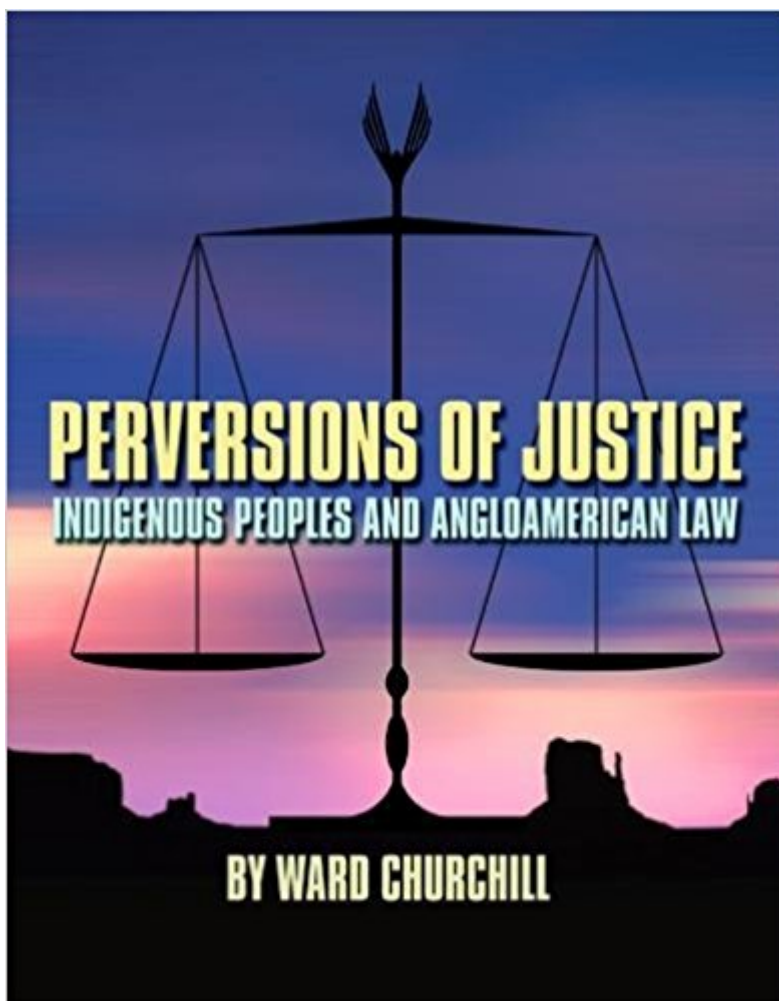


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Perversions Of Justice: Indigenous Peoples And Anglo-american Law



Synopsis

The United States is readily distinguishable from other countries, Chief Justice John Marshall opined in 1803, because it is "a nation of laws, not of men." In *Perversions of Justice*, Ward Churchill takes Marshall at his word, exploring through a series of 11 carefully crafted essays how the U.S. has consistently employed a corrupt form of legalism as a means of establishing colonial control and empire. Along the way, he demonstrates how this "nation of laws" has so completely subverted the law of nations that the current America-dominated international order ends up, like the U.S. -itself, functioning in a manner diametrically opposed to the ideals of freedom and democracy it professes to embrace. By tracing the evolution of federal Indian law, Churchill is able to show how the premises set forth therein not only spilled over onto non-Indians in the U.S., but were also adapted for application abroad. The trajectory of America's imperial logic can be followed all the way to the present New World Order in which "what we say goes" at the dawn of the third millennium.

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Customer Reviews

Ward Churchill has achieved an unparalleled reputation as a scholar-activist and analyst of indigenous issues. He is a Professor of American Indian Studies at the University of Colorado, Boulder, a leading member of AIM, and the author of numerous books, including *A Little Matter of Genocide*, *Struggle for the Land*, and *Fantasies of the Master Race*.

I'm sympathetic to the arguments Churchill lays out in this book-- but it's disconcerting to see him lie to make his points. In writing about the establishment of Los Alamos in New Mexico, he claims that the atomic city was put "on land supposedly reserved for the exclusive use of the San Ildefonso pueblo." That's simply not true. Some of the land belonged to an upscale boys' school. A bit more belonged to some local homesteaders. The great bulk of the land was forest service land that got transferred to the Army. One other example, from the same page of the book: Churchill writes about how all the nuclear installations were created near Indian lands because the Army knew that they were dealing with bad stuff and didn't want to expose good ol' Anglo Americans to such poisons. Yet he fails to mention entirely the Oak Ridge plant in Tennessee--where plutonium was processed and was even injected into (non-Indian) people as part of a medical experiment. Reader beware: Churchill is no historian-- he's a propagandist

There are few who have produced such an important collection of essays regarding the mistreatment of indigenous people. I just finished reading the chapter on "The Radioactive Colonization of Native North America." It's a very sad episode that continues to this day, with the waste of our nuclear projects being put into weapons and dumped by the ton on the tribal people of Afghanistan and Iraq. The depleted uranium, and the mess that uranium mining and nuclear tests create effect not just native people, but all of us. It's estimated the 10,000 Americans have died from living downwind of the Nevada nuclear test sites. With the Bush administration planning to conduct more nuclear tests as they create a new "family" of nuclear weapons, Churchill's message is more important than ever. It's great that the elite establishment has brought so much attention to his work. In their effort to destroy and dismiss him, Churchill's books and ideas have come to the attention of tens of thousands of people. I don't know if Ward is an Indian or not, but the work of this "fake" Indian is more valuable than the work of fake cowboys like George Bush. We all have tribal roots, "Perversions of Justice" may inspire some of us to remember them.

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