

INDIECOLLECT



New 4K Restoration by IndieCollect & Harvard Film Archive

FREE VOICE OF LABOR: THE JEWISH ANARCHISTS By Steve Fischler & Joel Sucher

Playing virtually — November 12-19
Metrograph

[Streaming details here.](#)

Join the Filmmakers on Opening Night
November 12, 8pm EST

Screening preceded by a video discussion with the directors.



Right-wing provocateurs proclaim that America is falling into anarchy and accuse even moderate Democrats of fostering socialism. They hurl the terms “socialist,” “anarchist,” and “anti-fascist” as though they were epithets. To clear smoke from the air, the Metrograph premieres a timely new 4K restoration of *Free Voice of Labor: The Jewish Anarchists* (1980, 55 min), by Steve Fischler & Joel Sucher, that we created in association with the Harvard Film Archive.

It premieres November 12 at the Metrograph and will play for a one-week virtual run, November 12-19. Metrograph membership & ticketing details [here](#).

The film focuses on the last generation of immigrants who produced America’s most enduring anarchist newspaper, the *Freie Arbeiter Stimme* or *Free Voice of Labor*. Published continuously from 1890 to 1977, the newspaper — and the movement it chronicled — attracted Jewish and other immigrants from countries that had suffered class warfare, namely Russia, Italy, Germany and Spain.



The Fear of Anarchism

For 150 years, anarchists have battled the charge that they are violent bomb-throwers. What comes shining through the Sucher / Fischler portrayal of this aging cohort is their idealism, their commitment to living an anarchist life and their strong sense of community. Although nearly all have died since being filmed in the 1970s, their collective dream of a more just and peaceful world animated them into old age and lives on through this landmark film.

As [The New York Times reported](#) when the newspaper went dark:

“Right up to the very last number, dated December 1977, the anarchist vision that rose from the pages was not of violent overthrow, of bombs and smoking pistols, but of reasoned argument in favor of a society of good neighbors, with no police or crime or stultifying labor, and no religion or government to enforce restraint.”

The anarchist movement has continued to be influential in American art, letters and political philosophy ever since. Anarchist thinking has provided the backbone for some in the Occupy and Antifa movements. One of today’s most notable political thinkers on anarchism is Noam Chomsky, author of [On Anarchism](#) (New Press, 2013).

Joel Sucher also wrote about anarchy for *The Huffington Post*. [“The Relentless Vision of an Old Anarchist”](#) chronicles the life of Spanish anarchist Federico Arcos. [“Left of the Left: My Memories of Sam Dolgoff”](#) is a review of Anatole’s Dolgoff’s memoir of the life of his anarcho-syndicalist father.

About the Filmmakers, Steve Fischler & Joel Sucher

Friends since the age of nine, Joel Sucher and Steven Fischler have worked together for more than 50 years since founding Pacific Street Films in 1969. Their documentary investigations spotlight police surveillance and misconduct, the intersection of racism and antisemitism, and the history of America’s labor and political movements. Two of their films — [Red Squad](#) and [Frame Up!](#) — were recently showcased at the Metrograph.

From Swastika to Jim Crow (2000) explores the parallels between Nazism in Germany and racism in the American South. When the Nazi Reich expelled Jewish scholars from German universities in 1939, many of them found teaching positions in Southern universities, where they identified with the oppression of their African-American colleagues and joined the civil rights movement.

They have also made films about filmmaking — reporting from the sets of Martin Scorsese’s *Goodfellas* and Oliver Stone’s *JFK*, two directors whom they first met at NYU’s film school. Steve Fischler and Joel Sucher won the John Grierson Award for Social Documentary Filmmaking in 1975 and John Simon Guggenheim Fellowships 1978. The Museum of Modern Art and the Harvard Film Archive mounted retrospectives of their work in 2004 and 2005. More information & filmography at [Pacific Street Films](#).



About the IndieCollect / Harvard Film Archive Restoration

The Harvard Film Archive, headed by HadenGuest, commissioned IndieCollect to restore *Free Voice of Labor*. Each frame of the original camera negative (16mm A&B Rolls) was captured using IndieCollect’s 5K Kinetta Archival Scanner, operated by Anne-Marie Desjardins. The raw scans were digitally conformed and synchronized by editor Eva Yuma, with audio capture from the 16mm Optical Track handled by Colorlab and audio restoration by Bruce Gordon at Harvard Media Preservation Services. Color correction and digital delivery were handled by restoration services manager Cameron Haffner. Filmmakers Steve Fischler and Joe Sucher had approval over each phase of the workflow and the final restoration was reviewed and approved by Haden Guest and HFA archivist Amy Sloper. Israel Ehrisman and I produced the restoration.

We are happy to report that IndieCollect and HFA plan to create a new 4K restoration of the filmmakers’ follow-up, *Anarchism in America*. There is also a plan to digitize the interviews that Fischler and Sucher shot for both films, which the Harvard Film Archive will make available to scholars and the general public in the future.

Join us November 12 at the Metrograph!

As you know, we are awfully concerned that our exhibition partners survive the pandemic. Please [buy a ticket from the Metrograph](#) to see *Free Voice of Labor*. And may you be surprised and inspired by these anarchist idealists of old.

Sandra Schulberg and the IndieCollect Team



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