

Charles Hauswirth: The Eye Opener and the 1934 Butte, Montana Miners' Strike

On January 1, 1932, Charles A. Hauswirth began publication of the Butte, Montana weekly, the Eye Opener. Hauswirth used this self-published newspaper as a voice of the people and labor, speaking out against the proprietors of the Anaconda Copper Mining Company and Montana Power Company. The "absentee ownership," as Hauswirth dubbed the phenomenon of Eastern owned and operated companies who exploited the resources of the Western states and its peoples, was a major concern not being addressed by Butte leadership. The platform of the the Eye Opener would be used to counter the many political moves made by corporate leadership which Hauswirth considered to be unjust and unbeneficial to the Butte citizenry. It was this concern, set in the context of the Depression, the New Deal era of the early 1930's, and the backdrop of a booming mining industry that created the opportunity for Hauswirth to challenge the corporate leadership of Butte with the Eye Opener as his weapon.

In the 1930's Butte, Montana's economic life-blood could be attributed to the wealth of minerals located within its geographical boundaries. The majority of wealth brought to the city by these local mineral deposits would be collected by out-of-state actors. In the majority of cases the mines, mills, and fabrication plants which produced those minerals had been owned by nonresident companies¹. The capital provided from wages paid and various investment stages within mining operations, had been more than returned to the companies in profits. In 1939 the Mountain West produced \$126,000,000 worth of copper, returning only \$86,000,000 in money payments to the region.² Although Eastern companies made millions of dollars from the extraction of Butte's resources, they invested almost nothing back into the region. Despite Eastern companies' disregard for the welfare of Butte's land and people, their presence was not unsolicited.

In 1876, the sole Butte newspaper, the Miner, developed a major campaign to convince not only Eastern state investors but also Butte citizenry that a union between the two would be mutually beneficial. However, the Miner accomplished very little outside of arousing a slight case of pride and

1 K. Ross Toole, "When Big Money Came to Butte: The Migration of Eastern Capital to Montana, *Pacific Northwest Quarterly*, January 1953, 23.

2 Ibid.

fellowship throughout the city. It was actually the increasing financial stature of local men rather than the Miner that ultimately attracted real capital to Butte. Taking advantage of the depressed mines of Butte and its surrounding area, pioneering entrepreneurs such as Samuel T. Hauser, William A. Clark, A.J. Davis, and Marcus Daly opened the doors for Eastern Capital through the sale of copper interests and mining properties in Butte.³

Hauser led the way in attempting to attract Eastern Capital and eventually succeeded in luring one of the first large capital interest companies to Montana, the Missouri and Montana Mining Company of St. Louis.⁴ Hauser's success encouraged Butte banker A.J. Davis to try his hand at enticement of capital. He turned to Marcus Daly, a partner of George Hearst, J.B. Haggin, and Lloyd Tevis. The "Hearst-Haggin-Tevis Syndicate" of San Francisco ranked among the West's most powerful capitalists.⁵ Daly did not need much encouragement from Davis, however, for he already held interests in Montana mining and sought the backing of the "syndicate" to extend his growing mine properties.⁶ Davis also approached another influential capitalist, William A. Clark. Clark arrived in Montana as a prospector but soon rose to be included among the ranks of Butte's "Copper Kings". Taking advantage of depressed prices, Clark invested heavily in the silver and copper properties of Butte. However, ownership of mines was not enough. The cost of mining and refining was high and the need for further investment always grew. Therefore, Clark followed Daly's example of recruiting investors from outside the region and began pursuing sources of capital from Colorado.⁷

Foreign investment was as readily available as domestic. In fact, the former was often preferred due to fewer strings attached to its uses. With the financial panics of the late 1800's, capital was tight in the U.S. and those who were investing demanded favorable deals for themselves. Foreigners, mainly from England, settled for lower interest rates on U.S. money and invested thousands of Pound Sterling in Montana mines.⁸ This preference, however, would end as in 1887 the U.S. Congress passed a law prohibiting aliens from owning real estate in U.S. Territories. Thus, a main

3 Ibid.

4 Howard, Joseph Kinsey, *Montana; High, Wide and Handsome*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1943), 52

5 Malone, Michael P., Roeder Richard B., Lang, William L., *Montana: A History of Two Centuries*, rev. ed. (University of Washington Press, 1975), 204

6 Ibid., 202

7 Ibid.

8 Howard., 54

source of capital to Montana was abruptly cut off.⁹ Montana, being a Territory until establishing Statehood in 1899, was now solely dependent on domestic capital, putting it in a position to lose its independence due to the influence Eastern Capital. In 1899, Joseph Kinsey Howard captured the mood in Montana in his book, Montana: High, Wide, and Handsome, with a quote from the first elected Governor of Montana, Joseph K. Toole:

There are some wise men bold enough to insist that these stupendous combinations of capital are the offspring of humane impulses exclusively, and that they are designed solely to ameliorate the sufferings of mankind by cheapening the costs of production...Many of the so-called benefactors of mankind who lived in other days appear to have been made of the same clay as those of the present time, and like the latter did not always hang a lantern over the pit they dug...

In the light of history, then, we may be pardoned if in our ignorance or incredulity some of us should take issue with the incorporated humanitarians and seek to prevent that which, in our judgment, will destroy competition, limit production, and restrain trade, and raise prices, for the sole purpose of adding to the wealth of the few and the poverty of the many.

Montana was well on its way to complete manipulation by the companies now in control. As K. Ross Toole states in his essay printed in the Pacific Northwest Quarterly, January, 1953, "*When Big Money Came to Butte, The Migration of Eastern Capital to Montana*": "Butte's cry for capital had been answered".

The 1890's marked a transition in Montana's mining industry which would have an effect on political life as well. At the time, Montana ranked second in the nation in silver output and fourth in gold, while the U.S., led by Butte, produced more than half of the world's supply of copper. But copper was rising in its dominance in Western mining due to innovations in technology and the drop in price and demand for silver. Two major changes in the processing and refining technology of copper increased efficiency and lowered the costs of production. The application of the Bessemer process, pioneered by Butte's Parrot Silver and Copper Company, fired currents of air into molten copper in converters and efficiently yielded blister copper of high purity. The use of electrolysis to refine copper of its last traces of impurity, also served to increase the productivity of copper mining.¹⁰

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Malone, Michael P., *The Battle for Butte: Mining and Politics on the Northern Frontier, 1864-1906*, (University of Washington Press, 1981), 54

The economic situation in Montana was looking good with a bit of economic growth however, this would be short lived. The U.S. economy would soon experience depressed times in what would be dubbed the Panic of 1893. Prompted by a sharp drop in U.S. gold reserve and a sharp decline in the stock market in May and June of 1893, the U.S. economy fell into the most severe depression in its history up to that time. A major cause of the depression was the Sherman Silver Purchase Act of 1890. This act provided for large-scale purchases of silver as a basis for issuance of paper currency redeemable in either silver or gold.¹¹

In October of 1893, Congress followed President Grover Cleveland's advice and voted to repeal the 1890 Sherman Silver Purchase Act. Montana's mining industry was greatly affected, as the act had allowed a large subsidy of the Western silver mining industry. With the subsidy gone and the silver value depressed, the mining industry collapsed spectacularly. Silver as a vital, driving force in the Montana economy was dead. Copper was seen as the dominating metal of Montana's mining industry, with silver and gold dwindling to mere byproducts of copper mining.¹²

The transition from silver to copper would be smoothed over by the incredible copper production to follow. By 1897 the Anaconda mine in Butte led all copper producing mines in the U.S. with a yield of 131,471,127 pounds of copper marketed.¹³ Montana had surpassed Michigan, the previous leader in copper production in the U.S., by 56,877,000 pounds marketed.¹⁴ The economic upswing was not, however, felt by all in the industry.

In the early 1890's one of the most significant political third parties rose up to speak against the steady increase of corporate power in America. Although the Populist party origins were in the Midwest and Southern farming communities, Montana miners adopted the parties ideology after the silver collapse of 1893. The silver issue was also perceived as an avenue to oppose mainstream politics. A radical anti-corporate, anti-Eastern banner was adopted by the Populist, who joined with the Democrats in the fight for "free silver" and more direct democracy to counter the power of great wealth.¹⁵ A government silver purchasing program, under the "free silver" program of the Populists, would lead to employment opportunities for miners and increased profits for the mining industry.

11 Ibid.

12 Ibid.

13 Ibid., 53

14 Toole., 25

15 Malone, Roeder, Lang., 214

Montana Populists also opposed big business influence in setting of railroad rates, the recruitment of immigrant labor, and an extremely important issue to Butte citizens, company use of strikebreakers.¹⁶

By 1898 Populist party participation eventually faded out, with members mainly dissolving into the Democratic party. Populism scrambled party lines in Montana and left an enduring legacy of party irregularity and anti-corporate, anti-Eastern radicalism on the left.¹⁷ Its ideological marks were left in future labor attacks against corporate power, and would give rise to the Twentieth Century Progressives and reformers in Montana.¹⁸

Enter, Charles Hauswirth. He was self-proclaimed to “always be a republican”,¹⁹ was however, a progressive first and his battles with Amalgamated Copper and Montana Power were backed up by early Populist ideals. Hauswirth called himself Republican until his split with the party in 1934 out of respect and admiration for party legacy, particularly the contributions of Abraham Lincoln, Ulysses S. Grant, and William T. Sherman.²⁰ Along with Populist ideals came progressive action. With roots in the Republican party, progressive movements began to appear just as soon as problems arose of corporations and trusts and financial power. As far back as 1872 there had been a Liberal Republican party organized to ask for civil service reform, and later a Labor party was organized to agitate the problems of capital and labor, the control of banks and railroads, and the disposal of public lands.²¹ It was this legacy that Hauswirth attached himself to and believed to be his duty to fight for.

The Grand Old Party had gone through some changes since the day of Lincoln, and while the members repeatedly called upon the glory years and general ideals of the past, corporate interests were bribing, bossing, and thieving with.²² In his autobiography, A Personal Narrative of Political Experiences, Robert M. La Follette sets the mood of the times by providing a speech given by then Chief Justice of Wisconsin, Edward G. Ryan, to the graduation class of the University of Wisconsin at Madison in June 1873:

There is a looming up a new and dark power. I cannot dwell upon the sigh and shocking omens of its advent. The accumulation of individual wealth seems to be greater than it ever has been since the downfall of the Roman Empire. The enterprises

16 Ibid., 215

17 Malone, Michael P. Dougherty, Dianne G., “*Montana’s Political Culture: A Century of Evolution*,” Winter 1981, 46.

18 Ibid., 46

19 Walter Shay, “Hauswirth Repudiates Republican Party,” *Butte (Montana) Eye Opener*, 23 August 1934

20 La Follette, Robert M., *A Personal Narrative of Political Experiences*, (De Moines: Homestead Printing, 1911, 1913), 15.

21 Ibid., 18

22 Ibid., 22

of the country are aggregating vast corporate combinations of unexampled capital, boldly marching, not for economic conquests only, but for political power. For the first time really in our politics money is taking the field as an organized power.... The question will arise, wealth or man; fill public stations-educated and patriotic free men, or the feudal serfs of corporate capital?

This speech, along with the speech given by Governor Joseph K. Toole in 1899 encapsulated the feeling of despair and panic within progressives such as Hauswirth as corporations sought tighter holds upon political and economic structures across the U.S. Hauswirth demonstrated his underlying belief in Republican party ideals and despisement of capital growth by printing Lincoln's message to Congress in 1861 in the August 30, 1934 edition of the Eye Opener. And with it he also included a statement summarizing Lincoln's address: "With prophetic accuracy, America's greatest American looked down the vista of the future and foretold the misery and disillusionment which would accrue from predatory wealth, made possible from the fruits of labor."

With the inroads of political discourse blocked by bloated corporate participation and corrupt practices of politicians, common political avenues were no longer available to ordinary citizens. A need for alternative means grew. The question asked by Edward G. Ryan in his 1873 commencement speech, "...Which shall rule-wealth or man...", is one Hauswirth answered for himself by repudiating the Butte Republican party as reported in the Eye Opener August 23, 1934:

I am hereby serving formal notice on this company instructed bunch of party wreckers that I am severing [sic] all connections with this central committee. On instructions from the Sixth floor (a reference to the headquarters of the Anaconda company, located on the sixth floor of the Hennessy's department store building in Butte) you came up here to wreck Hauswirth and every other republican candidate who tries to be an American citizen, not a corporation serf. By this action I am doing my best to maintain a principle which I hold more sacred than all the political offices in the land. I have always been a republican, a Lincoln republican, not a vassal republican for Wall Street domination of every Montana citizen."

With this message delivered, Hauswirth embraced an alternative political culture and withdrew from the mainstream politics, which he considered far too corrupt to be any sort of vehicle for reform. He declared, and promised, to fight the good fight for the people of Butte and Montana and to do so as a "fighting progressive".

Hauswirth began his attach upon big business with the Eye Opener as the vehicle. With a subtitle claiming the Eye Opener to be “Not a Cocktail-But a Stimulant”, and printing articles which Hauswirth declared contained “Just a Little Stuff Overlooked by The [Butte Daily] Post” and “Just a Little Stuff Looked Over by the [Montana] Standard But Not Published”, the Eye Opener promised to provide relevant material which Hauswirth believed to be omitted in the current circulated daily press.

Hauswirth had good reason to believe that the remaining Montana newspapers were printing, or not printing as the case may be, partisan news. By 1929 the Anaconda Copper Mining Company owned eight daily newspapers in Montana: the Anaconda Standard, the Daily Post and Montana Standard of Butte, the Daily Missoulian and Sentinel of Missoula, the Billings Gazette, the Helena Independent Record, and the Livingston Enterprise.²³ The Company, as the Anaconda Copper Mining Company was known in the Butte and Anaconda region, papers commanded 50 to 60 percent of the daily press circulation in the state.²⁴ Of course The Company officials denied any reports of editorial control, but according to Al Himsl, a veteran Montana journalist and one-time employee of The Company owned Billings Gazette, “the individual papers enjoyed little autonomy. They were told what to do from the top”.²⁵ Hauswirth repeatedly caught the Montana Standard and Daily Post releasing the same article hidden with differing titles. In the May 16, 1934 edition of the Eye Opener, reporting on a Butte Miners’ strike and the Chamber of Commerce reaction, Hauswirth stated:

Not many people are reading the daily papers, so we will tell you what they have been saying. On the front page of the Montana Standard of May 12th there appeared an article with the heading “BUTTE CHAMBER DEPLORES STRIKE”. Evidently the Post did not like the idea of using the name Chamber in the heading so in the evening when it printed the exact same article it changed the head to read “BUSINESS, PROFESSIONS DEPLORE BUTTE STRIKE”.

Hauswirth’s diligent reporting and keen eye for the obvious echoes John M. Schiltz’s comments on The Company press as stated by Michael P. Malone, Richard B. Roeder, and William L. Lang in Montana: A History of Two Centuries, the sameness of The Company papers defied coincidence.

Hauswirth’s entry into the world of newspaper publication was a direct reaction to Anaconda Copper Mining Company’s blatant exploitation of Montana through the daily press. Hauswirth was

23 Malone, Roeder, Lang., 367

24 Ibid.

25 Ibid.

determined to use the Eye Opener as a “militant weekly intent on “doing our [Hauswirth and editor Walter I. Shay] very best to give you important news which never appears in the Anaconda Company newsletters”.²⁶ He intended to give Montanans a voice in management of the state. “Our fight,” said Hauswirth in reference to the Eye Opener staff, is “for cleanliness and decency, for non-graft in politics and business.”²⁷

The Company’s editorial policy was altered throughout its reign as manipulator of press. Free-swinging attacks on their enemies, such as Senator Burton K. Wheeler in 1920 and Joseph Dixon in 1924, were normal practices for The Company’s editors.²⁸ For example, during the 1928 Gubernatorial campaign, the Anaconda Standard described anti-Company candidate Wellington Rankin as having “all the dignity of a baboon, all the self-restraint and poise of a tomcat, all the calm deliberation and judicial decision of a jackass, all the finer emotions and sentiments of a yellow dog, all the nobility and character of a snake.”²⁹

However, beginning in the early 1930’s The Company policy switched from attacking its enemies to simply ignoring them. State affairs were now largely avoided and focus moved to events happening far from home, a term dubbed “Afghanistaning” by journalists.³⁰ During The Company ownership of Montana press only 2.9 percent of the space for editorial comment was used for State issues, and local issues were accorded only .34 percent of the total.³¹

The policy of avoiding controversy by The Company press could only be accomplished by complete control of the editorial process. Although outright ownership of the chain of newspapers was never disclosed by The Company, some analysts closely guessed the actual ownership. Alfred M. Lee wrote in 1937: “The history of the Anaconda chain is shrouded in mystery it is one of the kind which Editor and Publisher does not list in its annual compilation.”³²

Upton Sinclair specifically pointed out Montana’s press situation in his book The Brass Check(1920). Commenting on the previous ownership of the Butte daily press being split between

26 Charles Hauswirth, “Notice to Eye Opener Readers,” *Butte (Montana) Eye Opener*, 2 August 1934.

27 Ibid.

28 Malone, Roeder, Lang., 367

29 Ibid.

30 Ibid.

31 Ruth James, “The Lee Newspapers of Montana: The First Three Years, 1959-1962” M.A. thesis, University of Montana, 63.

32 Alfred M. Lee, *The Daily Newspaper in America: The Evolution of a Social Instrument* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1937), 220.

Marcus Daly and William A. Clark, Sinclair argued that “now the giant Anaconda has swallowed them both and there are only two newspapers in Montana which are not owned or controlled by copper.”³³ John Thomas McNay Jr. wrote of company press ownership in the 1920’s: “If smudges of color over regions were special interests owned the press, only one entire state would be completely colored – Montana.” By 1929, The Company had purchased all the newspapers it felt necessary to silence dissent.³⁴

For this Hauswirth dubbed The Company press as a “capitalist news service, controlled by Wall Street.”³⁵ he considered “Afghanistaning” an attempt to sabotage the working class struggle. The Company press avoidance of important mining strike news from industrial cities across the U.S. kept the people of Butte from realizing the extent and militancy of class struggle.³⁶

On May 8 through September 18, 1934, “The quietest strike in the United States” began in Butte. All members of the International Union of Mine, Mill, and Smelter Workers (IUMMSW) union that worked in Butte and Anaconda stopped working and walked off the work sites.³⁷ Charles Hauswirth was presented with an incredible opportunity to report the IUMMSW strike activities from the perspective of the striker. He countered the Montana Standard and Daily Post with Eye Opener perspective of daily events which, he felt were lacking in The Company newspapers.

Joseph Kinsey Howard, writing under the pen name of Ward Kinney, comments in this July 25, 1934 article in The Nation (Vol. 139 No. 3603), “*Montana Challenges the Tyranny of Copper*,” about the nature of the strike and its possible affect upon The Company: “The company is aware that, all over Montana enemies it has crushed underfoot for twenty-five years are watching this battle; and the company has been confronted by the most amazing solidarity ever seen in the State.” A sense of change was about in Butte. The possibility of a victory over The Company motivated the citizens of Butte to band together. Hauswirth and the Eye Opener would become the voice of this movement urging Butte that “if there ever was a righteous cause; if there ever was a fight for humanity; if there

33 Upton Sinclair, *The Brass Check: A Study of American Journalism* (Pasadena, Published by the author, 1920), 241.

34 McNay, John Thomas Jr., “Breaking the Copper Collar: The Sale of the Anaconda Newspapers and the Professionalization of Journalism in Montana” M.A. thesis, University of Montana, 12.

35 Hauswirth, Charles, “The A.C.M Press,” *Butte (Montana) Eye Opener*, 24 May 1934.

36 Ibid.

37 Ore, Janet, “Labor and the New Deal in Butte, Montana: The international Union of Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers’ Strike of 1934” M.A. thesis, Washington State University, 47.

ever was a gentlemanly, well conducted strike its here and now, Miners, stick to it. You are right and you are bound to win. The people of Butte are with you.”³⁸

The lack of unionism among Western miners during the 1920’s and early 1930’s had reached an all time low. The IUMMSW had only six locals with a total membership of 1,500. Three of these were the Anaconda Mine and Smeltermen, the Butte Stationary Engineer’s Union, and the Great Falls Smeltermen.³⁹ It was not until the passage of the National Industrial Recovery Act (NIRA) of June 16, 1933 by Congress that unorganized workers of the United States began to invigorate unionism.⁴⁰ Specifically, section 7(a) of the NIRA opened the doors for the reorganization of labor. This section laid out conditions that would then be required and promoted fair competition between employer and employee in respect to guarantee of collective bargaining rights and the prospect of shorter hours. These were catalysts needed to promote labor unionism.

The main challenges facing the IUMMSW were to gain recognition and to win a favorable contract from the Anaconda Copper Mining Company.⁴¹ In January 1934, the Butte Miners’ Union a significant victory when it received full recognition from the Anaconda Copper Mining Company. Officials from the company pushed aside their anti-unionism despite fears that expanding unions would probably lead to labor-management confrontation.⁴² The Butte Miners’ Union immediately began signing up members.

The upswing in moods among Butte mining labor would soon turn as the U.S. Copper Association began hearings on a proposed copper code. Dominated by big corporations such as the Anaconda Copper Mining Company, Butte Miner’s Union president Thomas Brown and his concerns for fair competition received little attention.⁴³ The IUMMSW submitted proposals to establish a thirty-hour, six-day work week, and a minimum wage of \$32.50 per week for common labor with proportional increases for skilled workers. An abolishment of the contract and one-man drilling system were also requested.⁴⁴

38 Charles Hauswirth, “What is the Purpose of the Present Strike?” *Butte (Montana) Eye Opener*, 24 May 1934.s

39 Ore., 30

40 Bernstein, Irving, *Turbulent Years: A History of the American Worker 1933-41* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1969), 34

41 Malone, Roeder, Lang., 328

42 Ore., 33

43 Ibid., 33-34

44 Ibid.

The final revision of the copper code was signed in late April 1934 by national Recovery Act head Hugh S. Johnson, and with it the last hope that this regulation would protect the interests of miners and smelter men.⁴⁵ The code included a provision for a forty-hour work week maximum to be averaged over three month periods. It recommended eight hour work days but set no limit on the number of days per week. A minimum wage of thirty-two and half cents to forty-five cents per hour for work outside the mines, and forty-seven and half cents per hour for underground mining. This effectively lowered the minimum wage of the Butte miner, whose current wage was \$3.75 per day for surface work and \$4.25 to \$5.50 for underground laborers and miners.⁴⁶

The provisions of the new copper code were not exceptable to the workers in Butte. After seeing hope in the NIRA regulations for fair work practices and incredible organizational movements to take advantage of these regulations, laborers were severely disappointed in the final outcome of the copper code hearings. Workers perceived a failure of the federal government to protect their interests and subsequently exercised their most effective bargaining tool: the strike.⁴⁷

On May 9, 1934 the Montana Standard published an article describing the company reaction to the miner's strike in Butte:

The community yesterday showed little sympathy for the strike, the business interests surveyed the situation with many misgivings. The city accepts the strike as the worst of a long series of unfavorable developments during the depression in the course of which the efforts of the Anaconda company in keeping the mines in operation on a substantial scale: despite the consensus of opinion in the industry that all copper production should be suspended, have been generally appreciated.

The general knowledge here of the conditions under which the copper industry is laboring, with its vast surplus stocks of metal and the ruinously low price, makes the present move to shut down the industry in Butte a matter of grave apprehension to most people. They are aware that present wages in Butte are the highest paid in the industry and that working conditions effective here are the most favorable that prevail in any copper camp.

The accompanying article contained editorial comments, which were displayed on the front page, pertaining to the attitude of the striking unions. The paper claimed that the strike was an action taken "without conferring with the Anaconda company and put into effect without notice to it." That

45 Ibid., 36

46 Ibid., 35

47 Ibid., 40

“demands for increases in wages ranging from 200 to 250 percent of present rates of pay had been served upon the company’s management and without awaiting a reply to those demands.” The company paper purported that these demands plus solicitation of “ a six-hour day and a 30-hours week together with to the changes in working conditions,” were “estimated ... (to) increase the cost of operation in Butte as much as or more than the increases demanded in the wage scales.”

The editorial presented the stance and attitude taken by the Anaconda company throughout the union strike. The intentional and convenient omission of information pertaining to the origins of the strike is perplexing. Janet Ore, in her thesis, Labor and The New Deal In Butte, Montana: The International Union of Mine, Mill, and Smelter Workers’ Strike of 1934, states that a progression of action taken by the union during the copper code hearing leading up to the strike. Ore provides several instances where meetings were held by union members and representatives where they condemned the proposed and eventually accepted copper codes, that were reported by the Montana Labor News. The decisive union meeting took place on April 9-10, 1934 where the resulting labor proposal was taken to ACMC Butte general manager William B. Daly who refused to accept it. Ore, once again notes coverage of the event in the Montana Labor News. In the June 14, 1934 issue of the Eye Opener, Butte Miners’ President Robert C. Brown describes the company’s position and motive for claiming ignorance on the strike action:

The company knows full well that the union demands were presented to them a full twenty-eight days before the men went on strike. They used those twenty-eight days in scouring the state for gunmen, scab pumpmen, scab engineers and other degenerates. A few short days previous to the calling of the strike they answered the unions with a curt and contemptuous “NO.” If they wished to avert any possible flooding of the mines it would have been an easy matter to treat honorably with their employees, instead of which they proceeded to mount machine guns and fortify their stockades with tear gas bombs, and other implements of destruction.

Hauswirth wrote that it was not a question of the miners walking without giving notice. “The Standard knew there was going to be a strike, the A.C.M. knew there was going to be a strike and so did everybody know it.”⁴⁸ Hauswirth believed the miners did everything within their power to avert a strike. Hauswirth continued in that same article:

48 Charles Hauswirth, “Butte Chamber Weeps: ‘All Wet’ With tears. Boo Hoo. The Miners Refuse To Slave Longer. What Are We Going To Do?” *Butte (Montana) Eye Opener*, 16 May 1934.

For months they worked under almost unbearable conditions, while waiting for a code that would give them some consideration. They asked, nay more, they begged to have the contract system ... eliminated from the mines. They asked and begged for a wage that would be consistent with a decent standard of living. What did they get? A code cooked up by the Copper Barons that does not give the miners **ONE SINGLE THING**. [emphasis in source]⁴⁹

Hauswirth would go on to claim that the company acceptance of the union, despite its long history of stifling employee attempts to unionize, was due to a huge copper surplus. This surplus could be called upon as having been duly contracted for by the Anaconda subsidiary known as the American Brass company.⁵⁰ Hauswirth states that the copper code was primarily the work of the heads of various domestic copper companies. A specific aspect of the code, which Hauswirth claims was not published in any of the nine newspapers in Montana owned by the ACMC, read as follows: “ Any copper mined prior to May 22, 1934, which has been contracted for by any fabrication company will be considered Blue Eagle (National Recovery Act) copper.” He goes on to accuse the ACMC of having full knowledge of this provision and with that knowledge no effort was made to arbitrate or make concessions which might have led to a settlement.⁵¹

Hauswirth attempted to portray the necessity of the strike by reporting on the Anaconda company’s cover ups and the effort made by the miner, both for the company and against it. Articles in the Eye Opener gave reason and purpose to the strike and presented this material to the citizenry of Butte. On May 16, 1934 the Eye Opener proclaimed the strike to be justified.

The corporation press has attempted to convey to the general public the impression that the strike of organized labor, against the A.C.M. Co., has no justification in fact. However, a survey of a few intolerable conditions developed during the twenty years that the Butte Miners were unorganized, will easily convince any fair minded person to the righteousness of the demands of organized labor, in this struggle.

Labor produces all wealth. Surely then Labor is entitled to a fair share of the wealth it produces, and this is all that we have demanded of the copper barons, who would have us live like the peons and others, whom they employ in their foreign holdings.... This alone, in our opinion justifies the strike.

49 Charles Hauswirth, “Butte Chamber Weeps”.

50 Charles Hauswirth, “Copper Surplus Big Asset To Company,” *Butte (Montana) Eye Opener*, 28 June 1934.

51 Charles Hauswirth, “Copper Surplus,”

The fight against the Anaconda company was justified in Hauswirth's mind, his job would be to convince Butte of the miner's toil.

Throughout the Butte Miner's strike of 1934 Hauswirth sought other sources of justification for the action. Editorial comments were accepted and printed, presenting the public with sources of information from within the strike bureaucracy. Both the President of the Butte Miners' Union, Robert C. Brown, and Financial Secretary Reid Robinson, contributed editorial comments with facts covering the strike. Referring to the Blue Eagle copper code provision, Reid Robinson asks the following question in one such editorial: "Is it reasonable to expect us (the Miners' Union) to stop living for eighteen months just because we worked and slaved and produced a surplus that would last that long?" Robinson went on to prophesies that the Miners' Union will win " ...with the same Spirit that freed the colored slave of the South."⁵² An incredibly strong statement referenced to the emancipated African-American of the post-civil war South and compared to the relationship of the Butte miner to the despotic rule of the Anaconda company.

Subsequent articles related to the autocratic policies of the Anaconda company appeared in the Eye Opener throughout the duration of the strike which encapsulated Hauswirth's stance on the Anaconda company and furthered his battle with big business. Headlines reading "HITLER MAY COME TO BUTTE," were sure to grab the attention of Eye Opener readers. Claiming that the "Dictator could learn fine points of (the) game," Hauswirth went on to compare the "mad czar of Germany", Adolf Hitler, to the Anaconda company. The article expounded on the tyrannical activities of the company: "The Anaconda company has been the absolute dictator of Montana for more than 40 years," while Hitler "had been the dictator of the Fatherland for less than two."⁵³

The opinion expressed within the previous article recanted any doubt of Hauswirth's passion for exposing the Anaconda company and its officials for their true deeds. In 1933 Hauswirth published an article in the Eye Opener which could account for the origins of his beliefs and subsequent opinions on labor:

My attitude in regard to so-called Big business may be likened to the following:
If I saw a German Police dog and a Lap dog playing together in a yard, and their enjoyment was mutual, I would consider it fine and enjoy the sight. If, however, the

52 Reid Robinson, "Miners Secretary Statement," *Butte (Montana) Eye Opener*, 14 June 1934.

53 Charles Hauswirth, "Hitler May Come To Butte," *Butte (Montana) Eye Opener*, 16 July 1934.

burly Police dog should at dinner time become greedy and hog the meal, or if perchance he should take advantage of the little fellow and down him, I would, and I couldn't help it, be for the under dog. So would you and every other fair-minded person.

Certainly we should at least have as much feeling and consideration for people as for dogs. I am for the fellow abused, be h small or large, and I am not for the big fellow just because he is big. Some people in this town are for the big corporations, right or wrong. I'M NOT.

...The fact contained herein should satisfy any reasonable person that my attitude and sentiments did not spring up last month, last year or 10 years ago. I was reared and taught to be for the "under dog" and I just can't help it. It's my nature. So there you are.

The ideological stance of Charles Hauswirth was steeped in personal belief for fair play. He refused to except what was given to him and the citizens of Butte by the powers of the Anaconda company on the grounds of inequality. His reputation was put on the line every time he published an edition of the Eye Opener and accepted full responsibility for the aftermath which would accompany it.

Robert M. La Follette, in his autobiography, A Personal Narrative of Political Experiences, warned us in a 1912 speech delivered at the annual Banquet of the Periodical Publisher's Association, that " the most important question now before the American people is that of the combined capital represented in trusts, in consolidated railroads, and in the consolidated banking interests, controlling money and credit." Charles Hauswirth headed this warning in defense of the city he lived a full life, Butte, Montana. He realized the potential of Butte was being stifled by the money interests of it's non-resident controllers, the owners of the Anaconda copper Mining Company. Hauswirth was truthful and not afraid to point out the inequities inherent in mining operations where local labor propped up an industry and profits were sucked up and out to non-local entities.

Looking back to 1912 and La Follette's speech, the speech could be characterized as prophetic when he exclaimed that possible dire straits could come and a need for strength among the masses to step up and fight the good fight:

None have ever been called to a more unselfish, patriotic service. I believe that when the final test comes, you will not be found wanting; you will not desert and leave the people to depend upon the public platform alone, but you will hold aloft the lamp of

Truth, lighting the way for the preservation of representative government and the liberty of the American people.

Charles Hauswirth grasped that lamp of Truth described by La Follette and held it aloft for the citizenry of Butte, Montana, prepared to lead the way toward a better tomorrow.

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