

# CHANGE the WORLD

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MY WIFE AND I had just come out of a department store here in down-town San Francisco. We heard a fierce thunderclap in the street. It shook walls and rattled store windows. There was nothing to show whence it came. People looked scared. They talked to each other about the mystery. I was scared, too.

Later we learned that a military jet plane had created a sonic boom while practicing over the beautiful city—the second such “accident” in a week.

Evidently there are no quiet places left in America, where one can retire like some bearded Chinese sage, meditate on the destiny of man.



The jets criss-cross the American sky with their white vapory trails that are like hieroglyphic warnings of the terrible disasters to come.

Every hour while life carries on the war planes practice the destruction of all life in America and the world.

Where are we going? Nobody in confused America can confidently say. Only the terrible jet planes that can knock down a house just with sound—only they seem sure of themselves.

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I WAS TALKING TO a couple of longshoremen the other day. They were relaxing in Clancy's hot-home-like bar after a day spent unloading about a million tons of Japan-made toys for the Christmas trade.

They were old friends—fellow veterans of the great 1936 strike that established their trade Union, which is perhaps the cleanest in America at the moment.

The tall longshoreman, a dark, intense Gael, pointed his finger like a District Attorney at his short, amiable, pot-bellied friend, and addressed me as though I were some Judge on the bench.

“Look at him, he was a comrade for years,” ran the indictment. “Yes, he once knew the score, too—it was in the days before we built our union, when a longshoreman was still treated like a bum. This guy was not fat or prosperous then. He was not an intellectual, like he is now?”

“I resent that! It's a damn lie!” yelled the defendant.

“He knew there was a class struggle because it smacked him in the face every day,” continued the ruthless prosecutor. “He knew which side he was on, too—and that the class struggle could end only in socialism. That's why he was rooting for Russia—only because it was the first country where the workers kicked out all their racketeers, phonies and money hogs. They set up a system of production for use, not for profiteering. He was for that, and a good fighter in his time, if I say so.”

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“NOW LOOK at his greasy face, his low-slung hips. This bum has become a lace-curtain intellectual. All theory and no practice. He's busy paying off all the mortgages, that show how prosperous he is—the house, the car, frigidaire, TV set, and all the rest of what I call our phony American socialism.

“He's got no time left even to attend a union meeting. He certainly spreads no socialism any more. No, all he has time for now is to scandalize Russia. He is an expert on blaming the troubles of the world on Russia. It's the easy way out for all these bums that want to avoid the class struggle. It's their scapegoat now, like Hitler had the Jews.

“Oh, sure, there's lots of things wrong in Russia, and I feel free to express my thoughts on the matter any time of the day or night. But you and me are not going to fix those matters up. Neither is Eisenhower, or Barney Baruch, or the jets. The Russian people are going to do their own repairs. They are good social mechanics, with a lot of experience. Our wage scales have nothing to do with Russia. And the inflation that you kick about. Good sirloin steak such as you adore has gone up to \$1.50 a pound. Are you going to blame that on Russia? I blame it on the Meat Trust.”

And so on and so forth—two philosophers in a barroom, debating the state of the nation's soul and its porkchops.

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A TIME of vast confusion in America—also a time of vast change.

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EVEN MARXISM is being re-examined by American Marxists. There's nothing wrong about this. I believe Lenin did the same in his epoch. Every compass needs re-adjusting now and then. But the Marxian compass has shown the main course of history for the past hundred years. I don't agree with those who seem to want to throw out this true and irreplaceable compass.

They start their error by ignoring the fundamental fact that capitalist society is divided into economic classes, whose interests are contradictory. Out of the struggle of the classes socialism will be born. It is the only solution for the class struggle.

To revise Marxism to fit today's problems is necessary. To deny the struggle of the classes is to deny socialism and Marxism. Lovestone, Browder and others did just that. It is a peculiarly American disease, that comes with every boom, as pneumonia comes with winter weather.