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Series V: Writings, 1909-1963, undated.

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William R. Hopkins resignation, Cleveland city manager,
1929-1930.

Mr. Hopkins should not resign.

He owes a moral obligation to Cleveland, the city which he has served faithfully for six years and which is not unmindful of his services, to remain at his post until he is forced from it.

It is nobler to fall than to surrender. Mr. Hopkins should demand the privilege of a public hearing to which he is entitled by the provisions of the city charter. The citizens of Cleveland wish to listen in on this hearing in order to learn on what grounds his dismissal is sought and by whom.

The responsibility for the dismissal of the first city manager of Cleveland must be laid unmistakably and in full public view at the door of that political cabal which is seeking it. It is of utmost importance that the record of this unprecedented act of political sabotage should be complete and accurate. For Mr. Hopkins to resign is to leave doubts in the minds of people - is, in a sense, to desert them. Mr. Hopkins is no deserter.

For many of his fellow citizens Mr. Hopkins has become during his term of office, the symbol for the kind of honest and efficient government which they would like their city to enjoy. Against him, and most relentless in their hostility are those forces which are not interested in honest and efficient government but in political exploitation and personal aggrandizement. Between these two opposing conceptions of government there can be no compromise. It is an age-old struggle. Mr. Hopkins has for the time being become the battle-ground of this struggle. He can not resign.

It is clear now to many, as it has been clear to some from the very beginning, that the men who in the past few years sought the overthrow of our city manager form of government were interested not in the welfare of the community but in restoring that type of governmental machinery which is more responsive to the deft manipulations of clever politicians. If these men could have controlled the present city manager they would have been reconciled to the system. But Mr. Hopkins would not be controlled. He must therefore be destroyed. No charges are preferred. No

reasons are given. A party caucus behind closed doors has conspired to destroy him.

Cleveland is seemingly helpless - at least for the time being. But for the sake of the struggle for clean and efficient government which must be carried on in the future and in which we hope Mr. Hopkins will play a not inconsiderable role, the full story of this contemplated act of political wantonness should be told in public.

Mr. Hopkins should not resign. Cleveland demands a public hearing.

Rabbi Abba Hillel Silver



P.

City of Cleveland

WILLIAM R. HOPKINS
CITY MANAGER
W. J. MURPHY
SECRETARY

October 15, 1929.

Rabbi Abba H. Silver,
10311 Lake Shore Boulevard,
Bratenahl, Ohio.

My dear Rabbi Silver:

I hope you will pardon my long delay in acknowledging your very gracious note of September 4. With the splendid start which you gave the movement, it was inevitable that the defense of the present plan should be successful. As a matter of fact, the meeting at which you delivered the key note was the beginning of the successful campaign which followed and you have a right to feel that you made a real contribution to the result.

I presume that many people have told you what happened. For my own part, I think I may sum it up by saying that it was the most nearly unanimous aggregation of all of the advocates of purely political administration which we have yet witnessed. They put up a tremendous fight and were absolutely certain of success. The result was so totally unexpected by them as to leave them completely stunned. Of course it is now necessary to carry out the second item in the program of the Progressive Committee and elect a Council which is honestly sympathetic with the Manager Plan. Here again I feel that you made a very definite contribution by the suggestion of the candidacy of Mr. George Furth whose candidacy I sincerely trust will be successful.

It will be good to see you again and I shall hope some time to have a chance to have you tell me something about the great Conference which you attended.

Meanwhile, believe me as always, with much regard

Yours sincerely,

W. R. Hopkins

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RABBI A H SILVER=

THE TEMPLE ANSEL RD=

WOULD YOU JOIN WITH ME AND BE ON OF LIMITED NUMBER OF PUBLIC
SPIRITED CITIZENS SPONSORING PUBLIC MASS MEETING SUNDAY
AFTERNOON JANUARY 12 AT MUSIC HALL AT PUBLIC AUDITORIUM TO
PROTEST ARBITRARY OUSTER PROCEEDINGS AGAINST CITY MANAGER
HOPKINS PROPOSED BY MAJORITY MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL PLEASE
WIRE COLLECT OR CALL ME IMMEDIATELY THANK YOU=

B R BRICKNER CEDAR 0863.

No answer

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CLEVELAND, OHIO

January 9th, 1930.

Rabbi Abba Hillel Silver,
c/o The Temple,
East 105th and Ansel Road,
Cleveland, Ohio.

My dear Rabbi Silver:

Enclosed, herewith,
please find copy of letter which I have addressed
to Rabbi Brickner.

A lot of people in this
city will be interested to see what of the matters
touched upon in this communication will be referred
to at any public meeting called for the purpose of
retaining Hopkins in office.

Very respectfully yours,

Ed. S. Byers

ESB/E

Enc.

January 9th, 1930.

Rabbi B. R. Brickner,
2724 Coventry Road,
Cleveland Heights, Ohio.

My dear Rabbi:

The moral indignation being voiced by so many of our spiritual leaders in the cause of retention of W. R. Hopkins as City Manager has awakened some of my own. I have tried to bottle it, but I can't any longer.

city the facts with regard to indignation meeting?

Let me ask you:

Will you tell the public of this the Gordon Gardens deal at your

regard to the Pershing Avenue widening deal and Mr. Hopkins' part in it?

Will you tell them of his insistence upon location of the airport at a point within three miles radius of which there are more than 250 acres of railroad manufacturing sites owned by the Belt and Terminal Realty Company of which Mr. Hopkins is president and a principal stockholder? Just what do you think of the political morality, not to say decency, of such a performance?

Just how do you explain to your own satisfaction Mr. Hopkins' approval of the Coit Avenue playground purchase price and his indorsement of all the other very questionable land deals under his administration? the Girls Farm purchase; the Police Court site purchase; the reservoir site purchase; the Garbage Plant site purchase - to mention some of them.

I assume you know something about these things; if you don't, I'll be glad to give the facts.

January 9th, 1930.

Rabbi B. R. Brickner.

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Now, let me suggest to you some things you may not know.

Do you know or care to know the facts about the stadium project? I see Joe Hostetler is filled with indignation, too. He, I believe, is secretary of the bankers' Baseball Club Company to which Mr. Hopkins proposes to lease the stadium for a less amount than the city will have to pay as taxes if the property is used for other than public purpose. I can understand Joe's indignation.

Do you care to know the facts about Mr. Hopkins' scheme, to surrender the public rights in the city's lake front?

Do you know that in 1925, acting without any authority, he lobbied through the legislature a measure which authorized the city to lease in perpetuity, only to the adjacent riparian owners or with their consent all of the public lake front rights from East 26th Street to Gordon Park, (except adjacent to the White City tract);

- that again in 1929, acting without authority, he and the railroads together lobbied through the Jackson Bill which attempts, (and I say attempts because the bill is invalid for the purpose) to authorize surrender to the railroads, of control of Cleveland's Lake Front from the River to East 26th Street, except between West 3rd and East 12th Street; that if his plans are carried out, the railroads would control Cleveland's water commerce?

Do you know that in attempt to surrender the Bath Street tract to the railroads, he caused it to be vacated in 1928, and that no Cleveland newspaper carried this story, or the story of the Gordon Gardens purchase at the time?

January 9th, 1930.

Rabbi B. R. Brickner.

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Do you know that the figures compiled by the Bureau of Municipal Research, show that the costs of the house-keeping functions of the city government, the cost of the job Mr. Hopkins is hired to do, were 39 plus percent, roughly \$5,200,000, more in 1926 than they were in 1923, the last year of the mayoralty plan?

dependable figures.

These are the last available

to spend \$2,000,000 to erect the public hall wings and was between four and five hundred thousand dollars out in his estimates? Is this your idea of efficiency?

Do you know anything about his activity in connection with the high level bridge location, which first Peter Witt, and then Dr. McKay has denounced as a traffic monstrosity?

Do you know, that Mr. Hopkins would be upwards of one million dollars short in his operating budget this year, if he had not spent money secured from sales of land such as the Jewish home site on Woodland Avenue, - a capital expenditure for operating purpose, and misappropriated several hundred thousand dollars from the light plant earnings - money expended by Tom Johnson to build up the light plant in 1906-7-8 and 9?

This suggests part of the story of the most extravagant and wasteful, the most shameful and shameless administration this city has ever seen, at least in the past forty years.

If such conduct of public business merits the approval of our leaders in the field of private morality, is it any wonder our juries will not convict criminals?

January 9th, 1930.

Rabbi B. R. Brickner,
Cleveland Heights, Ohio.

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Sincerely yours,

ESB/E

WRHS



P.S. I am sending a copy of this letter to Rabbi Silver,
Rev. Joel B. Hayden, Rev. Dan F. Bradley, Mrs. Harris R.
Cooley, Rev. E. R. Wright and Rev. J. C. Walker.