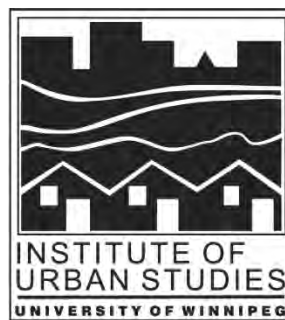


The Failure of Civic Reform Movements in Winnipeg Civic Elections: 1971-1992

Urban Resources No. 6

by Jim Silver
1995

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THE FAILURE OF CIVIC REFORM MOVEMENTS IN WINNIPEG CIVIC ELECTIONS: 1971-1992*

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INTRODUCTION

This paper seeks to explain why in Winnipeg—unlike such other major Canadian cities as Toronto, Montreal and Vancouver; and despite a long history of left/labour activity at the civic electoral level—there has been no electorally successful civic reform movement in the last quarter century. Numerous attempts have been made, some more effective than others, but none has elected a reform Mayor nor won a reform majority on Council.

Civic electoral politics in Winnipeg has since at least the 1919 General Strike been about social class, with business and related professions constantly seeking to secure their interests at City Hall by organizing along class lines, while attempting to obscure class divisions with an appeal to the need for non-partisan politics at the civic level. On those occasions when oppositional forces have organized effectively enough to pose a threat to business dominance at City Hall, business and related professional interests have re-structured and re-named their civic electoral organization, intensified their efforts, and warded off the challenge. It is precisely at those moments of challenge that the full significance of social class at the civic electoral level has been expressed most clearly.

The long stretch of business and professional dominance at the civic level since 1919 can be roughly divided into three periods, the last of which is the focus of this paper. In the period between the wars, the labour/left forces enjoyed at least a limited success, electing the Mayor in 1922 and 1923, and again from 1935 to 1942 with the exception of 1937. However, during the long post-war boom which constitutes the second period, class divisions were significantly obscured, and business and related professional interests dominated civic politics, the labour/left being limited to a largely ineffectual minority presence on Council. In 1971, the start of the third and current period, the civic reform forces made their first serious post-war attempt to win control of City Hall, the timing of their effort coinciding with the emergence of a new brand of civic reform politics in other major Canadian cities. Their defeat in Winnipeg in 1971 was the first of a series of defeats which it is the purpose of this paper to explain.

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BETWEEN THE WARS

In the period between the wars, civic politics in Winnipeg was shaped by the legacy of the Winnipeg General Strike. Indeed, the 1919 civic election has been called "The Second Round of the Strike."¹ Intensely and closely fought, the 1919 civic election revealed the aggressive determination with which business and related professions would organize to secure their local interests (O'Gorman, 1970). When labour/left seats increased from four to seven and business/professional seats declined from ten to seven, leaving the latter barely clinging to power by virtue of having won the mayoralty, the immediate response was "the best-engineered piece of civic gerrymandering ever perpetrated in Canada" (Wichern, 1976, p. 22; Stinson, 1975, p. 245). Of greater importance was the endorsement during the election campaign of candidates supportive of business and professional interests by the "Citizens' League of Winnipeg," whose origins were in the Committee of 1000 formed during the Winnipeg General Strike earlier that year,² and the Committee of 100 formed during the strike the previous year (Wichern, 1976, p. 22; McKillop, 1970, p. 61).

This election set the pattern: when there was a strong electoral challenge from the labour/left, as there was in 1919,³ business and related professional interests would respond by organizing to conduct an aggressive election campaign. Many such organizations were formed over the years, each with a different name,⁴ each descended from the Citizens' League and the Committee of 1000 formed during the General Strike, and each intended to advance business and professional interests. These "citizens'" organizations were chameleon-like, changing their appearance to respond to new circumstances, sometimes disappearing altogether when they were not needed, then re-emerging in a new guise when another electoral challenge arose.

The labour/left nevertheless won some victories in the inter-war period. S.J. Farmer of the Independent Labour Party was elected Mayor in 1922 and 1923, albeit without a labour/left majority on Council, and John Queen was elected Mayor in 1935, with the casting vote on a split council for the year. Queen won re-election through 1942 with the exception of 1937, though never again with the casting vote. His election in 1935 constituted a crisis for the business and professional interests, precipitating the revitalization of the "citizens'" electoral organization. Reconstituted in 1923-24 as the "Winnipeg Better Civic Government Association" to oust Farmer, the organization had atrophied from 1925 to 1928, "years of relative civic tranquility" (McKillop, 1970, p. 64), and had gone nameless in the 1932-35 period when the Depression made the name Civic Progress Association an embarrassment (McKillop, 1970, p. 64). But the labour/left victory of 1935 was the catalyst for a re-grouping of class forces and the formation of the revitalized "Citizens Election Committee," which would regain control of Council in 1936, never to relinquish it again.

THE POST-WAR PERIOD

In the post-war period the labour/left weakened, and the Civic Election Committee (CEC) was able to maintain its stranglehold at City Hall on behalf of business and related professional interests. When the CEC itself began to fragment in the mid-late 1950s and the 1960s, as it often did when its dominance was not threatened, the CCF/NDP were unable to take advantage of the opportunity.

The CEC consisted largely of business and professional people "whose objective was to prevent labour from gaining control of City Hall" (Stinson, 1975, p. 12). Members did not caucus on issues, nor did the CEC have a platform. Nevertheless, CEC councillors voted largely as a group, supporting low taxes and minimal social expenditures (Rea, 1976), and caucused once per year to divide Committee chairmanships among themselves. The result was effective control of civic politics.

Such control was made easier by the largely ineffectual efforts of the CCF/NDP. The editors of *City Magazine* went so far as to assert that: "During the late 1950's and 1960's there ceased to be any serious difference in political perspective between the Civic Election Committee and the NDP" (Editors, *City Magazine*, 1975). Although this was an exaggeration, it is certainly the case that the CCF/NDP were unable to arouse much interest among the electorate. Civic election campaigns were uninspiring—the *Winnipeg Tribune* called the 1957 campaign "one of the dullest election campaigns in years," and two years later lamented "the deadly dull 1959 civic election" (*Winnipeg Tribune*, October 24, 1957 and October 29, 1959)—and between 1959 and 1962 only about one quarter of the electorate voted. In 1963 a record low 22.8 percent voted; in 1969, a new record of 22 percent was reached. And as the *Winnipeg Tribune* observed in 1959, "no one could really blame them for their apathy" (*Winnipeg Tribune*, October 29, 1959). The CCF/NDP civic wing seemed lethargic, uninspiring, unimaginative. Long-time civic politics observer Val Werier wrote in 1969 that the NDP program "is couched in generalities. It is along the style of a plea for motherhood." He added:

It is no wonder the voter is confused. He is not presented with any real discussion of issues or problems facing the city. . . . There has been really nothing for the voter to think about in the election campaign . . . (Werier, October 24, 1969).

Heather Robertson, then a reporter with the *Tribune*, commented about the mayoralty campaign of 1966 that:

The old south-north, old family-new Canadian antagonism . . . seems to have lost almost all its power. . . . Winnipeg seems to have lost its radicals and, with them, its taste for the rough and tumble of civic politics. The city's radical tradition, set by the General Strike of 1919, seems very remote indeed (Robertson, October 12, 1966).

Class conflict had, it seemed, become a thing of the past.

Stephen Juba, elected Mayor in 1956 when he defeated establishment candidate George Sharpe, was a major cause of CCF/NDP weakness and of the blurring of class lines. Juba was a self-made millionaire of Ukrainian descent from Winnipeg's north end, and he had a powerful populist appeal:

. . . he identifies readily with Joe Citizen who swears by him as the champion of the "little guy." He may drive a cadillac, but he drives it himself, without benefit of chauffeur, and the man on the street approves (Stinson, 1975, p. 287).

Juba was Mayor from 1956 until his retirement in 1977, and he had a stranglehold on the votes of the very North End, working class constituency which might otherwise have been expected to support a labour/left mayoralty candidate. Winnipeg's first non-Anglo Saxon mayor, Juba was a North End Ukrainian of humble origins who continued to live on William Avenue in the inner city despite having become a millionaire businessman, and having defeated an old money, South End establishment candidate to become Mayor. For these cultural, even psychological reasons, Juba had an enormous populist appeal. As a consequence, the CCF/NDP did not contest the mayoralty. An NDP comment in 1962 was typical: the party was not running a mayoralty candidate against Juba "as he draws his support from the same section of the community as we do" (*Winnipeg Tribune*, September 27, 1962). Yet Juba, despite his North End ethnic background and electoral base, was no threat to establishment rule at City Hall:

In spite of his populist image, Mayor Juba was no socialist. On the contrary, he was an ardent free-enterpriser. Although he portrayed himself as being anti-establishment, he almost always sided with the business community when it counted (Levine, 1989, p. 69; see also Stinson, 1975, p. 287, and Walker, 1979, p. 87).

The consequence was that Juba contributed to a blurring of the class lines and class conflict that had characterized Winnipeg civic politics in the pre-war period, and by preventing the CCF/NDP from contesting the mayoralty he added significantly to their weakness.

Ironically, Juba also contributed to the growing weakness of the CEC in the 1950s and 1960s. At that time, Alderman Albert E. Bennett, although endorsed by the CEC, refused to join the caucus and succeeded in effectively dismantling the system by which the CEC caucus exerted civic control by hand-picking Committee Chairs. "The CEC was still floundering from this blow at its roots when Mayor Stephen Juba came to City Hall and tore the whole system asunder" (*Winnipeg Tribune*, September 12, 1959). Juba was able to play divide and rule by bringing small groups of councillors under his control, particularly as they saw electoral advantage in being identified with his populist appeal, with the result that the traditional unity of the CEC was eroded as "disputes and jealousies sprang up" (*Winnipeg Tribune*, September 12 1959). In 1959 the CEC decided not even to endorse candidates in the civic election, and by September 1962 it was reported that:

Once a power in city politics but now virtually inactive due to repeated spats among CEC-backed aldermen, the CEC isn't likely to have much influence on the election's outcome (*Winnipeg Tribune*, September 27, 1962).

With the CEC fragmented and adrift, and the CCF/NDP uninspiring and uncertain whether it should even operate as a party at the civic level—throughout the period the party agonized over and continually debated its civic involvement—city politics throughout the 1950s and 1960s was largely adrift. Few people voted; few issues were raised. The city's real economic problems went largely unattended. The *Tribune* opined that "[w]hat Winnipeg needs is a sense of direction and an orderly program" (*Winnipeg Tribune*, October 26, 1961). Institutional reform was tried with the establishment of Metro in 1960, and rumours abounded of the impending establishment of new civic parties, some said to be linked to Juba, others said to be broad centre-left coalitions which would include moderate members of the CCF/NDP (See, e.g., *Winnipeg Tribune*, October 3, 1958; September 17, 1959; October 6, 1959; June 14, 1960). No such parties were formed. The CEC and CCF/NDP limped through the 1960s. The class conflict which had so characterized pre-war civic politics had largely disappeared, obscured by the post-war boom, anti-communist hysteria and the populist appeal of Mayor Juba. However, it would soon re-appear, in another guise, in the first of the series of attempts at civic reform whose failure it is the purpose of this paper to try to explain.

THE ELECTION OF 1971

In 1971, conditions seemed right for a major attempt to take control of City Hall away from business and related professional interests. The Greater Winnipeg Election Committee, successor to the Citizens' Election Committee, was in disarray. In 1970, the *Winnipeg Free Press* titled the lead story following Council's inaugural meeting "GWEC Suffers Setback," and attached the subtitle: "NDP Aldermen Now Hold Three of the Six Key Chairmanships" (Stinson, 1975, p. 308). In January 1971, it was reported that the GWEC "has been officially disbanded, the decision having been reached by the GWEC Chairman . . . after trying for several months to revitalize the group" (*Winnipeg Free Press*, January 22, 1971). The long decline of the CEC-GWEC, begun in the early 1950s, had seemingly reached a new low.

At the same time, traditional city planning methods were being disrupted by the emergence in Winnipeg of a demand for citizen participation (see, e.g., Stinson, 1975, pp. 322-25). In major cities all across the country a new civic reform mood was emerging, rooted in neighbourhood and anti-poverty groups, and expressed in a demand for greater citizen participation and re-invigorated efforts by the broad left to exert popular control at City Hall (See, e.g., Higgins, 1981; Gutstein, 1975;

Goldrick, 1978). In Manitoba, the NDP had formed the provincial government for the first time in 1969, and in 1971 had passed into law an Urban Reorganization Bill which, it was thought by many, would afford increased opportunities for the NDP to make gains in the new 50 member City Council. In fact, as would be later demonstrated, it set the stage for the domination of Council by suburban—and non-NDP—councillors.

In this climate, the NDP mounted a major civic electoral campaign in preparation for the October 1971 election. On May 7, 1971, the party's Provincial Executive established a Committee "to investigate the entry of the Party into municipal politics." In June the final report of the Municipal Committee was passed. It called for the party to "enter the municipal political arena as an organized political entity," to hold organizational meetings at the ward level, to hold a five-day municipal policy convention in late August, and to prepare a civic policy platform "for submission to the municipal policy convention" (Manitoba NDP, *Minutes*, June 10, 1971). Premier Schreyer had already received a report which analyzed "the breakdown of the 1969 Provincial vote as applied to the 50 wards in Greater Winnipeg," and which projected that, based on the 1969 provincial vote, the NDP would win 33 of 50 wards. While it was noted that not all of the provincial vote could be counted on in a civic election, the report nevertheless concluded that:

If the NDP runs as an organized municipal party, with canvasses, identification of voters, and a relevant and progressive urban platform we would have a much better chance to hold the 1969 Provincial vote than if we ran a loose association of progressive thinking candidates (Manitoba NDP, *Minutes*, June 10, 1971).

By July, the *Tribune* was reporting that the NDP planned to enter the civic election in a big way (*Winnipeg Tribune*, July 24, 1971). In August:

The Manitoba NDP's first major municipal convention . . . resulted in the creation of a full-time municipal party organization, provision for annual party conventions, and the adoption of a multi-faceted platform binding on all NDP urban candidates (*Winnipeg Tribune*, August 23, 1971).

Premier Schreyer observed that because little time was left before the election, "[o]ur organization will be nowhere near as thorough as it can be, but it will be the most systematic approach yet taken by any party to urban policy" (*Winnipeg Tribune*, July 24, 1971). Brian Norris, who was a main organizer of this urban shift and who had chaired a special NDP urban committee for the past year, called the move "a totally new venture for a Manitoba political party" (*Winnipeg Tribune*, July 24, 1971). The *Tribune*, reporting on the NDP's August municipal policy convention, observed that:

If anyone thought the NDP would make only a token fight to win control of the unicity council to be elected this fall, the recent urban policy convention should dispel such thoughts. The party's in the race all the way (*Winnipeg Tribune*, September 9, 1971).

The election was a disaster for the NDP. The party won only seven seats, rather than the 15 or 20 that even the more cautious among them had predicted. Only one sitting NDP councillor was re-elected; the party's most experienced Council veterans were defeated. At NDP headquarters at the Union Centre it was variously described as a "slaughter . . . clobbering . . . licking" (*Winnipeg Tribune*, October 7, 1971). Lloyd Stinson, long-time CCF/NDP Councillor, added that:

Our only consolation was that rejection had been experienced many times before, but nothing could obscure the fact that the democratic socialists had taken a drubbing⁵ (Stinson, 1975, p. 336).

What happened?

It is clear that the left wing of the NDP, including members of the Waffle, played a significant role in this major civic thrust. This was reflected in the platform agreed to at the August municipal policy convention, which called, among other things, for the establishment of a government-run Winnipeg Housing Corporation which was to be vertically integrated so as to supply its own building materials, and was to have wide powers to assemble land in the City. Moreover, the platform was to be binding on all NDP councillors. This latter provision was a major shift, since prior to 1971 NDP councillors had no policy platform to guide their work:

Reforms proposed by NDP aldermen in city council have seemed to stem more from temperaments attuned to changes than any firm policy positions. They've been deciding most of their policy at brief caucus meetings before city council meetings (*Winnipeg Tribune*, September 9, 1971).

The municipal convention and the (radical and binding) policy platform raised the old spectre of party politics at City Hall, and the business and related professional interests used this bogey-man to their advantage. The day after the election the *Tribune* editorialized that Winnipeggers had rejected the NDP's "misguided attempt to inject a new and radical kind of party politics and rigid party discipline into civic affairs," and Premier Schreyer observed that "the issue of party politics may have hurt the party" (*Winnipeg Tribune*, October 7, 1971).

Not only was the NDP injecting party politics into civic affairs, but also their platform, and especially the proposed Winnipeg Housing Corporation, was a direct threat to the city's developers and contractors. In September, it was announced that the province's construction industry "has tightened ranks in preparation for an all-out struggle against "virtual nationalization" of their business by the municipal wing of the NDP." The industry established an "information committee" whose members included representatives of the Winnipeg House Builders' Association, the Road Builders' and Heavy Construction Association of Manitoba, the Urban Development Institute and the Manitoba Concrete Products Association (*Winnipeg Tribune*, September 24, 1971).

More importantly, the NDP challenge revitalized the moribund GWEC, which had been disbanded earlier that same year and which was born again, this time as the Independent Citizens' Election Committee. Using the (ironic) anti-party slogan, "Put People Before Party," the ICEC was chaired by Bill Palk, a Winnipeg lawyer with establishment law firm Pitblado and Hoskin.⁶ The challenge posed by the NDP municipal effort elicited an extraordinary response from the City's establishment. The ICEC, probably for the first time ever, established local committees, held nominating meetings, and staged an early September policy convention (*Winnipeg Tribune*, June 19, August 13 and September 8, 1971). The result was "that by nomination day this year, the ICEC had forged a political machine which could demolish all but the most well-organized political groups" (*Winnipeg Tribune*, October 8, 1971). Once again, the business and professional establishment, acting through yet another incarnation of the Citizens' League, had risen to the occasion when their control of City Hall was threatened.

The NDP, on the other hand, ended up being much less well organized, in large part the result of an internal party split. Throughout the post-war period there had been indecision about whether the CCF/NDP should contest civic elections as a party. The same was the case leading up to the 1971 election:

In preparing for the election the New Democratic Party did a lot of soul-searching . . . Many hectic meetings of a metropolitan committee were held, but no clear cut decision was reached; the campaign was leaderless and uncoordinated, lacking in drive (Stinson, 1975, p. 336).

It was leaderless in that the NDP ran no mayoralty candidate. Mayor Juba had a stranglehold on the NDP's natural constituency. Premier Schreyer expressed opposition to the party's running a mayoralty candidate and endorsed Mayor Juba (*Winnipeg Tribune*, August 7, 1971). Schreyer and the provincial party were lukewarm, at best, to the NDP's full-scale civic electoral involvement, their position typifying the ambivalence and indecision about the involvement of the party, *qua* party, at the civic level given the dominance among the electorate of the view that parties have no place at City Hall. Schreyer was concerned, too, that a loss at the civic level would be taken as a vote of non-confidence in his provincial administration. Moreover, Schreyer opposed the emergence not only of a strong urban wing of the party but also, and particularly, the emergence of an electorally rooted left-wing faction within the party. When the construction industry approached Schreyer regarding the proposed Winnipeg Housing Corporation, the chairman of the industry's "information committee" was reported to have said:

The premier said the views expressed by the convention did not necessarily represent the government of Manitoba's position in municipal matters (*Winnipeg Tribune*, September 24, 1971).

And as Frances Russell reported in the aftermath of the election:

The rebuff at the polls . . . strengthens the premier's hand against the persistent challenge to his leadership from the party's left wing . . . a major civic victory for the NDP would have given the left a new credence and a formidable lever in the provincial party. The left wing provided most of the policy input and many of the new-face candidates in the municipal race (Russell, October 16, 1971).

Schreyer spent only about one hour at the August Municipal convention and then left, apparently reinforced in his view that the party's municipal effort constituted a left-wing threat to his moderate form of governance.⁷ The result was that, despite all the preparations by the municipal wing, the campaign was poorly organized. Ternette goes so far as to argue that it is a myth that the NDP made a major civic effort in 1971, in that after the Left's victory at the Convention, the civic campaign was completely chaotic, riven by internal party dissent and completely lacking in organization and resources (Ternette, May 19, 1994). On election night Schreyer "said the issue of party politics may have hurt the party, while adding that poll workers were scarce. 'I suppose we didn't have the manpower' to run the NDP's traditional, door-to-door campaign" (*Winnipeg Tribune*, October 7, 1971). Municipal candidates blamed the loss on a lack of help from the provincial party. The municipal party's spokesperson, Councillor Art Coulter, said:

I don't think they helped any. There was no money and few workers. This election was completely financed by the candidates and their constituency memberships."

Provincial MLAs, he added, "played little part in the election. We would have preferred more help" (*Winnipeg Tribune*, October 7, 1971; see also Meyer Brownstone's comments, *Winnipeg Tribune*, October 8, 1971). The ICEC, by contrast, received plenty of help in its resurrection from a business and professional class determined, as always, to stave off a left wing challenge to its control of city hall.

THE ELECTION OF 1974

In 1971 the split within the NDP regarding the civic election was contained within the party; in 1974 it was not. A new organization, the Civic Reform Coalition, comprised largely of disgruntled NDP members, was formed in January 1974 to contest the October election.

On the surface, conditions seemed propitious for a civic reform movement. The ICEC had resumed its traditional tactics "by packing the council's standing committees exclusively with its own people and holding regular, well-publicized pre-council caucuses (Editors, *City Magazine*, 1975, p. 30), and

the Council had engaged in precisely the kind of blatant pro-developer policy that was sparking civic reform movements elsewhere in Canada when it approved—in a matter of weeks—the very controversial Trizec development at Portage and Main (Walker, 1979; Editors, *City Magazine*, 1975). This was the type of issue that had led to the election of a reform council in Toronto in 1972; to the defeat that same year of Vancouver's Non-Partisan Alliance—an organization parallel in structure and purpose to Winnipeg's ICEC—by the seemingly reform-oriented TEAM (The Electors' Action Movement); and to the surprisingly effective civic electoral challenge to Mayor Drapeau in Montreal by the Montreal Citizens' Movement (MCM), which won 18 seats and 49.3 percent of the votes in 1974. Similar possibilities seemed to exist in Winnipeg. For example, the attempt by the ICEC-dominated Council to contract out many services was defeated when the Canadian Union of Public Employees mobilized more than 2000 members outside the Council chambers in March 1973 (Editors, *City Magazine*, 1975, p. 32; Pringle, 1991, p. 82).

However, the NDP opposition on council was extremely weak and fragmented. The editors of *City Magazine* observed that:

For the most part the sitting NDP councillors were inarticulate and ineffectual and often enough supported the ICEC majority (Editors, *City Magazine*, 1975, p. 33).

The *Tribune* agreed:

Unfortunately, the six NDP councillors are split on most issues and haven't provided an effective anti-development opposition (*Winnipeg Tribune*, October 19, 1974).

Their ineffectiveness only aggravated the wounds created by the 1971 fiasco, when the provincial party largely abandoned the municipal NDP effort, and the civic NDP was electorally humiliated. Some in the party concluded that an alternative municipal organization was needed to mount an effective challenge to the developers and the ICEC. Early in 1974, two separate groups began meeting informally to discuss such a possibility:

One group included a number of dissident New Democrats, a couple of Liberals frustrated by the present council's antagonism to the RAG's (Resident Advisory Groups), and Joe Zuken . . . Another group, composed of environmentalists, social workers and community organizers, was also meeting independently (Editors, *City Magazine*, 1975, pp. 33-34; see also *Winnipeg Tribune*, January 19, 1974).

The two groups fused to form the Civic Reform Coalition. In a February 1974 interview Peter Hudson, a Social Work professor, President of the Winnipeg chapter of Pollution Probe, and one of the CRC organizers, said the group was "still in the early stages of organization":

Prof. Hudson says the reform coalition is 'just a nickel and dime operation' at this point. He contrasts it with the ICEC which, he says, has 'money falling out of its pockets' (*Winnipeg Tribune*, February 9, 1974).

A public meeting in early May attracted 75 people, but a second public meeting in late May, this one, revealingly, in the North End, drew only eight—"most of them organizers" (*Winnipeg Tribune*, May 31, 1974). A September policy convention attracted about 100 delegates, and Chairman Evelyn Shapiro, a University of Manitoba professor and former Executive Director of the Age and Opportunity Bureau, optimistically reported that the CRC had attracted more people each time a meeting was called (*Winnipeg Tribune*, September 9, 1974). The CRC adopted the kind of anti-developer, pro-participation policy platform that was typical of early 1970s civic reform movements. For example, Hudson was reported in February 1974 as saying that "the reform coalition is concerned about an apparent alliance between the ICEC and large land development companies in the city" (*Winnipeg Tribune*, February 9, 1974), and immediately after the election Shapiro was still arguing the same position, calling the ICEC councillors "a bunch of guys who are either lining their own pockets, their friends' pockets, or who don't know the hell what they're doing" (*Winnipeg Tribune*, October 16, 1974; See also *Winnipeg Tribune*, October 10, 1974).

The election was a disaster. Only one of ten CRC candidates was successful. Most of the others drew relatively few votes, those in suburban wards taking an average of 40 percent of the votes cast in their ward, and the two inner-city candidates drawing well below 200 votes each—less than ten percent of the votes cast. Balmoral and Ross House were the only inner-city wards contested by the CRC—the rest were suburban—and the only wards in which the CRC did not reach an agreement with the NDP to avoid confronting each other (*Winnipeg Tribune*, October 3, 1974). In Balmoral the successful NDP candidate took approximately seven times the number of votes, and in Ross House, where the ICEC won, approximately five times the number of votes, taken by the CRC candidate. It was a very disappointing performance, even though the CRC's sharp attack on the ICEC, charging it with being the developers' party, led the *Tribune* to conclude that "there is little question they assisted in the felling of ICEC incumbents both by the NDP and by Independents" (*Winnipeg Tribune*, October 25, 1974). The ICEC lost seven seats, dropping to 29,⁸ and they too blamed the CRC, charging the coalition with "blatant attempts to smear, innuendos and misrepresentation" (*Winnipeg Tribune*, October 24, 1974).

A major factor in the CRC's failure was the split between them and the NDP. Although they directly confronted each other in only two wards, each organization was weaker than a single civic reform organization would have been. A very high proportion of CRC members were disgruntled NDP members: "Indeed the CRC's executive is composed almost entirely of people who support the NDP at the federal level" (*Winnipeg Tribune*, September 28, 1974). The split generated a very acrimonious conflict (see, for example, the extremely vitriolic exchange of letters in the *Winnipeg Tribune*, October

8, 15 and 18, 1974), which in large part took the form of a faction of the party led by conservative, inner-city NDP councillors attacking the CRC for its disloyalty both before and after the election (see, e.g., *Winnipeg Tribune*, September 28, 1974, and October 8, 1975). In the post-election period the charge was that the CRC had taken over the NDP municipal wing. As NDP councillor Harry Lazarenko put it, referring to the CRC "invaders":

. . . we must open our eyes to reality and face the fact that not only the executive of the "municipal wing" is crawling with CRC infiltrators, but that the "municipal liaison committee" and our own party paper, the *New Democrat*, are controlled by the CRC element (*Winnipeg Tribune*, October 8, 1975).

This split appears to have been rooted in the changing demographics of Winnipeg's inner city, where an aging Eastern European working class population felt threatened by the erosion of their neighbourhoods—increasing levels of crime, violence and urban decay—and by the rapidly growing proportions of Aboriginal people and Asian immigrants. Their class and ethnic status led them to vote NDP, but their neighbourhood experience, given the rapidly changing character of the inner city, led them to be literally conservative. Such voters became the electoral stronghold for the municipal NDP, and a significant part of the explanation for the relatively conservative approach of the inner-city councillors who dominated the municipal NDP caucus.

The CRC, on the other hand, had different class and ethnic origins, its candidates were of a different generation, and it reflected and expressed the more radical ideology typical of the Canadian civic reform movements of the period. Five of the ten CRC candidates were 30 years or younger; a sixth was 32. Three were teachers, three were middle-level bureaucrats and four were social workers (*Winnipeg Tribune*, October 19, 1974). They were, in other words, typical of the young, 'sixties generation, middle-class civic reform movements that had emerged across Canada at the time. And they clashed with the older, Eastern European, inner-city New Democrats who had throughout the post-war period been the core of the municipal NDP caucus. They clashed, too, with the cautious, pragmatic form of social democracy practised by Premier Schreyer's provincial NDP administration.

The result was that *both* the CRC and the NDP were weak. In September, the *Tribune* reported that the NDP's civic wing was "financially troubled and expected to field candidates in no more than half of Winnipeg's fifty wards" (*Winnipeg Tribune*, September 23, 1974). Only forty people attended the municipal policy convention, members complained that the party was weakening their prospects in tacitly supporting Juba for Mayor but not running a mayoralty candidate, and "the meeting was told the federal election diverted NDP campaign donations from the civic wing and there was only \$1000 in the committee's account" (*Winnipeg Tribune*, September 23, 1974). The municipal wing was ever the party's lowest priority. The result was that the NDP:

. . . ran a poor and almost completely invisible campaign. The NDP was riven with internal disputes over whether it should be involved in civic elections [a long-standing debate—J.S.] . . . Because its candidates ran ICEC style as individuals and with no policy pronouncements, no centralized organization or thrust, they didn't engender fear or a reaction from the non-NDP majority (*Winnipeg Tribune*, October 25, 1974).

It was a long way from the high hopes of the pre-1971 civic campaign.

The CRC, of course, was even weaker. The group:

. . . appeared too late in the game, had little financing, lacked a strong organization and a catchy platform. Apparently it couldn't attract sufficient candidates of some calibre and status to enter the field (*Winnipeg Tribune*, October 5, 1974).

The CRC had no real roots in the community, particularly in those parts of the city where labour and the left had historically been strong, and it appeared to have no links to the labour movement.⁹ The historic unity of the electoral base of the labour-left—the North End working class vote—had fractured, with North End/inner-city voters returning conservative NDP councillors, leaving the "new left," whether from inside or outside the NDP, to the apparently futile task of taking suburban votes from the ICEC.

THE ELECTION OF 1977

Conditions in 1977 again looked positive in some respects for civic reform. The traditional reform concern with property developers' control of City Hall had recently been made an issue:

The provincial government had just sponsored an inquiry into the suburban land business and the high cost of housing in Winnipeg. Successive revelations about the role of the development business and land interests in city politics had led to a city-sponsored inquiry into the question of municipal conflicts of interest (Wichern, 1978, p. 21).

What is more, the ICEC appeared to be weakening (Wichern, 1978, p. 21). Yet the outcome of the October 1977 election again proved a disaster, both for the NDP, who were reduced to four seats in the restructured 29 seat Council, and for the successor to the CRC, the Winnipeg Citizens' Movement, which won no seats and attracted a minuscule proportion of the vote.

Again, the ambivalent role of the provincial NDP proved important. Their lack of commitment to the municipal wing was evidenced by their calling a provincial election for October 11, two weeks before the October 26 civic election. The provincial campaign drained money and organizers from the civic campaign (Lightbody, 1978, p. 326), and the Schreyer governments's loss to Sterling Lyon's Conservative Party had a significant psychological impact. New Democratic organizers were drained, both physically and emotionally. Many were in "a state of shock . . . , while PC's threw new energy into assisting local candidates" (Wichern, 1978, p. 24).

The NDP's municipal wing was still not strong anyway. Eight years of New Democratic rule at the provincial level had drawn many NDP councillors and civic activists into the provincial machinery, either as MLAs¹⁰ or as bureaucrats (Lightbody, 1978, p. 326). The much-weakened civic party ran only fifteen candidates for the 29 seat Council, not even bothering to run in many suburban wards, and was once again left leaderless by its failure to contest the mayoralty race. They contemplated running a Mayoralty candidate but "could not convince anyone to run because he or she would certainly lose to Steve Juba" (Wichern, 1978, p. 23). Premier Schreyer even endorsed Mayor Juba, thereby demonstrating again his continued reluctance to contribute to a serious NDP run at City Hall (see, e.g., Lightbody, 1978, p. 326), so that when Juba announced his last minute retirement the NDP were unable to seize the opportunity.

Besides the NDP's weakness and internal divisions, the broad left was further fragmented. The Labour Election Committee contested several North End wards, and re-elected Joe Zuken. The CRC had dissolved in 1975, and its place was taken in the 1977 election by the last-minute formation of the Winnipeg Citizens' Movement, led by community activist Nick Ternette, who contested the inner-city ward of Memorial and ran for Mayor. The WCM ran only three candidates, two of them new to civic politics. At the time of its formation in August 1977, the group was reported to have a mere 37 members. Ternette got 331 votes in Memorial Ward, up from the 134 he had garnered as the CRC candidate in Ross House in 1974, and he attracted less than four percent of the mayoralty vote. Besides Ternette, it appears that few CRC members were involved in the WCM—there was no continuity, no building from one civic reform effort to the next. The WCM was, in fact, a marginal and minuscule effort, weaker by far than the largely ineffectual 1974 CRC campaign. The ICEC, on the other hand, was able to maintain its grip on City Hall, arguing its familiar line in a full page *Winnipeg Free Press* advertisement which asserted that ICEC candidates "reject political party loyalties and vote according to conscience in the best interests of city government . . . ICEC candidates answer to no party" (Lightbody, 1978, p. 322).

A *Tribune* headline the day after the civic election shouted "NDP In a Shambles" (*Winnipeg Tribune* October 27, 1977), and the party's drop to four seats together with the miserable performance of the WCM led Professor Phil Wichern to conclude, with only a slight exaggeration, that at least for the moment "the 1977 election . . . [had] destroyed the citizens' movement in Winnipeg" (Wichern, 1978, p. 27). This, of course, was consistent with what was happening elsewhere in the country. The 1978 election of John Sewell as Mayor of Toronto notwithstanding, the new civic reform movement of the early 1970s appeared to have run its course. Higgins, writing in 1981, argued that:

. . . urban politics in Canada has just about finished going through a phase; that the decade from the late Sixties to the early-to-mid Seventies was the decade of reformist city politics; and that the steam has run out of the citizen movement in the past couple of years . . . (Higgins, 1981, p. 86).

In Winnipeg, the citizens' movement had never really got up a good head of steam, and this, together with the continuing ineffectiveness of the municipal wing of the NDP, was the reason that by the closing years of the decade civic politics in Winnipeg had become "so depressing and boring" (Higgins, 1981, p. 90), so "chaotic and hopeless" (Ternette, 1978).

Serious questions were beginning to be asked about the possibility of a broad left civic reform coalition. Ternette, for example, argued that unless the NDP were prepared to move into civic politics in a serious way—and there was, he argued, no indication so far of that happening—then the better and necessary alternative would be a coalition including the "progressive wing of the NDP," the Labour Election Committee and Winnipeg Citizens' Movement, and individual citizens and urban reformers (Ternette, 1978). Yet this prospect was anathema to the NDP. Party members had attacked those who joined the CRC in 1974, and the party attacked Ternette in 1977 (Wichern, 1978, p. 27). Many civic NDP members would attack those who would support Joe Zuken's mayoralty bid in 1979, and in fact, as will be seen, three NDP councillors would run against Zuken. Ambivalent and undecided as a party about whether to enter the municipal electoral arena in a serious, wholehearted way, and much more concerned with politics at the provincial level, where NDP governments served to drain talent and resources from the civic wing, the party—both municipal and provincial—was nevertheless adamantly opposed to any other civic reform movements attempting to enter the fray. It was a "dog-in-the-manger" attitude, and it seriously undermined the politics of civic reform in Winnipeg.

What is more, the NDP's relative strength in inner-city wards, where councillors constituting the most conservative wing of the party had deep electoral roots, and thus a genuine power base in an increasingly fearful electorate that consisted disproportionately of aging, working-class families of European descent, served only to weaken further the civic reform efforts. These efforts, weak and largely ineffectual to begin with, could not defeat the right wing NDP councillors in the inner city, and had no more luck than the NDP in the suburbs. This electoral divide served to widen and make more visible the split between the inner city, controlled by conservative New Democrats, and the suburbs, controlled by the ICEC.

The imagery and language of "inner city" *versus* "suburbs" had in the post-war period, and especially throughout the 1970s, gradually begun to replace the 1919 imagery and language of class *versus* class. The "inner city *versus* suburbs" imagery is in important ways false—many poor and most working class people live in the suburbs—but it is powerful. And to the extent that it replaces class

as the means by which people define their place in civic politics, it makes the historic Winnipeg divide of class *versus* class less dangerous to the business and professional interests who still control City Hall, because inner-city wards are so significantly outnumbered by suburban wards.

THE ELECTION OF 1979

The same phenomenon of left fragmentation was played out again in 1979 when Joe Zuken ran for Mayor, only a year after John Sewell's 1978 mayoralty victory in Toronto. Zuken, a long-time Communist Party member, had been on Council for eighteen years as a Labour Election Committee member and successor to Jacob Penner, and before that had been a School Board trustee for twenty-two years, and in those forty years had never lost an election. When Juba's successor Mayor Robert Steen died suddenly in 1979, Zuken became the city's first serious progressive mayoralty candidate since John Queen. Yet three members of the NDP, including two inner-city councillors, ran against him. The result was the same split that had occurred throughout the 1970s: in 1971 the NDP had been internally split along left-right lines; in 1974, and again in 1977, a part of the left had moved outside the NDP to form the CRC and the WCM; and in 1979 many on the left, including many NDPers, voted and worked for Zuken. And as was the case in 1974 and 1977, the conservative core of the NDP's municipal wing was outraged. Alf Skowron, NDP inner-city councillor who ran a poor fourth in the mayoralty race "expressed his disgust during the campaign at the number of New Democrats he believed were involved with the Joe Zuken campaign." Indeed, as one NDP supporter of Zuken observed:

We have NDP'ers who were more interested in attacking Joe Zuken than running a credible campaign against Bill Norrie (*Winnipeg Tribune*, June 21, 1979).

Zuken ran a strong second, with 24,650 votes to Norrie's 101,299.¹¹ Had it not been for his widely-known affiliation with the Communist Party—an affiliation which he refused, out of principle, to disown—his vote total would have been substantially higher. It was evidence, in Zuken's view, of the need for a broadly-based, non-partisan, civic reform coalition.

It was what he hoped to develop from his candidacy but it was completely side-tracked by the Communist scare tactics launched by the NDP candidates (Russell, June 29, 1979).

As Frances Russell observed, it was a fitting end to a full decade of failed civic reform attempts in Winnipeg:

The internal party split over municipal participation has probably never been so damaging to the NDP as it was this time because of Councillor Zuken's Communist Party affiliation . . . New Democrats running without official party endorsement, such as . . . Syms, . . . Skowron and . . . Lazarenko, had a new and potentially devastating weapon for their anger at other

New Democrats who favoured the development of a non-aligned reform party: The Red Scare.

Russell added, stating what surely should have been obvious:

. . . the party should seriously consider whether its continued presence on the municipal scene serves any purpose other than to guarantee continued ICEC domination of City Hall . . . (Russell, June 29, 1979).

As Zuken put it: "An NDP decision to go it alone plays right into the hands of the ICEC" (*Winnipeg Tribune*, June 28, 1980). Yet that is exactly what the NDP would do again in 1980. Old NDP-Communist Party hatreds, felt especially strongly by the right-wing, inner-city NDP councillors, made an alliance out of the question.

THE ELECTION OF 1980

Despite the fragmentation and failure that had characterized their efforts in the 1970s, and despite Zuken's call for a coalition and his warning that the NDP's going it alone guaranteed ICEC success, the municipal NDP began to gear up for the 1980 civic election well in advance. In August, 1978, prior to Zuken's mayoralty bid, a party executive member was reported to have said that the NDP would contest the next civic election with "its strongest commitment to municipal politics ever," and NDP inner-city councillor Alan Wade was quoted as saying: "never have I seen this kind of solidarity or commitment to a common goal. I don't see how this can't work" (*Winnipeg Tribune*, August 1, 1978). In September 1979, a party sub-committee recommended to provincial council that the municipal NDP contest all 29 wards and run a mayoralty candidate. Lawrie Cherniack, Chair of the municipal wing, responded directly to Zuken's call for a coalition when he "said the party will have no part of any coalitions with other civic movements" (*Winnipeg Tribune*, September 8, 1979). The enthusiasm carried forward to an April 26, 1980 convention at which the municipal wing of the NDP was officially reconstituted,¹² and it was decided to run NDP candidates in all 29 wards (NDP Press Release, May 26, 1980). Yet at the first policy convention of the newly reconstituted Winnipeg municipal NDP, "The chairs outnumbered the delegates" (*Winnipeg Tribune*, June 15, 1980). Despite there being 4200 registered NDP members in Manitoba, a mere 35 were in attendance at the policy conference. Though some had expected 300 delegates, "the municipal party didn't have the money and the provincial NDP office didn't have the time to send out more than 300 notices of the meeting" (*Winnipeg Tribune*, June 15, 1980). The old difficulties which had plagued civic reform efforts in the 1970s were re-emerging. Zuken called again for a reform coalition; Elmwood councillor Alf Skowron replied immediately that there was "absolutely no way" that the NDP would get involved in any coalition, and particularly one that involved the LEC. Despite this bravado, the municipal NDP was off to a slow start since being

officially reconstituted, and it was mid-September—i.e., one month prior to the civic election—before nominations were finished (*Winnipeg Tribune*, June 28, 1980). The ICEC had almost finished nominations, "but the NDP doesn't have ward organizations established." What was more, the provincial NDP, "already in debt and gearing up for an election next year, won't give the municipal wing any financial help" (*Winnipeg Tribune*, June 15, 1980). The policy convention discussed a mayoralty candidacy, but "some felt the NDP wouldn't stand a chance because there wasn't the organization nor the money to launch a winning campaign" (*Winnipeg Tribune*, June 15, 1980). Nevertheless, the civic NDP managed to win a record high seven wards, far from exercising control at City Hall, but more than enough to confirm in the minds of civic party activists the merits of their continued involvement at the civic level.

THE ELECTION OF 1983

While civic politics in Winnipeg in the late 1970s had been called "depressing and boring," and "chaotic and hopeless," and while this was consistent with the fact that all across the country "the end of the '70s saw little of a reform movement left," nevertheless there were some signs elsewhere in the country that by the early 1980s, civic reform was back on the agenda. In Vancouver, Mike Harcourt had been elected mayor in 1980, and the 1982 civic election:

. . . ushered in a new era, as reform and progressive candidates combined to win control of city council, mounting the first successful challenge to business dominance at the local level in the city's 96 year history (Gutstein, 1983, p. 12).

In Montreal the Montreal Citizens Movement, reduced to 18 percent of the vote and a single seat in 1978, came back in the 1982 civic election to take 35 percent of the vote and 15 seats, and the party membership had grown to 4000, "easily the largest municipal party in Canada" (Melamed, 1983, p. 25). These developments served further to inspire the Winnipeg municipal NDP to make a major effort, similar to that made in 1971, to take control of City Hall in 1983.

Hopes were extremely high. Kent Gerecke, President of the municipal NDP, writing in the Spring of 1983, called Winnipeg city politics "exciting," and predicted that the October election "will be a close one." He added: "In terms of policy, the NDP are openly talking about a 'socialist city hall'" (Gerecke, 1983, pp. 16, 19). The municipal party was organizationally sound, the result of continuous effort since 1980. New candidates were being attracted, nomination meetings were bringing out as many as 250 members, a mayoralty candidate was selected, funds were being raised, and labour was actively supportive (Gerecke, 1983; Drabble, 1984). In addition, the ICEC appeared weak. It was unable to hold its increasingly disparate membership together, had been outflanked on Council by the

NDP and unaffiliated Independents who had sufficient strength to deprive ICEC members of all but one Committee Chair, and was increasingly vulnerable to adverse public opinion due to its ineffectiveness and the obvious conflicts of interest of some of its leading Councillors (Gerecke, 1983; Hall, 1984).

The result was yet another electoral disaster for the NDP. The party won only six seats; so-called "Independents" took 23. Part of the explanation was, as always, the ability of business and related professional interests successfully to reconfigure their civic electoral organization. Fearful of the challenge being posed by the municipal NDP, the faltering ICEC pulled out a well-worn tactic and disbanded, *qua* ICEC, prior to the election (Pringle, 1983). Its members ran as "Independents." This enabled them to play their traditional civic card—"keep political parties out of City Hall"; "we answer to people, not a party hierarchy," *etc.*—and to accuse the NDP, as they did so effectively in 1971, of attempting a provincial-municipal "power grab."¹³

The most obvious explanation for the NDP's dashed hopes was the imposition of the provincial French language conflict upon the civic election. The provincial NDP government had introduced a Bill calling for official recognition of French in the courts and the legislature, and improved French language services where numbers warranted. The Conservative opposition had walked out of the legislature, leaving the bell summoning MLAs to their seats to ring. Old anti-French passions were aroused and directed against the Pawley government; from there it was but a short step for right-wing city councillors to extend the target of anti-French feeling to the municipal NDP. This they did by placing on the ballot a referendum on the French language matter, with the result that it "instantly became the overriding election issue" (Drabble, 1984, p. 12). Voters angry at the Pawley government for its stand on the French language issue were afforded the opportunity of wreaking revenge on the municipal NDP. Making matters worse for the municipal party was the fact that the motion to place the French language referendum on the ballot was able to pass only because two old-guard inner-city NDP councillors, Alf Skowron and Bill Chornopyski, supported it:

Skowron and Chornopyski had in a stroke destroyed the NDP's carefully laid election plans. Instead of pressing the opposition on issues such as neighbourhood preservation, NDP candidates were forced into an unwinnable debate on the provincial government's actions (Drabble, 1984, p. 12).

Although the language issue badly damaged the NDP's civic electoral prospects, the real problem, as had long been the case, was deeper:

The French language debacle only disguised the party's fundamental problem. It wasn't unified enough to win an election, let alone govern (Drabble, 1984, p. 11).

As had been the case for years, there was a huge philosophical gap between the old-guard, inner-city NDP councillors, and the party's civic reform wing. The old guard councillors had a solid electoral

power base in the inner city and North End, and their conservative approach accurately expressed the fears of ethnic voters in rapidly changing neighbourhoods, voters who:

. . . feel under threat from all quarters, bothered by the burgeoning and largely unemployed native population, by rising crime, by rapidly inflating property taxes and declining services (Drabble, 1984, p. 11).

Thus Skowron's and Chornopyski's support for the French language referendum reflected both their philosophical leanings and the sociological character of their wards, and was merely a logical extension of a split that had plagued Winnipeg's civic reform efforts at least since 1971.

Despite the loss and its magnitude, and the fact that the loss was in large part a function of an internal party split that was intrinsic to the civic NDP given the city's changing demographics, and that hobbled any civic reform effort, there were still those among the party's civic reform group who clung to the view that the municipal NDP should continue to go it alone. For example, party activist Dave Hall pointed to the fact that the NDP won over 30 percent of the popular vote in the 26 wards it contested, and increased its actual vote by 66 percent over 1980, and concluded that if the municipal NDP could continue to organize and develop policy as it did leading up to the 1983 election, "it will be well situated for significant, even dramatic, gains in 1986." He added, much more tellingly, that:

The results also eliminate any chance of the birth in Winnipeg of a non partisan reform coalition, similar to the Committee of Progressive Electors (COPE) in Vancouver. In Winnipeg the left will be represented by a reform party formally tied to the labour movement and with at least a tentative tradition of socialism (Hall, 1984, p. 16).

In short, not only were the conservative inner-city councillors with their ethnic electoral base opposed to any broad left reform coalition that might include the Communist Party-affiliated Labour Election Committee, but so too were at least some of the municipal NDP's reform wing. The historic battle between the CCF/NDP and the Communist Party of Canada (CPC) (see, e.g., Wiseman, 1983) was still being fought out at the municipal level in Winnipeg. For it was the Labour Election Committee, the civic wing of the CPC, which most consistently called for the establishment of a civic reform coalition. Zuken had done so in the wake of his mayoralty candidacy, and when he retired his successor, Mike Gidora, lamented the failure to form such a coalition:

For years, Zuken and the LEC had been arguing for the creation of a genuine reform coalition at the civic level . . . Pro-business and developer types have long recognized the need to band together into civic groups which cross over partisan party lines. Reformers have yet to do so (Gidora, 1984, pp. 18-19).

The fragmentation that had plagued civic reform efforts throughout the 1970s had continued into the 1983 civic election, and was added to the problems caused at the civic level whenever the NDP was in office provincially. Beneath the fragmentation lay the changing demographics of Winnipeg, which

resulted in conservative New Democrats winning and establishing an unassailable power base in inner-city/North End wards, while ICEC councillors maintained their stranglehold on the suburbs, thus leaving any potential civic reform effort, whether from within or outside the NDP, without an electoral base.

THE ELECTION OF 1986

Despite the dismal outcome of the 1983 election, and despite the growing determination to abandon the NDP as a vehicle of civic reform and to establish a broadly-based, progressive, civic reform coalition (see, e.g., Black, 1984; Gidora, 1984; Zuken, 1984), the civic NDP tried again in 1986. The results were, once more, disastrous: 27 so-called independents and only two NDP councillors. Kent Gerecke, President of the municipal NDP for the big 1983 electoral effort and editor of *City Magazine*, made the full measure of his frustration felt when he wrote that "Winnipeg's municipal NDP ran a dismal campaign"; the outcome was "shameful"; and "Winnipeggers have an infinite capacity for garbage." He described the now familiar role played by the provincial NDP:

. . . the real story was the scuttling of an effective campaign by provincial "big brother" During the campaign the provincial NDP party created confusion for the municipal NDP by overruling its decisions, made a decision for the municipal NDP to *not* run a candidate for mayor, and redirected key party workers to the elections in Saskatchewan and B.C. leaving the local campaign without resources (Gerecke, 1986/87, p. 35).

Not only did the NDP Provincial Council over-rule nominations on several occasions, but also ethnic politics emerged with a vengeance in several inner-city nominations. The result was that "it was a mess" (Ternette, May 19, 1994). Gerecke noted that the devastating 1986 loss added further to the emerging consensus that the NDP should abandon the civic electoral arena to clear the way for an alternative:

Some members now believe the NDP should get out of civic politics formally so individual members can participate as they wish—say start a Green Party. Others would like to maintain an identity at the city level but be free to join hands with others in a coalition—don't try to be a complete opposition rather be part of an alternative. These are the best recent thoughts from those who care about municipal NDP politics in Winnipeg (Gerecke, 1986/87, p. 35).

Gerecke's successor as President of the municipal NDP was reported as saying that: "One thing we've learned from this election is that we have to find a better organizational mechanism"¹⁴ (*Winnipeg Free Press*, October 23, 1986). The way was clearly open for an alternative, and in the months leading up to the 1989 civic election it would emerge.

THE ELECTION OF 1989

Winnipeg Into the Nineties (WIN) was formally launched at an organizational meeting attended by some 200 people in April 1989. Its origins were in the efforts of a small group of grassroots community activists. Most were concerned with traditional left/social justice issues like poverty and hunger, and were linked to the NDP or the Labour Election Committee; some were more middle class, suburban, neighbourhood preservation activists, at least some of whom were Liberals. What united them was the traditional civic reform demand for less control by developers, and more open decision-making at City Hall. As expressed by one of the founding members:

Right now, we don't know exactly what issues we'll stand for. But we need to change the process of how decisions are made at City Hall. We need a City Council that serves people, not developers (*Winnipeg Free Press*, April 16, 1989).

Following a low-key inaugural policy convention attended by sixty people in September (*Winnipeg Free Press*, September 17, 1989), one month before the election, WIN surprised even themselves when eight of their sixteen candidates won seats on the 29 seat Council, and eight of eighteen members of the Gang¹⁵ were defeated. Although WIN had a clear policy platform that all candidates subscribed to before being endorsed by the organization, and many of the WIN candidates had a history of community activism, nevertheless it was a remarkable performance for such a newly-formed, structurally loose and relatively ideologically diverse group. It was, in one sense, the culmination of efforts since the late 1970s, and perhaps even earlier with the CRC, to reach beyond the civic NDP to form a broadly-based civic reform coalition. It was also a tangible expression of growing public opposition to the blatant control of City Hall exercised by the developers through the Gang of 18. The jubilation inspired by their strong first-time election results was evident in the comments of Lawrie Cherniack, former Chairman of the civic NDP, and ironically one of those opposed in the late 1970s—early 1980s to just such a coalition. Cherniack is reported to have said on election night:

. . . it is really the end of the pro-development, pro-business era at City Hall . . . The new council is, no question, going to be anti-development (*Winnipeg Free Press*, October 26, 1989).

It was, however, far too early to read last rites over the body of the successors to the Citizens' League. The city's business and related professional interests had mobilized many times before to revitalize previously moribund civic electoral organizations in response to a threat from the left to their local interests. As always, a threat to class interests inspired a class response. In the next three years business and related professional interests mounted a three-pronged counter-attack: a campaign to reduce the size of City Council and make it more efficient and more sensitive to the demands of business;¹⁶ the establishment of Winnipeg 2000, a corporate controlled, largely city-funded, business

development agency designed to secure corporate control over the city's economic agenda; and a massive effort to force the city to reduce taxes, cut expenditures and privatize civic services. The final part of this strategy would be an aggressive civic election campaign in 1992.

THE ELECTION OF 1992

When Mayor Bill Norrie announced his retirement in June 1992, business and related professional interests mobilized to counter the threat posed by the 1989 electoral success of WIN, and by WIN's advancing the strongest left/labour mayoralty candidate since the days of John Queen. It appeared at first, though, that continued control of City Hall by business and related professional interests might be endangered by there being two strong business candidates for Mayor.

Dave Brown, Deputy Mayor and owner of Atkins Underground, a multi-million dollar coring firm that benefits from suburban growth, was promoted by a group calling itself the Committee for Good Government. The CGG was Winnipeg's developer and contractor lobby, successor to the Gang of 18 and latest incarnation of the Citizens' League. Their announcement in June of 1992 that the CGG had raised \$350,000 to support Brown and pro-developer candidates for Council generated a strongly adverse public response, followed shortly by polling evidence that public opinion was four to one against the idea of a mayoralty candidate running openly as part of a pro-developer slate. This was the same anti-developer message that had been expressed in the 1989 civic election with the unexpected electoral success of WIN, and it suggested to the more astute members of the establishment that the risk was too great that a candidate so transparently linked to the developers would be rejected by the electorate. A pro-establishment candidate amenable to business interests but less obviously a proponent of the developers' and contractors' interests had to be found; the local business class had to organize quickly to redirect and reorient their campaign. That they were able to do so is testimony once again to the exceptional political skills which Winnipeg's business class has always brought to civic politics.

Susan Thompson, proprietor of a long-established western and leather goods store, had begun 12-18 months before the election to determine whether support existed for a woman's mayoralty candidacy. Thompson had impressed important members of the business community through her work on the Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce and other business and professional committees, and by the Spring of 1992 a group of business and professional women was working hard on her behalf.¹⁷ When focus group sessions and polling revealed that a woman candidate would have up to a 20 percent edge in the race for mayor, crucial elements of the establishment—especially Kathleen Richardson of the

city's dominant Richardson family, who played a key fund-raising role—aware of the risks in Brown's candidacy, swung behind Thompson.

Thompson supporters assembled a bi-partisan team headed by Terry Stratton and David Unruh, the chief organizers for the Conservatives and Liberals in the 1988 federal election. They "lined up an elite group, a virtual Who's Who of top Winnipeggers, to run her campaign" (*Winnipeg Free Press*, 1992). Concentrating on expensive billboard ads and television spots which were largely devoid of substance—former councillor turned columnist Bill Neville described her "feel-good" approach as "large numbers of words chasing woefully few ideas" (Neville, 1992)—they promoted the theme "it's time for a change." The theme was ironic: the business and professional money supported her and not Brown precisely to *ensure* that little of substance would change, i.e., to ensure against an anticipated anti-developer backlash against Brown that would elect a WIN mayor.

It worked. Thompson outdistanced her nearest rival, WIN candidate Greg Selinger, by 89,743 votes to 75,123. She got most of the votes that abandoned Brown when his campaign collapsed in the last week, a collapse that was engineered in part by the Conservative establishment, and she won a significant proportion of the female vote—her last poll prior to the election reportedly showed 52% of committed female voters supporting her (Porter, 1993). Much of this vote might otherwise have gone to Selinger, who also lost some inner-city and Liberal Party votes to fourth place finisher Ernie Gilroy.

Selinger ran an intelligent campaign, was the most knowledgeable of the candidates (Chmielewska, 1993, pp. 5-6), and even managed, without abandoning his commitment to social justice, to win an endorsement from the usually right-wing *Winnipeg Free Press* (*Winnipeg Free Press*, October 23, 1992). A professor in the University of Manitoba's inner-city social work program and a long-time inner-city community organizer, Selinger was one of the WIN councillors elected in 1989, and had since 1990 served as Chair of the Civic Finance Committee where he exhibited a firm grasp of the intricacies of civic finances. Based on this knowledge, he rejected Thompson's and Brown's call for a property tax freeze on the grounds that a freeze would necessitate damaging cuts to services and jobs. This position, though accurate, contributed mightily to his defeat by a largely suburban electorate still animated by a right-wing populist anti-tax rebellion which fed into the establishment's campaign. This, plus the fact that a Selinger campaign which refused both corporate and union contributions could not compete with Thompson's bulging coffers,¹⁸ probably cost him the election.

Thompson's campaign promise of no property tax increases for three years threatened to further damage the inner city and labour, because it would almost certainly necessitate cuts to services and jobs, and would minimize the opportunities for innovative efforts to revitalize the inner city that would

likely have followed a Selinger victory. The promise of a property tax freeze was a major factor in Thompson's appeal to suburban voters, who, by voting for right-wing councillors and an establishment Mayor, advanced their narrow and immediate monetary interests, and implicitly refused to contribute tax dollars to the rapidly growing economic and social problems of a decaying inner city. The *Winnipeg Free Press* editorial endorsement of Selinger for Mayor may have represented the more enlightened pro-business view that the modest short-term costs in terms of property and business taxes that would have followed from a Selinger victory would be much less than the longer term costs that would follow if, as seemed likely with a Thompson-led Council, the inner city was allowed to continue to decay.

In addition to Selinger's loss, WIN managed to win only five of fifteen wards. The organization squandered much of the goodwill it had tapped in 1989, and proved unable to build on its earlier success. WIN failed to build a social base for its efforts at the community level,¹⁹ and ended up being organizationally weak at the ward level, running candidates in only eleven of fifteen wards with no organizational presence at all in some (Hammond, November 23, 1992). This was the case in St. Norbert, for example, where a strong WIN incumbent was given no organizational help and lost. Because WIN had not done the job of broadening its base it was simply not organizationally capable of sustaining both Selinger's very effective mayoralty campaign—which consumed substantial human and financial resources— and a serious run at controlling Council. Further, it was never clear whether WIN was a party or not. Members denied that it was, fearful of the anti-party bias so successfully promoted since 1919 by the establishment. But by not clearly defining itself as a party, and being confused as a result about what its organizational character was,²⁰ not only did WIN end up being organizationally weak at the ward level, but also it failed to run an open and democratic nominating process in many wards. The result was that in three wards that were potentially winnable, the WIN candidate split the vote with at least one other apparent reform candidate—yet another manifestation of the historic post-1971 fragmentation of Winnipeg's civic reform efforts.

A notable example of this fragmentation was the campaign in Point Douglas, a sprawling, largely inner-city ward. WIN endorsed Irene Haigh, former Labour Election Committee (LEC) school trustee who had replaced the LEC's Mary Kardash on the school board, and was following the path from school board to City Council trodden earlier by Joe Zuken. A diligent and progressive school trustee with solid roots in the city's Left and community experience in the inner city, Haigh was a good bet to knock off reactionary Gang member John Prystanski.

Though only 24 years of age, Prystanski was not just an obedient voice for the developers, but also a skilled ward politician, who used to the fullest his Eastern European ancestry—still of great advantage in Winnipeg's North End—and his links to the orthodox Catholic church. It was particularly

important for WIN and for the inner city that Prystanski be defeated, and difficult though it would be, in a head to head race Haigh stood a good chance.

Then in late July a group of progressive Aboriginal women involved in the Indigenous Women's Collective—which has waged a long and effective struggle on behalf of Aboriginal women and children in Winnipeg's inner city—announced that they were running Sandi Funk, one of their strongest members, in Point Douglas, even though Haigh had already declared, won the WIN endorsement, and printed her first piece of literature.

Chaos followed. The Funk camp wanted Haigh to move further north to Mynarski ward. They argued that the large Aboriginal population in Point Douglas and Funk's years of community experience in the ward warranted, indeed necessitated, her candidacy there.

Haigh's camp argued that it was far too late for her to move—Funk should wait until next time. Some of Funk's camp replied with charges of systemic racism, asking why, for example, WIN had not proactively sought out an Aboriginal candidate in the ward, and why Aboriginal people should be asked, yet again, to wait their turn.

In the end, Prystanski won, and by a margin less than the number of votes received by Funk, prompting charges that the Funk campaign had cost Haigh her victory. Although most of Funk's votes were almost certainly Aboriginal voters who would not otherwise have voted, her candidacy hurt Haigh's campaign by drawing away workers and consuming considerable emotional energy, thus contributing to the victory and further entrenchment of a particularly reactionary Councillor in an inner-city ward where a progressive Councillor is especially needed. The same kind of fragmentation, caused this time by a late NDP entrant, contributed to the defeat of the WIN candidate in the city's other major inner-city ward, Daniel McIntyre.

Beneath this fragmentation—which could have been prevented in 1992 and which stands in stark contrast to the establishment's organizational skills, as demonstrated yet again in the 1992 campaign—was the deeper split created by the geography of class and manifested in an inner-city/suburban split. WIN is, at one level, a loose coalition of inner-city and mostly NDP, and suburban and mostly Liberal members, and the NDP/Liberal split superimposed upon an inner-city/suburban split has created serious tensions which have adversely affected WIN's ability to function. The inner city has a minority of wards, and experience has proven that neither the NDP nor other civic reform organizations have been able, on their own, to win in the suburbs. Thus an electorally successful civic reform effort requires an alliance across the inner-city/suburban divide, which means also across party and class lines. The geography of class is such in Winnipeg that there is a dearth of middle class residents—the basis of many civic reform efforts in Canadian cities in the last quarter century—in the inner city, thus

deepening the divide which WIN would have to find the means to bridge. For such structural reasons, the WIN coalition is strained. In particular, it appears that Liberal members are viewed with suspicion by NDP and labour members, and *vice versa*. One WIN activist claims, for example, that resentment of alleged labour dominance runs so deep through a part of the organization that it is the norm at WIN meetings that someone ends up having to explain yet again why unions should be defended (Lord, 1992). In fact, WIN was virtually paralysed for at least part of the post-1989 period as the result of a struggle to remove two leaders who held to just such views. These strains within the organization are reflected in public perceptions of WIN. Barry Hammond, former WIN President, claims that people in the South End of the city see WIN as an NDP-left organization, while those in the North End see it as Liberal-dominated (Hammond, November 23, 1992). To this point, WIN has proved unable to solve such problems, nor do the organization's most recent efforts provide much evidence of its being able to do so in future. WIN's civic reform efforts have so far been, and appear likely to continue to be, consistent with the pattern which has prevailed, unbroken, since 1971.

CONCLUSION

The series of failures of civic reform efforts in Winnipeg since 1971 is attributable to a complex of reasons, foremost among which has been the political strength and skill of the city's business and related professional interests. They have organized at the civic level since 1919, sufficiently effectively that wave after wave of electoral attempts by the City's left/progressive forces has been successfully beaten back. Their civic electoral organization is chameleon-like: each time it atrophies from disuse, or becomes too openly identified with developers and real estate interests, it dissolves, only to re-group under a new name in response to a new electoral challenge. It is at times of such challenge that the class character of Winnipeg's civic elections is expressed most clearly: Winnipeg's business and professional interests are prepared, and able, to act aggressively and effectively in defense of their local class interests. Yet the city's business and related professional interests have been able to obscure the narrow class character of their civic involvement with an always successful appeal to non-partisanship—i.e., to the clever though ironic idea that they are responsible *directly* to the people, and that they put "people before party."²¹ As Civic Reform Coalition spokesperson Pete Hudson put it: "The ICEC were incredibly successful in selling people on the myth of keeping politics out of City Hall" (Hudson, May 17, 1994). To the extent that this notion has become hegemonic, it not only obscures the class basis of business and professional involvement, but also, in discrediting party, makes it more difficult to organize *against* the local ruling class.

Those who have attempted to organize against the business and related professional interests have lacked their certainty of purpose and organizational unity. The CCF/NDP has never been certain that it should be active as a party at the civic level, and has been riven with internal conflict over the issue. The provincial party has not only drained its civic counterpart of people and resources, but also has actively opposed civic involvement, both for fear that it would undermine the provincial effort, and for fear that it would create an electoral power base for the party's left wing. The left-right split has been further complicated by the fact that while the most ambitious civic reform efforts have been pushed by the left, they have been stymied by right-wing NDP councillors who have had deep electoral roots in inner-city wards and have been resistant, consistent with the character of their electoral base, to civic reform efforts. Opposed by both the electorally successful provincial wing and the electorally successful inner-city councillors, civic reform efforts from within the NDP have invariably failed. Efforts from outside the party, like the CRC and the WCM, have been even less successful, being opposed by the NDP who, though always uncertain of their own civic involvement, have been certain, "dog-in-the-manger" style, that nobody else should try. These NDP-breakaway efforts have been organizationally fragile, numerically small, and unable to find an electoral base, given NDP domination of the inner city and ICEC domination of the suburbs. Nor has there been any organizational continuity, any effort to build an electoral base, from one such attempt to the next.²² LEC candidates, equally vehemently opposed by the NDP, have been confined to a very narrow electoral base in the North End, and even this they were able to hold only until the retirement of the personally popular Joe Zuken. The result has been a degree of fragmentation and internal conflict among left/progressive forces that has made civic reform electorally impossible.

Beneath this fragmentation and internal conflict lies the central and enduring feature of Winnipeg's civic politics—its class character. The city's business and related professional interests organize aggressively and effectively along class lines. The class character of Winnipeg's inner city—the relative absence of a middle class,²³ and the electoral dominance of an aging Eastern European working class fearful of the consequences of rapid demographic change—has meant that the core of the civic NDP has been conservative and resistant to civic reform efforts. The populist appeal of Mayor Steve Juba, especially among North End ethnic working class voters, not only prevented civic reform efforts from running a mayoralty candidate, leaving them leaderless, but also served, along with the hegemony of non-partisanship, to obscure the city's historic class divisions.

Class divisions have been further obscured in recent years by the shift in everyday discourse and in political analysis from the language of class to that of place—specifically to the use of the concepts "inner city" *versus* "suburbs." This latter conceptualization is in important ways false—many poor and

working class people live in the suburbs. But to the extent that it replaces the language of class, this conceptualization renders the historic Winnipeg class conflict less dangerous. Not only do suburban-dominated wards exceed by far the number of inner-city dominated wards—even without gerrymandering—but also this conceptualization makes the majority "suburbs" even more susceptible to appeals to hold down property taxes in the face of civic reformers who would pour money into the "financial sinkhole" created by the socio-economic decay of the inner city. The result is to set the working class against the poor in an alignment which can only serve to benefit further the business and related professional interests.

This phenomenon is not confined to Winnipeg. Writing about Kingston, Richard Harris observes that:

By the 60's, in contrast to the 30's, the poor had become clearly distinct from organized labour . . . By the 1960's there was little sense of solidarity between the welfare poor and the working class. Indeed some of the latter were wondering why their taxes should support the apparent idleness of others, a view that seems to have been shared by an even higher proportion of the working poor (Harris, 1988, pp. 7-8).

This may have been related, Harris argues, to the hypothesis that:

. . . home ownership dulls the workers' perception of the inequities of capitalism, blunting labour radicalism. . . . in embracing a home-centred life in the 1950's, many Kingston workers simultaneously turned their backs on the unorganized and on an active engagement in social reform (Harris, 1988, p. 36).

The resulting segregation, Harris argues, "meant that there had developed a close association between class and place of residence . . . Indeed by the early 1960s the language of class had to a considerable extent been reduced to the language of place" (Harris, 1988, p. 67). In Winnipeg in the post-war era, very large numbers of young, working class families moved out of the cramped and aging inner city to the wide open spaces and new homes of the suburbs. A growing proportion of those left in the inner city were the poor, so that the inner city *versus* the suburbs split has become transmogrified, at least in part, into a poor *versus* working class split. In Winnipeg, this split is complicated by the fact that the residue of ethnic, working class residents in the inner city supports conservative NDP councillors, and only very small numbers of the middle class have returned to the inner city to lend strength to civic reform efforts.

This aspect of the geography of social class has played a significant role in thwarting civic reform efforts in Winnipeg. In those large Canadian cities in which civic reform has been electorally successful, it has been middle class professionals with language and bureaucratic skills seeking to protect older downtown neighbourhoods who have provided much of the social basis for civic reform. In Winnipeg there is virtually no middle class in the inner city. The middle class has been largely

suburbanized. There has been little incentive for such people to return to the inner city because the suburbs are so easily accessible, in no small measure due to the electoral success of the modern-day successors to the Citizens' League, who have used their elected positions to build the freeways and bridges needed to speed suburbanites to downtown work sites. This, plus the relatively poor quality of housing stock and deteriorating social conditions, have proved a disincentive to middle class relocation to downtown Winnipeg, thus contributing to shaping the geography of class in Winnipeg in a manner which is disadvantageous to the development of civic reform movements, and reinforcing the replacement of the language and imagery of class with that of place. The reconceptualization of city politics, with inner city *versus* suburbs replacing class *versus* class, serves only to electorally disadvantage the inner city's already socio-economically disadvantaged, not only by placing them in a minority, but also by setting them against the very working class and middle class elements whose involvement on their side is essential to the electoral success of civic reform. Attempts to bridge this gap, such as that being made by WIN, have proved exceptionally difficult, especially in the face of a highly skilled business and professional class, leaving the electoral prospects of civic reform efforts in Winnipeg in the 1990s no further advanced than they have been since 1971. It remains to be seen whether these difficulties can be overcome.

NOTES

1. The title of the *Manitoba Free Press* editorial, November 26, 1919 (McKillop, 1970, p. 51)
2. For a discussion of the inaugural meeting of the Citizens' League, August 20, 1919, and an occupational breakdown of its first provisional executive, see Barber, 1970, pp. 2-3, and McKillop, 1970, pp. 61-62.
3. Mayor Gray, running for re-election, had declared that "there [is] only one issue in this election, whether the city is to be governed by the British traditions of law, order and equity, or by one class who [are] fanatics" (*Manitoba Free Press*, November 6, 1919); the *Manitoba Free Press* had added that the issue was whether the "extreme section" of the working class, "Bolshi's, were to take control of the city" (McKillop, 1970, p. 52)
4. The "Citizens' League of Winnipeg" became the "Citizens' Campaign Committee" in 1922, the "Winnipeg Better Civic Government Association" in 1923 and 1924, the "Civic Progress Association" from 1929 to 1932, the "Civic Election Committee" from 1936 to 1966, the "Greater Winnipeg Election Committee" from 1966 to 1971, the "Independent Citizens' Election Committee" from 1971 to the early 1980s, "the Gang" from the early 1980s to 1992 (Barber, 1970, p. 1 and McKillop, 1970, p. 64).
5. The same outcome was experienced in Manitoba's second largest city, Brandon, where the NDP contested the 1971 election in a big way, with a full slate of candidates and detailed policy papers, only to suffer an unexpected, "significant" defeat (Black, 1984).
6. Isaac Pitblado had been elected President of the provisional executive of the Citizens' League at the founding meeting of that organization, August 20, 1919. Pitblado would later serve as crown prosecutor in the trial of the Winnipeg General Strike leaders (Barber, 1970, p. 2).
7. Nick Ternette recalls that this convention featured a major conflict between the NDP establishment, rooted in the labour movement and the provincial wing of the party, who were very reluctant to get involved in civic politics, and the Left within the party, dominated by members of the Waffle, who sought to run a major civic campaign. The Left won, at least on the floor of the Convention, though the provincial party responded by starving the civic campaign of resources (Ternette, May 19, 1994).
8. Final standings: ICEC-29; NDP-9 (up two from 7); CRC-1; LEC-1; Independents-10.
9. Pete Hudson, one of two key spokespersons, now describes the CRC as a "tiny band with an Olivetti typewriter," on which he hammered out press releases. Mostly suburban-based, middle class "new Lefties," they did not reach out to the union movement or neighbourhood organizations, and conducted "a naive piece of organizing." Knowing they were running a losing cause but hoping to raise consciousness about the developers' control of City Hall, as described in James Lorimer's *Citizens' Guide to City Hall*, by which he had been influenced, Hudson now claims: "I'm not sure we wanted power" or would have known what to do with it (Hudson, May 17, 1994). Nonetheless, the media paid attention to the issues raised by the CRC, and the effort can be seen in some ways as the forerunner of Winnipeg Into the Nineties (WIN).

10. Civic politics in Winnipeg has always been used, both by CCF/NDP and by CEC/ICEC councillors, as a stepping stone to the provincial level.
11. NDP candidates Syms, Skowron and Lazarenko won 1998, 1435 and 648 votes respectively.
12. "'Prior to April, the municipal party was operated on a kind of *ad hoc* basis,' Vice President Harvey Smith said. 'The organization surfaced at election time and then disappeared'" (*Winnipeg Tribune*, June 15, 1980).
13. The NDP had been elected provincially in late 1981, under the leadership of Howard Pawley.
14. The NDP were also major losers in the 1986 Vancouver civic election, with the result that "the party's likely to come up with a different format for participation in future elections" (Gutstein, 1986/87, p. 30).
15. The "Gang of 18" was the informal name which came to be attached to what had been the ICEC. The title, "the Gang," appears to have been used by editors and writers at the *Winnipeg Free Press*, and to have been picked up by the rest of the media and many observers of city politics. Its use was of course rejected by those to whom it was intended to apply.
16. One political scientist described the shift from 29 to 15 wards as follows: "in increasing the size of wards, the government of Manitoba is following the time-honoured tradition of conservative governments seeking to enhance the business community's control over civic affairs" (Leo, 1992, p. 3). This "time-honoured tradition" goes back at least to 1919, when the General Strike was followed by "what . . . can only be described as the best-engineered piece of civic gerrymandering ever perpetrated in Canada" (Wichern, 1976, p. 22).
17. A group of nine women—two civil servants, one federal and one provincial, three in banking or the trust business, three in industry and a lawyer—"began to hold regular breakfast meetings, always inviting a few new women to attend. Susan was always the star attraction. It was a forum for her to test the ideas she was developing about the role she could play as Mayor . . . They held Friday morning breakfast meetings for the better part of a year. Usually there were about twenty-five women in attendance . . ." (Porter, 1993, pp.3-4).
18. Changes to the City of Winnipeg Act by the provincial government strengthened the pro-establishment forces on Council by legalizing corporate and union donations, while prohibiting (tax-deductible) contributions to local candidates by political parties. This gave corporate donors greater power, which in turn accrued to the benefit of Thompson.
19. "We thought just running good candidates was all we needed to do" (Barry Hammond, WIN President, November 23, 1992).
20. WIN is often called a party, but it has no whip, no party discipline, no party leader. "We never felt there was need for a leader in WIN" (Hammond, November 23, 1992).
21. Non-partisanship has a long history not only at the civic level in Winnipeg, where it has been used effectively since 1919, but also at the provincial level in Manitoba, where it was utilized from 1922 to 1958, its purpose being to ward off challenges based on class. As described by former Premier Douglas Campbell in reference to the first such government, "the most important

consideration for them was a non-partisan approach rather than a class approach" (Stinson, 1975, p. 126).

22. Winnipeg's experience appears to have been typical in this respect. Higgins has argued that much the same happened in the decade after the late 1960s in Canadian cities. Generally, after a civic reform effort had failed electorally: "Solace is then taken in the belief that the next election will turn out much better because a mass base has been built and the public's consciousness has been raised. But rare indeed are the instances where that base is carefully cultivated and that consciousness capitalized upon immediately after the one election in preparation for the next" (Higgins, 1981, p. 90).
23. ". . . the urban middle class maintain a very low profile in the inner core of Winnipeg, blocking the growth of reform politics" (Gerecke and Reid, 1992, p. 129). For the role of the middle class in civic reform politics see Goldrick, 1978, pp. 33-34; Harris, 1988, p. 152; Milner, 1979, p. 41.

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