

Laboring for the State

Contrary to claims that socialism opposed the family unit, Rachel Hynson argues that the revolutionary Cuban government engaged in social engineering to redefine the nuclear family and organize citizens to serve the state. Drawing on Cuban newspapers and periodicals, government documents and speeches, long-overlooked laws, and oral histories, Hynson reveals that by 1961, and increasingly throughout this decade, revolutionary citizenship was earned through labor. While men were to work outside the home in state-approved jobs, women found their citizenship tied to affording the state control over their reproduction and sexual labor. Through all four campaigns examined in this book – the projects to control women’s reproduction, promote marriage, end prostitution, and compel men into state-sanctioned employment – Hynson shows that the state’s progression toward authoritarianism and its attendant monopolization of morality were met with resistance and counter-narratives by citizens who so opposed the mandates of these campaigns that Cuban leadership has since reconfigured or effaced these programs from the Revolution’s grand narrative.

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Laboring for the State

*Women, Family, and Work in
Revolutionary Cuba, 1959–1971*

RACHEL HYNSON



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*In loving memory of my grandfather,
Leon O. Hynson (1930–2006)*

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Acknowledgments

The publication of this book was never inevitable. I did not enter graduate school with a well-defined project or a novel cache of sources. My dissertation was a late bloomer, and my decision to leave academia removed any obligation to publish. The final version of this book was born of my departure from academia, a decision that slowed down my pace and revealed things I'd missed in the sprint.

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The model Cuban family of the 1960s was a distant relative of the Reagan-era, rural Pennsylvania evangelicals to whom I was born. Still, it was in my natal home that I first learned that labor could be defined *not* by a 9-to-5 job or a steady paycheck but instead by any action that sustains and reproduces the family. I am eternally grateful to the family members, particularly my parents: Debra Egli-Flanagan and Jonathan Hynson, who encouraged and loved me throughout the duration of this project; and while they may not have always understood what I was studying or why I remained perpetually a graduate student, their support never wavered. In the time it took to write this book, my siblings – Rebekah, Taylor, Dakota, and Levi – have all grown up, and I am overjoyed that the book’s publication allows me time to know them better as adults. I also extend deep thanks to my in-laws, Cindy Burns and Thomas Burns, who lovingly adopted both me and this project. The last and most-treasured mention of all goes to Meg Burns, who danced into my life in the final years of this book’s completion and transformed my conception of family for the better.

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Abbreviations

CDR	Committee for the Defense of the Revolution (Comité para la Defensa de la Revolución)
CPA	Camaguëy Center for Artisanship (Centro de Producción Artesanal)
CTC	Confederation of Cuban Workers (Confederación de Trabajadores Cubanos)
FMC	Federation of Cuban Women (Federación de Mujeres Cubanas)
G2	Popular name for the secret police
INRA	National Institute of Agrarian Reform (Instituto Nacional de Reforma Agraria)
M-26-7	26th of July Movement (Movimiento 26 de Julio)
MINFAR	Ministry of the Armed Forces (Ministerio de las Fuerzas Armadas)
MININD	Ministry of Industries (Ministerio de Industrias)
MININT	Ministry of the Interior (Ministerio del Interior)
MINJUS	Ministry of Justice (Ministerio de Justicia)
MINREX	Ministry of Foreign Relations (Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores)
MINSAP	Ministry of Public Health (Ministerio de Salud Pública)
MINTRAB	Ministry of Labor (Ministerio del Trabajo)
PCC	Cuban Communist Party (Partido Comunista de Cuba)
PNR	National Revolutionary Police (Policía Nacional Revolucionaria)
SMO	Obligatory Military Service (Servicio Militar Obligatorio)
UMAP	Military Units to Aid Production (Unidades Militares de Ayuda a la Producción)

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