

Mine, mill and smelter workers, Int'l union of

The International Union of Mine, Mill, and
Smelter Workers:
A Study in Radical Unionism.

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Michael Peevey

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Mr. Ross Mr. Ulman

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[Berkeley, University of California] ✓

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Introduction

The purpose of this study is to describe unionism in the nonferrous metals industry since the departure of the International Union of Mine, Mill, and Smelter Workers (hereafter referred to as Mine-Mill) from the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) in 1950. This is mainly the account of one union, Mine-Mill, and its position in the industry since 1950. However, this paper will be more than a study of Mine-Mill. It will include a study of rival unionism, the Communist issue, and some historical background on the dominant union in the industry. The report will also include an analysis of the 1959 strike, and will end with some blueprint of the future course of events in nonferrous metals industry unionism. This forecast will, of course, be largely speculative, but the previous material will allow some maxima and minima within which such speculation can proceed. Before sketching the background and heritage of Mine-Mill, a few words should be said about the nature and structure of the industry.

The nonferrous metals industry is mainly located in the Western United States. This is particularly true of mining; refineries and smelters are more generally spread throughout the nation. The main reason for this is the processing of raw materials from abroad. The major products of the industry are copper, lead, zinc, gold, and silver.* These metals are essential to the nation's economy, without them, as without coal or

* Other important metals are tungsten, uranium, and chromite.

steel, the economy would come to an abrupt halt. This is not as true today as it was forty years ago because there are now international suppliers of these metals; however, the industry still is of tremendous importance to the economy.

The nonferrous metals industry is quite centralized. This is shown most clearly in copper mining where a "Big Three" dominate the industry. These three firms are: Kennecott Copper Corporation, Phelps Dodge Corporation, and Anaconda Copper Mining Company. In the production of copper they rank as listed. These firms go beyond the mining of copper, with each owning or controlling many fabricating plants, and each having sizable foreign holdings. They are giants by any measuring rod. Lead and zinc production is also concentrated in a few large companies. When speaking of labor-management relations in this report, the management referred to will be, unless specified otherwise, the copper companies. They hire the most personnel and have played the most prominent rôle in labor-management relations in the industry.

I.

The International Union of Mine, Mill, and Smelter Workers is a union with a long and radical heritage. It dates back to 1893, and the Ada county jail in the Coeur d'Alene district of Idaho. It was in this jail that men, imprisoned by Federal troops due to strike violence, formulated plans for the Western Federation of Miners (WFM). Upon release from jail these men formed the WFM. They sought *to* organize miners, mill men, smelter men, and engineers. The original program of the union was not revolutionary, as Perlman and Taft note: "This union, the most militant in the history of the United States, and destined to engage in some of the bitterest labor wars, did not begin with a revolutionary program."¹ This was not to last; soon industrial warfare on a large scale was the rule throughout the mining districts of the Western United States.²

The WFM grew erratically, winning and losing strikes throughout the mining area. The outstanding characteristic in labor-management relations in nonferrous metals was violence.³ Whatever the cause, whoever at fault, physical force was used by one side or the other when the strike appeared about to be lost. Almost without exception the mine owners'

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1. Perlman, S., and Taft, P., History of Labor in the United States, 1896-1932, New York, 1935, p. 172-173.
 2. Ibid., p. 169. The authors ask why there was class warfare in the mining regions of the West instead of the "normal" job conscious American unionism. They then supply the answer: There was class warfare because there was no middle class; when the farmers and urban middle class arrived in the West class conflict declined.
 3. Ibid. The authors get a little romantic on this point, saying (of the miners), "They defended their jobs with Winchester rifles and dynamite. The employers, Westerners like their employees, were even 'quicker on the trigger.'"

answer to a strike was to import strikebreakers, and the strikers' response to this action was some form of intimidation of the strikebreakers. A lively imagination is useful here, for all possible means were undoubtedly used to discourage potential job seekers from entering the area of conflict. The government, at all levels, was caught in the middle, and sided generally, though by no means always, with the employers. Local governments were the least impartial, and probably sided more with the strikers, who had numerical superiority, then did state or Federal government. There were many cases in which local governments opposed the use of national guard or federal troops in a labor dispute, and yet such militia were used for the stated purpose of protecting property rights, and with the result being the loss of a strike by the miners.

The WFM in 1896 affiliated with the American Federation of Labor (AFL). At the latter body's convention the same year the WFM asked for assistance and indorsement of its Leadville, Colorado, strike. The convention indorsed the strike but the member unions of the AFL failed to give any practical assistance to the WFM in this struggle. Disappointed, the Western miners withdrew from the AFL and were again an independent group. Thereafter the WFM remained independent until 1905 when it became a founder and the leading member union of the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW).⁴ A delegate to the founding

4. The WFM, after withdrawal from the AFL, did attempt to organize a Western trade union federation, called the Western Labor Union (later changed to American Labor Union); the organization met with little success and declined rapidly after 1903.

convention of the IWW, and probably the most dynamic and colorful one, was "Big Bill" Haywood, from the WFM. He soon became the most important leader of the IWW, and stayed with this organization, despite the withdrawal of the WFM in 1907.

The miners' union was by the time of its departure from the IWW beginning to lose its militant spirit, and starting to decline as an organized industrial union. In 1903-1904 a true class war was fought in the Cripple Creek region of Colorado. The intermittent fighting lasted for thirteen months, with killing, mob violence, mine explosions, vigilante committees, and the state militia all playing prominent roles.⁵ After thirteen months the strike was crushed, and order was restored to the Cripple Creek region. The WFM never regained its strength in Colorado. This loss was felt throughout the union, in its morale, and in its finances. In 1909 the WFM took steps to reaffiliate with the AFL and in 1911 a charter was issued and the Western miners rejoined the AFL after fifteen years of separation.

Throughout this period the real key to unionism in non-ferrous metals and the bulwark of the WFM was Butte Miners Union No. 1. This group was first organized in 1878.⁶ When the WFM was formed the Butte local became an integral part of the union. All did not remain well in Butte however, and by 1912 a fierce intraunion war broke out between conservatives and radicals in Butte. The conservatives called the radicals

5. See: Perlman and Taft, op. cit., pp. 194-203, and Jensen, v., Heritage of Conflict, New York, 1950, pp. 118-160.

6. Jensen, V., Ibid., p. 289 ff.

"irresponsible" and unfit to rule; the radicals responded, calling the conservatives "company stooges" and the like. In 1914, unable to reconcile their differences, the disputants turned to violence; the copper companies, caught in the middle, demanded militia, and the militia came, despite the protest of the mayor of Butte. All the copper companies reopened their mines, and declared jointly that they would not recognize either group. The companies had the militia to maintain order; unionism, after 36 years, was broken in Butte, and for the next 20 years Butte was to be an open shop town. This defeat, the result of internal strife, of which the copper companies were by chance the lucky benefactors, clearly heralded the decline of the WFM.

At the 1916 convention the Western miners discarded their old name, and became the International Union of Mine, Mill, and Smelter Workers. The change in name, despite some hopes, failed to arrest the downward drift of the time. Even World War One failed to spark the union; it grew numerically, but its strength did not. After the war the situation became exceedingly grave. Vernon Jensen put it succinctly when he wrote:⁷

"When the war ended, chaotic conditions developed rapidly, particularly in the West. The convention of the I.U.M.M.S.W. in 1920 was something of a post-mortem. The hand of death lay heavily upon the organization. The industry was in the doldrums and the threadbare international union was also coming apart at the seams."

7. Ibid., p. 452.

By the middle 1920's the union was to all intents and purposes defunct. What caused its death? Some reasons like internal strife and government cooperation with business have already been alluded to, other reasons are the 1921 depression, which almost completely closed down the nonferrous metals industry, and the IWW (which caused internal strife and membership defections). By the time of the New Deal the union was reduced to six chartered locals scattered throughout the West; all were small, and none had any established bargaining rights.

The above sketch shows the essential features of labor-management relations in the nonferrous metals industry prior to the New Deal period. The features of mutual suspicion, distrust, fear, and shortsightedness manifested themselves in unstable labor relations and resort to wholesale violence. The answer to the question why conflict was so commonplace rests, in the main, in the Western environment; that is, stability, a middle class, and governmental impartiality were not strong. The owners had an extremely narrow view of property rights, somewhat analagous to that of Western cattle barons, while the miners, frontier men also, refused to accept their plight docilely. Both agreed on one thing; the use of violence was justifiable if it would achieve one's ends. In such an environment conflict was inevitable. The tragedy is that this "heritage of conflict" has been allowed to continue, and still exerts a strong influence on the minds and sentiments of some workers.

The New Deal in general, and the Wagner Act in particular, gave a great impetus to unionism in the basic industries of the nation. The strong upsurge in organization was not as pronounced in the nonferrous metals industry as it was in most other basic industries. It was not until the "defense boom" of the late 1930's that union membership really grew in nonferrous metals. By 1940 Mine-Mill began to make rapid progress in "organizing the unorganized." This was due to a multitude of reasons, but two stand out; first, the Wagner Act, which made organization easier, even in the face of a hostile employer; and second, the economic well-being of the industry increased greatly due to the defense program. Before July 1939 Mine-Mill won only 40 per cent of the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) elections in which it participated, but after the large increase in defense spending Mine-Mill, for the following two years, won approximately 90 per cent of the NLRB elections it entered.⁸ Organization continued throughout the war years, with Mine-Mill representing over 100,000 workers in the industry by 1945. The union's organizational drives had achieved their purpose by this date, with almost all mine, mill, and smelter workers organized in the union. On the surface all was well, yet this was misleading, for Mine-Mill was beset by internal strife.

8. Jensen, V., Nonferrous Metals Industry Unionism 1932-1954, Geneva, New York, 1954, p. 49 fn.

As unionism revived in the industry, Mine-Mill encountered a leadership problem. The union was led by elderly men who seemed to be out of touch with the times. In 1936 the old leaders were ousted and Reid Robinson took over the presidency. At this time Robinson was a strict believer in business unionism and Communist influence in the union was almost absent. For reasons as yet unknown Robinson soon shifted his allegiance and began to associate with "left-wingers" and began to employ them as staff advisors in the union.⁹ This policy was strongly opposed by the conservative members of the union executive board, and as time passed the conflict within the union became more pronounced. This internal strife naturally weakened the union and was the cause of a widespread movement of secession, chiefly among the brass industry workers in Connecticut.¹⁰ The charge was made that Mine-Mill was a Communist dominated union; the validity of this charge, and the subsequent action of the union, and of the CIO, will now be discussed.

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9. V. Jensen in his long and exhaustive study of internal union controversy, Nonferrous Metals Industry Unionism 1932-1954, concludes that "it is impossible to analyze Robinson's motives adequately." What is clear is that the union did change its course and became "left-wing" in outlook.
 10. The National Association of Die Casting Workers merged with Mine-Mill in 1942. In 1948 these workers seceded from Mine-Mill due to the Communist issue. The CIO would not recharter a die-casting international union, so this group entered the United Automobile Workers (which had established a Die Casting Department for this purpose). The Report of UAW President Walter P. Reuther, 16th Constitutional Convention, April 7-12, 1957, p. 49-D says, "The Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers which was formerly a major factor in this industry has now been reduced to three plants of the American Brass, and two other plants with less than 500 members in Connecticut." However, these three plants represent 40 40 per cent of American Brass Company workers.

II.

After World War Two the national CIO became increasingly concerned with the problem of Communist leadership in affiliated national trade unions. Time after time Philip Murray tried to appeal to the "leftwing" unions to follow national CIO policy. In this he was continually rebuffed by the "left-wing" group within the CIO. The group was strong, and was led by the United Electrical, Radio, and Machine Workers of America (UE) with some 600,000 members, the International Fur and Leather Workers Union with some 100,000 members, the International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union (ILWU) with some 75,000 members, and Mine-Mill with some 100,000 members.¹¹ At the October 1948, Portland convention of the CIO patience was short; the CIO said, in effect, to the "left-wing" unions, conform to national CIO policy or withdraw. Mine-Mill responded by becoming delinquent in the payment of its per capita tax to the CIO. When it became obvious that Mine-Mill, as well as the other recalcitrant unions, were not going to follow CIO policy, the national body began action to expel them. The case made against Mine-Mill was similar to those against the other "left-wing" unions. The CIO charged these unions with following the policies and activities of the Communist Party, and that the ends sought by these unions were those of the Communist Party, not those set forth in the CIO Constitution.

11. The UE was led by the triumvirate of Albert Fitzgerald, Julius Emspak, and James Matles, the Fur and Leather Workers by Ben Gold; the ILWU by Harry Bridges. All these men had long records in support of extremely radical causes.

In support of this charge the CIO said:

1. Mine-Mill policy shifted one way or the other depending upon changes in the policy of the Communist Party. Mine-Mill was against the Marshall Plan, the Truman Doctrine, praised the Communist coup in Czechoslovakia, and the like.
2. The policy of the union was determined by a Communist steering committee. In this accusation the CIO used testimonies by ex-Mine-Mill officials. Chief participants were Homer Wilson, ex-Mine-Mill vice-president, and Kenneth Eckert, ex-head of the Die Casting division of Mine-Mill, and the men responsible for the secession of this group from the union.
3. The Secretary-Treasurer of Mine Mill, Maurice Travis, is an admitted Communist, who resigned membership in the Communist Party only for the sake of expediency.¹²

This was the CIO case against Mine-Mill; it seemed airtight; most impartial observers feeling that this was not a kangaroo court proceeding, and that the union was guilty as charged. It is significant that Mine-Mill's defense did not attempt to refute these charges, but was based on the grounds that Mine-Mill under the CIO Constitution, is an autonomous international union with the right to decide its policies, with or without the aid of the CIO.

12. In regard to the Taft-Hartley Act's non-communist affidavit, Maurice Travis said, "In order to make it possible for me to sign those affidavits, it was necessary that I resign from the Communist Party of which I had been a member for some time." Taken from Official Proceedings of the 45th Convention of the IUMMSW, September 12-17, 1949, p. 163.

Once it became abundantly clear that Mine-Mill was to be expelled unless it changed its tactics and adhered to official CIO policy, the union began to stress that the CIO was arbitrary and unfair. It made no attempt to follow CIO policy, instead it claimed the CIO had become perverted. To quote from a union publication:¹³

"MINE-MILL IS PREPARED TO WAGE ALL-OUT FIGHT TO SAVE ITS AUTONOMY WITHIN CIO AND TO HELP RESTORE RANK-AND-FILE DEMOCRACY TO CIO, THE PRINCIPLE UPON WHICH CIO WAS FOUNDED.

"A. To Mine-Mill, autonomy is self-government and this means:

1. Protection of the rights and privileges granted under our CIO charter.
2. We must insist on our right to have a voice and a vote on matters of policy affecting the welfare of Mine-Mill members.
3. The use of whatever strategy and tactics our union feels are necessary to defend and advance the interests of Mine-Mill members.
4. The right to be let alone by other CIO unions to work out our own problems, without CIO-sponsored raids, strikebreaking, or gangsterism.
 - a. The officers of the International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union said that 'autonomy to the ILWU is what home rule is to Ireland.'

"B. Mine-Mill Executive Board said that it is not what opinion we have, but our right to have an opinion.

13. Mine-Mill Staff Bulletin, No. 7, July 30, 1949, p. 10.

And again at Mine-Mill's 1949 convention:¹⁴

"_ _ _ Mine-Mill is not violating CIO policy. It is being assailed today precisely because it is insisting that CIO policy be preserved."

Needless to say Mine-Mill protests were of no avail; on February 15, 1950, the union was expelled from the CIO. This done, the CIO next concerned itself with the question: What was to become of the rank-and-file members of Mine-Mill? There were two clear courses to follow: Either the CIO could charter a new union in the nonferrous metals industry, or it could reward jurisdiction to already existing CIO unions.¹⁵ The CIO chose the latter course, and, as will be seen in the next section of this paper, met with little success.

14. Official Proceedings of the 45th Convention of the IUMMSW, September 12-17, 1949, p. 258.

15. In the electrical industry immediately after the withdrawal of the UE from the CIO in 1949, the CIO chartered a rival union, the International Union of Electrical Workers (IUE), led by James B. Carey, ex-president of UE, and in 1949 Secretary-Treasurer of the CIO. Carey had been the "right-wing" spokesman within UE since his ouster from the presidency in 1941. The IUE was quite successful due to a multitude of reasons, not the least of which was encouragement from the General Electric Company, the industry leader. By 1955 it had approximately 400,000 members to the less than 100,000 for UE. However, UE has not died, and rival unionism still exists in the industry. In March 1960 UE only lost a NLRB election at General Electric's big Lynn, Massachusetts, plant by some 200 votes out of over 6,000 cast. The IUE has held bargaining rights at Lynn since defeating UE in 1950.

III.

The CIO, after formally expelling Mine-Mill, gave jurisdiction over workers in the nonferrous metals industry to the United Steelworkers of America, and the United Automobile Workers (UAW). The Steelworkers were to have claim to all workers in the industry except those connected with metal fabrication, which was to be the UAW's jurisdiction. Other unions also wanted a part of Mine-Mill; District 50 of the United Mine Workers, and various AFL craft unions, in particular those in the Metal Trades Department, moved into the nonferrous metals industry. All these unions made direct overtures to Mine-Mill locals to change their union affiliation; to their surprise nothing happened. Some locals did immediately affiliate with the Steelworkers, and the UAW, but these dissident locals had previously withdrawn from Mine-Mill and were in the Progressive Metalworkers Council (PMC).¹⁶ The locals in this group that joined the Steelworkers were, in part, located in Utah; this gave the steel union a beachhead in the Rocky Mountain region. The major part of the PMC was located in Connecticut, and, as already noted, this group^{joined} the UAW. Aside from this group, and

16. Engineering and Mining Journal, July 1947, p. 78-79. Due to the Communist issue some 40 Mine-Mill locals seceded from the parent body and united as the PMC. The PMC received a charter from the CIO's Industrial Union of Marine and Shipbuilding Workers. Approximately 30,000 workers left Mine-Mill at this time. The movement originated in Connecticut where the local leadership was always at odds with the top leadership of the union. This was due to geography, the union is mainly located in the West, the Connecticut workers felt isolated in the East, and secondly, the Eastern leadership was more conservative and felt strongly about the Communist issue. The PMC movement was mainly located in the East, and spread little into the West.

a few small dissident locals there was no movement among Mine-Mill locals to affiliate with other international unions.

The interesting question is why was not there a large exodus of Mine-Mill locals from the national union similar to that in the electrical industry in 1949-1950.¹⁷ Various explanations have been put forth to explain why the locals did not withdraw from the international union. The crucial reasons will be mentioned here.

In the first place, due to previous loss of dissident locals to the PMC and other unions, two things had happened within Mine-Mill. The union had been reduced to a "hard core" of locals satisfied to remain in Mine-Mill regardless of the power struggle and the Communist issue, and most locals were under the strong control of International representatives, loyal to the top leadership of the union. The top leadership had worked long and hard expanding and tightening their control over local unions; this policy was not in vain.

Another reason is what Vernon Jensen calls "the prevailing psychology of the western miner and smelter worker," which simply is that the western miner wants his own union, not a union centered in Pittsburgh. The whole question of Communist leadership does not particularly bother the Western miner as much as his fellow workers in other parts of the country for two reasons: he is relatively isolated in a geographical sense, and is, because of this fact, often in association with men called

17. After the UE left the CIO a new union, the IUE, was chartered, and in six months had a membership of 155,000.

"Reds," and also because his union, dating back to 1893, has a long heritage of being called radical. High officials in the CIO overlooked this crucial consideration when granting jurisdiction to the Steelworkers.¹⁸ Someone once said possession is nine-tenths of the law, and if one couples this with the desire of the Western miner to have his own autonomous union, one begins to understand the difficulties faced by the Steelworkers in trying to take over the Mine-Mill locals.

A third factor of great importance in an explanation of the initial failure of the Steelworkers, and a continuing cause for the steel union's difficulties can be found in management sentiment. The companies, while not altogether happy dealing with Mine-Mill, did not look with great eagerness to dealing with the powerful Steelworkers union. This was not a universal feeling, but it was widespread. Management did not want to be tied to the collective bargaining in the steel industry, which would occur if the local unions of Mine-Mill were to affiliate with the steel union. V. Jensen notes this when he observes, "A feeling of real apprehension prevailed also concerning the prospects of eventually being forced into the steel-industry pattern of bargaining. In some local situations, managements astutely exerted their influence to exclude the newcomers."¹⁹

18. V. Jensen feels the main reason for the continued existence of Mine-Mill is the failure of the CIO to charter a rival union which could lay claim to the democratic heritage of the old Western Federation of Miners.

19. Jensen, V., Nonferrous Metals Industry Unionism 1932-1954, p. 272.

For the above mentioned reasons the Steelworkers were completely unsuccessful in their attempts to induce locals unions of Mine-Mill to break with the parent body on their own accord and affiliate with the steel union. This became apparent immediately after Mine-Mill was expelled from the CIO. This being the case, the next step for the Steelworkers was to win NLRB elections at all major Mine-Mill locations. In the first attempts at this, in 1950-1951, the steel union was again unsuccessful; mainly for the same reasons they failed to attract Mine-Mill locals in the first place. At the 1950 convention of Mine-Mill the union leadership was able to record the Steelworker's defeat---since 1949 Mine-Mill won 38 and lost 9 NLRB elections, none of the losses being of any great importance.²⁰ The steel union was completely unsuccessful in its initial attempts in Montana and Arizona; an analysis of these defeats will follow.

There is a saying, traced back to the days of Butte Miners Union No. 1, that "As goes Montana, so goes nonferrous metals unionism." Whether this is true or not the Steelworkers acted on this premise. They rushed into Montana, made a strong drive at Butte, Anaconda, and Great Falls, and were strongly rebuffed. Their overwhelming failure was due to many reasons, each of which aided Mine-Mill. The Anaconda Copper Company did not remain neutral, and gave at least tacit encouragement to Mine-Mill

20. Official Proceedings of the 46th Convention of the IUMMSW, September 11-15, 1950, p. 150.

in its fight with the steel union.²¹ Also the Steelworkers made strategic errors on two fronts: they failed to gain the favor of local leaders, a step that was necessary if they were to succeed, and they campaigned on the Communist issue, while Mine-Mill contented itself with "bread and butter" issues. The result was that Mine-Mill looked most concerned with the workers' economic interests, while the Steelworkers seemed most concerned with politics, not economics. Mine-Mill's approach carried the day by a better than two to one margin.

In Arizona the end result was the same as in Montana, the causes differed. In the Southwest Mexican workers make up the bulk of Mine-Mill membership, they are quite conscious of their lower social status, and realize Mine-Mill has fought the discrimination issue. They feel it is their union. Also this is the region that Orville Larson, an ex-vice-president of Mine-Mill, comes from. These same workers reportedly had high respect for Larson as a leader. Jensen feels that if the Steelworkers could have won over Larson, the Arizona locals would have affiliated with the steel union. He says, "For some reason, the Steelworkers could not win Larson's allegiance_ _ _ . When it was clear that Larson intended to stand with Mine Mill, the Mexican workers also decided to remain; but they would have gone to the Steelworkers had Larson been willing."²² Whether

21. V. Jensen feels the support given Mine-Mill by Anaconda was the decisive factor in the defeat of the Steelworkers in Montana. I feel this is open to question: oftentimes such support is tantamount to a "kiss of death" through charges of company-union collusion and the like.

22. Jensen, V., op. cit., p. 278.

this is true or not, and I question whether Larson could command such loyalty, especially if local leaders remained loyal to Mine-Mill, it is a moot point. Both Larson and Mine-Mill remained in firm control of the situation in Arizona; the Steelworkers failed even to gain a foothold.²³

The Steelworkers were, then, unsuccessful in their attempts to oust Mine-Mill from the nonferrous metals industry in the years 1950-1951. Mine-Mill was able to write, with glowing pride:²⁴

"When we convened last September, the raiding onslaught of the CIO Steel and Auto unions was moving rapidly toward a climax. Today we can proudly report that the raiders are not only beaten, they have dropped completely out of sight." While the Steelworkers had not really "dropped completely out of sight," they were lying dormant; the first round of jurisdictional warfare had been decisively won by Mine-Mill.

In August 1951, a national magazine tabulated the results of NLRB elections since the expulsion of Mine-Mill from the CIO. The results are printed below.²⁵

Total Elections

79

Winners:

<u>AFL</u>	<u>CIO</u>	<u>Unaffiliated</u>	<u>Mine-Mill</u>	<u>No Union</u>
10	12	15	36	6

Votes Received:

<u>AFL</u>	<u>CIO</u>	<u>Unaffiliated</u>	<u>Mine-Mill</u>	<u>No Union</u>
2,649	6,874	585	11,577	1,227

23. As a follow-up, in November 1959 Larson resigned from Mine-Mill and joined the Steelworkers. See: Mine-Mill Union, April 1960, p.3

24. Official Proceedings of the 47th Convention of the IUMMSW, September 10-14, 1951, p. 188.

25. Business Week, August 25, 1951, p. 34-35.

The magazine concluded that Mine-Mill, despite expulsion from the CIO, had remained strong, and in solid control of the key locals in the industry. However, it must be remembered that Mine-Mill won no victories in the real sense of the word; it organized no new firms, it was completely on the defensive. Any local it lost, big or small, decreased its size; its victories were in defense of what it already had. Another factor, unrelated to the jurisdictional battle in the industry, greatly helped Mine-Mill in its struggle. This was the increase in employment due to the Korean War and the subsequent increase in defense spending. The result of this was that while the union lost members due to NLRB defeats, these membership losses were offset by increases in employment at locations where Mine-Mill had preserved bargaining rights. Thus in 1950 membership in Mine-Mill was some 68,000, while in 1952 this figure had increased to 77,000.²⁶ The biggest increases came in District 1, which is mainly located in Montana, and District 8, which is located in Eastern Canada.²⁷

26. Jensen, V., op. cit., p. 281.

27. In Canada the Steelworkers were also unsuccessful. Mine-Mill holds bargaining rights at International Nickel Company's big Sudbury, Ontario, mine operations. Here some 15,000 workers are represented by Mine-Mill. One reason why Mine-Mill was so successful in Canada may be the "Rand Formula." This requires all workers to pay dues to the union whether or not they are members. In 1956 the Canadian division of Mine-Mill, still intact despite attempted raids, was granted complete autonomy within the union. Today, as far as bargaining, policy setting, and the like are concerned, it acts as an independent union. However, Mine-Mill still gives and receives strike assistance from the Canadian division. See: Official Proceedings of the 54th Convention IUMMSW, March 16-21, 1959, p. 281.

The Steelworkers lost the first round of their jurisdictional battle with Mine-Mill when they were resoundingly defeated in the 1950 NLRB elections. The battle now moved to a different front---the bargaining table. The Steelworkers felt that by winning greater wage increases for their members in nonferrous metals they would be able to induce Mine-Mill locals to withdraw from their national union and affiliate with them. This shift in strategy, from ideology to dollar and cents unionism, is significant. It shows that the steel union was aware that their original approach, accusing Mine-Mill of being Communist-dominated, was a failure.

The Steelworkers, intent on "setting the pattern," pressed for a job evaluation plan at American Smelting and Refining Company's big Garfield, Utah smelter. The proposed program was to be similar to that worked out by management and union in the steel industry. The company flatly said no, and negotiations ground to a standstill. The Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service intervened in June, but to no avail; neither side was willing to make any major concessions. The steel union, realizing that its status in the industry was at stake, struck the Garfield smelter on July 2. The federal government, because of the Korean War and the crucial need for new copper for the defense effort (Garfield is the world's largest copper smelter) directly intervened; the President, on July 26, sent the controversy to the National Wage Stabilization Board (NWSB), and told the union he hoped it would order the men back to work

while the NWSB deliberated on the conflict.²⁸ The union responded by ending the work stoppage. The board opened public hearings on the dispute immediately; the steel union desired an immediate settlement in order to claim having set the industry pattern.

Meanwhile Mine-Mill opened negotiations with all major companies in the industry. The union had not been able, previously, to establish even company-wide bargaining, but saw a good opportunity this year as all major contracts terminated on approximately the same date. Mine-Mill's hope was to make a company-wide or industry-wide settlement before the Steelworkers came to an agreement at the Garfield smelter. The union, unable to reach agreement with any company, set a strike for August 1. The Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service intervened but failed, and on August 27 all Mine-Mill locals went on strike---the first industry-wide walkout in the history of nonferrous metals industry unionism. President Truman appealed to the union to order the men back to work; the union refused, and the President, invoking the emergency provisions of the Taft-Hartley Act, put the men back on the job. He also appointed a board of inquiry. At this same time, for reasons as yet unknown, Kennecott came to an agreement with Mine-Mill. The other companies, though unhappy with the rapid settlement, felt they had no choice but to go along. Anaconda and Phelps Dodge settled with Mine-Mill on

28. Jensen, V., op. cit., p. 282.

basically the same terms as the Kennecott settlement. At a later date the Steelworkers settled at the Garfield smelter of the American Smelting and Refining Company. This company had been reluctant to settle earlier for most of its other properties were represented by Mine-Mill. The final settlement at the Garfield smelter was for about one cent an hour more than Mine-Mill's, but the furor was over by this time, and Mine-Mill had the publicity and the prestige of the initial settlement. Mine-Mill was not silent in victory; it had won the battle and it made the most of it.

The events of 1950-1951 clearly show the predominant position of Mine-Mill in the nonferrous metals industry. It decisively defeated the Steelworkers in NLRB elections, and its locals rebuffed the steel union's overtures to affiliate. The Steelworkers waged mainly an ideological battle for votes in 1950; the mine, mill, and smelter workers, largely unimpressed, remained in Mine-Mill. The following year, using the Garfield smelter as the example, the Steelworkers tried to set the pattern for wage increases in the industry. Again they failed; Mine-Mill got the headlines, and set the industry pattern. The steel union's position was unimpressive; it had twice gone forth into battle, and was twice roundly defeated. From these two initial defeats it was never to fully recover; prestige lost takes considerable time and impressive victories to regain.

The outcome of the above events was to increase the prestige of Mine-Mill. The union had been little affected by its ouster from the CIO, either in membership or in bargaining

strength. In fact never before had the union been able to shut down the entire industry. This fact showed its members that despite alleged Communist control the union could take a position and deliver the goods in "bread and butter" unionism style. The Communist question, in the face of this, was, to the membership, unimportant.

The collective bargaining between Mine-Mill and the industry for the years 1952-1954 was not of earthshaking importance. Each year wage increases were won; at no time were there prolonged strikes, although the union voted strike action each year. The wage gains were modest, in part due to the threat of foreign competition.²⁹ The following chart is a brief summary of Mine-Mill wage gains for the period 1946-1954; the figures are those published by the union.³⁰

<u>Year</u>	<u>Increased Wages</u>	<u>Other Issues</u>	<u>Total Value</u>
1946	18.5¢		18.5¢
1947	12 ¢	6-paid holidays	15 ¢
1948	12 ¢		12 ¢
1949	5 ¢		5 ¢
1950	10 ¢		10 ¢
1951	15 ¢	pensions- reclassifications	21 ¢
1952	8 ¢		8 ¢
1953	8 ¢	fringes	8.5¢
1954	5 ¢	welfare gains- shift differential	8.5¢
Total: 93.5¢ hour		Total: \$1.06½ hour	

29. Kennecott, Phelps Dodge, and Anaconda all have extensive foreign copper holdings, mainly in Chile. The importance of this will be mentioned in connection with the 1959 strike.
30. "Taft-Hartley Time Bomb Explodes!" March of Labor, New York, 1955, p. 3.

The jurisdictional war between the Steelworkers and Mine-Mill went into partial eclipse for a time after 1951. However, the steel union was by no means through in its attempt to destroy Mine-Mill, and soon began again to contest Mine-Mill through the medium of NLRB elections. In 1952-1953 it was generally unsuccessful, and Mine-Mill was able to report in 1953 that of the 48 elections it had participated in over the past year it had not lost a single major unit to a rival union.³¹ The Steelworkers decided, in 1954, again to make a major drive to unseat Mine-Mill as the major bargaining agent in the industry; as before, the drive was centered in Montana.

In 1954 an internal struggle that had been raging for ~~some~~ time suddenly came to the surface in the Montana locals. Many of the local leaders were dissatisfied with the national leadership, and despairing of changing the organization from within, decided to withdraw and affiliate with the Steelworkers. To the steel union the situation looked ideal: here were local leaders attempting to lead their followers out of Mine-Mill and into the Steelworkers. The local leaders approached the steel union and a tentative agreement of affiliation was agreed upon. The national CIO rejoiced, and Walter Reuther, its president, announced publicly the reaffiliation of these locals into the CIO. As events proved, this action was premature. The local leaders favoring withdrawal from Mine-Mill had some support, but not enough. When they and their supporters

31. Official Proceedings of the 49th Convention of the IUMMSW, September 14-19, 1953.

claimed the old miner's union hall in Butte this was too much; loyal Mine-Mill members, marching over 600 strong, came to the union hall, and physically retook it.³² In March 1954, the NLRB conducted an election to determine who was to be the bargaining agent. Mine-Mill won again, 4,099 to 2,185 for the Steelworkers, with less than 70 votes for "No Union."³³ Speaking of the Mine-Mill victory, Fortune said succinctly, "Its smashing victory gives it a firm hold on the key Montana locals."³⁴ Why the steel union was again so strongly defeated, this time with the support of most local leaders, is difficult to ascertain. But some reasons were: the desire to have an exclusive nonferrous metals industry union; dislike of outsiders; disbelief in the Communist charges leveled at the national union leadership; the effective campaign waged by Mine-Mill; and satisfaction with the economic gains won by Mine-Mill in collective bargaining sessions. The result in Montana considerably strengthened Mine-Mill's position, and certainly hurt the already weak position of the steel union in the industry. The initial 1950-1951 setbacks were damaging enough, this 1954 setback effectively ended the Steelworkers campaign to replace Mine-Mill as the dominant union in the industry.³⁵

32. Life, April 12, 1954, p. 49ff. Illustrations show the loyalists marching to the old union hall and physically repossessing it.

33. Nation, April 10, 1954, inside front cover.

34. Fortune, July 1954, p. 36.

35. In 1956 NLRB elections were again held in Montana. The Steelworkers were defeated 4,126 to 2,452. See: Proceedings of the 52nd Convention, IUMMSW, March 18-23, 1957, p. 254-255. In January 1957, the Steelworkers put the "For Rent" sign in the window of their Butte headquarters. For the picture and caption see Mine-Mill Union, February 1957, p. 1.

Mine-Mill was by 1955 clearly the dominant union in the industry, and was without effective challengers. In that year it won, after an industry-wide strike, wage settlements averaging 15 cents an hour from Kennecott, Phelps Dodge, and American Smelting and Refining Company.³⁶ Again the agreement was for one year only; an interesting fact considering that most industrial unions by 1955 were signing contracts that lasted for two or more years. The union joined the national trend towards extended contracts the following year.

In 1956 Mine-Mill signed three year contracts with the leading firms in the industry without a strike or even a strike vote being taken. The settlements are briefly outlined below:³⁷

<u>Company:</u>	<u>1956</u>	<u>1957</u>	<u>1958</u>	<u>Total*</u>
Kennecott	10¢	6¢	6¢	25.45¢
Phelps Dodge	9¢	6¢	6¢	24.3 ¢
Anaconda	10¢	7¢	7¢	27 ¢
American Smelting and Refining Company	10¢	6¢	6¢	27 ¢

* Total includes health and fringe benefits.

The contracts signed with the above companies extended until June 1959. When they expired, an industry-wide strike took place; an analysis of which is the subject of the next section of this paper. Before passing to this however, the position of Mine-Mill in the period 1956-1959 merits mention.

36. Mine-Mill Union, August 15, 1955, p. 1-5.

37. Mine-Mill Union, July 1956, p. 1.

During this three year period, Mine-Mill weathered a recession that made 15,000 of its members unemployed, and still remained strong. It should be noted that throughout the recession period there was no collective bargaining in the industry; the three year contracts safely carried Mine-Mill through the recession. The jurisdictional war came to an end with the defeat of the steel union in 1954. There were elections after that date but Mine-Mill was able to win them handily. At the 1958 union convention officials were able to report that in 1957 "there were no raids on our basic jurisdiction_ _ _."38 Also the union was able to announce that membership was on the increase in the autonomous Canadian division of the union, and that in 1957 eleven new locals were chartered there. Mine-Mill, already working in alliance with some craft unions at local mines, mills, and smelters, gained some respectability and more prestige at the 48th Annual Meeting of the AFL-CIO's Metal Trades Department. This body called upon the national AFL-CIO to charter Mine-Mill and bring it back into the "House of Labor."39 In organizing the unorganized Mine-Mill finally arose from the doldrums. On October 30, 1957, the union won bargaining rights at Magma Copper Company's mine at Superior, Arizona, by a vote of 460 to 311 "No Union" votes. This was the first time in the mine's 46 years of operation that it had been organized.40 Also at San Manuel Copper Company,

38. Proceedings of the 53rd Convention IUMMSW, March 10-14, 1958, pp. 220-221.

39. Mine-Mill Union, January 1958, p. 1.

40. Mine-Mill Union, November 1957, p. 1.

a wholly owned subsidiary of Magma Copper Company, the union won representation rights.⁴¹ Taken together, Mine-Mill became the sole bargaining agent for some 2,000 workers (when the latter mine is in full production). All told, in Arizona, Mine-Mill represents some 6,000 workers in the copper industry as compared to approximately 200 by the Steelworkers.⁴²

As the union approached the 1959 negotiations it was in a stronger position than at any other time since the split from the CIO in 1950. In this period it had faced the Steelworkers directly in 46 NLRB elections. Mine-Mill won 37 for 34,865^{workers}; the Steelworkers won 9 for 5,648 workers.⁴³ It had met and conquered the steel union in almost all cases, and had made solid economic advances for its members in face of employer opposition; government opposition due to the Communist issue; and AFL-CIO opposition (this was not always in the form of the Steelworkers union). In 1957 Business Week said Mine-Mill had proved that "___ a union can survive as an out-cast in the labor movement as long as it produces favorable contracts for its members."⁴⁴ This was as applicable in 1959 as in 1957, and as the events of the 1959 strike will show, it is still applicable today.

41. Proceedings of the 53rd Convention IUMMSW, op. cit., p. 221.

42. Mine-Mill Union, August 1957, p. 12.

43. Mine-Mill Union, June 1959, p. 12.

44. Business Week, March 30, 1957, p. 159.

IV.

The collective bargaining sessions on new contracts in the nonferrous metals industry began in the spring of 1959. The bargaining, from the start, was tough; the companies adopted a "hold the line" policy early and appeared ready to adhere to it even in the event of a long strike. Mine-Mill was beset with problems that were intimately tied to the nature of the industry. During the 1957-1958 recession some 15,000 Mine-Mill members were unemployed; by 1959 mine production had fully recovered yet the companies were now able to produce the same amount of copper as before with 7,000 fewer workers.⁴⁵ Also the industry had, possibly in anticipation of a strike, large stocks of copper; enough to take a strike for a prolonged period of time without being injured. Finally, the "Big Three" had large foreign holdings, which reduced the effectiveness of any possible strike, and tended to act as an limitation on Mine-Mill demands.

The question of foreign copper holdings and foreign competition on the domestic market is of crucial concern to Mine-Mill. Some mention of the international copper situation is necessary for any understanding of the 1959 negotiations. The union has a long history of lobbying to protect American mines; desiring some form of government subsidy instead of import restrictions, to keep the high-cost marginal mines in production and thus keep Mine-Mill members employed. Unless the domestic

45. Proceedings of the 54th Convention IUMMSW, March 16-21, 1959, p. 245.

copper industry increases production, which it has not done in any large way, Mine-Mill faces the problem of declining membership as the same amount of copper is mined by fewer and fewer men due to new advances in mine technology. This has been the trend in the industry since World War Two. The foreign holdings, oftentimes with more efficient equipment than domestic mines, are able to produce at greatly lower total cost; this savings being largely made in labor costs. The following Mine-Mill announcement, though not free of the ideological bent, gives a fairly accurate picture of the situation faced by the union:⁴⁶

"The low-wage high-profit operations controlled by U.S. metals corporations elsewhere in the world pose a direct threat to us all the time, but the threat becomes more immediate, direct, and dangerous when we get into bargaining. When production is flowing smoothly from their El Teniente mine in Chile, Kennecott bosses can dare the miners of Bingham Canyon to walk out on strike in support of a wage increase demand. They can say: 'We'll get all the copper we need from Chile---and only pay 21 cents an hour in wages for it!' _ _ _The big companies are loyal only to the dollar. When demand falls, the first thing they will do is to shut down their high cost operations, which are here in the U.S. They will keep their low wage, low cost operations abroad going---full blast."

The ability to import from abroad at low cost certainly places Mine-Mill at a bargaining disadvantage; one of which the

46. A World At Peace, IUMMSW, 1953, p. 25.

industry is well aware. Also, the large amount of unsold copper in July placed a further burden on the union, for the companies almost welcomed a strike (if they did not openly welcome one), knowing that if production continued, the domestic copper price, never stable (price instability is one of the domestic industries greatest problems), would fall. The relevance of this is clearly brought out in the following quotation, "Prices for copper in the more sensitive markets declined last week as traders expected there might not be a shutdown of U.S. mines_ _ _."47

Before proceeding to the direct negotiations and the strike in the copper industry, further mention should be made of the United States copper industry's position in the international copper market. The United States is a net copper importer, accounting, since 1946 for 24 per cent of world copper production while absorbing 41.5 per cent of world production.⁴⁸ Before 1940 this nation was a net copper exporter, but despite the increased output in World War Two, "U.S. mine production failed by a wide margin to keep pace with the extraordinary expansion of U.S. copper requirements."⁴⁹ The table on the following page illustrates this.⁵⁰

47. Wall Street Journal, Pacific Coast Edition (PCE), June 22, 1959, p. 22.

48. Engineering and Mining Journal, August 1959, p. 92.

49. Ibid.

50. Ibid., p. 93.

World Mine Production of Copper*

	<u>1936-39</u>	<u>1940-45</u>	<u>1946-50</u>	<u>1951-55</u>	<u>1956</u>	<u>1957</u>	<u>1958</u>
United States	680	959	780	935	1,114	1,093	980
Latin America	478	623	558	555	672	685	639
Rhodesia and South Africa	230	286	298	450	522	559	525
Australia	23	26	17	33	55	58	76

* all figures in thousands of short tons

For the last fifteen years United States copper production has fluctuated in the neighborhood of one million short tons a year. At the same time the United States imports an estimated 250,000 short tons a year; the amount imported has increased as the United States market for copper increases, while domestic production remains relatively stable. There is no reason to assume the domestic industry will greatly expand output in the future.⁵¹ The consequences of this policy to Mine-Mill are obvious, and do not need elaboration here.

One final consideration should be mentioned here; the industry raised the inflation question in spring 1959, as negotiations neared, and said it must hold the line in face of foreign competition and the like. The rationale for raising this issue was similar to that used by the steel industry in its 1959 wage negotiations. This issue, while not completely irrelevant, is not of chief importance in the copper industry provided the government continues to levy a tariff on copper

51. Early this year Kennecott opened a new refinery in Maryland, the cost 30 million dollars, the purpose, to refine raw copper from Chile. See: Engineering and Mining Journal, March 1960, p. 72.

imports, something it is likely to continue for political reasons (there is a large bloc of Western Senators and Congressmen strongly in favor of it), and for national defense. The inflation issue was met squarely by at least some people in the industry as the Engineering and Mining Journal observed:⁵²

"Despite much talk of inflation and rising costs of production, the statistical record of the past four years has offered no evidence which warrants expectation of any other average price than 30¢ per lb. for the period 1960-1975."

The price of 30 cents per pound was the selling price of copper before the strike began in August 1959. Another observer expressed the same view when he said:⁵³

"The present price of copper is, I believe, reasonable. At this level its competitive position is strong, in fact I doubt that a price 10 per cent---15 per cent higher would seriously affect copper usage. It is my belief that apart from the short term speculative variations, the metal is entering a period of relative price stability which it has not enjoyed in many years."

If the inflation question, and the threat of foreign competition (the latter rather meaningless since the big United States producers also have extensive holdings abroad) were not the real issues in 1959 what were the issues? Two issues seem to stand out. First, management desired to regain some

52. Engineering and Mining Journal, August 1959, p. 91.

53. Bradfield, J.R., "Current Outlook for Base Metals," Canadian Mining Journal, November 1959, p. 98-99.

of the control over job composition and work rules that it had lost in previous negotiations (the "right to manage" issue). Second, the companies sought to subcontract some jobs usually done by Mine-Mill members without union interference. If we take these two factors, and couple them with the large amount of unsold copper in existence in June and July, it is clear why the strike took place.

The 1959 negotiations in the industry began slowly, both sides clearly "dragging their feet." The industry refused to make any offer, the union would not present any demands to the industry. Instead it said:⁵⁴

"Our position in the current negotiations_ _ _is for the companies to make an offer and we will tell them quickly whether it's substantial or not. We've never been bashful that way before. After all, you can't accept zero as a figure."

On July 1 all major contracts expired, but the union chose to continue working without a contract. The union Executive Board asked the membership to grant it authority to call a strike if a satisfactory agreement could not be reached. This the membership did, voting 82 per cent in favor of the Executive Board proposal.⁵⁵ Meanwhile the Steelworkers were bargaining with Kennecott for a wage increase; their contract ran until July 31.⁵⁶

54. Wall Street Journal, PCE, June 22, 1959, p. 22. Mine-Mill Vice-President O. Larson was the above speaker. As noted previously, he resigned from Mine-Mill in the midst of the strike and joined the Steelworkers union.

55. Mine-Mill Union, July 1959, p. 1.

56. Wall Street Journal, PCE, July 27, 1959. The steel union's major contracts are with Kennecott at Garfield, Utah, and Phelps Dodge at Laurel Hill, New York.

Lack of progress in negotiations was the rule in the industry as neither side presented any really negotiable demands. Late in July Mine-Mill publicly submitted a number of concrete demands to the copper industry. The demands were:⁵⁷

1. An across-the-board wage increase of 15-17 cents an hour.
2. Supplementary unemployment benefits.
3. Premium pay for Saturday and Sunday work, and double and one-half time pay for holiday work.
4. Health and welfare program improvements.
5. A one-year agreement, or a two-year agreement with a wage re-opener at the end of the first year.
6. Non-economic issues: no contracting out of work usually performed by Mine-Mill members, changes in work rules, and changes in the grievance and arbitration procedure.

The companies promptly rejected these and the Steelworker's demands as untenable, and the Wall Street Journal noted:⁵⁸

"Officials of the major copper producers indicated in interviews they felt further talks with the union would be futile and they have no present intention of making offers. Their position was that the union would have to modify greatly its demands before any serious bargaining could resume."

On August 10 Mine-Mill and the Steelworkers struck the Kennecott Copper Company properties in Utah. By the end of the month Phelps Dodge, Anaconda, Magma, and American Smelting

57. Mine-Mill Union, August 1959, p. 1.

58. Wall Street Journal, PCE, August 24, 1959, p. 5.

and Refining were also closed down. Some 30,000 Mine-Mill members were out on strike, joined by approximately 5,000 Steelworkers. Both sides agreed on one point---there were no signs of an early settlement. The Wall Street Journal noted that, "Hefty copper supplies in this country and abroad have forestalled any shortage of the red metal and also curbed any sharp spurt in prices."⁵⁹ And a top Kennecott official said, "We're not interested in a quick settlement, so long as there are certain basic, non-economic issues to be straightend out."⁶⁰

The strike entered October with no sign of a settlement. No one outside the two direct parties to the dispute seemed concerned. The Canadian Mining Journal observed, "The majority of consumers appeared to be unworried about the duration of the strike because most of them had been able to build up carry-through inventories following the first news of labour difficulties."⁶¹ However, as the strike continued to lengthen third party interest in the strike increased. The Denver Post, never known for its liberal editorials, expressed disapproval with the industry's policy of no negotiations, and said:⁶²

"Unlike the steel firms, the five major non-ferrous metals companies do not argue that they can't afford a wage increase without a price increase."

Nonetheless the stalemate continued through October and entered November before the first settlements were reached.

59. Wall Street Journal, PCE, September 8, 1959, p. 1.

60. Ibid., p. 13.

61. Canadian Mining Journal, October 1959, p. 138.

62. Quoted in Mine-Mill Union, October 1959, p. 8.

In October one important development did take place, even though it occurred abroad. Kennecott's operations in Chile were struck by the Chilean copper workers' union. "This new development completely shut down all Kennecott mine production."⁶³ This raised the price of copper on the New York market by two cents a pound, a substantial increase. By late November Kennecott's copper stocks were completely depleted, and perhaps with this in mind the firm settled its dispute with the Steelworkers. The new contract was for two years with a wage package of 22.3 cents an hour. Mine-Mill, offered the same package, refused, declaring, "To dig the ore and mill it, they've got to settle with Mine-Mill."⁶⁴ However, a few days later Mine-Mill settled with American Smelting and Refining at the same general level---a two year, 22.4 cents an hour wage package.⁶⁵ When this happened copper prices fell in anticipation of an early settlement throughout the industry; such a settlement was still a long way in the future.

In early December Mine-Mill asked the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service to intervene in its four-month strike against Kennecott. The issues holding up the settlement were now non-economic in nature. Through the offices of the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service a compromise was reached, and the union and Kennecott signed a new two year contract in

63. Canadian Mining Journal, November 1959, p. 122.

64. Mine-Mill Union, December 1959, p. 8.

65. Wall Street Journal, November 30, 1959, p. 2.

mid-December. The total wage package was 22.3 cents an hour, the same as the Steelworkers-Kennecott agreement.⁶⁶

As the strike continued into December dissension appeared among the Montana locals of Mine-Mill. Early that month Mine-Mill Local 117 broke away from the Joint Committee of Mine-Mill, and two days before Christmas voted 991 to 447 to accept an Anaconda offer. The local signed a 30 month contract with a wage package estimated at 22.5 cents an hour spread over this period.⁶⁷ Anaconda had all along pleaded that it was unable to grant a wage increase as large as the other major firms in the industry; there was some justification for this because Anaconda does appear to have higher cost mining operations due mainly to the fact that copper mining in Montana is underground, while elsewhere copper is strip-mined. No other locals broke away from the Joint Committee, nor were there any other major settlements in December.

The following month Magma Copper Company and Mine-Mill reached agreement on a 18 month contract totaling 22.4 cents an hour at the company's Arizona mines.⁶⁸ This left the second and third largest United States producers of raw copper, Phelps Dodge and Anaconda, still to settle with the union. The strike at their properties continued throughout January.

66. Wall Street Journal, December 17, 1959, p. 2.

67. Wall Street Journal, December 24, 1959, p. 3.

68. Wall Street Journal, January 18, 1960, p. 22.

By February 1960 the strike against Phelps Dodge and Anaconda was six months old. At this time Chief Federal Negotiator Joseph Finnegan personally entered the negotiations. Partly through his efforts Mine-Mill settled with these two firms in February, and the longest strike in the history of the copper industry had ended. Anaconda was the last company to sign a contract with Mine-Mill; the strike against it had lasted 177 days.⁶⁹ It seems that the issues of management's "right to manage," and the contracting out of work usually performed by Mine-Mill members, were never really settled; and the non-economic parts of the new contracts were similar to earlier contracts. The major wage provisions of the 1959 company-union contracts in the industry are outlined on the following page.⁷⁰

69. Wall Street Journal, February 12, 1960, p. 4. The Anaconda agreement was less than the other major producers, in part, because its costs are higher. As noted, "Anaconda held out for a lower package increase than other concerns on the ground its Montana mining operations, which are underground, are more costly than other mining operations in the industry."
70. These figures are compiled from the Mine-Mill Union, Wall Street Journal, Canadian Mining Journal, and Engineering and Mining Journal.

<u>Company:</u>	<u>Length of Contract</u>	<u>Wage Increases</u>	<u>Other Benefits</u>	<u>Total Package</u>
Kennecott	Steelworkers: Expires August 1, 1961	8.7¢ immediately; 8.7¢ August 1, 1960	4.9¢ in health and fringe benefits	22.3¢
	Mine-Mill: Expires July 1, 1961	7 to 10¢ December 16, 1959; 7 to 10¢ July 1, 1960	Additional holiday (makes 7), little other benefits	22.3¢
Phelps Dodge	Expires July 1, 1962	8 $\frac{1}{2}$ ¢ immediately; 8 $\frac{1}{2}$ ¢ July 1, 1960; 8 $\frac{1}{2}$ ¢ July 1, 1961	Additional holiday (makes 7), full vacations despite strike, more fringes	33.4¢
Anaconda	Local 117: Expires July 1, 1962	5¢ immediately; 5¢ January 1, 1961; 5¢ January 1, 1962	Additional holiday (makes 8), expanded health and welfare benefits	22.5¢
	Other locals: Expires July 1, 1962	7 $\frac{1}{2}$ ¢ immediately; 7 $\frac{1}{2}$ ¢ May 1, 1961; and 40% of Butte miners receive immediate increase of 27 $\frac{1}{2}$ ¢ in base rate	Additional holiday (makes 8), expanded health and welfare benefits, full vacation this year despite strike	23¢
American Smelting & Refining	Expires July 1, 1961	7¢ immediately; 7¢ July 1, 1960	Extensive health and welfare benefits, the best in the industry	22.4¢
Magna	Expires July 1, 1961	8 $\frac{1}{2}$ ¢ immediately; 8 $\frac{1}{2}$ ¢ July 1, 1960	Additional holiday (makes 7), further fringe benefits	22.5¢

V.

The Communist issue, which was the cause of constant internal dissension, and, finally, expulsion from the CIO, is no longer in the limelight. The issue was used in vain by the Steelworkers and other unions in their early attempts to destroy the union. Yet today many of the same leaders are at the helm of Mine-Mill as were there in the strife-torn years after World War Two. The current union president, John Clark, has been at his post since 1948. It is true that Maurice Travis, long considered by some to be the real leader of the union, is now retired, but a close reading of the union newspaper reveals much the same editorial policy and militancy that existed in earlier days. The only group still active pursuing the Communist issue is the federal government; today it is actively prosecuting fourteen past and present Mine-Mill leaders (M. Travis is the leading one) for falsely swearing to the Taft-Hartley Act's non-Communist affidavit. The cases are now on appeal, with the union pledged to carry the fight for acquittal to the United States Supreme Court if necessary. Regardless of the final outcome, however, the day to day workings of the union will be little affected.

The union is still "left-wing" in outlook, but this does not seem to affect its posture at the bargaining table. It is militant, as indeed are most, if not all, "left-wing" unions, past and present. And the union appears responsible to its membership. Many people do not feel that "What is needed is

a unionism without a left-wing ideology, a unionism that accepts the responsibilities as well as the freedoms of democracy, a unionism that accepts all of the democratic tradition."⁷¹ Perhaps the outlook of Mine-Mill is needed by more American unions; many people feel so, but, whether this is true or not, the union does bargain, does not wage "political" strikes, and leaves its "left-wing" views to its newspaper. It has shown a willingness to be second to none in winning economic gains for its membership.⁷² This is not meant as condoning or condemning Mine-Mill, but merely to point out that the union, as the economic representative of its members, fulfills the seemingly basic function of a trade union in the United States---to win wage increases for its membership.

The 1959 strike, only recently concluded, is still too near at hand, and enough details are not available, to state its possible long run effects. The strike was long and costly to the union and its members, and it is conceivable that dissatisfied members may move to disaffiliate. Yet in light of past experience it seems unlikely that this will occur, and extremely unlikely, if it does occur, that it will be successful.

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71. Jensen, V., Collective Bargaining in the Nonferrous Metals Industry, Berkeley, 1955, p. 69. For a somewhat contrary view see: Lens, Sidney, The Crisis of American Labor, New York, 1959.
72. Some observers feel this is true only because of the threat imposed by the Steelworkers; yet this threat was largely non-existent in 1959.

The events since the split in 1950 reveal that, barring some unforeseen occurrence, Mine-Mill will continue to remain the dominant union in the nonferrous metals industry. The source of its strength---the long heritage of independent Western unionism, the fact that its leaders have always been branded radicals, the ability to win wage gains for its membership---will keep it dominant in the industry. However, another trend is also apparent---the failure of the copper industry to expand production and the introduction of labor saving devices which reduce employment. In the coal industry, due to new, labor saving machinery, employment has fallen; this also will occur in the nonferrous metals industry. Thus we see the future course of events in the industry: Mine-Mill will remain the dominant union, but its influence and power will decline with the passage of time.