

The Joy of Revolution and Related Texts

Ken Knabb

It may seem absurd to talk about revolution. But all the alternatives assume the continuation of the present system, which is even more absurd.

Best known for his translations of works by Guy Debord and the Situationist International, Ken Knabb is himself the author of many incisive radical texts. *The Joy of Revolution* is widely considered his masterpiece. While there have been countless histories of past revolutions and countless examinations of the many flaws of the present society and the many methods proposed for reforming them, it would be difficult to name a single book that more clearly and concisely explores the problems and possibilities of a modern, situationist-type revolution.

Following a brief overview of the absurdities of the present social system and the failures of past efforts to change it, *The Joy of Revolution* examines the pros and cons of a wide range of radical tactics, first in the context of "normal" or "ordinary" conditions, then in the very different context of radical situations—those rare breakthroughs where masses of people start to call everything into question and real change becomes possible. The book then concludes with some speculations on how a postrevolutionary global network of culturally diverse liberated communities might work, and where we might go from there.

For this new edition, Ken has added some notes and updates to his original book and appended a number of his more recent texts—situationist-style "detoured" comics; a detailed refutation of anarcho-primitivism; reports on two remarkable radical movements in France (1998 and 2006); extensive observations on the coronavirus pandemic and the Trumpian mass psychosis; and a series of texts and talks on the Occupy movement, in which he was an enthusiastic participant.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Ken Knabb has lived in Berkeley, California, since 1965. He has translated numerous works by Guy Debord and the Situationist International, including *The Society of the Spectacle*. His own writings have been translated into more than a dozen languages.

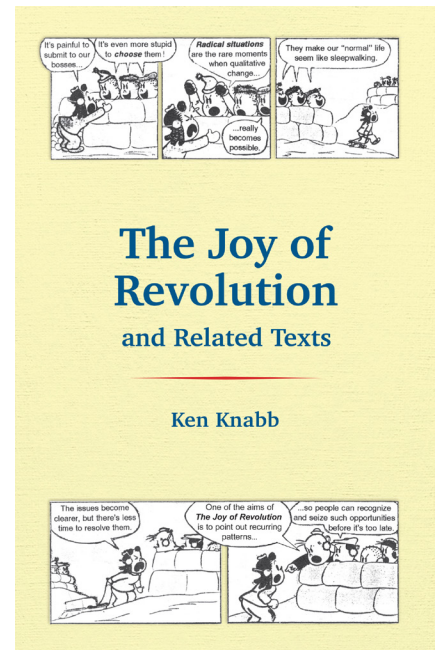
ACCOLADES

I'd especially recommend this book for people who are sympathetic to the idea of a nonhierarchical, nonstatist society but who are skeptical of how, in practice, it could ever happen. Knabb gives a lot of pointers and demolishes some common bugbears along the way, and it is all written with his rare combination of readability and logicity and élan."

—Eugenia Lovelace, *Red and Black*

"Ken Knabb has so thoroughly assimilated French language and culture that I sometimes have the impression that I'm talking with a compatriot. He does, however, retain that eminently North American quality of speaking clearly and directly, without showing off his intelligence or drawing attention to himself. Does this mean that his work is a sort of 'Situationist International for Dummies'? No, although it could undeniably serve as such. Anyone who is unfamiliar with the Situationists, or radical critique, or the American counterculture should put his book at the very top of their reading list."

—Jean-Pierre Depétris, *Gavroche: revue d'histoire populaire*



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