ARETHA AIDS APARTHEID

A SOUTH AFRICAN NEWSPAPER, "THE STAR", RECENTLY REPORTED THAT ARETHA FRANKLIN, THE AMERICAN SOUL SISTER NUMBER ONE, HAS CONCLUDED NEGOTIATIONS FOR A THREE-WEEK CONCERT TOUR IN SOUTH AFRICA. MISS FRANKLIN AND HER TROUPE WILL PERFORM FOR NON-WHITE AUDIENCES. THE TOUR WILL OPEN AT THE JABULANI AMPHITHEATRE IN SOWETO, THE BALK ENCLOSED TOWNSHIP OUTSIDE OF JOHANNESBURG. IT IS BELIEVED THAT SISTER FRANKLIN WILL RECEIVE $15,000 A WEEK DURING THE TOUR. MISS FRANKLIN WAS FIRST CONTACTED IN NEW YORK BY CHIEF BUTHELEZI, OF THE ZULULAND BANTUSTAN, WHEN HE RECENTLY VISITED THE U.S. ON A STATE DEPARTMENT-SPONSORED TOUR.

THE CHICAGO OFFICE OF THE AMERICAN COMMITTEE ON AFRICA STATES EMPHATICALLY THAT SUCH A TRIP BY MISS FRANKLIN CAN ONLY SERVE TO BOLSTER THE SOUTH AFRICAN APARTHEID SYSTEM, A SYSTEM WHICH DENIES POLITICAL RIGHTS TO ALL BLACKS, 70% OF THE TOTAL POPULATION. MANY BLACK CHILDREN BORN IN SOUTH AFRICA WILL NEVER HAVE A CHANCE TO HEAR ARETHA BECAUSE, ACCORDING TO PROFESSOR JOHN REID, HEAD OF THE DEPARTMENT OF PHYSIOLOGY AT DURBAN MEDICAL SCHOOL, ALMOST HALF OF THE CHILDREN BORN IN AFRICAN RESERVES DIE BEFORE REACHING THE AGE OF FIVE. TWO BLACK CHILDREN DIE OF MALNUTRITION EVERY THIRTY-FIVE MINUTES. THE AVERAGE BLACK SOUTH AFRICAN WORKER EARN $9.80 PER MONTH, WHILE HIS WHITE COUNTER-PART EARN $133.

THE CHICAGO OFFICE IS REMINDED OF THE VISIT OF SINGER PERCY SLEDGE TO SOUTH AFRICA IN MAY 1970. WHEN A WHITE REPORTER THERE QUESTIONED HIM ABOUT HIS VIEWS ON APARTHEID AND DISCRIMINATION, "BROTHER" SLEDGE REPLIED, "I DON'T KNOW NOTHIN'. I JES' COMES TO SING AND TO SEE ME SOME WILD ANIMALS". (Manchester Guardian, May 1970).

IN A RECENT YEAR YORK TIMES INTERVIEW (June 27, 1971) SLEDGE WAS ASKED ABOUT THE POLITICS OF HIS VISIT. HE REPLIED, "NO POLITICS, JUST GOOD TIMES".

THE CHICAGO OFFICE SUGGESTS TO SISTER ARETHA THAT SHE BE A "DO-RIGHT WOMAN" BY IMMEDIATELY CANCELING HER TOUR OF APARTHEID SOUTH AFRICA.

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(South African statistics based on "Facts and Figures on South Africa", United Nations Unit on Apartheid, No. 7/71, February, 1971.)