

AN ALTERNATIVE OUTLOOK

By Everett W. Gross

I believe that Nebraska is one of the leading states in the number of grain elevator explosions. As I have read the news reports of each of those explosions, the thing that has impressed me is that the reporter seemed to place emphasis on the question of what might have caused the spark that ignited the grain dust.

When the state investigative authorities give their report, the same idea seems to prevail. The fact that the air in the elevator was laden with grain dust fuel seems to be played down.

If the reasoning doesn't blow your mind, maybe it should. A few ways of reducing sparks may be known, but I will bet that sparks will not be abolished completely. If there were no grain dust fuel in the air, no amount of sparking could ignite it. I suspect that the reason for not pursuing the grain dust danger is one of cost. I have read discussions of successful methods of clearing out the grain dust, but they are all expensive.

However, I really wanted to talk about Latin America. Nearly every commentator wants to refer only to the spark which touches off an immediate outbreak of war there. Only a few venture to discuss how the fuel accumulates for each of those explosions. Even most of those give a very superficial treatment.

It seems that a full discussion is something most people don't want to take time to look into. But everyone wants to have an opinion about what should be done after the situation threatens our own safety.

Nicaragua is undergoing its explosion. The fuel is the mass opinion of the majority of people. It has been gathering up throughout a few generations of massive oppression by the few people who owned the land. For longer than anyone can remember, the rest of the people have had to make terms with the owners, or take a swim in the ocean, or starve. And the terms with the owners have been tough. And the U.S. merchants' dealings with the owners have provided only slight, but hardly noticed relief for the dispossessed workers.

Under these economic conditions, it should be no surprise that dictators have been overthrowing each other frequently. The present conflict there appears to be just more of the same. No matter whether the Sandinistas or the Contras come out on top of the struggle, the masses of people will still be oppressed by the few people who own the land.

The Soviets are busy in there, as everywhere, telling the masses that the fault lies with capital. Then the masses endorse the confiscation of capital and end up at least as bad off as they ever were. A few token cosmetic reforms count for little.

The pro-Sandinistas brag about a gain in the literacy rate. But where is any material for them to read which explains their plight? Is any being supplied by either the pro- or anti-Sandinistas in this country? Even if it were, would one generation be enough to get it across to them?

I fear we are wasting time in Nicaragua. The explosion has occurred. We need to concentrate on some other countries where the fuel is still accumulating. My first suggestion is to start right here at home and set an example. Enough fuel is building up in our own country. But how many in our country understand it and see it building up before the spark occurs?

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