

Introduction

As the 1950s slowly came to an end, the steel producing companies saw their industry slowly failing and in direct need of intervention. The industry was analyzing man hours per ton and ultimately declining plant capacity starting in 1955. They were watching the labor costs per ton of steel steadily on the rise. Newly found markets outside the United States were competing not just globally but domestically also. Steel producing companies, were concerned about the growing obsolescence of the steel industry, globally. The newly created competitors from Europe supported by the Marshall plan quickly recovered the European Steel Industry. Exacerbating the issue, the overall outlook from the American industrialists, was that a serious profit loss was soon to emerge. As a result, the steel producers felt that the only solution lay in technology improvements that would ultimately lower hours per ton, better government terms to depreciate technology and tax incentives.

With a war between two sides, there must be an alternative view to the same future. The steel union, however, the plight and plea of the steel producers seemed disingenuous. Labor leaders were quick to point out that the reduction in profits were only a function of less plant capacity. Specifically, for the USW they disputed that higher wages and benefits made it still possible to compete with foreign steel production. The union also claimed that increased wages for its members would raise consumer buying power which was absolutely necessary to stimulate the economy. As 1959 entered the steel contract between the steel producers and USW would end. Ultimately, the words of Grant McConnell would ring true, calling 1959 the “year of truth in the steel industry.” (Metzgar 2000)

As both sides dig in the author of *The Decline of American Steel*, Paul Tiffany noted, “They handed us an issue,” “I couldn’t have written the script better myself.” (Tiffany 2000) Just in a movie script you have a different characters, a differing scenes, spoke and unspoken goals, and an insurmountable confrontation that both sides must conquer.

Characters

Each character in this story have specific ideas of the problem, constraints and a solution.

- United Steelworkers of America (USWA) – started in 1942. Created as a result of the Republic Steel Strike in 1937. Originally created as SWOC (Steel Workers Organizing Committee)
- President Dwight D. Eisenhower – Republican. To settle such controversies, some politicians of course have a quick and easy remedy: "In the public interest, let the federal government take charge." I opposed such answers. Let the federal government fix wages, I argued, and it will next have to fix hours and work rules, moderate grievances, and finally set prices. Once it regulates wages and prices in major industries, it can run the entire economy--and will soon run it for political, not economic, advantage. Source: Waging Peace, by Pres. Dwight Eisenhower, p.453-454 Jan 1, 1965
- Philip Murray – USWA president until his death in 1952. Post World War 2 Murray expelled many communists from the union.
- David J. McDonald – Named acting president after the death of Philip Murray. His focus was not on wages but fringe benefits such as unemployment compensation, health insurance, pensions, tuition reimbursement.
- United States Steel Corporation -
- Labor Secretary James P. Mitchell
- Vice President Richard Nixon – talked about the strike during the kitchen debate
- Arthur J. Goldberg - he represented the steelworkers in negotiations during a strike that lasted more than 100 days and that led to a contract that was widely seen as a major gain for labor.
- R. Conrad Cooper – Vice President of United States Steel. Head of the negotiating team representing the steel and iron businesses. Chairman of the steel industry's four-man team

which negotiated with labor representatives. Cooper headed a four-man team representing twelve steel companies - all major producers accounting for approximately 87% of the nation's steel.



Domestic Landscape

In 1959, the upcoming conflict between steel producers and unions had been set. Like most negotiations between labor and corporations wage-price bargaining was going to be at the center of the conflict. Steel and specifically steel production were seen by the government, steel producers and the public as the basic raw material of the American industrial economy. It touched just about every consumer, public product within American society. Steel was a main ingredient from something as simple as a paper clip to the complexity of the American automobile. Not only was the product pivotal it also had a direct and indirect of millions of American workers and consumers. During the 1959 many economists and experts saw steel as the principle force for influencing economic behavior. Many of Presidents Eisenhower's economic advisors saw that plunging steel prices would affect every aspect of

the economy. They saw it as a major contributing to the current inflation and late 1950s recession. Probably the most outspoken individual to address the connection was the chief economist at the Federal Reserve Board, as well as Democratic and Republicans on Capital Hill. (Various 1959) As a result, wage uncertain or fluctuation is one of the most important influencers of fluctuating steel prices. Woodlief Thomas, the Economic Advisor to the Federal Reserve stated, "over high prices and wages in steel threw sand into the economy's delicately interlocked parts, either slowing the machine (recession) or making it run inefficiently (unemployment, slow growth)." (Thomas 1959)

During the 1950s most negotiations seemed to find a similar pattern until 1959. The story remained predictable and acceptable to both sides. As the contract deadline was approaching the President of the United Steel Workers would meet with the representatives of the steel producers. They would postulate, grandstand and beat their chest. The two would eventually come out with a signed agreement. With one exception, in 1946, the relationship will start to demonstrate the growing seeds of discontent and distrust. Philip Murry not only headed the United Steelworkers Union; he was also the President of the CIO. Benjamin Fairless was the United States Steel's Chairman and his prowess could only be rivaled by Murry. With all that was sake, the Truman administration did not stay on the sideline, they three parties will deeply involved in the negotiations. The negotiations took place in the White House and the suite at the Carlton Hotel. The union made it clear they would require a large wage increase that would require a surge in the price of steel. During this negotiating you could see the foreshadowing of what 1959 would have instore. Both Murry and Fairless continued to pursue their own interested, ultimately trying to influence the government representatives to take their side. John Snyder, the Reconversion Directory, and Charles Bowles, of the Price Administration, initially desired a freeze of \$2.40 a ton was best for the economy. At the last minute, President Truman attempted a compromise. He offered an \$.18 ½ increase in wages and a \$.40 per ton increase in price. The union agreed to Truman terms however Fairless rejected the terms. The results produced a one-month strike,

Truman once again interjected himself, this time both sides agreed to \$.18 ½ increase in wages and a one dollar per ton increase in the steel price. (McConnell 1962) Ultimately this model is what repeated itself in 1946, 1949 and 1952, both wages and steel prices were also raised. The government continued their heavy-handed involvement. This was again magnified during the 1952 Korean crisis. The only difference is that the Wage Stabilization Board pushed to keep the wages essentially flat during the conflict. (Lumb 1959)

In the warm summer of 1956, collective bargaining between the steel producers and the USW started to repeat the path of 1952. Looking back from World War II to 1956, the industry set new records for income and production. The Cold War, along with the Korean War placed the economy under similar controls as it did in World War II. However, there was important difference, no price controls were placed on steel producers. Just like in 1946, the government played a critical roll in ending the strike. According to *Iron Age*, Secretary of Labor, James Mitchel and Secretary of the Treasury, George Humphrey, played a critical role in ending the strike between USW and the steel producers. (Raskin 1959)

The die has been cast; the stage has been set for the conflict during the 1959 negotiation of the contract. The steel producers viewed the increases in prices and wages with continued pessimism. The contract viewed that the economy would grow into a new level of national prosperity. As a result, the view of the steel producers where realized. Inflation become to grow and the demand for steel declined. With this three year contract the conflict was placed on the schedule of the summer of 1959. The steel producers ultimately tried to solve this with price increments. Roger Blough, Chairing of the Board for United States Steel, "Prices increases since World War II, have not been enough to widen profit margins..." (Kefauver 1957)

A new type of inflation was being experienced by the steel producers. This type of inflation gets a new term “wage-push” inflation. The definition provided in the *Kefauver Committee Hearings*, was the ability of unions to force up wage cost with the consequence of raising production costs. Blough stated further, “To enforce what we regard as inflationary wage demands the union has struck our plants five times in the past eleven years; and we have taken these costly strikes in an effort to hold the line against inflation. But hardly has on of these strikes begun before there is a nationwide demand that we settle it. Our customers must have steel or close their plants. Their employees face layoff’s and loss of pay. The government, too, must have steel and the daily the pressures upon us keep building up. “ He continues to explain, “this is because the wage inflation is surprisingly universal and uniform throughout American industry...for each dollar that our employment costs increases our total cost increases over two dollars.” (Kefauver 1957) This effect of “wage-push” inflation became very sever during the 1950s pushing the prices of steel and related steel products. Alwin Franz, President of the Colorado Fuel and Iron Corporations, speaking at an AISI conference, said that “Inflation, has brough with it falling productivity coupled with increasing costs, loss of profits, and a rapid growth in foreign and domestic competition. These developments are challenging all American steel companies, both large and small.” (Blough 1959)

Global Landscape

While labor and steel producers were in conflict over wages, inflation, steel prices and government intervention; Europe was rebuilding their manufacturing infrastructure. As the end of World War II, American steel had no global competitors. As a result, it produced three quarters of all of the steel in the world. Factors in Japan and most of Europe were completely destroyed. American steel such as United States Steel were positioned to be the global dominate power for the future. The American steel producers were in position however, they were quickly passed by many foreign producers. Donald Trump today declares that the steel industry has been “decimated by decades of

unfair trade and bad policy.” (Trump 2018) He was joined by many Democrats and Republicans agreed with his sentiment. Unfair trade practices were just not a factor in the 1950s and early 1960s. As a result, the blame lies in the United States steel producers holding on to the “open hearth” method of producing steel. They continued to use this process decades after new technologies had surpassed it by.

With European and Japanese steel production completely decimated they had to attachment to the “open hearth” method. As a result, they had started experimenting with alternative methods of producing steel. They stated to use the steel making process that uses blasting of pure oxygen onto the molten metal. This method will be called the basic-oxygen process. The first European producers to use this process was in Linz, Austria. VOEST soon built a large full-scale facility that was fully functional by 1952. Many other producers started evaluating this new process, they were quickly converted to this new process. The largest impact was demonstrated in both production and in operating costs. This provided these new mills an advantage of their American competitors. A basic-oxygen furnaces was 40 to 50 percent cheaper to build than a conventional open-hearth and 25 percent lower in operating costs.

The VOEST plant in Austria will become a model for new factories in Europe. European steel makers wholly abandon the “open-hearth” method, demolishing the factories and replacing them with the oxygen process. These gains would not go unnoticed by others, especially the United States government. One mill in Germany was producing 40 tons of steel per hour, after converting to a basic-oxygen process they were able to make 160 tons of steel per hour with less labor. However, this was barely noticed by the American steel producers. Stephen Mihm, an analyst for the steel industry at Bloomberg stated, “Unfortunately, Big Steel was too proud to notice Europe gaining ground. In a typical advertisement from the era, U.S. Steel claimed it was a company ‘where the big idea is innovation.’ But this claim -- much like so many of the braggadocios claims of today -- could not hide a more disturbing reality.” (Mihm 2018)

During the rest of the 1950s Europe continued to build factory after factory with the new technologies and automations, while the American steel industry ignored it. The Marshall Plan continued to provide capital for these mills to focus on new advances made in the industry. When interviewed by Congress in 1957, the Big Three (Bethlehem, U.S. Steel and Republic) claimed that not enough evidence had been produced to demonstrate the improvements. Congress summoned the steel industry executives to testify and they stated, "The distinguishing characteristic of the American steel industry is its tremendous productiveness, a quality which other countries have been unable to emulate so far." (Brock 1992)

The second method embraced by many European mills was the electric-arc method. This technique was designed to use electricity to recycle scrap iron. The electric-arc mills are designed to be small cheap mills designed to meet a specific need. This need could be satisfied in a fraction of the scale of a traditional mill providing steel closer to the steel producers. At the same time the American steel producers continued to add inefficient open-hearth furnaces. (Metzgar 2000)

It was not until 1969 that the first electric-arc furnace was built in the United States. Ken Iverson of Nucor steel stated in an interview in 1986. Iverson noted that protectionist measures instituted would never have the desired effect. "As soon as prices began to rise so that the steel companies began to be profitable, they stopped modernizing," he said. "It's only under intense competitive pressure – both internally from the mini-mills, and externally from the Japanese and the Koreans -- that the big steel companies have been forced to modernize." (Lazonick 2004)

Preparations

Productivity was the number one issue recognized by the steel producers as being the main gear of their long-term viability. As the 1950s continued productivity started to fall while steel employment/labor costs constantly rose. Dr. John W. Kendrick, an Economist at George Washington University, communicated this loss of productivity. He analyzed the causes of the rising steel prices, two-fold since

World War II. Raw material inputs were one of the items that contributed to the steel prices, the second most vital was labor. As he analyzed the costs, he recognized that the inputs rose in price more than in any other industry. As a result, it put upward pressure on the price per ton for steel. The second major contributor was the reduced productivity within the industry. (Kendrick 1959)

Productivity and labor costs were extremely important indicators for the health of the steel industry, as soon by steel executives. Blough stated "The fact is, that rising prices are at once the result of inflation and a measure of the degree of inflation that has occurred. They do not cause inflation any more than a clinical thermometer can be said to cause a patient's fever... No. Since the war the most persistent cause of rising industrial prices has been found in the rising costs of production; and the most important element in rising production costs is the rise in the cost of employment. Throughout American industry, employment costs – direct or indirect – represent more than 75 percent of all costs." (Kefauver 1957)

Blough further provided an example of automation of the sand loading process. With automation one man with the assistance of a power shovel can do the work of six men. He stated that automation would not necessarily increase profits. The price of the equipment and the higher wages may offset the higher productivity. (Figure 1 - Employment Costs vs Man-Hours Worked) Blough explained, "All of these added inputs, must be set against the added output in calculating the productivity." (AISI, Economic Matters of Fact: A Steel Data Book 1959)

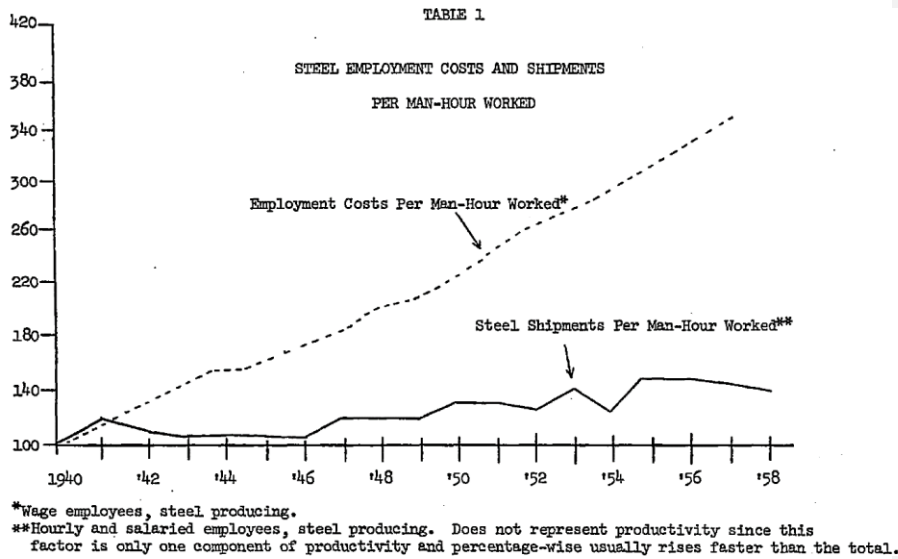


Figure 1 - Employment Costs vs Man-Hours Worked (AISI, Economic Matters of Fact: A Steel Data Book 1959)

8-point-plan to break the union

McDonalds View of the 8 Point

Although this was a private statement by McDonald, he also made the statement publicly as well.

Deadline Approaches

As the deadline approached, it was clear steel producers were united under "Hold that Line."

"For the first time in all of the five other strikes since World War II, the companies are holding fast", explained John W. Hill, Chairman of Hill and Knowlton. He continued to say, "this is a great shock to the union which is having difficulty accepting the fact that they are face-to-face with a new situation." (Hill 1959) It was evident to David McDonald that the steel producers were going to be aggressive and ultimately looked to reduce the power of the union. He stated that, "We are in a fight to save the union. They are not kidding about these eight points... They have presented sections for agreement

which are just sickening in their contents. You may as well give up and go back and get a job as a company-union representative. You will be far better off because the Steelworkers would not exist as an important economic entity. They not only proposed it in general terms, but they spelled them out in specific terms where you have not a single right left of these many things we won down through the years.” (Stebenne n.d.) He went on to say “It often has been said as steel goes, so goes the nation, I want to paraphrase that to say that, in this case, as the United Steel Workers go in these negotiations, so may go the future fate of the entire trade union movement.” Both the Union and steel producers were fully aware before negotiations even started that this was going to be different. McDonald continued, “I freely admit that at one time I held the hope that an era of mutual respect and understanding was possible in labor relations. Such conditions as we have exposed in steel negotiations make for disillusionment.” The union continued to contend that the American Steel industry was still making record profit. The reality was far from the truth. Record profit was made in 1957 as a result of record exports to other companies that would all but dry up in 1957. (Figure 2 - Revenue and Profit)

American Steel Industry Financial Data (in millions)

Year	Revenue	After Tax Earnings
1953	13,156	735
1954	10593	637
1955	14049	1099
1956	1522	1113
1957	15592	2213
1958	12551	788
1959	14233	831
1960	14222	811

Figure 2 - Revenue and Profit (AISI, Annual Statistical Report 1936 to 1960)

Internal pressures were also facing the United Steel Workers union. Throughout the 1950s, however, McDonald felt an intense rivalry with the United Auto Workers (UAW). The UAW often won better wage and benefit packages than the Steelworkers and were able to obtain the closed shop. McDonald's negotiating stands often reflected the interunion jealousy.

Record steel profits - American steel companies were reporting high profits which led McDonald and Steelworkers general counsel Arthur J. Goldberg to request a major wage increase ("Aspirin for Steel", Time, November 16, 1959)

The steel producers had one finally issue remaining from the contract signed in 1956. Section 2(b) of the steelworkers' contract limited management's ability to change the number of workers assigned to a task or to introduce new work rules or machinery that would result in reduced hours or fewer employees. Management claimed that it helped featherbedding and reduced the competitiveness of the American steel industry. (Shils 1997)

Negotiations (Steel Industry View)

From the beginning of the negotiations, Cooper denounced the steelworkers' wage demands as inflationary, contending that an increase in the price of steel would be necessary to offset the wage raise. He argued that such a price increase would make it more difficult for U.S. steel producers to withstand the encroachments of foreign steel competitors, and that American steel would price itself out of world markets. Labor, on the other hand, attributed industry's predicament to its own high profits.

Another important issue in the dispute concerned local work rules. Industry insisted upon gaining greater authority over working practices at the plant level in order to eliminate what Cooper called "loafing, featherbedding, and unjustifiable idle time." Industry negotiators stipulated that union agreement to work-rule changes would have to be a precondition to any specific offer of a wage increase.

Eight weeks of negotiations failed to break the deadlock between management and labor. A strike date was set for June 30, 1959. However, it was postponed through a two-week truce arranged by President Dwight D. Eisenhower. On July 15th, the steelworkers called a nationwide walkout.

The walkout of July 15, 1959 initiated the longest work stoppage in the history of the steel industry. At the time the strike had reached its 116th day, the U.S. Supreme Court upheld a Taft-Hartley law injunction directing the steelworkers to return to work for eighty days. By this time, thousands of other workers in various industries had been thrown out of work because of steel shortages.

The U.S. Steel Corporation had announced in October that during the strike-ridden third quarter of 1959 it had suffered a loss of more than thirty-one million dollars. Nevertheless, it was able to maintain its quarterly dividend of seventy-five cents because of heavy profits in the first half of the year - profits due, in part, to consumers' having built up a reserve of inventories in expectation of a strike.

As early as 1956 the steelmakers were getting back into a smaller and smaller corner. Their strategy for international production stability and raising domestic prices to fund modernization was being attacked by all parties. The USW was concerned about the effect on the labor and the federal government was putting pressure to prevent wage-price escalations. In 1956 US Steel announced an increase of \$8.50 a ton (7.4% increase) to offset the new labor contract. This new labor contract was a result of the strike earlier that year. Congress asked US Steel to defend their pricing in a series of committee meetings. (Baker 1956)

The stage has been set, the battle between the America's largest union and America's largest industry will soon began. 1959 became the epicenter of the turning point in the American steel industry and the United Steel Workers union. The three-year contract between the union and US steel would expire in June and the industry, and specifically U.S. Steel was determined to stop the spiraling wage increases. The union was under new leadership and seemed dead set on protecting the workers against the mounting economic inflation. Finally, the Eisenhower administration would not budge from their policy of not working or aiding a specific sector.

Negotiations

Both sides had been deeply swayed of the reality of their own problems and the promise of their own solutions. The steel union believed that increases in wages and fringe benefits would increase the overall economy through the impact on consumer spending. While the steel producers were convinced that the stability in the economy, more specifically the steel market, required strike resistance to the demand of labor. The USW, as described by Harry Lumb, Vice-President of Republic Steel, said "Base on our experience over the past twenty years, union's maturity towards recognizing management's indispensable authority and responsibility is and for the foreseeable future will be far down the road." (Lumb, *Collective Bargaining in Steel* 1959)

With both sides in an obvious stalemate the President's office took notice. Both sides knew they would require resistance from both the public and Eisenhower administration. As a result, the Secretary of Labor, Mitchell endorsed a price freeze and small wage increase. The union refused government intervention out of hand and failed to even respond. As a result, the Eisenhower administration wanted to play nothing more than a mediation role. (Lumb, *Collective Bargaining in Steel* 1959)

Before the strike began, representatives of the steel producers had talked with Vice President Richard Nixon and asked him to use his good offices to induce the steel manufacturers to come to an agreement with the union. Watching the course of the strike, at my request, he began a series of secret meetings with officials on both sides of the disputes, meeting among other places at the Nixon home in Washington.

The failed negotiations even caused some issues with our relationship between the Soviet Union and the United States. The following is an exchange between Vice President Nixon and Soviet Premier Khrushchev.

“**Nixon:** This house can be bought for \$14,000, and most American [veterans from World War II] can buy a home in the bracket of \$10,000 to \$15,000. Let me give you an example that you can appreciate. Our steel workers as you know, are now on strike. But any steel worker could buy this house. They earn \$3 an hour. This house costs about \$100 a month to buy on a contract running 25 to 30 years.

Khrushchev: We have steel workers and peasants who can afford to spend \$14,000 for a house. Your American houses are built to last only 20 years so builders could sell new houses at the end. We build firmly. We build for our children and grandchildren.” (Khrushchev 1959)

On Wednesday, December 30, 1959, the Vice President "laid the issue on the line," reminding them that if the strike resumed, "the country will have no place to go for a remedy but to the Congress, which as you know, the Democrats control. In an election year, management won't like the labor-management legislation such a Congress will produce." That meeting broke the stalemate. The steel producing negotiators agreed that they would willingly accept the settlement recommended by Nixon. A series of almost nonstop meetings began. Ten were held at Nixon's Washington home. The final one lasted 22 hours. The result was an agreement that the industry predicted would cost it \$1 billion. The United Steel Workers didn't know it then, but labor had an unlikely ally in the talks for a new contract. Vice President Richard Nixon, who was getting ready to run for president in 1960, was deeply interested in the outcome of the strike. (Eisenhower 1965)

The contract provided substantial insurance and other benefits, plus pay increases of 7 cents an hour in 1960 and 1961. It called for increased pension benefits for workers. Most damaging for Bethlehem Steel, Clause 2B stayed. As a result of the strike, union workers got wages that took them out of the working class and into the burgeoning middle class. For the first time, they were able to move out of the shadow of the steel plant. For the first time, the bread-eaters could move across the street

from the cake-eaters. The headline in the Jan. 5, 1960, New York Times left no doubt which side the public viewed as winning the strike of 1959: STEEL SETTLEMENT IS REACHED/UNION VICTOR, PRICE RISE SEEN/NIXON, MEDIATOR GAIN STATURE.

Impact

The largest person-hours idled in US History. The economic impact was not only in the steel industry but every type of industry that consumed steel or catered to the steel employees. It created and emboldened period of “intensified class struggle in the United States” (Metzgar 2000) It created a liberation and empowerment of the labor vs. industrial business class.

Ultimately big business and big labor faced off in a “mimetic” conflict, one “painfully real in the sense that emotions are aroused, but unreal because no economic loss can occur” for either of the parties involved. Therefore, the union’s dogged defense of work rules “was primarily a symbolic test of authority” with “no vital economic issue at stake.” Only voiceless consumers and the unorganized suffered the consequences of this labor-management battle.

The prediction by the U.S. Tariff Commission came true. In 1948 they indicated that the “Competitive strength of the European continent, probably for a considerable period, will remain weaker than it was before the war...During the later postwar period the prospects as to imports of tonnage steel into the United States are more problematical. Rehabilitation of the iron and steel industries in continental Europe and the installation of new plans and equipment may increase their efficiency so that they may be able to compete more effectively in the United States markets during the early years following the war.” (Commission 1946)

	United States	United Kingdom	Germany	France	Italy	Benelux	Japan	Russia
1936	53.5	13.2	20.7	7.4	2.2	5.7	5.5	18.0
1939	52.8	14.8	29.6	9.4	2.5	5.2	7.4	20.7
1945	79.7	13.2	1.7	1.8	.4	1.2	2.3	20.7

1950	96.8	18.3	13.4	9.5	2.6	6.9	5.3	29.8
1955	117.0	22.2	23.5	13.9	5.9	11.2	10.4	50.3
1960	99.3	27.2	37.6	19.1	9.1	14.7	24.4	72.1

(AISI 1936 to 1960)

World Steel Trade and American Steel Exports

Year	World Steel Trade	U.S. Exports	U.S. Percentage of World Trade
1947	11.0	5.9	53.6
1949	13.5	4.3	31.9
1950	15.9	2.6	16.4
1955	28.8	4.1	14.2
1959	35.7	1.7	4.8
1960	43.2	3.0	6.9

(Commerce 1963)

After the end of the war any special assistance giving the assistance had completely dried up.

The United States steel makers continued to watch as their global dominance was reduced. Not only was there going to be a reduced need for American steel globally. Newer, more efficient plants would be able to export steel to the United States and effectively compete with the United States. What really concerned the steel makers was the fact that, in many instances, these upgraded plants in productions was subsidized by the United States and other governments rebuilding the war-torn nations.

American Crude Steel Production as Percentage of World Production

1930	43.5
1935	34.8
1940	63.7
1950	46.6
1955	39.4
1960	26.0

(AISI 1936 to 1960)

US Imports of Crude Steel by Country

Year	ECSC	UK	Canada	Japan	All Others	Total Tons
1950	802	64	189	18	4	1077
1955	609	47	185	96	33	970
1959	2898	215	377	626	280	4396
1960	2097	212	211	601	238	3359
1965	4191	720	644	4418	410	10383

Commented [JS1]:

(AISI, Steel Imports - A National Concert 1970)

Timeline

- July 5, 1940 to July 5, 1950 – over the 10 years five work stoppages in the steel industry occurred over this time. Truman’s plan was to seize the steel mills and restart them as required.
- 12 January 1942 until July 1945 - The entry of the United States into World War II in December 1941 brought near-total unanimity among the varying factions of the American labor movement in their support of the war effort. The AFL and CIO, two of the country's largest and most influential unions, were bitter enemies before the war, with antagonism over such ideals as craft (skilled) versus industrial (semiskilled and unskilled) unionism. Although not without conflicts during the war, leaders from both unions joined together and promised "no-strike pledges" for the duration of hostilities.
- June 1945 – Truman removed both formal and informal controls of the handling of steel and union disputes. “There is one sure formula for brining on a recession or a depression that is to maintain excessively high prices... Our private enterprise system now has the responsibility for price... Private enterprise must display the leadership to make our free economy work by arresting this trend.” (Hight 1947)
- June 23, 1947 – Taft-Harvey Act was passed. The bill allowed the unions to officially organize and strike. However, it set limits to the rights of unions.
- July 1956 – Steel strike with the union winning concessions on wages, unemployment, layoff rights and improved pension accounts. This strike included 500,000 workers work stoppage nationwide. A 3-year contract providing for hourly wage rate increases averaging 10 1/2 cents effective on the contract date and 9.1 cents in the 2d and 3d years of the contract; a semiannual cost-of-living escalator clause; changes in supplementary benefits effective at various dates during contract period; premium pay for Sunday work; liberalized premium pay for holiday

work; supplemental unemployment benefit plan, pay for jury duty; a 7th paid holiday; and improved health, welfare and pension benefits; also; a revised union shop provision.

- July 1, 1959 – Steel strike is authorized by the United Steel Workers
- July 15, 1959 - 500,000 steelworkers replace tools with picket signs as they start their strike.
- July 20, 1959 – Secretary of Labor Mitchel started Federal Mediation between the two parties.
- August 23, 1959 – Eisenhower informs both parties that the government has no immediate plans to intervene.
- September 8, 1959 – Eisenhower informs both parties that they new to renew they negotiations in good faith.
- September 28, 1959, Eisenhower met privately with McDonald and Goldberg
- October 9, 1959 – Eisenhower meets with his cabinet to discuss invoking the Taft-Hartley Act.
- October 10 – November 2, 1959 – Various court cases between the USW and steel producers.
- November 7, 1959 – Court ordered a cool-off period of 80 days and the Supreme upheld the Taft-Hartley Act as constitutional.
- December 31 – Representatives from the USW and steel producers meet secretly with Vice President Nixon.
- January 4, 1960 – The steel strike was finally ended, and a settlement was reached.

Terms

- AISI - American Iron and Steel Institute. AISI is an association of North American steel producers. It was created in response for the need for a cooperative agency in the iron and steel industry for collecting and disseminating statistics and information, carrying on investigations, providing a forum for the discussion of problems and generally advancing the interests of the industry.

- ECPC – European Coal and Steel Producing Committee. This group coordinated and aligned all European steel producers. In addition, they shared technology and advancements within the industry group.
- Crude Steel - Steel in the first solid state after melting, suitable for further processing or for sale. Synonymous with raw steel.

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