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Cuban Research Institute

Steven J. Green School of International and Public Affairs



Patriots and Traitors in Revolutionary Cuba: Conscience and Complicity Lecture by Lillian Guerra

Thursday, May 9, 2019 | 12:30 PM | FIU Modesto A. Maidique Campus | Green Library (GL) 220

“These children will be patriots or traitors,” a poster declared in 1965 Cuba, “you decide. Teach them the work of the Revolution.” Yet citizens rarely responded to this call with unconditional support. For this reason, in the 1970s, the Cuban state turned to the “rehabilitation” of citizens through labor camps, Soviet pedagogy designed to create a “Communist personality in every child,” and finally, Fidel’s launch of the Mariel boatlift in 1980—a policy to rid Cuba of critics accused of lacking “revolutionary genes.” What was it like to grow up in this Cuba? How did leaders go from “teaching the work of the Revolution” to repression and exclusion? Through unused archives and oral history, Lillian Guerra will delve into the mechanisms through which grassroots support was constructed and challenged. Finding that the burdens of revolutionary citizenship often blurred lines, Dr. Guerra illuminates an ironically apolitical nation within the binary of patriot vs. traitor: there, a creative, collective individualism thrived.

Dr. Lillian Guerra is Professor of Cuban and Caribbean History at the University of Florida. She is the author of a book of Puerto Rican history, published in 1998, and three books of Cuban history, including *Heroes, Martyrs, and Political Messiahs in Revolutionary Cuba, 1946–1958* (2018) and *Revolution, Redemption, and Resistance, 1959–1971* (2012), a recipient of the Bryce Wood Book Award from the Latin American Studies Association (LASA). Raised in Marion, Kansas by a *cientfueguera* and a *pinareño*, Dr. Guerra has researched and deepened family ties to Cuba in more than fifty visits over the last 24 years. She is one of the recipients of the 2019 Díaz-Ayala Library Travel Grants at FIU.

This lecture is free and open to the public.

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