



## Before Fidel: The Cuba I Remember

*Francisco José Moreno*

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Before Fidel Castro seized power, Cuba was an ebullient and chaotic society in a permanent state of turmoil, combining a raucous tropical nature with the evils of arbitrary and corrupt government. Yet this fascinating period in Cuban history has been largely forgotten or misrepresented, even though it set the stage for Castro's dramatic takeover in 1959. To reclaim the Cuba that he knew—and add color and detail to the historical record—distinguished political scientist Francisco José Moreno here offers his recollections of the Cuba in which he came of age personally and politically.

Moreno takes us into the little-known world of privileged, upper-middle-class, white Cubans of the 1930s through the 1950s. His vivid depictions of life in the family and on the streets capture the distinctive rhythms of Cuban society and the dynamics between parents and children, men and women, and people of different races and classes. The heart of the book describes Moreno's political awakening, which culminated during his student years at the University of Havana. Moreno gives a detailed, insider's account of the anti-Batista movement, including the Ortodoxos and the Triple A. He recaptures the idealism and naiveté of the movement, as well as its ultimate ineffectiveness as it fell before the juggernaut of the Castro Revolution. His own disillusionment and wrenching decision to leave Cuba rather than accept a commission in Castro's army poignantly closes the book.

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