On June 12, 1941, Minneapolis voters went to the polls to elect candidates for municipal offices. This was not a routine election. In previous months, the contest for a normally obscure and uncontroversial office had drawn local and national attention. Among four people running for two spots on the Minneapolis Public Library’s board of directors, Communist Party candidate Helen Allison Winter placed third with 35,108 votes. Her total, an FBI agent later reported, “staggered the population of Minneapolis.” The Minneapolis Times agonized: “Thirty-five thousand Minneapolis people voted to put an avowed and active Communist into public office. . . . It is unbelievable that any such number of Minneapolis voters want a Communist on any city board, especially in times like these.”

The hardships experienced by millions in the Great Depression had
led many Americans to question the viability of capitalism. Among the groups that benefited most from this unease was the Communist Party of the United States of America (CPUSA), born in September 1919. To gain recognition in 1933, the Soviet Union promised the United States that it would not agitate against the American government or engage in propaganda campaigns. It kept neither promise but only chose its moments to increase or decrease the intensity of its efforts. Although recognition added political legitimacy to the CPUSA, on foreign policy it followed Moscow dictates precisely.2

During the depression, the CPUSA portrayed itself with some success and sincerity as defender of the unemployed, champion of the racially oppressed, and opponent of Fascism. In 1935 Moscow directed Communist parties around the world to adopt a “Popular Front” policy and cooperate more with other left-wing politicians. In the United States, this meant establishing alliances with the newly formed Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) and infiltrating existing left-leaning groups or organizing new ones.3

Communists made a significant impression on Minnesota politics during the 1930s. In mid-decade, the Popular Front connected Communists to union movements and the Farmer-Labor Party, the state’s leading liberal political institution. Their common interests included an active anti-Fascist foreign policy and support for much of Franklin D. Roosevelt’s New Deal legislation. By the late 1930s, Communists had integrated into mainstream state politics through the Farmer-Labor Party. Minnesota had one of the largest state CPUSA units in the country (2,100 members in 1938), with particular strength among Finnish immigrants in the north and CIO workers in Minneapolis and St. Paul. Between 1936 and 1938, argues historian Harvey Klehr, “In no other state in the Union did the Communists have so intimate a relationship with the executive branch and the political party that controlled it.”4

On August 23, 1939, however, Moscow’s foreign policy became paramount for American Communists. On that day, the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany signed a nonaggression pact, promising not to attack each other. In its wake, Hitler invaded Poland, and within weeks France and England joined the war against Germany while Russia attacked Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, and Finland. Events in Europe forced Americans of all political persuasions to respond. For U.S. conservatives, Stalin’s willingness to ally with Hitler proved that the Soviet Union was as totalitarian as Germany. In Minnesota, Popular Front alliances were tested. Most held, although Finns abandoned the Communist Party “in droves,” according to historian John Earl Haynes. In the 1940 gubernatorial race, Republican Harold Stassen resoundingly defeated the Farmer-Labor candidate, Hjalmar Petersen, and Communist Party power and influence in state politics waned substantially.5

Despite these reverses, the Minnesota CPUSA consistently parroted Moscow’s opposition to U.S. involvement in the European war. When the Minnesota Young Communist League issued a leaflet in late 1939 announcing a St. Paul rally supporting the nonaggression pact and Soviet invasion of Finland (“Prolonged fascist Finnish provocations on the Soviet frontier . . . compelled the Soviet government to take protective measures against the war schemes of Finland’s imperialist masters”), the Republican-leaning, pro-Stassen Minneapolis Times criticized this “generously distributed colored handbill” for its hypocrisy. Such spin, the Times concluded, only confirmed what many Minnesotans perceived as the party’s basic dishonesty: “It’s all clear now.”6

Still, the CPUSAs position on the war resonated with many in a state having a strong tradition of isolationism. From 1906 to 1946, according to historian Barbara Stuhler, “isolationism was a dominant strain in Minnesota foreign policy thought.” Until the U.S. entered World War II, this stance was pontificated most effectively in Minnesota by Charles Lindbergh Sr. and Jr., both of whom believed only

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eastern bankers and munitions makers had anything to gain from waging war outside U.S. borders.7

In Minneapolis, these forces played out in ways unique to city politics during the spring and summer of 1941. At the time, Communist Party headquarters was at 10 Tenth Street South, across from the Minneapolis Public Library and one floor above the party-run Library Book Shop. Like other CPUSA-sponsored bookstores in the 1930s, the Minneapolis shop sold leftist books and pamphlets not likely to be found in public libraries. And tacked up inside the front window for passersby to read was the front page of the party’s New York-based Daily Worker.8

The secretary of the Communist Party of Minnesota was Carl Winter, a Pittsburgh native who spent his youth in Cleveland and there joined the party in 1925. His wife, Helen, was born in Seattle in 1908, daughter of Alfred Wagenknecht and Hortense Allison, both activist party functionaries. While her father was in prison during World War I for resisting conscription, Helen was expelled from school for wearing a Eugene Debs campaign button. She married Carl in 1927, and by the middle of the 1930s both were active in Cleveland, where Helen ran on the party ticket for secretary of state in 1937. A year later they moved to Minneapolis to open the bookstore. For a while they resided at 3803 Fourth Avenue South—“the colored district,” noted an FBI agent monitoring their activities. Helen Winter became the party’s secretary for both Hennepin County and the Young Communist League. FBI files describe her as a “plain” dressing, “large boned” woman with “big features”; she stood five-and-a-half feet tall, weighed 140 pounds, and had “mouse colored, stringy” hair. In the summer of 1940 she and her husband worked the streets of Minneapolis-St. Paul, the towns of the Iron Range, and many places in between to secure more than 20,000 signatures on a petition naming jailed CPUSA leader Earl Browder as candidate for U.S. president.9

Then, on March 26, 1941, Helen Winter was named the Communist Party candidate for one of the two open positions on the Minneapolis Public Library board. The primary election would narrow the field to four candidates. That primary would also witness a fierce battle between Popular Front and anti-Communist forces within the Farmer-Labor Party. The battle, which effectively ended party unity and eventually drove many Farmer-Laborites to the Democrats, was most obvious in the mayoral race. On the left, the Hennepin Farmer-Labor Association (a Popular Front organization) endorsed Al Hansen, while the Minneapolis Central Labor Union (an American Federation of Labor affiliate strongly influenced by the Teamsters Local 544, host to a cadre of virulently anti-Communist Trotskyites), backed Torauf Eide. In the campaign, Hansen largely ignored municipal issues, attacked Eide and the Central Labor Union as capitalist stooges, and spun the election as a “Vote Against the War.”10

In accepting the nomination for the library board, Winter immediately accused Hansen’s mayoral opponents of bringing war industries to Minneapolis, a tactic she described as an attempt to “sell the war to the citizens.” The war, she said, “is the main issue in the election, since it endangers economic security, civil liberties, and right to free speech and press.” Exactly how a library board position would play into this scenario she did not say, and the local press did not ask. Her opponents generally ignored the war as an issue for a library post. But the FBI immediately took notice and filed a summary report of her life gathered from information agents had been documenting for more than a decade.11

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Several pressing matters made for obvious campaign issues. In 1941 the library was still suffering the vicissitudes of the depression, when budgets were greatly reduced at the same time that demand for books and services increased significantly. In addition, in March it was still reeling from the loss of 131 workers funded by the federal Work Projects Administration. The library had also just experienced a change of leadership. To replace the beloved Gratia Countryman, director from 1904 to 1937 who had made the library into a dynamic civic institution, trustees had chosen Carl Vitz from the Toledo Public Library, in part because he had experience constructing libraries. A new building was bound to become a campaign issue, as the 50-year-old structure had become seriously overcrowded. Yet, Vitz’s selection showed that the board was politically split. Its four Farmer-Laborites had favored an internal candidate, and when the five Republicans chose Vitz instead, the Hennepin County Veterans Farmer-Labor Club quickly passed a resolution condemning the board for choosing an outsider.

Another contentious issue pitted the library board against the school board. Twenty years earlier, Countryman had brought library services to the city’s junior-high schools. In 1941, however, the library board argued that it could no longer afford to fund these services. The school board fought back, but to no avail. “We really are indignant at the thought of losing something which rightfully should be ours,” Sheridan School Parent-Teachers Association officers wrote Vitz in March 1941. When the library board announced that funding would be discontinued in June, citizens publicly protested.

Helen Winter thus had plenty of issues on which to base her campaign. The day after announcing her candidacy, she toured the central library “from basement to attic, and with pointed questions determined for herself what the library needed,” the Daily Worker later reported. “The librarians were most coopera-

tive and obviously impressed.” On the next three mornings she visited library branches, at each talking to librarians about problems they were experiencing. About that time, a banner went up over the Library Book Shop: “Helen Allison Winter for Library Director: Peace, Security, Civil Rights.”

Shortly thereafter, Winter’s campaign issued a trifold leaflet laden with themes she intended to address. Under the headline “For Peace and Progress,” Winter outlined her position. “As a candidate for the Library Board, I intend to fight against every attempt to subordinate public welfare to the war program of Wall Street.” She decried cuts in local services—including the library’s—to support “our government’s participation in the imperialist war abroad.” She also opposed “monopoly interference with our library bookshelves and public forum, or their misuse for reactionary purposes.” She then introduced a new twist: “I shall work for the employment by our library and other public institutions of Negro and other minority people without discrimination.” Left unsaid was the fact that the library employed no African Americans at that time.

Inside the leaflet, readers saw another headline—“Which Shall It Be? Books or Bullets”—sandwiched between a photo of the aging library (“Built 1889. Cost $325,000”) and a photo of the new Minneapolis Armory (“Built 1935. Cost $930,000”). Other statements—“Minneapolis will spend less than 90¢ per person for our library this year”; “Keep our library free of war-hysteria and censorship”; and “A new Public Library and expanded facilities”—were juxtaposed against statements such as “City government pays bankers over $2,000,000 yearly in interest”; “Republican and Democratic
parties propose to tax wages for war billions”; and “Public utilities pay no tax for use of our streets, while making millions.” Winter made no secret of her politics, promising, “As a representative of the Communist Party, I pledge all efforts to help get our government out and keep it out of the imperialist war.” Minneapolis Communists quickly began to hand out these leaflets on city streets and deliver them door-to-door.

In a May 1 radio speech on WLOL, Winter elaborated her platform: “Each day we find that new commitments have been made by our administration that endanger our very lives. We raise our voices today against any participation in the imperialist war—to stop the war makers, and to demand useful jobs over here—not useless death over there.” Although she made no mention of her opponents, she argued against mayoral candidates “trying to sell the war to the people of Minneapolis.”

Not until halfway through her speech did Winter address library issues. “Our Public Library, built 52 years ago, is inadequate to meet the increasing population and needs of Minneapolis.” She complimented the staff for “unstinting work” but lamented, “There are not sufficient funds made available to buy the necessary books and expand library facilities.” She argued against any “wage cuts,” “reduced book budgets,” or “less service” and repeated her pledge to hire African Americans, fight censorship, and make the library an “arsenal of facts for peace, economic security, and civil rights.” Concluding, “I have tried tonight to give you a frank presentation of my views as a Communist upon the vital problems affecting our city,” she framed her candidacy in broader terms.

If you wish to express your protest against all policies that are dragging us farther into the war [one of mayoral candidate Hansen’s talking points]; if you wish to speak for increased and not restricted public services; if you wish to be heard for education and culture for the people; for books—not bullets—I ask you to vote on May 12th for Helen Allison Winter for Library Director.

Within a week, her campaign had adopted its slogan—“Books Not Bullets”—and she added more detail to her plans for library reform. In a leaflet announcing a May 9 rally, she argued for a new library and branches, as well as unionization and improved working conditions for its employees. She advocated establishing “neighborhood centers for youth” within library buildings to provide them with “improved recreational and educational facilities.” Obviously, she had seen the public reaction to the cessation of library services to junior-high schools and sought to exploit it. “Who is Youth’s Candidate?” the leaflet asked. “Helen Allison Winter . . . is for getting out and staying out of the war. She is for jobs, education and recreational opportunities for youth. She believes that establishing Socialism is the only method by which we can assure real equality of opportunity for youth to develop and lead a happy normal life.”

Although Winter’s candidacy picked up support from fellow Communists, it failed to attract other endorsements. The Farmer-Labor Party had its own slate of candidates from the Central Labor Union; neither its official newspaper, the *Minneapolis Labor Review*, nor the Teamsters Union’s *Northwest Organizer* ever mentioned Winter. In an article, “Library Candidate Advocates Equal Opportunity for All,” the African American *Minneapolis Spokesman* noted her NAACP membership but endorsed no candidates for the library board.

But thousands of people had heard her on the radio and in person and had read her campaign literature. On May 12, in primary election results an FBI agent called “staggering,” Winter received 24,830 votes, placing her fourth behind a “Con-
servative” (Republican) and the two Central Labor Union candidates, but ahead of another Republican (by 496 votes) and a Farmer-Labor candidate who got only 18,996. (For mayor, Eide placed first; Hansen, a distant fourth.) And, surprisingly, she drew support across the city, including the Eighth and Thirteenth wards—“silkstocking wards,” local newspapers called them—where she received one in four votes cast. “The library board race furnished the freak of the day, when Helen Allison Winter, avowed Communist, won nomination,” noted the Times. 18

As asked about her showing, Winter said it was “a mandate to continue the fight in the final election for a program of peace and social welfare.” Four days after the primary, she published a letter in the Spokesman. “I want to thank the hundreds of Negro people who supported my candidacy. . . . Between now and the time of the general elections I pledge to bring the question of discrimination against Negroes before thousands of Minneapolis citizens.” During the primary campaign, no other candidate had referred to African Americans. On May 19, FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover recommended that Winter “be considered for custodial detention in the event of a national emergency.” 19

Few people had expected Winter to poll so well. The Daily Worker later quoted “a number of librarians” as saying, “We voted for Helen Allison Winter because we would like to see what a real liberal would do on the Library Board.” The Minneapolis Labor Review and Northwest Organizer, meanwhile, continued to promote the Central Labor Union candidates, incumbent Myrtle Harris and Cliff Blanchard. The Organizer called them “the best guarantees that citizens will continue to obtain full use of the libraries of the city.” In their general-election campaigns, both worked to distance themselves from Winter. Blanchard told an audience on June 5 not to be worried by talk of Communism. “It’s a long way to Moscow,” he said, “and I don’t believe this election will determine whether we’ll pull down Old Glory from the city hall and run up the hammer and sickle.” 20

Harlan B. Strong, the “Conservative” candidate, was more forthright. Campaigning on a ticket “for Americanism” (“We are opposed to radicalism and foreign isms,” his posters read), he urged Tenth Ward Republican clubwomen to keep “certain political factions such as the Communist Party” from getting control of the library. Several days later, he told a Fourth Ward Republican club that he would increase efforts “to obtain endowments and contributions for book collections of private citizens for the public library to offset shortage of funds.” 21

While the Times worried about Winter, the Minneapolis Star Journal, which generally supported the Roosevelt administration, was more balanced. On June 2 it acknowledged the “good deal of attention” that Winter was getting in Minneapolis and around the country. “Communists outside this city are saying that if Mrs. Winter can be elected it will give Communism a success to boast about nationally.” The Star Journal saw no problem with Winter’s candidacy: “This is a free country—the kind of a country in which a Communist has as much right as anybody else to run for office, and to be elected if he can get enough votes”; furthermore, it acknowledged that Winter identified herself as a Communist, and so voters had no excuse for not knowing. Nonetheless, it predicted she would be defeated. 22

On May 12, in primary election results an FBI agent called “staggering,” Winter received 24,630 votes.
Why are the Communists and their fellow travelers so anxious to get their representatives on the school and library boards? Is it in order to have radicalism taught in our public schools and to fill the shelves of our libraries with the pernicious and revolutionary mouthings of the Marxists? We are a tolerant people, but there is such a thing as carrying tolerance too far with elements that threaten the very life of our government, the stability of its most cherished institutions and the American way of life.

Newspapers printed many letters against Winter; the *Daily Worker* complained that they refused to print favorable ones.25

On June 2, Martin cabled Alice Ames Winter, then living in California. The 76-year-old had been the founder and first president of the Minneapolis Woman’s Club and, during World War I, head of the Council of National Defense Minnesota Women’s Committee and the Woman’s Auxiliary of the superpatriotic Minnesota Commission of Public Safety.

Your friends here think many voters were confused by name thinking her [Helen Winter] some relative of yours. Please wire me collect . . . statement I can give to newspapers saying if true that you are not a relative and are not in favor of Communism, therefore wish to do everything in your power to help Minneapolitans proper selection of Library Directors at June 9 election.

Alice Winter’s response was immediate and unequivocal: “Certainly Helen Winter is no connection of mine, and I love both American ideals of life and Minneapolis too much to tolerate any Communist penetration. I wish all Communists could go to Russia and get a taste of what lack of freedom means.”

Once Martin released this cable to the newspapers, “the business of picking members for the Minneapolis public library board roared into a red hot political battle,” as the *Times* reported. On June 3, it reprinted the cable verbatim and featured a photo of the Library Book Shop festooned with the banner for Winter’s candidacy. One paper carried pictures of both Helen Winter (“Communist, library candidate”) and Alice Winter (“Clubwoman, no Communist”).26

Shortly thereafter, local newspapers began publishing letters to the editor about Winter’s candidacy. “I want to ask all voters to be good Americans and keep Helen Allison Winter off our library board,” wrote one to the *Star Journal* on June 5. “Like the worm in the apple, fifth columnists get into positions of trust and soften our morale.” Another wrote: “Undoubtedly this is the first time in the history of Minneapolis that this obscure office has received the careful notice it has.” A third was less kind.

National newspapers printed many letters against Winter; the *Daily Worker* complained that they refused to print favorable ones.25

By this time, African Americans in Minneapolis had become more receptive. On June 6 the *Spokesman* endorsed candidates for municipal offices. For library director, the *Spokesman* said, “Vote for Helen Allison Winter and Myrtle Harris. . . . Mrs. Winter is the only candidate who has asked why there is not a single colored person employed in the Minneapolis library system.” In the same issue, her campaign chair thanked “the Negro and white campaign workers who have worked so splendidly in her behalf. . . . Every vote for Mrs. Winter on June 9 will speak out loudly against the discrimination shown to Negroes. . . . The larger the vote for Mrs. Winter the louder will the demand be heard that our city institutions set an example in employment of Negroes in every position without discrimination.”

Two columns over, the *Spokesman* ran an ad: “Vote Against Discrimination. Elect Helen Allison Winter.”26

The week before the election,
Winter hosted daily two-hour open-house discussion sessions at campaign headquarters for parents, teachers, and librarians. That same week, she said, other board candidates refused to attend a meeting of the American Peace Mobilization Committee (a lobbying group of the Communist Party and Popular Front) because, they claimed, “the war has nothing to do with municipal politics.” Winter noted: “The war is striking at every family in Minneapolis through rising food prices, conscription and in a hundred and one other ways. . . . I am the only candidate taking a forthright stand on the question.” At a meeting of Board of Education employees, organized by the local CIO chapter, she denounced wage cuts and salary adjustments for library and other city workers. On June 6 she gave her final campaign radio talk on WLOL.27

The Worker quoted the Spokesman directly. And in “Helen Allison Winter—Champion of the People,” the Worker spun the meeting between Winter and Mac Martin in a way Martin would not have recognized.28

On June 12, 1941, Torauf Eide lost to Republican candidate Marvin Kline by 6,000 out of 150,000 votes cast. Winning library board candidates were Cliff Blanchard (78,946 votes) and Harlan Strong (77,672). Myrtle Harris received 63,792 votes, and Winter, 35,108. But by polling some 10,000 more than her primary total, Winter bucked the trend experienced by other Popular Front candidates, drawing many more votes than most people expected. “The explanation would seem to be that thousands voted in ignorance of the candidates,” the Times editorialized the following day. The Star Journal was more tempered. It called Winter’s showing “a poor fourth,” but noted it was “a gain of 10,278 over her primary vote.29

Again the Daily Worker was effusive. “Mrs. Winter Gets Biggest Bloc of Negro Votes,” ran the headline. “The ten thousand vote increase was polled in the face of unanimous effort on the part of reactionaries and the press to drive her vote down below primary results.” The Worker also noted that, in covering the election for local radio, Star Journal writer Mike Halloran called the library board race “one of the principal contests” because “a strong campaign was made for Mrs. Winter by the Communist Party.” Most radio stations described Strong and Blanchard not as “having been elected to the library board,” said the Worker, “but for having defeated Mrs. Winter.”30

Four days later, the Daily Worker needled the Minneapolis press for its inability explain Winter’s “big vote,” crowing that “The spectre of 35,000 votes is haunting the capitalists and their editorial stooges.” Winter’s tally showed significant African American support. “I don’t think there are two Negro people in town who didn’t vote for Mrs. Winter,” said “one leading member of the Negro community” to the Daily Worker. “The attack of the red-baiters has fallen. . . . The progressives have been encouraged to resume and increase the struggle
Meanwhile, Minnesota Communists continued their campaign against the war. On June 20, detectives arrested Carl Winter on disorderly conduct charges for addressing 150 listeners on a downtown street corner. In reporting the incident, the Times referred to him as “husband of Helen Allison Winter, unsuccessful candidate for the library board in the last election.” Nor was Helen Winter ready to leave the public eye. On June 27 she wrote the Times, complaining about teachers being threatened with dismissal for “advocating change in the existing form of government.” This, she said, “is an assault not only upon free speech” but also upon free thought. “It opens the way for a free-for-all witch hunt.”

On June 22, 1941, Hitler invaded the Soviet Union and radically altered the political landscape for all Americans—Communists, in particular. Suddenly, the Russians were fighting the same evil as Great Britain and its allies. The Roosevelt administration quickly began sending aid to the Soviets. But the shift in thinking occasioned by this watershed event was perhaps most transparent in the CPUSA’s leadership. Before June 22, it was against the “imperialist” war; after that date, it pushed for U.S. entry into the conflict. In the following weeks, party leaders admonished loyalists to follow the party line. Several subsequent public events demonstrated that, like other Minnesota Communists, Carl and Helen Winter quickly abandoned their opposition to the war.

The Winters did not remain in Minneapolis after the U.S. entered World War II in December. By the summer of 1942 they had moved to Los Angeles, where Carl became executive secretary of the Los Angeles County Communist Party and Helen took charge of membership registration. The FBI continued to monitor their activities and usually referred to Helen as “once a Communist Party candidate receiving over thirty-five thousand votes for the Library Board in Minneapolis.” On March 24, 1942, Hoover placed her FBI file in Group A—“Individuals believed to be the most dangerous and who in all probability should be interned in the event of War.”

In the late 1940s, the Winters moved to Michigan, where Carl quickly became one of eleven Communists (including William Z. Foster, Ben Davis, Eugene Dennis, and Gus Hall) to undergo a nine-month trial in New York on charges of conspiring to “teach and advocate” the forcible overthrow of the government.
All were convicted in October 1949 and sentenced to five years in prison. In October 1953, Helen Winter was indicted in Detroit with five other Communists on similar charges. All six were convicted in February 1954; because of illness, however, Helen never served her sentence. Carl Winter died in Detroit on November 18, 1991; Helen died there on December 13, 2001.16

“Books Not Bullets,” the slogan Helen Winter rode to 35,108 votes in her 1941 campaign, certainly proved effective for Minneapolis and Minnesota Communists, although it did not test fundamental Popular Front alignments for the city’s radicals. How she got those votes, however, will always be a matter of speculation. It could have been her views on library issues or her attractiveness to members of local Popular Front organizations. Perhaps she picked up votes from the defeated Farmer-Labor primary candidate, or from local supporters of isolationism (which Charles Lindbergh Jr. was promoting at the time), or voter ignorance (as the Minneapolis Times surmised), or her advocacy for African Americans and opposition to racism (as the Minneapolis Spokesman and Daily Worker argued), or lingering confusion over her name (as Mac Martin argued)—or a combination of all of these factors. While we will never know exactly why Helen Winter received these votes, we can offer several observations about the issues on which she campaigned.

In 1941 the Minneapolis Public Library was underfunded, understaffed, and suffering from overcrowding in a 50-year-old building. It had recently abandoned funding library services to junior-high schools across the city. By bringing attention to each of these issues and introducing another—a lack of minority employees—Helen Winter performed a valuable civic service. Still, none of these issues were the primary focus of her campaign, and all were diminished when she attempted to locate the Minneapolis Public Library at the center of the major foreign-policy debate occupying the United States. By making the war the litmus test of her candidacy and then abandoning what looked like a very principled position for political expediency so soon thereafter, Helen Winter showed that loyalty to the Communist Party was more important to her than the immediate needs of the Minneapolis Public Library.

Notes

1. Report, June 14, 1942, File 100-423449, Helen Allison Winter Freedom of Information Act File, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Department of Justice (hereinafter cited as Winter FOIA); Minneapolis Times, June 10, 11, 1941.


For evidence of Communist Party activities in the state, see Minnesota Radicalism Pamphlet Collection, nos. 93, 97, 119, 176, 180, and 183 (fascist quote), Minnesota Historical Society (MHS), also described in Carl Ross, ed., Radicalism in Minnesota, 1900–1960: A Survey of Selected Sources (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1994).

9. Reports: Nov. 4, 1940, File No. 100-62; Mar. 18, 1943, June 6, 1944, and Nov. 28, 1944, all File No. 100-17170, Winter FOIA. See also Daily Worker, June 5, 1941. Carl Winter was the party’s write-in candidate for U.S. Senate in 1940; The Campaigner, Oct. 1940, no. 182, Minnesota Radicalism Pamphlet Collection.


11. See Minneapolis Times, Mar. 26, 27, 1941; Report, Mar. 26, 1941, File No. 100-423449-X3, Winter FOIA.


13. Daily Worker, June 5, 1941.

14. Here and below, “For Peace and Prosperity,” no. 196, Minnesota Radicalism Pamphlet Collection, MHS.

15. Here and below, see copy of this speech in “Winter, Carl & Helen” file, Minneapolis Collection, Minneapolis Central Library (hereinafter cited as Winter file, Mpls.).


17. Minneapolis Star Journal, May 8, 1941; Minneapolis Spokesman, May 9, 1941. A search of the Minneapolis Labor Review’s online archive turned up much information on the library board election but no mention of either Carl or Helen Winter; www.minneapolisunions.org.


19. Minneapolis Star Journal, May 14, 1941; Minneapolis Tribune, May 14, 1941; Minneapolis Star Journal, May 16, 1941; Star Journal, June 15, 1941; Daily Worker, June 15, 1941; Minneapolis Star Journal, June 16, 1941; Minneapolis Times, June 17, 1941; Daily Worker, June 18, 1941; Minneapolis Tribune, June 22, 1941.

20. Daily Worker, June 5, 1941; Northwest Organizer, May 29, 1941; Minneapolis Tribune, June 6, 1941.


22. Minneapolis Star Journal, June 2, 1941. The Daily Worker, June 15, 1941, criticized Times coverage of Winter’s candidacy “on behalf of the press monopoly of Minneapolis.”


25. Star Journal, June 5, 7, 1941; Daily Worker, June 5, 1941.


27. Minneapolis Star Journal, June 6, 1941; Star Journal, June 4, 1941; Daily Worker, June 5, 1941. See also Haynes, Dubious Alliance, 51.


30. Daily Worker, June 11, 1941.

31. Daily Worker, June 15, 1941.

32. Winter merits no mention in Benidt, Library Book, either; see especially 129–40.


The new Minneapolis Public Library, 1890s

The photos on p. 153, 155, and 158 are courtesy the Minneapolis Collection, Minneapolis Central Library. All other images are in MHS collections, including p. 148, from the Minneapolis Star Journal, p. 150 and 152 from the Minnesota Radicalism Pamphlet Collection, and p. 154 by Jessie Tarbox Beals.

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