S. and its collaborators out of their country all together. And these are the guys who are going to save the day, if unleashed to do their

thing in North America.” Ward Churchill is bitterly critical of the politicians, the military, and other government agencies, who have unleashed a wave of terror upon, people around the world. He does not mindlessly genuflect to the dead from the world trade center attacks, he explains as best he can, that such unbridled violence abroad lead to violence here. Churchill is not a safe or guild historian. He does not speak obliquely of the vanishing Indian or the glories of manifest destiny, he teaches of the madness of Empire, and from the position of the people on the periphery, the outskirts of Empire. It is not enough for us to merely, dumbly intone that Churchill has the right to write what he does, no we must do more, we must insist that Churchill is right, and no one, not some rabid talk show parrot, nor political whore like governor Bill Owens, has a right to demand what is wrong. The Cold War is over, even in Colorado. Churchill is right.

From Death Row this is Mumia Abu Jamal.