

Background to the Great Leap Forward
in Iron and Steel

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Industrial Story of the Year

10.7 Million Tons of Steel: A Great Target Fulfilled

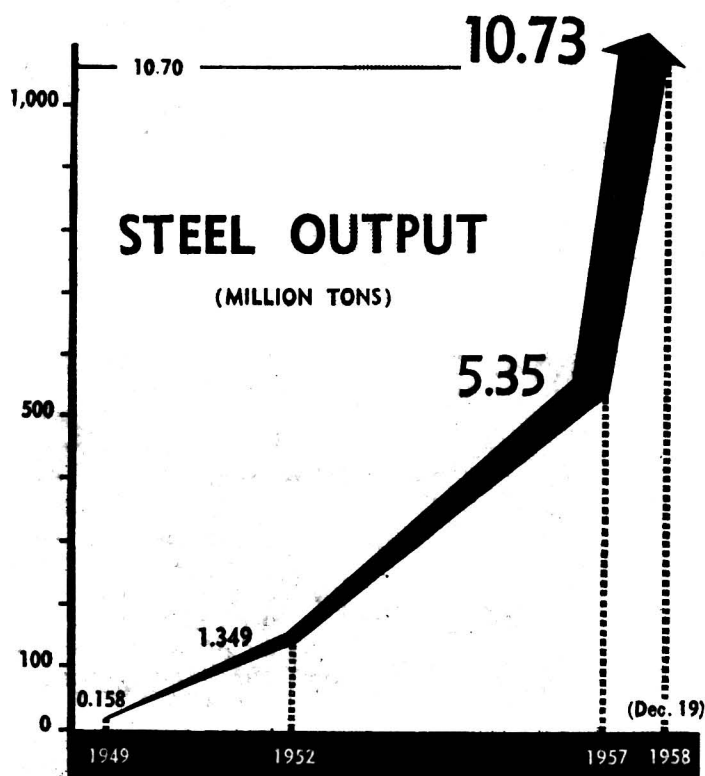
Vice-Premier Po I-po Reviews the Record Achievement

CHINA produced 10.73 million tons of steel from January 1 to December 19, 1958. The year's target of 10.7 million tons was reached ahead of time and it means that China has doubled her steel output in a single year.

Commenting on this unprecedented success in steel production, Po I-po, Vice-Premier and Chairman of the State Economic Commission, described in a press interview this year's general leap forward on the industrial front with steel as the key, and the big bumper harvest and the people's commune movement on the agricultural front as two events of great historic significance in China's economic life. The following are excerpts from the interview.

This call issued by the Chinese Communist Party in August to produce 10.7 million tons of steel in 1958 was taken up by the people throughout the country with enthusiasm, soon touching off a gigantic campaign for iron and steel involving all Communist Party members and all the people.

Steel output has been growing at an amazing rate in the few months since last September. Taking the average steel monthly output between January and August as 100, the figure rose to 178 in September, 341 in October and 440 in November.



The rapid rise in steel output was closely connected with a sharp rise in pig iron. At the very outset of the mass movement to make iron and steel, the Central Committee of the Party clearly pointed out that the key to turning out 10.7 million tons of steel was the production of pig iron. Thanks to hard efforts all round, a very big increase in the output of pig iron was achieved in September and October. This ensured that the needs of steel-making would be met.

Big—Small—Mass

Around October, the Central Committee of the Party pointed out in good time that the big, modern enterprises should make further efforts to mobilize the masses, tap their latent productive capacity, improve smelting techniques and raise the output; while in local, small and indigenous-style production of iron and steel, the stress should not be on quantity alone but especially on quality. All over the country, Communist Party committees and metallurgical departments adopted various effective steps in this respect, with outstanding results. The large iron and steel enterprises raised their output and quality considerably; and the pig iron produced by indigenous methods gave great support to the production of big, modern plants. At the same time, the use of iron and steel produced by indigenous methods has been continually extended. Nodular cast iron, rolled steel and machines are now made from these products. This, to a certain extent, has prepared the material basis for the industrialization of the people's communes.

The leaping progress in the iron and steel industry has not only pushed forward all departments of heavy industry but stimulated all branches of the entire national economy.

It can now be estimated that the output of machine-tools this year will be about 3.2 times that of last year, coal output will increase more than twofold, chemical fertilizers by over 60 per cent, electricity and crude oil by more than 40 per cent, cement by more than 30 per cent and cotton yarn by about 43 per cent. The rate of industrial growth this year is the highest ever recorded in Chinese history. In absolute figures, the increase in the output of many products has surpassed the total increase during the First Five-Year Plan.

Source of Success

The success in steel and in industry as a whole is first of all attributed to the fact that the Communist Party made a timely shift in the main emphasis of leadership from agriculture to industry and carried through the

policy of effecting "an overall leap forward with steel as the key."

Facts have shown that the policy of "an overall leap forward with steel as the key" is correct because the growth of our industry depends to a very great degree on the growth of iron and steel and machine-building, which are the two great industrial "marshals," the foundation and nucleus of modern industry. The growth of machine-building, in its turn, depends on the growth of the iron and steel industry. Only after the iron and steel industry has developed will the machine-building industry be able to obtain sufficient material and turn out machines and equipment in large quantities for the further development of other industries.

Industrial production, like everything else, must have its key and ordinary branches. Close attention should be given to the key branches while due care is also extended to the ordinary ones. Without emphasis on the former, the latter cannot be developed in the best way. If close attention is given to the key branches at the expense of the ordinary ones, there will be dislocations in the national economy. We have already gained some experience in this respect and will gain more in the future. Following the big progress in iron and steel this year, fairly big advances have also been made in electricity, basic chemicals, communications and transport, but they are still unable to meet the needs of the development of the national economy. This sort of thing is not anything to be surprised at; it is an inevitable outcome of rapid development. We are taking positive steps to adjust and solve the problems that arise from it.

The second important reason is that we have launched a mass movement on the industrial front and given full scope to the initiative of the masses in running industry. Mass movements are needed both in small, indigenous-style production units and in big, modern plants.

The policy that the whole Party and the whole people should run industry has been implemented in our country this year, particularly in the second half of the year. Tens of millions of workers, peasants and soldiers, and of students, functionaries and other city people took part in iron and steel production or other industrial work. Geological prospecting was conducted on an unprecedented scale throughout the nation, and many mineral deposits were discovered. Great numbers of iron-smelting and steel-making furnaces—and of small coal pits, coking plants, oil refineries, chemical fertilizer plants and machine-building plants—were built all over the country. All this accounts for the rapid rise in the output of iron, steel and other products.

The big, modern plants have also mobilized the masses of their workers in the drive for steel, launched the technical revolution, tapped their latent productive capacity, and have thus played a decisive role in the fulfilment of this year's national iron and steel targets ahead of time.

Tasks in 1959

The coming year will be one of decisive significance in the "three years' hard battle." With regard to steel production, we should now do the following:

First, close attention should be given to the production of rolled steel and the manufacture of steel-rolling equipment. From now on, every place and particularly



STEEL MAKES HISTORY

It took **CHINA**

353 DAYS

to increase its steel output from 5.35
million tons to 10.73 million tons

(Jan. 1, 1958 - Dec. 19, 1958)

And it took

U.S.A.

7 YEARS to increase its steel output
from 5 million tons to 10.81 million tons
(1892-1899)

Britain

32 YEARS to increase its steel output
from 5.11 million tons to 10.02 million
tons (1903-1935)

Japan

20 YEARS to increase its steel output
from 5.22 million tons to 11.11 million
tons (1936-1956)

Germany

8 YEARS to increase its steel output
from 5.09 million tons to 10.06 million
tons (1897-1905)

France

29 YEARS to increase its steel output
from 5.3 million tons to 10.9 million
tons (1923-1952)

the key iron and steel enterprises should launch a mass movement centring on the increased output of rolled steel. By carrying out the technical revolution and tapping latent productive capacity to the full, the output of rolled steel will be considerably raised in the first quarter of 1959. At the same time, machine-building departments should speed up the production of steel-rolling equipment.

Secondly, close attention should be given to increasing the production of iron ore, coal, coke and fire-resistant materials, so that iron and steel enterprises will be assured of sufficient raw materials of good quality for the production of good-quality iron and steel. This calls for atten-

tion by the metallurgical and coal-mining departments to the speeding of work on these links, and by machine-building departments to accelerating the manufacture of mining equipment.

Thirdly, the check-up and consolidation of the small, indigenous-style iron and steel production units should continue. Though this will take a fairly long time, the first group of small iron and steel bases should be established and consolidated, and manpower should be rationally arranged and used in the first quarter of the coming year. This work should be combined with the present task of education, check-up and consolidation in the people's communes.

In establishing bases everything possible should be done wherever conditions are mature to enable the small and indigenous production units to develop into small integrated iron and steel enterprises which combine indigenous and modern production methods, like some of

those in Shangcheng, Honan Province, and Macheng, Hupeh Province.

Fourthly, further efforts will be made to improve the quality of iron and steel, solve certain technical problems with regard especially to the use in modern steel furnaces of iron made by indigenous methods, and the use of iron and steel made by indigenous methods for a wider range of products.

Fifthly, work will be done to improve transport, so that iron and steel production will get the supplies it needs. Iron made by indigenous methods and destined for the steel furnaces will be delivered to the big plants on time.

Sixthly, since winter has come, the living and working conditions of the big army of iron and steel makers should be properly taken care of everywhere. Normal production during the winter should be ensured.

THE NATION GREETES STEEL VICTORY

by OUR CORRESPONDENT

ON the evening of December 21, Peking's Central People's Broadcasting Station alerted the nation to an announcement of special importance: China had surpassed her target for steel output ahead of time: by the 19th of the month she had produced 10,730,000 tons of steel.

The news spread with lightning speed. On the following day papers frontpaged it with banner headlines in red, illustrations and charts. The nation rejoiced and with good reason.

Everybody's Business

10,700,000! This unusual figure has been a household word in China over the past few months blazoned on walls, and in the press. Four months ago, at its Peitaiho meeting, the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party called on the nation to double last year's steel output by the end of this year. The whole nation got busy. While the big and small steel works of the country made a major effort to step up output, myriads of small, "indigenous style" furnaces appeared in villages and towns. Steel-making became everybody's business. At the height of the drive you could see the glow of iron and steel making furnaces in the mountains and on the plains, in city and countryside, in the courtyards of office buildings and schools and on university campuses. On empty lots on housing estates housewives took to "cooking" steel. The talk was of the relative merits of brushwood furnace or the modified puddling furnace. The jargon of the steel-maker became everyday talk. This was the Party's mass line in industry in action. Steel was being made not only by workers, but by peasants, soldiers, students, government office workers, writers, nurse-maids . . . by men and women from every walk of life. Millions of others threw themselves into

the jobs of digging and bringing ore, scrap and fuel to the furnaces by rail and water, lorry and bullock cart. No means were overlooked to keep the furnaces going. Raw materials came up in hand-carts and wheelbarrows. Young Pioneers scurried around finding scrap in the most unlikely places. These were the days when the Party also called for the combining of mental and physical labour and implementation of the principle of integrating education with productive labour in the schools. Steel was the catalyst. Furnaces started in government offices turned pen-pushers into puddlers. Every school and university in the land started its steel furnace. A communist spirit of co-operation and ways of thinking was in the ascendant. People who had never seen an industrial plant in their lives became steel-making enthusiasts over-night. Party committees and groups led the way. The people learnt what the Party meant by "running industry by the whole Party and the whole nation" and, as the figures rose, they saw what it could achieve.

A young steel-worker of the Penchi No. 1 Iron and Steel Plant told reporters: "We've named our blast furnace the Young Idea because we resuscitated this 40-year-old furnace with our own hands after liberation. This year we revised our production target eight times and raised our annual output from 9,000 tons to 70,000 tons."

Peasants were no less enthusiastic in the drive for steel. Liang Hsun-wen, an agricultural labour model of Hupeh, and his whole family went into iron-smelting. He himself wielded the rabble at their home-made furnace while his father worked the bellows; his son crushed the ore while his wife brought it to the furnace in an old rice basket. They turned out well over 200 jin a day. And the Liangs were only one of the many millions of peasant households who turned industrial workers and went into iron and steel production.

China's women seized the opportunity to show what they could do in this "man-sized" job. There is a couplet about a furnace run by women in Huangmei:

Put aside the knitting needles;

Take the rabble up!

There's no trouble that can daunt us

Running furnaces for steel!

Gird on armour, mount your steed like

Heroines of yore!

End the old time superstitions,

Women, generals of steel!

Women in the country, besides working alongside their men, have also built no one knows how many furnaces of their own.

This was the pattern of things at the height of the campaign: a new giant steel-making open hearth furnace at Anshan pouring out 1,300 tons to 1,500 tons a day; countless small "lampshade," reverberatory or other types of furnaces of fire brick and clay, producing just a few hundred and more *jin* a day and each of them stepping up output, improving methods, adding to the total, pound by pound and ton by ton. The Shanghai No. 3 Steel Mill's converter shop increased daily output from an average of 300 tons to a high of 622 tons a day.

A corner-lot furnace that began as a midget grew in a few weeks to an efficiently run, storey-high converter.

When the news of victory was broadcast, the whole nation rejoiced with a sense of personal participation. The news reached the Anshan Iron and Steel Works that night, with the rataplan of drums the clash of cymbals and hiss of fire-crackers. There was dancing and singing. Workers of the first night shift of the No. 2 Steel Mill celebrated by turning out an extra heat of steel. In Peking, 6,000 students and faculty members of the Institute of Iron and Steel held a flying celebration meet-



A worker's drawing. "The Dragon Dance for 10.7 Million Tons of Steel"

By Wang Chang-shan

ing at which they pledged to give another boost to output and quality in the fine steel mills they have built. In Shanghai, workers of the No. 5 Steel Mill greeted the news by repairing a furnace in ten hours instead of the twenty originally scheduled. In the Wuhan Iron and Steel Works, China's second metallurgical giant, workers of the No. 1 blast furnace had already achieved a daily output of 2,426 tons of pig iron; they pledged to raise this still higher. In Paotow, where China's new giant steel centre is under construction, tens of thousands of builders took steps to speed construction for another great leap next year. People throughout the country celebrated with enormous enthusiasm and confidence that another mass effort will ensure fulfilment of the next year's target—18 million tons.

Seven-Year Plan

Great Soviet Plan to Build Communism

by YU CHAO-LI

Following is a translation of an article that appeared in "Hongqi" (Red Flag), No. 14, December 16, 1958, theoretical fortnightly published by the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party. — Ed.

THE stress at the Twenty-first Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union will be on discussion of the Seven-Year Plan for the Development of the National Economy of the U.S.S.R. The theses of Comrade N. S. Khrushchov's report on the plan have now been published. This is an important, historic event. It signifies that the great Soviet Union has entered a new era, in which the construction of communist society is unfolding. The Chinese people, building socialism under the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party, are im-

mensely inspired by this gigantic Soviet plan to build communism.

The level of development of productive forces which the Soviet Union has achieved through the heroic struggle of its people in the last 41 years has made it possible to put forward this grand task of building communism. The Soviet Union, the Seven-Year Plan provides, will develop industry on the basis of the latest technical and scientific achievements and expand agriculture on the basis of comprehensive mechanization and electrification. The total value of its industrial output will increase by 80 per cent, agriculture by 70 per cent, while investment in capital construction will be 80 per cent more than in the past seven years. National income will increase 62 to 65 per cent;