

## On the Justice of Charging Buffalo: “Who Stole American Indians Studies?” Redux

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. . . . As many of us know, working for the interests of Indigenous Peoples is not easy, given that our colonizer is the most powerful nation in the world and, since we number more than five hundred nations, we can have very different minds on how (or whether) to pursue common strategies and tactics for decolonization. The case of Professor Churchill is no exception. Because of my open support for Churchill’s pro-Indigenous and anti-imperialist scholarship and activism, and my refusal to denounce him as an “ethnic fraud,” I have been the target of criticism . . . .

. . . . instead of assisting us in concentrating our intellectual resources on the pursuit of common goals that support the Indigenous communities to whom we are responsible, [the red-herring issue of] identity remains a vortex for the poisoning of our [Indigenous Studies] departments and our discipline, and for undermining our work for the people. In the “old days” many of our tribes who were brilliantly utilitarian had a regular practice of dealing with identity by formally adopting (nonmember) Indigenous and non-Indigenous persons who exhibited behaviors and thinking that empowered the nation. Many also made practice of formally banishing those who endangered the group. It is too bad that, with all our PhDs, we have not found similar avenues to empower ourselves in the academy. . . .

Professor Ward Churchill has been deliberately targeted for elimination for his well-documented views of American Empire, which many of us strongly endorse. While more Indigenous scholars might support him if he “toned it down a bit” or “said it in a more civil manner,” I wonder how one tones down and talks civilly about genocide, repression, and murder? . . .

Truth-telling is an essential human right, and this purge is occurring because Churchill’s truth-telling scholarship is dangerous to the political, academic, and public interests of those who are best served by U.S. imperialism and anti-Indigenous discourse and policies. This is an attempt to silence one of the strongest and most prolific defenders of Indigenous Peoples. . . .

The full article is available in the Spring 2007 issue of *Wicazo Sa Review*:  
[www.upress.umn.edu/journals/wsr/issues/22-1\\_main.html](http://www.upress.umn.edu/journals/wsr/issues/22-1_main.html)  
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