

# #HANDSOFFVENEZUELA:

## A READER ON CAPITALISM, IMPERIALISM, REVOLUTION, AND CRISIS

COMPILED BY  
THE ORGANIZATION FOR A FREE SOCIETY

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On January 23 the right-wing Venezuelan politician Juan Guaidó anointed himself President of Venezuela, based on the flimsiest of legal justifications: he cited Article 233 of the Venezuelan Constitution, which **allows** for the replacement of an elected president who has “abandoned” the post – which the elected president, Nicolás Maduro, has not done. This scheme would be laughable if not for the recognition of the unelected Guaidó by the Trump administration and a host of other major governments, from the neofascist Bolsonaro government in Brazil to the liberal Trudeau administration in Canada. This strategy aims to precipitate a military coup and perhaps furnish a pretext for direct U.S. military intervention. Trump and others are now openly promoting the military overthrow of President Maduro and are openly threatening U.S. military aggression. The result of either would **likely** be a long and bloody period of repression, with revolutionaries and progressives the main victims.

U.S. intervention has involved a circus of Orwellian absurdities. Trump has appointed Reagan-era war criminal Elliott Abrams – who actively **abetted** terror and genocide in Central America in the 1980s – as special envoy to Venezuela. While **illegal** U.S. sanctions intentionally punish the Venezuelan people, the U.S. military has begun flying “humanitarian” aid to the Venezuelan border, in a spectacle **condemned** as transparently political by even the United Nations and the Red Cross. Though corporate media and Democratic politicians lambast some of Trump’s policies and lies, they have **embraced** most of his policies and lies around Venezuela. And while U.S. politicians claim to be acting on behalf of the Venezuelan people, **polls** suggest that Venezuelans strongly oppose U.S. military intervention and U.S. sanctions, and support negotiations between the Venezuelan government and opposition – a fact that passes without mention in the U.S. media. As one analyst **notes**, for U.S. media, “the ‘Venezuelan people’ are whoever agrees with Donald Trump”; the rest don’t count.

Stripped of the humanitarian rhetoric, the goals of the U.S. government and the Venezuelan right are very clear. As U.S. National Security Advisor John Bolton openly **proclaimed** on January 24, he wants to “have American oil companies really invest in and produce the oil capabilities in Venezuela.” This agenda aligns with that of Juan Guaidó and his so-called Popular Will party, which, despite casting itself as social democratic, seeks to **reopen Venezuela’s oil sector** to private companies and cut the social programs that have benefited working-class Venezuelans since Maduro’s predecessor, Hugo Chávez, was elected in 1998. The Venezuelan right seeks to restore what the U.S. business press calls the “**wonderful Venezuela of old**”: a plutocracy that caters to the demands of corporations and U.S. foreign policy interests.<sup>1</sup> The right’s strategy has involved a range of extralegal means, including **fascistic street violence** and **lobbying foreign powers** to strangle the Venezuelan economy.

How did we reach this point? The answer lies in several places: in the historic U.S. hostility toward independent governments in the Global South, in the power and intransigence of the Venezuelan capitalist class, and in the progressive but contradictory policies of the Hugo Chávez (1999-2013) and Nicolás Maduro (2013-present) administrations in Venezuela. Following a short intro to recent Venezuelan history, we offer a list of reading and multimedia suggestions for interested readers.

## **EMPIRE, NEOLIBERALISM, CHAVISMO, AND THE BACKLASH UP TO 2013**

In 1952 U.S. Secretary of State Dean Acheson **wrote** that “Venezuela is an outstanding example to the rest of the world of cooperation between foreign investors and the government for their mutual benefit.” Oil had been discovered thirty years earlier, making the country of supreme interest to Washington. By 1952 Venezuela was the world’s leading oil exporter. At a time when other oil-producing countries were pursuing nationalization, the Venezuelan government remained a “citadel” of the “free enterprise system,” which was “invaluable not only to our interests here but in support [of] US economic relations with other nations,” in the words of a 1950 State Department memo. The government proved a faithful servant to foreign investors and the U.S. government, whose goal was “[r]etention of foreign oil production in the hands of private American companies to the fullest possible extent,” in Acheson’s words. The brutal U.S.-backed dictator Marcos Pérez Jiménez (1948-1958) kept Venezuelans’ anti-imperialist and redistributive demands in check through imprisonment, torture,

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1. “Surveillance: Roger Stone, Russia, & Venezuela,” *Bloomberg Surveillance* (podcast), January 25, 2019, at 22:40 mark.

and murder. Acheson reported that “the danger of nationalization of the oil industry in Venezuela is not critical. However,” he warned, “popular sentiment for such action is present in Venezuela” and could pose a future threat.<sup>2</sup>

And indeed it did. In 1958 a popular movement overthrew Pérez Jiménez. Fortunately for Washington and capitalists, though, the system that would reign for the next four decades was a democracy in name only. Although the Venezuelan oil industry was nominally nationalized in 1976, successive governments failed to promote any significant redistribution of wealth within the country, which remained extremely unequal and dominated by a small oligarchy of Venezuelan elites and foreign capitalists. In fact, government officials did just the opposite: they implemented neoliberal economic policies – austerity, privatization of public resources, and deregulation of business – that funneled wealth upwards even more. Often presidential candidates would campaign on anti-neoliberal platforms, only to betray those promises upon taking office. Such was the case with the president elected in 1988, Carlos Andrés Pérez, who upon taking office abandoned his progressive rhetoric and imposed drastic austerity measures in line with International Monetary Fund (IMF) demands. An immediate effect was to increase transportation fares, which sparked a massive urban rebellion by the working class in February 1989. The protests spread quickly throughout the country, and the government cracked down by declaring martial law and killing hundreds of protesters. In the poor Caracas neighborhood of **Petare**, for instance, the army opened fire on a crowd and killed at least twenty people. The total number of deaths is unknown because many were buried in unmarked graves (*for more on this history, see Readings 33-34 below*).

The 1989 rebellion and repression was a landmark event, known in Venezuela and throughout Latin America as the *Caracazo*. Yet the government’s savage response failed to extinguish popular aspirations. During the 1990s movements against neoliberalism gained steam. The 1998 election of Hugo Chávez came on the heels of these movements and gave them further encouragement. Once in office, Chávez moved further left in response to diehard right-wing intransigence, on the one hand, and progressive demands from his base, on the other. Following a failed U.S.-backed military coup in 2002, and then an oil industry shutdown spearheaded by the opposition, the Chávez government wrested control of the state oil company from its

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2. Dean Acheson, “Memorandum by the Secretary of State to the Executive Secretary of the National Security Council (Lay),” February 29, 1952 (Document 725), in *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1952-1954* (U.S. Government Printing Office, 1983), 4: 1602; Walter J. Donnelly to Secretary of State, January 5, 1950, in U.S. National Archives and Records Administration, Record Group 59, Central Decimal File, 1950-54, Box 4646.

unelected right-wing administrators and began financing major new social programs in sectors like healthcare, education, and housing, eventually under the slogan “21st-Century Socialism.” By 2012, the poverty rate had been **cut in half**. These policies won a strong majority of Venezuelans to *Chavismo*. Venezuelans also came to see their country as **more democratic** than before, and more democratic than other Latin American countries (*On Chavista policies, see Readings 19-24 below*).

The rage of the right-wing opposition and its bipartisan backers in Washington only increased during Chávez’s time in office. Economically, they responded by trying to handcuff the Venezuelan economy: through the oil industry shutdown, through businesses’ withholding of consumer goods from the market, and various other measures. In response, the Chávez administration accelerated its leftward shift. In the mid-2000s it responded to capitalist hoarding by nationalizing certain manufacturing industries. Around the same time, it began supporting a new revolutionary formation known as “communal councils” (see below).

Politically, the opposition has also sought to destabilize the country at every turn. Neither the Venezuelan right nor the U.S. government – Republicans nor Democrats – have ever fully recognized the legitimacy of the Chávez government or of his elected successor Maduro. Washington has funneled **tens of millions of dollars** to opposition groups over the past two decades, **grooming** obscure fringe figures like Juan Guaidó into civil society “leaders” who are ready and willing to work hand-in-hand with the United States (*Readings 10-11*). At times the opposition parties have boycotted elections that they weren’t sure they could win – as in the May 2018 presidential contest – and then claimed that the results were illegitimate. Right-wing forces have also made consistent efforts to overthrow or undermine the government through various means, both military and non-military (*see Readings 5-13*). The Trump administration represents the most extreme version of this policy to date, evident in its open support for the unconstitutional overthrow of Maduro, its repeated threats of military aggression, the devastating U.S. sanctions that have cost Venezuela billions of dollars and harmed tens of millions of Venezuelans, and Trump officials’ unabashed **admission** that they are acting in unison with U.S. oil companies.

## **THE COMMUNES**

Just as important as *Chavismo*’s antipoverty and nationalization measures was Chávez’s support for participatory democracy. Starting in 2006, he lent his support to the formation of tens of thousands of “communal councils” around the country (*Readings 25-32*). The councils are participatory decision-making bodies that produce

food and other goods, oversee local construction, transport, and infrastructure projects, and resolve intra-community conflicts. They seek to move beyond traditional structures of “representative” democracy to allow people to gather, debate, and make decisions directly, without the mediation of professional politicians and bureaucrats. In 2010 Chávez signed a “Communes Law” lending official support to the “commune” structures that would link the local councils to each other in federated structures. This process has continued long after Chávez’s death, despite the profound economic crisis of the last several years. The Red Nacional de Comuneras (National Network of Communers), for instance, has grown to include around 500 communes and 100 social movement organizations throughout Venezuela.

These experiments in socialism or communism “from below” are ultimately what make the Venezuelan process so interesting. The *comuneras* advocate a participatory-democratic version of revolution in which ever larger numbers of people develop the capacity and freedom to make the decisions that affect their lives. The communes are the most revolutionary actors in Venezuela, and are well to the left of most officials in the ruling Socialist (PSUV) Party. Although they strongly prefer *Chavismo* over right-wing alternatives, and while they insist that the existing state has obligations to the people, they are also deeply skeptical of the state itself for its bureaucracy, centralization, corruption, and structural tendency to favor capitalists. They recognize that despite Chávez’s support for the communes, both the state and the PSUV party remain rife with internal bureaucracy and class contradictions.

As our recommended sources suggest, the further expansion and empowerment of the communes represents the most revolutionary – and also the most practical – solution to Venezuela’s intertwined economic and political crises. The most pressing manifestations of those crises are the shortage of domestic food production and essential public services, the unaffordability of existing goods and services due to hyperinflation, the capitalist strikes and U.S. sanctions that deny financial resources to the country, and the often violent opposition of the extreme right, actively aided by U.S. intervention. A less immediate but still urgent aspect of the crisis is Venezuela’s ecologically unsustainable dependence on oil and mineral extraction, which *Chavismo* has done little to confront (despite some interesting proposals for reducing fossil fuels production made by Chávez and some other PSUV officials in years past) (*see Readings 41-44*). While the Maduro government can take certain immediate steps to mitigate these contradictions, the only real solution is to vest more power in the hands of the people themselves, by greatly expanding the communes’ capacity to produce and to govern.

## CRISIS UNDER MADURO

The impressive social and economic gains of the Chávez era have not been maintained under Maduro, who was elected in 2013 after Chávez died, and reelected in May 2018 in an **election** that most of the right-wing candidates chose to boycott. Although the social programs have remained in place, the country has suffered a deep economic crisis, with the currency (*bolívar*) losing value against the dollar, prices rising rapidly, and goods becoming more and more scarce. In the last two years the economy has seen an almost unprecedented rate of hyperinflation.

There are multiple causes of the crisis. Although Donald Trump and capitalist ideologues blame “socialism,” the biggest part of the problem has little to do with ideology. It’s the result of a chaotic monetary policy in which the government has maintained a fixed exchange rate while limiting the access to dollars, causing the dollar’s price on the black market to rise drastically against the *bolívar*. In this context Venezuelans have sought to trade in their local currency for dollars, which has reduced the *bolívar*’s value even more. Imports have gotten more expensive and more scarce, exacerbating inflation, and importing companies have increased the price of goods further on the Venezuelan market, basing their prices on the dollar’s black market price.

The Maduro government shares a significant portion of the blame. Faced with the crisis, it has been indecisive, incompetent, and erratic. It’s also true that some powerful figures in the government benefit from the crisis, making money off contraband, speculation, and corruption. The profiteers include not only capitalists but also many corrupt PSUV officials (*See Readings 20-21*).

The economic crisis also has roots that are not the government’s fault. The most important structural cause is the historic problem of dependence on oil exports, coupled with extreme dependence on imports of food, medicine, and other goods to supply the domestic market. When the global price of oil drops, as it did in 2008 and again in 2014, it causes a dramatic loss of revenue and reduces the ability to import needed goods. Venezuela’s longtime status as an oil economy – irrespective of the various policies adopted by its governments – is vital for understanding its vulnerability to market forces. Both Chávez and Maduro can be faulted for not doing more to break the country’s dependence on oil, but the problem is nearly a century old.

The Venezuelan right wing and its U.S. allies have taken full advantage of this situation, intentionally making it worse. Among the other causes of the crisis are **capitalist strikes** – in the form of capital flight and the hoarding of goods – and the hostile intervention

of the U.S. government, which is designed to accentuate economic misery. Even right-wing economist Francisco Rodríguez, a fierce critic of the government, **notes** that U.S. sanctions are making a bad situation far worse. He suggests that the sanctions that Trump put in place in August 2017 have prevented the state oil company from accessing credit, leading to a precipitous drop in Venezuelan oil production, even as world oil prices have rebounded. After one year the sanctions had cost Venezuela about **\$6 billion**, and the Trump administration recently ratcheted up sanctions targeting the state oil company. It's the height of hypocrisy for Trump or anyone else to blame the Venezuelan government for the crisis while supporting sanctions, coups, capital flight, hoarding, violent protesters, and other factors that intensify it.

## **PUNISHING DEFIANCE**

It's hypocritical, but not illogical. It's exactly the point of U.S. policy: to make ordinary Venezuelans as miserable as possible, so that they'll acquiesce to a right-wing takeover by representatives of the old oligarchy, who will then Make Venezuela Great Again (with help from **U.S. oil companies**).

U.S. policymakers aren't upset about economic mismanagement, incompetence, corruption, or undemocratic impulses – though all of those things are present within the Venezuelan government. Rather, the cardinal sin is defiance of imperial orders. U.S. intelligence reports from the past two decades, under both **Republican** and **Democratic** administrations, have included Venezuela among a group of “radical populist governments” that “emphasize economic nationalism at the expense of market-based approaches.” Anti-imperialist and redistributive policies “directly clash with US initiatives” and jeopardize vital U.S. “interests in the region.”<sup>3</sup> By questioning the logic of the market – and by forging links to alternate markets like Russia and China in response to the hostility of Western capitalists – the Venezuelan government has clashed with U.S. goals. Consequently, the Venezuelan people who support or condone that behavior must be punished.

Other instances of defiance have met with the same response (*Readings 14-18*). Soon after the 1959 Cuban Revolution, a State Department official wrote that “every possible means should be undertaken promptly to weaken the economic life

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3. J. Michael McConnell, “Annual Threat Assessment of the Intelligence Community for the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence,” February 7, 2008, p. 33; Dennis C. Blair, “Annual Threat Assessment of the US Intelligence Community for the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence,” February 3, 2010, p. 30.

of Cuba,” through an embargo and other policies designed to “make the greatest inroads in denying money and supplies to Cuba, to decrease monetary and real wages, to bring about hunger, desperation and overthrow of government.”<sup>4</sup> As the State Department Policy Planning Council noted a few years later, “The simple fact is that Castro represents a successful defiance of the US, a negation of our whole hemispheric policy of almost a century and a half.”<sup>5</sup> To ensure that Cuba’s defiant path was unsuccessful, Cubans had to be made hungry and desperate so that they would attack their government. The goal was to crush the Cuban Revolution while also sending a clear message to would-be imitators in the Global South. It was only partly successful: Cuba’s defiance continues today, against enormous odds, and thus it remains in the sights of Washington **Republicans** and **Democrats** alike.

The same logic guided the Nixon administration’s response to the elected socialist government of Salvador Allende in Chile (1970-1973). In Henry Kissinger’s **words**, Allende’s Chile was “most likely to appear as an ‘independent’ socialist country rather than a Soviet satellite,” and therefore “its ‘model’ effect [could] be insidious,” inspiring other oppressed peoples to pursue a similar path. Kissinger’s concern was “the prospect that [Allende] can consolidate himself and the picture projected to the world will be his success.”<sup>6</sup> Hence Nixon’s famous **instruction** to “make [the] economy scream.”

Even without U.S. sanctions, Venezuela’s oil-dependent economy would have many problems. But as commune organizer Atenea Jiménez notes, U.S. sanctions “produce even more problems for our people.” They do so intentionally, to guarantee that the Venezuelan people don’t furnish a model that could inspire others to defy empire and capitalism. For Jiménez the real motive behind U.S. policy is clear: the suffering of Venezuelans “doesn’t worry the Colossus of the North in the slightest – it’s just an excuse for more global plundering, just like the weapons of mass destruction that never turned up in Iraq...We’re faced with another disingenuous imperialist narrative, to take control of our resource wealth and impose a government at the service of the interests of big global businesses, as the government of Juan Guaidó proposes.”<sup>7</sup>

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4. “Memorandum from the Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs (Mallory) to the Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs (Rubottom),” April 6, 1960 (Document 499), in *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1958-1960* (USGPO, 1991), 6: 887.

5. Quoted in Piero Gleijeses, *Conflicting Missions: Havana, Washington, and Africa, 1959-1976* (UNC Press, 2002), 26.

6. Kissinger, Memo for the President, November 5, 1970, and National Security Council transcript, November 6, 1970, **National Security Archive**.

7. Personal communication, February 21, 2019.

## A REVOLUTIONARY WAY FORWARD

The war for Venezuela is multifaceted. The United States and other right-wing governments have allied with the far-right, antidemocratic opposition within Venezuela to overthrow the Maduro government. Progressive people in Venezuela uniformly oppose this agenda, and have rallied behind the Maduro government in response. At the same time, however, most of Maduro's own supporters have criticisms of his government. Many of them seek to replace the state's bureaucracy, corruption, and authoritarian structures with participatory democratic alternatives. They want an economy that is diverse, equitable, democratic, and ecologically sustainable. The councils and communes have come to constitute a sort of *dual power* within the country, signifying a revolutionary alternative to both the right and the PSUV leadership. As such, they have **received** only partial and grudging support (at best) from Chavista state officials. Yet it is they who hold the only real answers in this time of profound crisis.

The same spirit is apparent in recent statements from diverse Venezuelan revolutionaries, who unequivocally condemn the coup attempt and U.S. imperialism while also urging the Maduro government to change course. For example, on January 27 the Revolutionary Sex-Gender Diverse Alliance **condemned** "imperialist interference," but also called on Maduro "to radicalize the processes of true empowerment of the grassroots and not to delay further the advance towards a productive economy that surpasses the economic behavior centered on the extraction of oil and our position as a mining enclave in the international division of labor." The Alliance characterized the Maduro administration as "the expression of a multitude of contradictions that are still in the process of being resolved," and demanded an end to "practices such as corruption, bureaucracy, political patronage, waste, ecocide and police brutality that are privileged instruments by which the order of capitalist plundering over common goods and Nature is imposed. If these measures are not assumed, the nation-state will only be weakened definitively as a trench against the advance of global capital."

For those of us who live in the imperial centers, our primary duty is to oppose U.S. intervention in Venezuelan affairs – through street protests, civil disobedience, education, social media campaigns that elevate the voices of Venezuelan revolutionaries, and the various other means at our disposal. Supporting "the Venezuelan people's need for free self-determination," in Atenea Jiménez's words, should be our focus. Doing so does not mean defending all the actions of the Maduro government. Those who want to stand in solidarity with Venezuelans should take their cues from the grassroots forces of liberation who are seeking to build an egalitarian, democratic, and sustainable society in Venezuela – not from the Venezuelan state,

and certainly not from the capitalist and imperialist forces that are behind the current coup attempt. Some solidarity activists argue that we should never criticize governments that oppose U.S. imperialism. But true solidarity involves siding with the most oppressed and most revolutionary forces in other societies (*Readings 45-53*). In Venezuela, those forces have uniformly condemned U.S. imperialism and the right-wing opposition and have united in defense of Venezuelan sovereignty, even as they continue to express their criticisms of the Maduro government.

Solidarity also means making revolution here at home. If we truly want to end U.S. imperialism – rather than just protesting its most grotesque manifestations as they’re happening – we must abolish the system that produces imperialist policies. That means creating new, democratic institutions that can replace capitalist enterprises, the market, the Pentagon, and the other tyrannical institutions that dominate our society. It means taking a page from the playbook of the Venezuelan *comuneras*, by constructing **councils and communes** in our workplaces, neighborhoods, cities, and beyond. Unlike our current government and economic system, those bodies would be directly accountable to the people whose lives are affected by their policies. They would incentivize cooperation, solidarity, and negotiation rather than selfishness and domination. Then, and only then, can we put an end to imperialism and to the parasitic forces of capitalism, patriarchy, racism, and authoritarianism that undergird it.

## RECOMMENDED SOURCES:

*Note: The best English-language source for updates on Venezuela is the [Venezuela Analysis](#) website. A variety of other sources also feature regular reports and analysis. See particularly [Democracy Now](#), the [Real News Network](#), and the [North American Congress on Latin America](#).*

### ***The Current Crisis***

1. See interviews with scholars and activists featured at [Democracy Now's Venezuela page](#) and [The Real News Network's Latin America page](#)
2. "What Is Going on in Venezuela? Testimonies on the Ongoing Coup," *Venezuela Analysis*, February 4, 2019
3. Steve Ellner, "Regime Change 'Made in the U.S.A.," NACLA, February 8, 2019
4. George Ciccariello-Maher, "Venezuela: Call It What It Is – a Coup," *Nation*, January 25, 2019

### ***U.S. Imperialism in Venezuela***

5. Noam Chomsky, et al., "An Open Letter to the United States: Stop Interfering in Venezuela's Internal Politics," *Common Dreams*, January 24, 2019
6. Alex Main and Greg Wilpert, "The US Strategy for Regime Change in Venezuela," *The Real News*, January 25, 2019 (video/transcript)
7. Greg Grandin, "How the Right Is Using Venezuela to Reorder Politics," *Nation*, January 25, 2019
8. Greg Wilpert and Mark Weisbrot, "Trump Sanctions Against Venezuela Have Decimated Oil Production," *The Real News*, January 18, 2019
9. Alexander Main, "The United States' Hand in Undermining Democracy in Venezuela," NACLA, May 17, 2018
10. Dan Beeton, Jake Johnston, and Alexander Main, "Venezuela," in *The WikiLeaks Files: The World According to US Empire* (Verso, 2015)
11. Eva Golinger, "NED Report: International Agencies Fund Venezuelan Opposition with \$40-50 Million Annually," *Venezuela Analysis*, June 21, 2010
12. Andrew Fishman and Glenn Greenwald, "Overwhelmed NSA Surprised to Discover Its Own Surveillance 'Goldmine' on Venezuela's Oil Executives," *The Intercept*, November 18, 2015
13. Eva Golinger, *The Chavez Code: Cracking US Intervention in Venezuela* (Olive Branch, 2006)

### ***U.S. Imperialism in the Rest of Latin America***

14. William Blum, *Killing Hope: U.S. Military and CIA Interventions since World War II*,

revised edition (Zed, 2003) [\(full pdf\)](#)

15. Greg Grandin, *Empire's Workshop: Latin America, the United States, and the Rise of the New Imperialism* (New York: Metropolitan, 2006)
16. John Dinges, *The Condor Years: How Pinochet and His Allies Brought Terrorism to Three Continents* (New Press, 2004)
17. Noam Chomsky, *Turning the Tide: U.S. Intervention in Central America and the Struggle for Peace* (South End, 1985)
18. Noam Chomsky, *Hegemony or Survival: America's Quest for Global Dominance* (Henry Holt, 2003)

### ***Chavismo's Economic and Social Policies, 1999-Present***

19. Steve Ellner, ["Social and Political Diversity and the Democratic Road to Change in Venezuela,"](#) in *Latin America's Radical Left: Challenges and Complexities of Political Power in the Twenty-First Century*, ed. Steve Ellner (Rowman and Littlefield, 2014). [Spanish version.](#)
20. Ryan Mallett-Outtrim, ["Revolutionise or Compromise? What Venezuela's Maduro Could Be Doing \(And What Is He Actually Doing\),"](#) *Venezuela Analysis*, December 20, 2016
21. Mark Weisbrot, ["Venezuela's Economic Crisis: Does It Mean That the Left Has Failed?"](#) *Truthout*, October 23, 2016
22. Daniel Finn, ["Unfinished Business,"](#) *Jacobin*, May 22, 2017
23. Gregory Wilpert, *Changing Venezuela by Taking Power: The History and Policies of the Chávez Government* (Verso, 2006)
24. Diana L. Raby, *Democracy and Revolution: Latin America and Socialism Today* (Pluto, 2006)

### ***Communes and "Socialism from Below"***

25. ["Communes in Progress: An Interview with Atenea Jiménez,"](#) *NACLA Report on the Americas* 46, no. 2 (2013): 31-34
26. George Ciccariello-Maher, ["Venezuela: ¡Comuna o nada!"](#) *ROAR Magazine* no. 1 (2016)
27. "21st-Century Socialism: Venezuela's Communes in Historical Perspective" (panel featuring Atenea Jiménez and George Ciccariello-Maher), October 17, 2018. [English transcript](#); [Spanish audio](#)
28. Dario Azzellini, *Communes and Workers' Control in Venezuela: Building 21st Century Socialism from Below* (Haymarket, 2018)
29. George Ciccariello-Maher, *Building the Commune: Radical Democracy in Venezuela* (Verso, 2016)
30. Carlos Martínez, Michael Fox, and JoJo Farrell, eds., *Venezuela Speaks! Voices from the Grassroots* (PM, 2010)

31. Michael Lebowitz, *Build it Now: Socialism for the 21st Century* (Monthly Review, 2006)

33. Ana Felicien, Christina Schiavoni and Licia Romero, “**The Politics of Food in Venezuela,**” *Monthly Review* (June 2018)

#### **Venezuelan Social Movements Prior to 1999**

34. George Ciccariello-Maher, *We Created Chávez: A People's History of the Venezuelan Revolution* (Duke, 2013)

35. Alejandro Velasco, *Barrio Rising: Urban Popular Politics and the Making of Modern Venezuela* (UC Press, 2015)

36. Sujatha Fernandes, *Who Can Stop the Drums? Urban Social Movements in Chávez's Venezuela* (Duke, 2010)

#### **Gender, Sexuality, and Feminism**

37. “**Women and Chavismo: An Interview with Yanahir Reyes,**” *NACLA Report on the Americas* 46, no. 2 (2013): 35-39

38. Sujatha Fernandes, “**Barrio Women and Popular Politics in Chávez's Venezuela,**” *Latin American Politics and Society* 49, no. 3 (2007): 97-127

#### **The Venezuelan Right**

39. Miguel Tinker Salas, “**What Is Happening in Venezuela?**” CEPR blog, March 4, 2014

40. Lucas Koerner, “**The Truth about Venezuela's Opposition,**” *Jacobin*, November 1, 2016

41. Gabriel Hetland, “**A History of Violence,**” *Jacobin*, September 11, 2016

#### **Oil, Environment, and Ecology**

42. Miguel Tinker Salas, *The Enduring Legacy: Oil, Culture, and Society in Venezuela* (Duke, 2009)

43. Ciria Pascual Marquina, “**The Orinoco Mining Arc's Impact: A Conversation with Emiliano Teran Mantovani,**” *Venezuela Analysis*, October 10, 2018

44. “**The First Ecosocialist International: Combined Strategy and Plan of Action,**” December 19, 2017

45. Rebecca McMillan, “**Greening the Venezuelan Constitution: Proposals from the Grassroots,**” *Venezuela Analysis*, July 21, 2017

#### **Global Anti-Imperialist/Solidarity Movements**

46. Kevin Young, “**Venezuela and the Global Left: What We Might Learn from Our Venezuelan Counterparts,**” *Z*, February 27, 2014

47. Emily K. Hobson and Aaron Lecklider, “**Transnational Solidarity on the Gay and Lesbian Left: An Interview With Emily Hobson,**” *Viewpoint Magazine*, February 1, 2018
48. Héctor Perla, Jr., “**Si Nicaragua venció, El Salvador vencerá: Central American Agency in the Creation of the U.S.-Central American Peace and Solidarity Movement,**” *Latin American Research Review* 43, no. 2 (2008): 136-58
49. Van Gosse, “**‘The North American Front’: Central American Solidarity in the Reagan Era,**” in *Reshaping the US Left: Popular Struggles in the 1980s*, ed. Mike Davis and Michael Sprinker (Verso, 1988), 11-49
50. Emily K. Hobson, *Lavender and Red: Liberation and Solidarity in the Gay and Lesbian Left* (UC Press, 2016)
51. Renny Golden and Michael McConnell, *Sanctuary: The New Underground Railroad* (Orbis, 1986)
52. Roger Peace, *A Call to Conscience: The Anti-Contra War Campaign* (UMass, 2012)
53. Christian Smith, *Resisting Reagan: The U.S. Central America Peace Movement* (Chicago, 1996)
54. Kim Scipes, ed., *Building Global Labor Solidarity in a Time of Accelerating Globalization* (Haymarket, 2016)

***Critical Analysis of Media Coverage***

55. For regular critiques, see Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting’s **Venezuela page**
56. Alan MacLeod, *Bad News from Venezuela: Twenty Years of Fake News and Misreporting* (Routledge, 2018)
57. Kevin Young, “**The Good, the Bad, and the Benevolent Interventionist: U.S. Press and Intellectual Distortions of the Latin American Left,**” in *Latin America’s Radical Left: Challenges and Complexities of Political Power in the Twenty-First Century*, ed. Steve Ellner (Rowman & Littlefield, 2014), 249-69
58. Kevin Young, “**Colombia and Venezuela: Testing the Propaganda Model,**” *NACLA Report on the Americas* (November-December 2008): 50-52
59. For a classic analysis of U.S. press coverage of foreign affairs, see Edward S. Herman and Noam Chomsky, *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media* (Pantheon, 2002)