

TOMORROW

By ED OCHS

"John and Yoko Lennon are no longer involved with the Toronto Peace Festival, planned for July 3, 4 and 5 at Mosport Park." The first line of the announcement was worded with great care, concern and suggestion. It came down on their heads like "a hard rain," a pronouncement, a verdict. Guilty. Suddenly John Lennon, the most public of the Beatles, rock's greatest lyricist, who earlier gave us the spirit and energy of his positive personality, had been trapped in the mad media he more than helped create; caught in a cold, accusing representation of "the truth" used as prima-facie evidence in what has become the latest and subtlest rhetoric of black comedy. "John and Yoko Lennon are no longer involved. . . ." The announcement, made by festival backers John Brower and Karma Productions, was issued in response to Lennon's disclaimer from what was to be the inevitable, ultimate, endless festival of clear spirits. John and Yoko wanted it to be free, not another Altemont, positive music. Brower telegraphed back and hipped Lennon to the price of peace in Canada—\$3,000,000 worth of police and security, water, sewage, garbage, and medical facilities, not to mention talent. A free festival could not be controlled. "There is no mention of it being free," retorted John. Now, once more with feeling, bad feeling: "John and Yoko Lennon are no longer involved with the Toronto Peace Festival. . . ."

Lennon Pulls Out

News of Lennon's decision to withdraw from the festival he lent his name to crashed through the underground with the colossal, sickening thud of a god falling to earth from a million miles up. Missing from Brower's six-page statement was the gathering worship that had, with the cosmic spirit of the festival, come strongly to the Lennons. Robbed of love, the voice between the lines no longer addressed the peace-opportunists Lennons, but rather the present lead singers of the Plastic Ono Band. "They have established a procedure which would take control of the festival out of Mr. Lennon's hands," insisted John's statement with stubborn conviction. At that point, the energy swung across the Atlantic, away from Lennon and Allen Klein, who has been pegged and sentenced in a silent code of disdain, and to John Brower, Karma and vague cosmic vibrations. Wrote Rolling Stones' Jon Carroll about the meeting called in San Francisco to inaugurate the festival, "The Toronto people were so vague about so many important questions, so apparently unaware of the magnitude of which they were proposing, that many found it very hard to put aside their doubts and follow. The meeting didn't end so much as dissolve." Said John Lennon when the end came, "We want nothing whatsoever to do with Brower-Toronto Peace-type."

They've Landed in Toronto

During the high heavy drama that plucked the festival from Lennon's hands and set it down in Toronto, the dramatis personae thickened with cults, angels, aliens, cosmic alliances, powerful love-trusts and spacey mind traps: It is a drama with dialog common to junkies, hippies and zealots; of incredible raps cleverly conceived to blow the mind, of new philosophies worded in "trips," "points," "numbers," "energy flow," "clear," "clean," and what "went down" in the name of a "higher" honesty. But that's another story, which apparently, I have argued with myself, is not mine to tell. Ask John Lennon, ask him why he cut his hair, about instant karma, why he feared for his life in his Amsterdam hotel and rejected shamelessly what seemed to be a real hope for unqualified peace and love. Meanwhile, the festival backers have resolved the Lennon debate—he would not, could not "give peace a chance" in Toronto—Mosport Park is expected to be rezoned in favor of the festival, and the original energy has returned. Now Lennon must get off the fence, make his position clear, decide what to do about Allen Klein, or be purged as insincere and uncommitted before the world he opened like a Pandora's Box to the nuclear device, now set to be detonated by the heat from the fissionable material of several million people pried open to receive commands from a few.

When the Music's Over

Some of our best citizens have fled the country, jumped to Canada, while others have, in a sense, jumped the planet for "higher levels of energy," for greener cosmic pastures where the elite converse in vibrations. For what? For the answers to whatever desperately ails humanity and which they, the telepathic earth-angels, intend to blow over the heads of the millions gathered in Mosport Park, 40 miles from Toronto, July 3-5. Now the festival is on and up with: David Britten and the "Whole Earth Catalog"; Toronto, the new spiritual and high-energy spa in the Western Hemisphere; Lennon's peace poll; a generous embrace from Tommy Smothers & Friends; the Harbinger group; the Brotherhood; the good and wise Shep Gordon, manager of the spectacular Alice Cooper; 50 per cent of the profits to the peace foundation; Year One; intergalactical revolution; and the suffocating burnt odor of apocalypse; rather than sweet peace, rock and resurrection. There are so many questions still unanswered and gathering in urgent need for replies with each passing day. Everything is terribly vague about the festival, everything except that whatever it is is set to go off exactly in 101 days.