

A Sobering Thought

One evening, while several of the major airlines were grounded by strikes and another was threatened, I walked from my home into the starlit night. Only one plane could be heard and it was flying very high. Commercial? Not likely. Probably a government job — transport or bomber. Then a sobering thought: Let the stewardesses, the machinists, the flight engineers, the co-pilots, the captains invoke their strikes; let them play their riding-rough-shod-over-others game; let them keep the strike a little longer as a negotiating device. Let them do this and soon government planes will be all we or they shall fly. That's the

Russian way to end strikes. They don't have strikes there! But, what a costly way! The price is the end of freedom for customers and for airline personnel as well.

Freedom once lost is difficult to regain. It may take decades, perhaps centuries. How much easier to learn the free market, creative way! This will take only the time that can be measured in months for persons with the potential intelligence of stewardesses, machinists, flight engineers, co-pilots, captains. They could, with some genuine effort, raise a standard for all the rest — these of our new, glamorous industry, these who should be among the *conquistadores del cielo*. . . .

HOW WAGES RISE

or — THE ECONOMICS OF COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

(With apologies to the muse of Robert Southey)

It was a cold December day
At story-telling time.
Old Kaspar closed the windows tight
And poured a rum-and-lime;
While Peterkin and Wilhelmine
Warmed up the television screen.

They saw a street where people leaned
Against the empty stores,
Or stood in shuffling, silent groups
Outside the tavern doors;
While others walked in ragged lines
Displaying sandwich boards and signs.

"Now tell us what it's all about!"
The little children cried.
"It's more Collective Bargaining,"
Old Kaspar then replied;
"Those men are loafing in the cold
To get a pension when they're old."

"But how can folks get pension plans
By loafing in the street?"
"Employers always have their rent
And other bills to meet;
So when their shops are closed up tight
They can't afford a lengthy fight."

"Then how do workers pay their bills,
If they just loaf for days?"
"Oh, they'll go out on strike again
And get another raise;
But first they have to loaf, you see,
Until they get Security."

"But doesn't *everybody* lose
When folks go out on strike?"
"It raises prices," Kaspar sighed,
"Much higher than we like;
But it's the customary way
Of raising hired workers' pay."

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