

the village Voice

a weekly newspaper designed to be read
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To Mayor Wagner

Dear Mayor Wagner:

The people of Greenwich Village through the Greenwich Village Association have requested that I, as president of the Association, with a committee of representative citizens of this area, call upon you to ask you to bring about the closing of Washington Square to all vehicular traffic. We feel that, as Mayor, you are the person to lead the fight. You no doubt know that the large majority of people in this area are counting on you for such leadership.

It is not necessary for us to point out that the Square is known historically and with great affection throughout the country, and in our area is the central point of the entire community. That it might be possible to destroy this Square and Park for the benefit of a few because of the construction of Washington Square Village is unthinkable. However, the World-Telegram of February 11, in an article on the future of the Square, states "in the words of Robert Moses, the private sponsors were formally, officially, and reliably promised under the Slum Clearance Act, a Fifth Avenue address."

As you know, there was considerable opposition to the construction of Washington Square Village. Now to have its construction result in the destruction of a world-famous site is too tragic to be believed. I know that under your leadership the Square can be preserved and that you will not permit this callous destruction to occur. If a Fifth Avenue address has been promised to the persons who are constructing Washington Square Village, this can be accomplished without touching the Square.

The World-Telegram further stated that "The famous Washington Square Arch, which is in the way, may have to go, and great are the howls of anguish that Greenwich Villagers have raised at the prospect. But it is as definite as it can be before the accomplished deed that they will howl in vain."

We recognize that Bob Moses has performed a great service to the city in many projects, but occasionally, as in this case, the Moserian methods and plans have transcended the rights of our people and are directly against their best interests.

We know that you will not let this happen. When may we call upon you at City Hall?

Respectfully yours,

—J. G. L. Molloy, President
Greenwich Village Association

The Press of Freedom:

Guilt Takes a Holiday

by Amos Vogel

"If the sufferings of children are necessary to pay for truth," said the much-maligned Ivan in his famous debate with Alyosha before it had been eliminated by MGM, "then I protest that the truth is not worth such a price. . . . I re-
nounce the higher harmony altogether. It is not worth the tears of one tortured child!" Obviously Ivan is hopelessly out-of-date. The French consider the tears of even 30 tortured children insufficient to keep them from their self-imposed determination to bring the higher harmony to a bunch of African barbarians. Ivan is a hopeless moralist, and if the truth a la Francaise demands the sacrifice of 70 tattered villagers and a few misplaced Red Cross trucks, so much the worse for them and for the equipment.

The Only Certainty

But let us leave the French to themselves. At present they are so confused that they cannot even determine who gave the orders for this splendid act of righteous pacification. The government politely suggests that it may have been the generals. The generals maintain that the focus of responsibility rests elsewhere. The damp civil-service bureaucrats disdain all competence in the matter, and Kafka stands vindicated: the ultimate seat of decision-making cannot be determined. The only certainty is that the deed itself was committed. In short, not only do the French in this regard agree with another of Ivan's famous remarks—"All I know is that there is suffering and that there are none guilty"—but they even go so far as to deny all guilt, if not suffering. "Most" of those killed were rebellious members of

Amos Vogel, who lives on Washington Place, is the founder or director of Cinema 16. "The Press of Freedom" is a department open to contributions from our readers. They may write on any topic and from any point of view they choose, with the editors retaining the right to select printable manuscripts on the basis of literacy and interest.

their thoughts? Were they autom-
atons? Heavenly avengers? Or
were they merely members of the
French Socialist Party, which
voted its confidence in govern-
ment policy respecting this raid?

A Long Way

Further, where were the Amer-
ican protests and picket lines
crying out against this incident?
Where was the big heart, the love
of justice and fair play for which
the American people presumably
are famous? We have come a long
way since Guernica. Then a cry
went out that resounded through-
out the world. And when Musso-
lini's son, bombing the Abyssinians,
described in his memoirs his
aesthetic orgasm when confronted
with the "beautiful flowering" of
his bombs upon impact, his re-
marks caused an international
furore.

Since then, several million
people have gone up the chimney
(was it seven? or eight? we for-
get); tens of thousands died in
more efficient saturation raids,
and between 60,000 and 100,000
died in a single flash in a far-
away Japanese town. In short,
permit us to admit that our sensi-
bilities have been blunted. This
efficiency is simply too much for
human minds to grasp. Our bombs

the Algerian Liberation move-
ment, they say. This presumably
includes the 10-odd children
learning French in a school whose
roof unaccountably collapsed on
them.

But if neither the government
nor the generals are "guilty,"
what about the fliers who dropped
the bombs? True enough, the
name of the village is almost im-
possible to pronounce even for
literate Frenchmen. True enough,
they knew in advance that they
were, among others, to bomb a
public square on market day, with
the local populace further swelled
by peasants from neighboring
towns who had arrived on that
day to benefit from the largesse of
the Red Cross.

What, then, precisely, went on
in the fliers' minds? What were

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The Night People

by JEAN SHEPHERD

Less Work for Mother

A short short story

"Just below the surface, the cold clean mirror surface, there lurked countless shadowy shapes. Occasionally a puff of air like a flick of a fine sable brush would send fanlike ripples skittering in the watery sunlight. When this happened,

the shadows on the bottom would disappear as though a shutter had been drawn." The short fat girl read what she had written. She was sipping coffee as she skimmed the page which was typewritten, double-spaced, neat. But short. In fact, that phrase was the only thing that marred the stark beauty of white paper.

In spite of the No Smoking sign that hung just over her head, she lit another cigarette. Next to her chair was a large worn pig-skin bag. The kind that is open at the top and has two loops or

leather for carrying. It was stuffed out of shape. Rather similar to the girl herself.

Back to the Page

In front of her on the square cafeteria table were several plates which had obviously been used by someone who had occupied her place before her. A Puerto Rican bus boy stepped alongside the empty chair to her left and began to put the messy dishes in his battered metal cart. The girl glanced up at him and protective-

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Sick, Sick, Sick by Jules Feiffer

