

STATEMENT BY AMIRI BARAKA, NEW JERSEY POET LAUREATE 10/2/2002

*I WILL NOT "APOLOGIZE", I WILL NOT "RESIGN!"*

The recent dishonest, consciously distorted and insulting non-interpretation of my poem, "Somebody Blew Up America" by the "Anti-Defamation" League, is fundamentally an attempt to defame me. And with that, an attempt to repress and stigmatize independent thinkers everywhere.

This trashy propaganda is characteristic of right-wing zealots who are interested only in slander and character assassination of those whose views or philosophies differ from or are in contradiction to theirs.

First, the poem underlying theme focuses on how Black Americans have suffered from domestic terrorism since being kidnapped into US chattel slavery, e.g., by Slave Owners, US & State Laws, Klan, Skin Heads, Domestic Nazis, Lynching, denial of rights, national oppression, racism, character assassination, historically, and at this very minute throughout the US. The relevance of this to Bush call for a "War on Terrorism", is that Black people feel we have always been victims of terror, governmental and general, so we cannot get as frenzied and hysterical as the people who while asking us to dismiss our history and contemporary reality to join them, in the name of a shallow "patriotism" in attacking the majority of people in the world, especially people of color and in the third world.

This is said to us, even as this counterfeit president has legalized the Confederate Flag in Mississippi. Could the victims of European Fascism be as frantically loyal to a regime that would fly a Nazi Swastika over their homes? So we cannot, in good conscience, celebrate what seems to us an international crusade to set up a military dictatorship over the world, legitimized at base, by white supremacy, carried out, no matter the crude lies, as the most terrifying form of Imperialism and its attendant national oppression. All of it designed to drain super profits bluntly from the colored peoples of the world, but as well, from the majority of the peoples in the world. For all the frantic condemnations of Terror by Bush &c, as the single International Super Power, they are the most dangerous terrorists in the world!

Actually, in my focus on various forces of terror Afro Americans and other oppressed people of the world have suffered, slavery, colonialism, Imperialism, Neo neo-colonialism, National Oppression, the ADL disingenuously makes no mention of my probing into the creators of the holocaust, e.g., "who put the Jews in ovens, / and who helped them do it, / Who said "America First"/ and Ok'd the yellow stars", which of course is a reference to America's domestic fascists just before World War @ and the Nazi Holocaust.

Nor do these ADL purveyors of falsehood mention the poem's listing of some of the Jews across the world, oppressed, imprisoned, murdered by actual Anti-Semitic forces, open or disguised. The poem asks "Who killed Rosa Luxembourg, Liebnicht/Who murdered the Rosenbergs/ And all the good people iced, tortured, assassinate, vanished".

The ADL apparently is not outraged by McCarthy era frame-up and execution of the Rosenbergs, nor the assassination of German Jewish Communist leaders like Liebnecht, Luxembourg. The ADL leaves these things out to try to make their lies more believable, and also because these victims of imperialism were on the Left

Happily the Star Ledger published the entire poem, though including in a box, supposedly identifying the offending phrases, my question, "Who Blew Up The Reichstag?" as if the ADL had also claimed that the poem was inferring that Jews did it. When it was Hitler's destruction of the Reichstag, that provided the pretext for the general imprisonment of Jews, after incarcerating Communists, Social Democrats and Trade Unionists. Why this was done one can only speculate, but this is the kind of sloppy or intentionally slanderous journalism one can often find in the media. It also reflects the kind of unprincipled attack that characterizes ADL press release.

The Reichstag fire, parallels the 911 Attack, in that after that "mysterious act of terrorism", which Hitler blamed on Jews and Communists, the Nazis passed a law The Reichstag Enablement Act, that gave the Nazis much the same carte blanche as the Bush administration used the 911 tragedy to pass the wholly undemocratic Patriot Bill and begin rounding up suspects, even without identifying them. Of course the actual arsonists of the Reichstag terror were never found, though most scholars are certain it was the Nazis themselves.

Of the other lines of the poem, which the ADL termed an example of the Hitlerian "Big Lie", and the poet's "spewing Anti-Semitic venom". The lines, "Who knew the World Trade Center was gonna get/bombed?" Well now, certainly, even the Democratic Party has affirmed that the Bush Administration knew. I agree with this, and it is everywhere on the Internet that not only was the US warned repeatedly by Germany, France, Russia, England but also Israel. Michael Ruppert of the Green Party has issued a video stating clearly, "Israeli security issued urgent warnings to the CIA of large-scale terror attacks. ...And that the Israeli Mossad knew that the attacks were going to take place...they knew that the World Trade Center were the targets. This is from British newspaper the "Telegraph". (Copies of these documents available with this statement.)

In addition there are articles in all forms of media and of course the Internet confirming or suggesting that the entire Imperialist world knew and had warned the US CIA in advance, but no action was taken. WHY. They say they "couldn't connect the dots". The FBI agents in Minnesota and Arizona who sd that FBI received a report in 1998 that a terrorist organization ...planned to bring people to the US to enroll in flight schools. Zacharias Moussoui, now charged with conspiring in the Sept 11 attacks, was arrested by the Minnesota agents of the FBI in August 2001 but FBI HQ denied agents request to seek a warrant even to search his computer. And in a prepared statement by a Minnesota FBI agent, he blamed legal restrictions but principally FBI headquarters for impeding a more aggressive investigation of this man. As for the other agent's attempt to warn the FBI HQ of these attacks, he was rebuffed when he made the report, but now FBI HQ says it has not record of such warning.(See Truthout.org/docs)

There are other incredible dots on the media, for instance the stockholders of American Airlines and United, which were the carriers highjacked to commit the terror began withdrawing stock from these companies in August before the attacks.

The most offensive phrase in the poem to my various attackers is, "Who told 4000 Israeli workers at the Twin Towers / to stay home that day/ Why did Sharon stay away?" To infer that I am accusing Israel of committing the atrocity is disingenuous slander and character assassination. But I do believe, as I stated about England, Germany, France, Russia, that the Israeli government, certainly it's security force, SHABAK knew about the attack in advance.

My sources were, "Ha'aretz" and "Yadiot Ahranot" (two Israeli newspapers) "Al Watan" (a Jordanian newspaper), "Manar" -TV and the website of the Israeli security force SHABAK. There are myriad references to this in Reuters, Der Spiegel.

The Israeli newspaper Yadiot Ahranot 1st revealed that SHABAK had canceled Sharon's appearance in New York City that day, Sept 11, where he was supposed to speak at an "Israel Day" celebration. This was also mentioned in the Star Ledger, to the effect that Sharon was supposed to visit the US, but no dates were mentioned.

It is the Green Party's Ruppert who makes the most effective case for the 4000 Israeli workers (Not Jewish Workers!) but Israeli nationals. He says in his video, "if what I am showing you is know overtly although the media, how much more does our thirty billion dollar intelligence community know"/

He goes on, and this seems true to me, It is "Nonsense" to say the Israelis did it They were warning the U.S. hand over fist..." Ruppert speculates further 1. The US did not listen 2. They needed the attacks" which I leave to time, as Malcolm X sd, Time will tell.

But the most stunning revelation is this, again Ruppert, "We reviewed the list of former tenants of the World Trade Center at the on-line Wall St Journal site. And there's the website. It is an alphabetical list of tenants. Scroll to the very bottom and notice the moving date for the office of Zim American-Israeli Shipping to Norfolk Virginia. They were in the World Trade Center. They must have had Mossad" (or Shabak- AB) input because they vacated one week before September and they broke their lease. The Israelis didn't pull the attack, but they were smart enough to get their people out of the way. How come our government didn't do the same thing for us." (Statement & Quote by George DeCarlo, Coordinator of Union County Greens, Co Founder of the NJ Lavender Greens- included in media pkg.)

The poem was never saying anything else, i.e., why didn't the other slaughtered Americans know? I WAS NOT SAYING ISRAEL WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE ATTACK, BUT THAT THEY KNEW AND OUR OWN COUNTERFEIT PRESIDENT DID TOO!

There is other disturbing facts surround the hideous 911 attacks, which my family and I could see from the third floor bathroom window of our homes! And certainly one day all this will be thoroughly investigated. The poem says "Who know why Five Israelis was filming the explosion/ And cracking they sides at the notion." I got this story from The Star Ledger, where it appeared twice, and The New York Times.

The reference to "cracking they sides" or laughing uproariously while filming the 911 attack, apparently on the top of a truck from the Jersey side is a direct paraphrase of the Ledger articles. In fact, the State Police, who arrested them, stated that that is one of the reasons they did arrest them, because they were laughing.

Again, these were Israeli Nationals, persons holding Israeli passports. The Times article even reported on what their lives were like in Jail. And implied they would be deported. So this reference is not more of the ADL's "Anti-Semitic venom" but arrived at merely from studying the US media.

Why those five Israelis were there filming and laughing I do not claim know. That's why the poem here and throughout continuously chants the question WHO WHO WHO? That is, who is responsible for this horrible crime and WHY? It is a poem that aims to probe and disturb, but there is not the slightest evidence of Anti-Semitism, as anyone who reads it without some insidious bias would have to agree.

Why the ADL would do this, I can only speculate.

I wish they and other concerned pundits would speculate on how an Airplane flying in America, where the pilot has to file a flight plan before taking off, how can such a plane or two or three of them file such a route in which they would travel, and in the case of the planes leaving Boston make 45 degree turns south and fly 54 minutes to the World Trade Center and 90 minutes to the Pentagon and not be challenged by US Air Defense Fighters, or brought down by ground to air missiles?

Having been in the Air Force I know those ADC fighters would normally confront such "rogue" aircraft within a few minutes! Why was this not done? Let the ADL and the media investigating me, investigate that!

We should know that Bush and his Right Wing crew want War against all the forces of their so called "Axis of Evil" What a not so wild coincidence that the path of this Axis parallels the route of the proposed US oil corporations- pipe line from Saudi to the far east, apparently to oppose the spiraling economic growth and influence of China. They scream "Bin Laden" and "Taliban" and destroy Afghanistan, install a puppet president and a shadow occupation force.

Next in the Axis is Iraq, we should have known that. With no real proof at all again the people of the US outraged and frightened by the Reichstag of 911 are hyped with chants of "Regime Change" and "Saddam Hussein". No longer is the madness of crowds being aroused by the "Anti-Terrorist" campaign and Bin Laden as the Devil figure used to rouse the people to a patriotic frenzy, now it is Saddam Hussein. So forget last month's war and get ready for this month's.

Bush says he wants "regime change" in Palestine, he wants to oust Arafat, now in Iraq, and he wants to oust Saddam. The Axis projects Iran next and then North Korea. What is this an updated version of 1984 or an American version of Hitler's and Bush 1's) New World Order?

Regime Change, why? Because these regimes are anti democratic or terrorists or in the case of Saddam, they have "weapons of mass destruction".

Well if being anti democratic were a good rationalization for foreign invasions of countries then the United States better watch out because the Florida coup, which tricked the American people into accepting Bush as President is anything but democratic. Should we let foreign countries invade us to get rid of Bush? What would be the American People's reaction to such Third Reich replay?

And as for Saddam having “weapons of mass destruction” (or mass diversion as some critics say) The US has these weapons. So do Israel, South Africa, Germany, France, Italy, England, Russia, and now China, India, Pakistan. How is it the US and its allies (except the Chinese) can have such weapons, but no one else can. The answer to that, of course, is White Supremacy and Imperialism. And what should be the growing understanding by the American people and the democratic people of the world, is what the far right Bush coven wants is a military dictatorship of the world.

The ADL, by attacking me by distorting what my poem is saying, is doing its usual ugly, as a well known running dog of imperialism, particularly by attacking anyone who takes an independent position or is critical of Israeli Imperialism and its attendant ideology political Zionism. As they are attempting with me the ADL slanders anyone who is not happy with Israel’s ethnic cleansing of the Palestinians

As Anti Semitic, when Ist of all Israel and its guiding philosophy have nothing to do, as categories, with Jews. (See “Zionism in the Age of the Dictators”, Brenner

But this is the trick such demagogues as the ADL use to hide the crimes of Imperialist Israel. When we criticize US imperialism does that make us enemies of Christianity, maybe only to Jerry Falwell and such Right wing Christian Zealots, perhaps Asscraft But neither Israel nor Zionism is the same as Judaism. (Op cit Brenner; also “The Dilemma of the Modern Jew, Prinz”.) But this is the trick the Israeli’s and their sympathizers use to hide behind Judaism. Israel (and it’s political Zionism) has as much to do with Judaism, as the US has to do with Christianity.

In the US our constitution makes clear that this is a secular nation and by law theoretically enforces separation of church and state, tho Mr. Bush and Mr. Asscraft have demonstrated they disagree, and Israel outright says it is a “Jewish State” but if that is so then that explains why it can discriminate against its Arab people living inside Israel and make them 2<sup>nd</sup> class citizens, in much the same way that South Africa, a close friend did under Apartheid. (See “The Crisis of Black Jewish Relations”, Brenner & Bloom; “Israel and South Africa”, Stevens & Ellmessi; The “Arabs in Israel” by Sabri Jiryis, foreword by Noam Chomsky)

The ADL attacks so it can confuse people and show me as just another Anti- Semitic attacker of their absolutely false depictions of Israel as a victim of Palestinian Terrorism. This is absolutely in tune with the Bush administrations

Frenzied “destroy Iraq regime change “Jones” (a street word for narcotics addiction) that the administration is chanting around us like cheer leaders at a football game! So that US imperialism can transform the whole of the Middle East, the Arab world into a gas station (See “Bushwacked: A Counterfeit President for a Fake Democracy”, Baraka)

So that we are supposed to believe that if a little girl blows herself up in a Israeli Pizza Parlor, she is a terrorist, but when Israeli Jets, made in the USA, destroy whole sections of Palestinian cities, bulldoze neighborhoods, all but destroy the Palestinian Center of Governance, with its President, Yasser Arafat, inside sitting in the dark, it is the Israelis who are victims and the little Palestinian girl or boy or young man or young woman or even elder, they are the terrorists. We are supposed to be intimidated by demagogues like the Anti Defamation League (who shd be called the Anti Anti Defamation League) so

that Israel as a jr. partner of the Bush led US goosestep to world military domination can commit ethnic cleansing of the Palestinians in the name of fighting terrorism.

It is the ADL, which is actually guilty of what its leader, Abraham Foxman calls the Hitlerian "Big Lie", and ironically it is the ADL, which is "spewing anti-Semitic venom". The same ADL which became aware of "Black Anti-Semitism", which it had earlier said has never been a threat, until Stokely Carmichael and SNCC began to support the PLO and the Palestinian Struggle as a Liberation Struggle and condemn Israeli Imperialism and Zionism. That is when, as Stokely Carmichael says in the APRP's "Smash Zionism" the ADL smashed SNCC instead.

As Israel drew closer to South Africa, politically, economically, militarily in the 60's (Op Cit, above & others) the Black Liberation Movement and African Nations became more and more guilty, according to the ADL, of "Black Anti-Semitism".

This is the same ADL who opposed Affirmative Action, even though many Jews benefited by the Civil Rights Struggle, and the most notable white comrades in that struggle were young Jews. The same ADL that filed an Amicus Curiae (friend of the court brief) in the historic and reactionary Baake Decision which challenged & defeated the University of California's affirmative action as "racist" and was explained by the ADL as its opposition to quotas. So that the university's could now enforce a quota on Black students of none!

This is the same ADL, which in league with the American Israel Political Action Committee, just a few weeks ago sent millions of dollars into Atlanta, Georgia to defeat progressive Black Congress woman Cynthia McKinney, because she called for a more balance American view of the Palestinian –Israeli Conflict.

These same forces defeated in Alabama, another progressive Black incumbent Congressman, because he too dared to support the Palestinians. (See New York Times), Amsterdam News, Star Ledger).

Very much like the way Bush touts "Regime Change," recently even hinting at an attempted Assassination of Saddam Hussein, if the American People rise up and force our congress to deny the Bush juggernaut of terror to attack Iraq. ADL and their "bagman" AIPAC didn't like these black politicians stance on Israel, so in a minute and a few million dollars, they are gone!

So now, it's my turn. Using my poem, "Somebody Blew Up America" they are

Going to spread the Big Lie, distort what poem says. Cover the fact that this poem actually is an attack on Imperialism, National Oppression, Monopoly Capitalism, Racism, Anti-Semitism. I challenge ADL to show anywhere in this poem that is Anti-Semitic in the least. In their press release they say talk about "Jews being scapegoated throughout history..." then "conspiracy mongers of the Arab world...have taken Anti-Israel propaganda to a new level " (Mr. Foxman, what is the Arab World? Alan Dershowitz in his "Chutzpah" says the basis of bigotry is "overgeneralization," so where is the "Arab World"? Is Detroit included? Asscraft thinks so.

Earlier the press release mentions “the Muslim World” does that include Lyons Ave, Newark? But then from “Anti-Semitism” the release goes to Israel, not Jews, and Israeli Mossad as those victimized. So they fight Anti Semitism

Mainly by “defending” Israel. In fact they defend Israel like Joe McCarthy “defended” the US against Communism. Included in my package is a communiqué from an Israeli Peace Organization “: Gush Shalom”, “Israeli Peace Block (see Defamation from the Anti Defamation League Answered” ([info@gush-shalom.org](mailto:info@gush-shalom.org)) This was first published 7/11/2000 as a press release. “In the past 24 hours, an attack is being mounted against Gush Shalom. Knesset Member Collette Avital (Labor) has actually lodge a complaint with the police, claiming that cartoons presented on our website constitute “incitement”. And the powerful American Jewish organization Anti –Defamation League found time, even on election day, over there, to disseminate a message of defamation against “Gush Shalom”, which already resulted in hate e mails being sent our address”

In a following message signed by Adam Keller Gush, Shalom Spokesperson. The organization defends itself from an ADL press release s “expressing outrage at Gush Shalom’s portrayal of Prime Minister Barak as a killer of Palestinian children in a caricature on its web site, stating that the image of Barak standing on the bleeding bullet ridden body of a Palestinian child is abhorrent.”

Gush Shalom replies, "Still after consulting with my fellow activists I am in a position to make an offer. Should a complete week – seven days pass in which not a single unarmed Palestinian is killed by the Israeli armed forces which are answerable to Mr. Barak, we would remove the above mentioned cartoon from our website.

The Gush Shalom statement ends “As for the ADL- an organization which claims to “counter hatred prejudice and bigotry” can you truly find no other places to search for such, with Israeli society in its present condition, except at our modest website. Was the ADL attacking these Israelis for being Anti Semitic or criticizing rather forcefully the continuous murder of the Palestinians. So in Israel itself, ADL is still covering for and attacking anyone, even Israeli citizens themselves who oppose the Bush Zionist Plan to de-Palestinianize Palestine!

Another communication from Israel (robertoj69@yahoo.com). This signed by 95 Israeli Academics (copy included in pkg), Sept 23, 2002 that begins “URGENT WARNING: THE ISRAELI GOVERNMENT MAY BE CONTEMPLATING CRIMES AGAINST HUMANITY” It goes on, “We members of the Israeli academe are horrified by US buildup of aggression towards Iraq and by the Israeli political leadership’s enthusiastic support of it. We are deeply worried by indications that the “fog of war” could be exploited by the Israeli government to commit further crimes against the Palestinian people, up to full-fledged ethnic cleansing.”

One striking description of the Israeli Military by these professors is that in an interview found in Ha’aretz Sept 19, 2002, Israeli Chief of Staff Moshe Ya’alon describe the Palestinians as a “cancerous manifestation” and equated the military actions in the Occupied territories with “chemotherapy”

Certainly the ADL will have to go after these “Anti Semites” using the “Big Lie” and “Spewing Anti-Semitic Venom”! And the growing list of progressive democratic people around the world who will have opinions about Israel and Political Zionism independent of the ADL, the ADL will have to attack and slander them as well

I challenge the ADL to set up a national television program so that we might debate this issue. We can project the poem on a wall and go down line by line and discuss it. If not that then why not a forum or debate some place like NYC Town Hall or at Symphony Hall in Newark.

Why not take a survey of those who heard the poem at the Dodge Festival? Those who registered and the students brought by schools could be contacted and a survey taken to reflect just the majority of people hearing the poem thought, not just some shadowy surrogates of Imperialism who are trying to convince people that I and my poem are the enemy not US and Israeli Imperialism.

I have already gotten a great many communications praising the poem. A great many E-mail letters and phone calls not only praising the poem, and the poet for writing it, but also opposing the attempt to violate my first amendment rights by this oft repeated ADL skin game of calling critics of imperialism Anti Semites.

I have already said, in answer to what Governor McGreevey is quoted as demanding that I apologize and that I resign as NJ Poet Laureate. And I have said repeatedly that I will do neither. It is unfortunate that Governor McGreevey has been stampeded by paid liars, and apologists for ethnic cleansing and white supremacy, bourgeois nationalists and the dangerously ignorant, to be panicked into joining in the ADL’s slander, belittling my intelligence, and insulting not only my person, my family, my fellow artists and activists who know all this is just the feces of a very small cow. But they are also attacking my work in the arts and my social political views. By demanding that I apologize to Evil and Submit to some fundamentally racist and politically motivated call for me to resign as New Jersey’s Poet Laureate, he is insulting the broad group of people who know he is incorrect and who have read and celebrated and valued my work. And that is a grave mistake, one I am hoping he will correct.

“Somebody Blew Up America!” was written Oct 1, 2001. A month after the terror attack. Almost immediately I circulated it around the world on the Internet.

In addition, I have read this poem in Spain, Portugal, Africa, Switzerland, Italy, Finland and it was translated into German and read on German radio, at Universities and other venues across this country. It has become one of the most circulated of my poems.

Yet it was not until I read the poem at the Dodge Poetry Festival that I got negative response from three people that I know of. The overwhelming response was an almost thunderous applause. I even had to come out and take a second bow at one performance. So why now and Who, as the poem asks, is behind it? Perhaps the forces which have dishonestly tried to characterize the poem as “venom” or merely “a harangue” (just as they called John Coltrane’s music “Barbaric Yawps”) are simply, the Charlie McCarthy voices for Bush & Sharon’s Edgar Bergen’s. Empty-headed devilish

dummies constructed of wood and painted and costumed to look like it is real people speaking, when all the time it is imperialism is the ventriloquist speaking through their mouths,

NO, I WILL NOT APOLOGIZE, I WILL NOT RESIGN. In fact I will continue to do what I have appointed to do but still have not been paid to do. Publicize and Popularize poetry and poets throughout this state. To set up new venues and new networks for poetry reading and workshops, in the state's libraries and schools and other institutions. Hopefully initiated and given paradigm right here in the Newark Public Library, its branches and throughout the school system. Therefore giving more of our citizens access to poetry, involving poets of all nationalities, both male and female, of diverse experience and styles. I have already begun to enlist coordinators of poetry programs throughout the state, so that we can network a tour of poets, hopefully beginning in January, throughout the state.

To do this I will be approaching local, county, state, federal and private funding. And expand our budget with the cooperation of these other existing programs. We will ask that poets POET-ON! That they begin to produce at least one poem or publish a poem monthly, in the most modest forms, Kinko style, and give them away if they have to. That they begin to set up readings not only in the places we mentioned but also in parks and restaurants and in neighborhoods.

We say this because we feel that this state and indeed this nation and this world is desperately in need of the deepest and most profound human values that poetry can teach. That is what Keats and Du Bois called for the poet to do, to bring Truth and Beauty. To be like the most ancient paradigmmythic image of the poet. To be like Osiris and Orpheus, whose job it was to raise the Sun each morning with song and story. To illuminate the human mind, and bring light into the world. POET ON!