FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION/PRIVACY ACTS SECTION

SUBJECT: THE BEATLES

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Rallies Against Beatles

A man of awesome courage, usually a gentle chap, now is roused and rallying forces in the State, Labor and Justice Dept. to stand off another Beatles invasion in May and August—moments for which the Beatlemaniacs have been living.

This fellow is Herman Kenin, successor to James C. Petrillo as president of the American Federation of Musicians. Mr. Kenin just doesn't believe the Beatles are culture.

"The Beatles are not immortal to me," Kenin said the other day. "We don't consider them unique. They are musicians and only sing incidentally. We can go to Yankees or Tennessee and pick up four kids who can do this kind of stuff. Guitars are now in the ascendency in this country.

"Of course, we have a cultural exchange with other nations, but this is not culture. If they do get back into the country, they're going to have to leave their instruments at home, because there are enough musicians in the U.S. and too many of them are unemployed. They were here before we realized what happened, but it won't happen again."

Mr. Kenin and his colleagues are licensed. They say that the Britshers can come in only if there is a reciprocal arrangement and American musicians are booked into Britain.

This exchange arrangement was made some years ago when Stan Kenton, purveyor of progressive jazz, wanted to take a tour through England. The London musicians union and the government would have turned him down unless the U.S. took some players from England. Mr. Petrillo, who was AFM president then, countered with a proposal that the gates be swung wide open to both countries. The British refused and insisted on a man-for-man swap. The exchange was made. Only such artists as Jascha Heifetz or Arthur Rubinstein were to be allowed free entry.

The agreement was monitored by the Immigration and Naturalization Service and the U.S. Labor Dept. on this side of the Atlantic. All went smoothly until the Beatles swarmed, like the invasion, over the horizon. They claimed they were artists and were in the country before the AFM could protest that they were musicians, and, therefore, should have come under the man-for-man arrangement.

So Kenin wrote to the British Musicians Union. Back came a reply agreeing that the Beatles are primarily musicians.

"We are entirely in sympathy . . . wrote Harry Francis, assistant secretary of the union. ". . . It is true that the Beatles and Dave Clark Five are members of the musicians' union. But neither group submitted the contract for American visas, so we are not responsible."

"Having now received your official complaint, we shall arrange to publish a statement in the trade press that in the future British beat groups performing in the U.S. may file only in reciprocal exchange for the performance of American musicians in Britain."

Having shoved up the international front Mr. Kenin turned his wrath upon our own Government. He protested to the Labor Dept. Secretary Willard Wirtz, agreed to extend to actors and other entertainers an immigration clearance order which it filed for virtually all other occupations. The order prohibits the British government from approving the entry of aliens seeking entry. Such admission is refused if qualified Americans are available.

Thus, the Beatles will need the Government's approval for re-admission.