Antisemitism and the American Far Left

Stephen H. Norwood has written the first systematic study of the American far left’s role in both propagating and combating antisemitism. This book covers Communists from 1920 onward, Trotskyists, the New Left and its black nationalist allies, and the contemporary remnants of the New Left. Professor Norwood analyzes the deficiencies of the American far left’s explanations of Nazism and the Holocaust. He explores far left approaches to militant Islam, from condemnation of its fierce antisemitism in the 1930s to recent apologies for jihad. Norwood discusses the far left’s use of long-standing theological and economic antisemitic stereotypes that the far right also embraced. The study analyzes the far left’s antipathy to Jewish culture, as well as its occasional efforts to promote it. He considers how early Marxist and Bolshevik paradigms continued to shape American far left views of Jewish identity, Zionism, Israel, and antisemitism.

Stephen H. Norwood (PhD, Columbia University) is Professor of History and Judaic Studies at the University of Oklahoma. He is the author of five books on American history, including The Third Reich in the Ivory Tower (Cambridge 2009), which was a Finalist for the National Jewish Book Award for Holocaust Studies. He coedited the Encyclopedia of American Jewish History (2008, with Eunice G. Pollack), which won Booklist’s Editor’s Choice Award.
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2. A synagogue in Hebron desecrated by Arabs during the 1929 Palestine pogroms. The pogromists smashed furniture and tore up sacred books.  
3. Jews fleeing the Old City, Jerusalem, during the 1929 Palestine pogroms.  
4. Soviet foreign minister Vyacheslav Molotov shaking hands with Nazi SS chief Heinrich Himmler. German foreign minister Joachim von Ribbentrop is to the left of Molotov; Dr. Robert Ley, head of the German Labor Front, is to the right of Himmler.  
8. A Communist-sponsored picket line protesting the German Exposition, New York City, April 1949.  
9. A Communist-sponsored picket line at the German Exposition, New York City, April 1949.  
10. A demonstration at Globe Theatre, New York City, against showing the movie Desert Fox.  
12. State assemblyman Leo Isacson and New York City councilman Michael J. Quill, president of the Transport Workers Union, CIO, picketing the British consulate in New York City, June 24, 1946. The demonstration was sponsored by the Communist-led International Workers Order as the Communists moved toward supporting the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine.
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13 Some of the more than 4,500 passengers the British seized from the *Exodus 1947* as it sailed to Palestine, in the hold of the British transport *Runnymede Park* on its arrival at Port de Bouc, France, August 22, 1947.

14 Jews confined behind barbed wire in a Cyprus detention camp, March 16, 1947. An armed British soldier in the watchtower guards the Jews. The British had denied the Jews admission into Palestine and deported them to Cyprus. They had been held in the camp since August 1946.

15 A campaign rally for Leo Isacson, denouncing President Truman’s “double-cross” of Israel, 1948.

16 A Leo Isacson campaign poster, urging sending of arms to Haganah, 1948.


18 Itzik Feffer, Eddie Cantor, and Solomon Mikhoels, 1943.

19 László Rajk in the dock.

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