

Ciudad en Rojo (“City in Red”) is a fictionalized version of events occurring over a 24-hour period in the years prior to the triumph of the 1959 Cuban Revolution. As a teenager, director Rebeca Chávez participated in the underground movement depicted in her film which she describes as a “reflection on violence.” The film is also based on a 1960 novel, *Bertillón 166*, by Jose Soler Puig; its title is the term used by the daily paper to indicate the cause of death of the previous night's victims: “death by firearm.”



The movie takes place in Santiago de Cuba, where the uprising against the dictator Fulgencio Batista began. On July 26, 1953, a band of rebels under the leadership of Fidel Castro unsuccessfully attacked the city's Moncada army barracks. Fidel and others survived the attack and following an amnesty from Batista in 1955 continued the struggle in Mexico under the banner of the 26th of July Movement. From there, 82 fighters, including Che Guevara, set sail for Santiago to link up with the urban resistance movement led by Frank Pais. The guerrillas were met by

Batista’s army and nearly destroyed, but Fidel, Che and Fidel’s brother, Raul, escaped to the Sierra Maestre Mountains where they constructed the armed force that eventually defeated the Batista regime at the end of 1958.

Less well known, but equally important was the urban resistance in cities across the country that is portrayed in *Ciudad en Rojo*. Santiago, the second largest, had a large Afro-descendant populace, which became known as some of the most militant fighters against the regime. Batista unleashed brutal force against this movement and close to 20,000 Cubans would die in the struggle between 1953-59, mostly civilians in the cities. A consistent theme in both the film and the novel that preceded it is the existential question of the necessity of taking up arms against a state that could unleash that kind of terror.

The film is preceded by a short, *La Leyenda de Fernando Valdés*, about an unknown Cuban baseball player who somehow hit the longest home run in Cuban history. A student thesis from EICTV, the international film school, it

A discussion following the film will be led by Gary Prevost, professor at St. John's University/ St. Benedict, who specializes in the study of Cuba and has written several books about its history and politics.

Please join us and share your impressions at Pracna on Main adjacent to the theater (take a left at the bottom of the stairs). You can purchase food and drink, but there's no obligation to do so.

Upcoming films and other events

Coming up next Thursday is the second feature in the Minnesota Cuban Film Festival, *Nada+* (“Nothing more”). This 2001 film from Juan Carlos Cremata (“Viva Cuba”) was his first feature film and was noted for its quirky design aspects. The discussion following will be led by Giselle Garcia, a Cuban film student, who is studying at St. Thomas University.

A month-long exhibit of the prison paintings of Antonio Guerrero, is currently running at Regla De Oro Art Gallery and Fair Trade Gifts. Guerrero is one of the Cuban Five who were wrongly sentenced to long US prison sentences on charges of conspiracy to commit espionage. A special program will be held on Friday, February 28, the day after Fernando Gonzalez, another of the Five, completes his sentence. Please pick up a flyer outside for details.

The Minnesota Cuba Committee meets every two weeks The next meeting is on Sunday, February 23, at 6:00 pm at Boneshaker Books, 2002 23rd Avenue South, Minneapolis. Anyone interested in finding out more about our work is welcome to attend.

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contains interviews with people who have real stories, except they happen to be about someone other than Fernando Valdés.

late 1950s, Santiago de Cuba, the country's second largest city and home to a large population of Afro-descendent Cubans was afire, the site of some of the fiercest resistance to the murderous dictatorship of Fulgencio Batista. The film's narrative unfolds over twenty-four hours in the lives of young members of the urban underground as they confront their mortality in the armed struggle and its consequences of their choices.