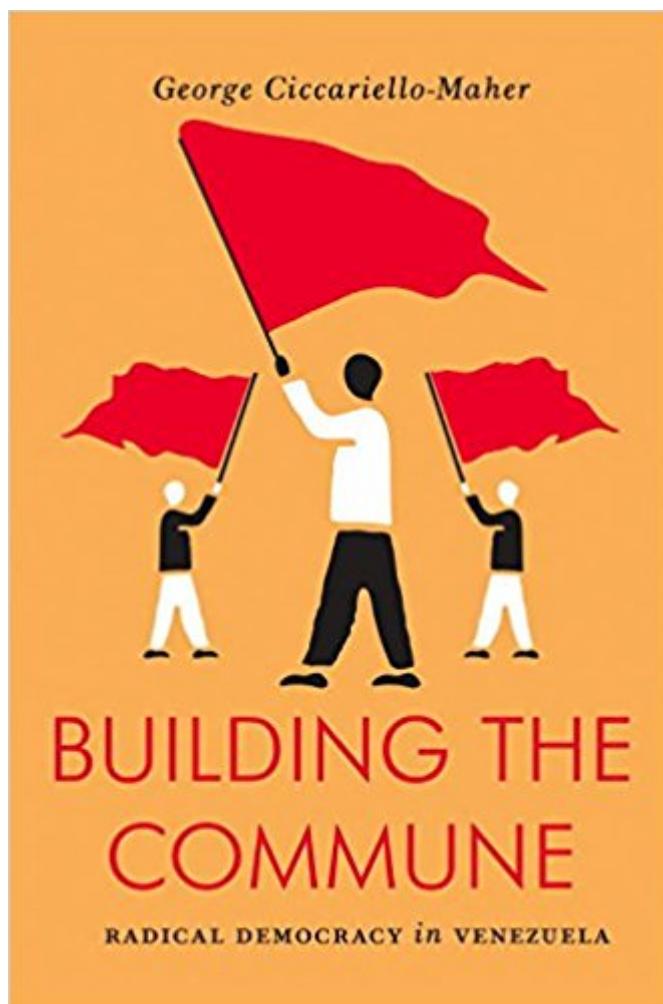


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# Building The Commune: Radical Democracy In Venezuela



## Synopsis

Latin America's experiments in direct democracy Since 2011, a wave of popular uprisings has swept the globe, taking shape in the Occupy movement, the Arab Spring, 15M in Spain, and the anti-austerity protests in Greece. The demands have been varied, but have expressed a consistent commitment to the ideals of radical democracy. Similar experiments began appearing across Latin America twenty-five years ago, just as the left fell into decline in Europe. In Venezuela, poor barrio residents arose in a mass rebellion against neoliberalism, ushering in a government that institutionalized the communes already forming organically. In *Building the Commune*, George Ciccarello-Maher travels through these radical experiments, speaking to a broad range of community members, workers, students and government officials. Assessing the project's successes and failures, *Building the Commune* provides lessons and inspiration for the radical movements of today.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

George Ciccarello-Maher reminds us of the extraordinary achievement of Venezuela's communes in fostering direct democracy at the community and workplace scales. Whatever storms may come, they represent the highest level of popular self-organization in modern Latin American history. • "Mike Davis, author of *Planet of Slums* " Democracy has been emptied of its content, and *Building the Commune* offers an alternative model for political organization: the

Commune, whose roots are in 1871 Paris but whose contemporary emergence is in Venezuela. A sharp and important book that puts at center-stage the ambitions of ordinary people to govern themselves. • "Vijay Prashad, author of *The Poorer Nations*" George Ciccarello-Maher's careful engagement with the revolutionary creativity of the communes traces a trajectory of hope for Venezuela and also for the rest of us looking for the forms of our emancipation. Attuned to the ways left and right exploit the streets and social media, Building the Commune is essential to the Left's renewed discussion of the tactics and strategies for building collective power. • "Jodi Dean, author of *Crowds and Party* and *The Communist Horizon*" In the post-Chávez era in Venezuela, one under-reported institution stands out as the repository of popular aspirations: the Commune. George Ciccarello-Maher brilliantly describes their activities against the background of increasing political strife. Essential reading for all those anxious about the future of Venezuela. • "Richard Gott, author of *Hugo Chávez and the Bolivarian Revolution*" Behind the rampant debates on Hugo Chavez and Nicolas Maduro's legacy, millions of men and women in Venezuela's smallest towns and largest cities are building local communes. Ciccarello-Maher's book is a triumph of reporting, narrative, and theoretical analysis. It's a testament to what happens when you keep your eyes open, your ear to the ground, and your head on straight. • "Corey Robin, author of *The Reactionary Mind*

George Ciccarello-Maher is Associate Professor of Politics and Global Studies at Drexel University in Philadelphia. He is the author of *We Created Chávez: A People's History of the Venezuelan Revolution* and *Decolonizing Dialectics*.

My review is in response to a campaign of the far right, including fascist right, to troll all of George Ciccarello-Maher's books on (and I presume other locations as well). This campaign comes in reaction to a series of tweets by the author that the right wing and fascist media picked up on in attempts to demonize the author. Many of the 1-star reviews were written at the end of March and/or early April of 2017, but others were written right after the author's ironic "White Genocide" tweet on December 24th of 2016 (the author was simply saying there is no such thing as white genocide as the Nazi and fascist right seem to indicate, thus White Genocide doesn't exist). There are also a few reviews from late February after the Mainstream Media was pushing some anti-Venezuela rhetoric and the author was asked on talk shows for comment. None of these reviews come from verified purchases. Some individuals, including Nazi Richard Spencer (most famous for getting punched in the face on multiple occasions), have instructed individuals to write these reviews. NONE of these

1-star review (at least none I have seen) have any substance at all. We see no mention of the content or conclusions of the book. The one-star reviews are "fact free" and are equivalent to fake news.

This is a solid read. It's on the shorter side, but that doesn't at all reflect in its content. It's dense with ideas, dense with facts, and dense with citations. I've learned so much reading it, and it's only made my reading list that much bigger.

An engaging read, outlining some of the experiments in direct democracy in Venezuela. It's not sugar-coated. He talks about the challenges, problems, and general messiness of the ongoing revolution. It is short and quite enjoyable to read.

Fascinating look at the growth of true communism in Venezuela. The book delves deep into what happened after Chavez took power and how it has helped spur a movement for true democratic rule. The book helps you beyond the faux communist states that westerners are likely familiar with and shows the potential offered to empower the people. Overall it's very helpful in learning about and understanding Venezuela in a way that isn't from a western Imperialist standpoint.

A deeply fascinating and informative read

gcm is my boo

One of the best books on Venezuela written by one of the sharpest minds studying Venezuela today. Ciccarello-Maher's writing is at once approachable and critical. Highly recommended for those interested in building local democratic movements. Buy this book!

Was genuinely surprised to see this book rated so low after picking up in Verso sale. Then noticed that all the one star reviews were from the same day after the author got embroiled in some alt-right conspiracy. My advice is pay them no mind

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