



## Abba Hillel Silver Collection Digitization Project

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### **MS-4787: Abba Hillel Silver Papers, 1902-1989.**

Series V: Writings, 1909-1963, undated.

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Reel  
175

Box  
64

Folder  
285

City manager government, Cleveland, 1931.



I have been in favor of the city manager plan of government for our community when both political parties opposed it, when both favored it and when one or the other opposed it. Party organizations will never be very sympathetic to the manager plan. It interferes too much with their forthright domination of the machinery of government and it weakens party organization.

Hardly a year has passed since the adoption of the plan but what one or the other or both of the political parties have tried to wreck it. When they failed they united their forces to get the maximum amount of plunder possible under it. Against such organized exploitation no democratic government is ever entirely immune.

The city manager plan for municipal government is the soundest and most progressive form of government yet devised. Progressive communities here and abroad have been adopting it in increasing numbers. One out of every five cities in the United States having a population of over twenty thousand, now operates under it. The idea that a modern city whose problems are purely local and of an administrative character must be run by Democrats or Republicans is a stupid anachronism. If there is any shred of meaning left to these political parties in their national significance there is absolutely nothing left of it as far as their local application is concerned. Party government of cities is of no benefit to anyone but to the party boss and to the party machine.

The Cleveland community has not done full justice by the city manager plan in not electing to the council, which is the very heart of the entire plan, more men of a higher and more independent type ~~of public official~~. When that is done the plan will work admirably.

As it is, under the city manager plan, our city has enjoyed for the last seven-eight years satisfactory government, better by far than in the eight years preceeding it, and had it been less interfered with by grasping politicians and big business interests an even better showing would have been recorded.

Both of the men who have occupied the office of city manager served the city competently, faithfully and, their detractors notwithstanding, honestly. No one will be so naive as to maintain that we have had perfect government. But then no one <sup>should</sup> be so naive as to expect it in a city whose electorate is not exercising its best judgment in the selection of men for the key positions-the Council.

But the achievements during the charter years point to a steady upward curve of improvement if the charter is not tampered with.

Proportional representation which is part of our present charter and under which we elect our present Council, is the fairest and most satisfactory way of registering the collective will of the electorate. It does not permit the utter annihilation of minorities which frequently contribute the best of thought and personnel to a legislative body. It permits the majority to govern but insures the opposition representation and a voice in government. The



arguments of the opponents of P. R. have been characterized more by ill temper and impatience than by logic and sound judgment.

The Danaceau Amendment has nothing to recommend it. It will restore a form of government in our community which was tried, found wanting, discredited and scrapped. It will retard our civic progress.

The task confronting the intelligent citizenry of Cleveland at this hour is to preserve the city manager government in Cleveland and to elect independent and capable men to Council. There is a goodly number of such men standing for election this year. An independent Council will help to weaken the hold of both political party machines whose interests are today, as always, the maximum of plunder and the minimum of good government.





*will*  
*too much*  
I have been in favor of the city manager plan of government for our community when both political parties opposed it, when both ~~political parties~~ favored it and when one or the other of the parties found it expedient to oppose it. Party organizations ~~can~~ never be very sympathetic to a manager plan, ~~of municipal government~~. It interferes with their forthright domination of the machinery of government and it weakens party organization.

*an election a year*  
*have tried*  
Hardly ~~a year~~ has passed ~~by~~ since the adoption of the plan but what one or the other or both of the political parties ~~in our city~~ sought to wreck it. When they failed to ~~wreck it~~ they united their forces to get the maximum amount of plunder ~~out of it~~ and against such an arrangement no ~~reasonable~~ democratic government is immune.

*possible under it.*  
*most purely*  
*get devised.*  
The city manager plan for municipal government is the ~~most~~ soundest and logical form of government. Progressive communities here and abroad have been adopting it in increasing numbers. *Organized exploitation* The idea that a modern city whose problems are purely local and of an administrative character ~~should be~~ run by Democrats or Republicans is a stupid and ridiculous anachronism. If there is any shred of meaning left to these political parties in their national significance there is absolutely nothing left as far as their local application is concerned. Party government of cities is of no benefit to anyone but to the party boss and to the party machine.

*men of*  
The Cleveland community has not done full justice by the city manager plan in not electing to the council, which is the heart of the entire plan, more a higher and more independent type of public official. When that is done the plan will work admirably.

*on*  
*on the last*  
*seven*  
As it is, under the city manager plan, the city has enjoyed ~~city~~ eight years of satisfactory government, better by far than in the eight years preceeding it, characterized by greater economy and efficiency. *and had it been less interfered with, by the an even better showing would have been*

*over*  
*is*  
Both of the men who have occupied the office of city manager served the city competently, faithfully and, their detractors notwithstanding, honestly. No one will be ~~so~~ naive as to maintain that we have enjoyed perfect government. But then no one must be ~~so~~ naive as to expect it, *in such a corrupt electorate*

*argument of the*  
The plan offers the best method for the improvement of our ~~municipal government~~. Proportional representation which is part of our present charter and under which we elect our present Council is the fairest and most satisfactory way of registering the collective will of the electorate. It does not permit the utter annihilation of minorities which frequently contribute the best of thought and personnel to the legislative body. It permits the majority to govern but insures the opposition representation and a voicing government. The opponents of P. R. have been characterized more by ill temper and impatience than by logic and sound judgment.

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*But while the plan has so far not given us*

*men for the key position - the Council.*  
*Mr 3*



one out of every five cities in the United  
States having a population of more  
than 20,000, ~~over~~ operates under the  
~~management~~ ~~council~~ ~~from~~ ~~for~~ ~~transmit~~

by grasping politicians and big business  
interests

WRHS



But the achievement ~~the past~~ ~~years~~  
point to a steady upward course  
of improvement if the charter is not  
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the intelligent citizenry of Cleveland at this hour is to preserve the city manager government in Cleveland and to elect independent and capable men to the Council. ~~There are~~ <sup>such men</sup> a goodly number of ~~them~~ <sup>upon our city government</sup> standing for election this year ~~thereby helping~~ <sup>helping</sup> to weaken the ~~whole of~~ <sup>both</sup> political party machines whose interests today are the same as they always have been, ~~as always,~~ the maximum of plunder and ~~gift.~~ <sup>the minimum of good government.</sup>

~~the city~~  
An independent Council will help

