

Letters to the Editor

Various Authors

1967

To the Editor:

Leaving aside his descent into scatology and personal abuse, Shelley Manne's letter [FE #21, January 1–15, 1967] claims that I am in error regarding the degree of integration in 1) his group; 2) his club; 3) the movie-TV-recording studios.

As evidence for 1), he informs us that he offered Teddy Edwards, a black tenor player, a job in his group. So? If true, and if Edwards had accepted, that would have raised the number of Negro musicians in Manne's group for the last dozen years to 4 instead of 3 (assuming Down Beat is correct in reporting that pianist Hamp Hawes has joined Manne). That hardly makes Manne a flaming integrationist: Dave Brubeck has had a greater percentage of black musicians in his quartet during the same period.

Let us next look at 2), Manne's employment policy in his club, the Manne-Hole. Manne states that he has had more Negroes than whites working his club during the last year. This is absolutely true—and absolutely irrelevant. Every club owner who wants to stay in business has to employ mostly black groups, because they are the ones that draw the crowds and pay the bills.

For precisely that reason, I very deliberately restricted myself to stating that Manne discriminated in employment not of the out-of-town stars, where he has little choice but to hire blacks, but in his selection of LOCAL talent to work the Manne-Hole. Here is where Manne has carte blanche, so to speak, since none of the local groups, black or white, are major attractions; hence here we have a good method for judging Manne's intentions.

My own estimate, formed by driving past his club, on the average of once a week (until I left LA in August 1965), is that of the local musicians he hires, roughly 80 percent are white. That is nothing like an accurate reflection of the LA jazz scene, rest assured of that. Will Manne, I wonder, dare deny any of this?

As for 3), the studios: Manne's reply to my assertion that only 6 or 7 black musicians are employed therein is to counter by saying that the number is really 12 or 14! If tokenism implemented with 14 Negroes seems to you more acceptable than tokenism implemented with 7, solid! Manne clearly wins the day.

For myself, I will continue proclaiming that the studios are run on a Jim Crow basis until black musicians themselves begin writing to the underground papers to assure us that this is no longer so. I'm not holding my breath in anticipation.

Frank Kofsky
Pittsburgh

To the Editor,

On one of your last issue's articles, "Spare the Rod...?" [FE #21, January 1–15, 1967] suppose teachers do spare the rod? What then? Fact is that oppression is not so much physical as mental—the public school being a huge

machine, a gigantic prep school for dog-eat-dog and status-seeking (grades, tests, private petty-bourgeois careers), for an authoritarian-oriented way of life (discipline, obedience, army-navy preparation), and for (what goes with the authoritarianism) a general bottling up of libido energies (behind an iron curtain of intellectualism and keeping intellectually busy).

The public school system, I fear, is beyond redemption. John Dewey and the like had good ideas, but they were never really let in, and it looks like, since Sputnik, never will be.

The only answer (short of burning the schools to the ground) is to decentralize—a la ideas like Paul Goodman's—to "de-massize." There should never be over fifteen kids to a class, for one item. Until this is done, to spare the rod or not to spare the rod, however an important issue and concern for him on the other side of the rod or his parents, is for the school system as such irrelevant.

Schools, as they stand today—we might as well call a spade a spade—are prisons. Why the shock at one of the inmates (teacher) now and then letting go with a whack at other inmates?

Or shall we keep demanding of him (as his superiors do) to—like a waiter in a restaurant—keep smiling!

Sam Cohen

Detroit

To the Editor:

The truce in Viet Nam for Christmas and New Years has convinced me we can have a 40 hour war week. Just like the general work week, it will be from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday with lunch time and coffee breaks. Naturally there will be time and a half for overtime. This will give both sides the leisure they need. Of course as 35 hours or less becomes common for a work week here, the war week would also become shorter.

Janice Berkowitz

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