

Lennon and Yoko
with New York
radio DJ Alex
Dennet, 1971



Lennon had delivered it live in a green hat with a pig under his arm.

Had Lennon really given himself time, allowed the vital issues he addressed here to get among him, then the resultant songs, marinated in his suppurating rage, might have benefited. At least the album, long deleted in Britain, raised the profile of the political prisoners and victims of heavy-handed state oppression listed here. These were not 'fashionable' causes- Dylan wrote "George Jackson" but otherwise no one of comparable stature was writing these sort of songs, which were perhaps always destined to be low on artistic impression.

What's maybe more important, however, isn't so much the fact that they were done well but that they were done at all. After all, if Lennon hadn't written "Angela", how many fewer people - not only then, in 1972, but today-would otherwise have been aware of Davis' existence or the nature of her struggle. Maybe that's worth more than the odd infelicitous lyric.

AND YET LENNON WAS NEVER quite at home in the straitjacket of militancy. He experienced, once again, a sense of fatigue and disillusionment with the Yippies and revolutionaries he had surrounded himself with. David Peel left early on, perhaps anticipating the transitory nature of a pop star's revolutionary zeal-Abbie Hoffman and Jerry Rubin soon followed.

Lennon was no longer a great source of funds or personal endorsement. He was especially annoyed when, having helped secure the freedom of John Sinclair, the latter attempted to sue him for non-payment in Lennon's *Ten For Two* movie project. It may have been that Lennon was advised that the company he kept wasn't doing his case with the immigration authorities much good, or that he realised, especially after securing an appearance by Hoffman and Rubin on US TV's *The Mike Douglas Show*, that his compadres did not share his populist touch. "It's a waste of time," Lennon said of political activism in a 1975 *Rolling Stone* interview. "Just keep moving around, and changing clothes is the best.

That's all that goes on: change."

In that spirit, Lennon moved from the Village to the Upper West Side gothic retreat of the Dakota.

The mood of restlessness, even listlessness, reflected in that quote was also reflected in Lennon life and music. His fourth solo album, *Mind Games*, was recorded in early '73.

Exhausted by his battles with the US immigration service, on a down alter his initial exhilaration at arriving in New York, he was no longer walking on water but treading it. Ever candid, he admitted to an interviewer that was no longer walking on water but treading it. Ever candid, he admitted to an interviewer that studio work was becoming "the same old jazz". The title track of the album was about as rousing as it got, with its wan slide guitars and a lyric which urged the listener to continue with the visualisation techniques he'd encouraged on "Imagine".

The rest of the album found Lennon in the kind of helpless, balladeering mode he was wont to sink into when composing infatuated, mostly guilt-ridden paeans of love to Yoko. Only this time he sounded. »