



Jake S. Friedman on The Disney Revolt: The Great Labor War and Animation's Golden Age

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Lisa Phillips interviewed Jake S. Friedman, author of *The Disney Revolt: The Great Labor War and Animation's Golden Age*, published by the Chicago Review Press in 2022. Friedman makes use of previously untapped archival material and interviews to write a much needed, more thorough and nuanced, history of the momentous 1941 strike at the Walt Disney Studios.

This was a strike of creative artists led by Art Babbitt and the Screen Cartoonists' Guild. Babbitt was Disney's highest paid animator at the time as were many of his fellow animators-now-strikers, all at the top of their field. They and the studio's staff had just produced the academy-award winning and highly successful *Snow White* under the direction of their beloved boss and fellow creative artist, Walt Disney. What happened? How did what Disney's animators considered one of the best places to work, under the leadership of a "boss" who was more team player than head honcho, turn into disgruntled workers on the picket line for over ten weeks? Friedman tells this fascinating story paying careful attention not to vilify either "side." The book reads like a play couched in a good, intellectual,

explanation of one of most interesting labor actions of the mid-20th century. A must-read for anyone interested in Disney's history, in labor history, in US animation history.

Jake S. Friedman is a New York-based writer, teacher, and artist. He is a longtime contributor to Animation Magazine, and has also written for American History Magazine, The Huffington Post, Animation World Network, Animation Mentor, and The Philadelphia Daily News. For ten years he was an animation artist for films and television as seen on Nickelodeon, Disney Channel, Saturday Night Live, and 20th Century Fox. His other books include *The Art of Blue Sky Studios* and the forthcoming *The Disney Afternoon: The Making of a Television Renaissance*. He currently teaches the history of animation at New York University, Rhode Island School of Design, and the Fashion Institute of Technology. The rest of his time he works as a licensed mental health counselor specializing in creatives. Find him @JakeSFriedman.

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Lisa Wunderlich Phillips is the author of *A Renegade Union: Interracial Organizing and Labor Radicalism*. She is working on history of labor relations at Disney and teaches at Indiana State University.