Why Boycott Ray Charles?

In October of 1980 Ray Charles performed in apartheid South Africa. Before he went to South Africa, Ray received several requests to reconsider "playing along" with the apartheid regime. Southern Africa liberation groups - the African National Congress (ANC) and the South West Africa Peoples Organization (SWAPO) - and the Organization of African Unity (OAU) were among those asking Ray not to collaborate with the Afrikaners.

In addition to those requests, Ray was made aware of the United Nations boycott against cultural exchanges with the apartheid state and the international campaign to isolate the racists.

South Africa Tour Particularly Offensive

Ray's tour of South Africa was particularly offensive. One of his concerts was scheduled in Soweto on October 19th - a day reserved by Blacks for anti-apartheid protests in commemoration of the banning of 18 organizations and the jailing of over fifty leading activists on that date in 1977. The people organized a boycott of this performance. Only 30 people showed up and the concert was cancelled. Later concerts were cancelled as well and his entourage was stoned by Black protesters.

"Honorary White" !!!

In spite of many pressures, Ray refused to cancel out the gig and chose instead to accept the status of "honorary white" from the apartheid government so that he could perform in South Africa and have the privilege, denied to his Black brothers, to travel freely in that land.

Even while he was there conducting his concert tour of sixteen cities, Mnafuthi Johnstone Makatini, then the chief representative of the ANC to the U.N, issued a plea to Ray to "stop collaborating" and "stabbing the aspirations of the people of South Africa in the back and come home." Ray ignored this plea and continued to let the "blood money roll."

What about "integrated" audiences?

Ray claimed he was playing before integrated audiences and offered that as a justification of his tour. First of all, integrated audiences are just a trick by the government to convince people there is reform - integrated audiences exist only by special permit by the government while life outside the concert hall is still totally controlled by rigid apartheid laws. Secondly, Blacks in South Africa don't care about integrated audiences - they care about political freedom and basic human dignity. Ray makes a mockery of the anti-apartheid struggle when he justifies his trip with the excuse of an integrated audience.

Partial List of Endorsers: NAACP, Albany Branch, Democratic Socialists of America (DSA), Blacks in Government (BIG), Central America Solidarity Alliance (CASA), S.A.S.U.
Ray Charles has isolated himself from the hundreds of entertainers who have refused to be lured by blood money. He has isolated himself from others - the Temptations, Tina Turner, the Mighty Clouds of Joy, Chick Corea, Kenny Rogers, George Benson, the O.J.'s - who have entertained in South Africa and later have acknowledged their error and vowed never to return until there is Black majority rule.

We are asking Ray to openly acknowledge his error or performing for apartheid and promise not to return to South Africa until apartheid is ended. We are asking him to make a stand against the most racist society on earth. We are asking you to boycott his performance and join a demonstration against Ray Charles. This is what Black South Africans want. We support them. Join in this support.

Support the cultural boycott
Isolate apartheid South Africa
Boycott entertainers who violate United Nations ban

America
Bob Anderson
**Paul Anka
David Baca
Cliff Barnes
Shirley Bassey
**George Benson
**Brook Benton
C.L. Blast
Ernest Bourgnine
Beach Boys
Gwen Brisco
Shirley Brown
Nina Burrell
Glen Campbell
Colin Carr
Clarence Carter
Monk Channing
Ray Charles
Cher
Chicago
Jimmy Cliff
Billy Cobham
Pete & Conte Condoli
Rita Coolidge
**Chick Corea
**Andrew Crouch
Danibelle
Henry "Manolito" Darrow
"Devine"
Joe Dolan
**Lou Donaldson
Lamont Dozier
The Drifters
Jack duPree
Ecstasy Passion & Pain
Carla Fontana
George Forest
Midel Fox
Don Francisco
Buddy de Franco
Aretha Franklin
Gloria Gaynor
Terry Gibbs
Nikki Giovanni
Glade" Breakdancer, Members of the Dynamic Rockers
Francis Grier
Jack Gregg
David Hasselhof
Richard Hatch
Goldie Hawn
Isaac Hayes
Joe Henderson
**Howard Hesseman
"Dr. Johnny Fever"
Richard Groove Holmes
Jimmy Bo Horne
Susan Howard
**Janis Ian
**Willie Jackson
"Willie "Gator Tail" Jackson
Elton John
Jack Jones
Tom Jones
Fern Kinney
Eartha Kitt
Louis Lane
Jiane Laredo
Mary Larkin
Liberace
Jerry Loren
Love Machine
Main Ingredient
Mance Dancers
& Roberta
Barry Manilow
Ann Margaret
Barry Martin
Johnny Mathis
Mattison Brothers
**Curtis Mayfield
George McCrae
**Mighty Clouds of Joy
**Stephanie Mills
Lisa Minnelli
Ella Mitchell
**James Moody
Olivia Newton-John
Linda Oliphant
Osmonds
Charles Pace
Dolly Parton
Wilson Pickett
The Platters
Barbara Ray
Helen Reddy
Della Reese
Tim Reid "Venus Flytrap"
Linda Ronstadt
**Kenny Rogers
Richard Roundtree
Telly Savalas
Leo Sayer
Shirley Scott
Neil Sedaka
George Shearing
Shabba Na Na
Frank Sinatra
Percy Sledge
Jimmy Smith
Diane Solomon
**The Staple Singers
Edwin Starr
Candi Staton
Dakota Staton
Rod Stewart
The Supremes

This list is based on a list comprised by two New York City based organizations, the Patrice Lumumba Coalition and AJASS, based on research done by Michael C. Beaubien and the United Nations Centre Against Apartheid.

**Vowed not to return

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