



*Fidel Castro golfed with Che Guevara at Havana's Buena Vista Social Club, after their victory in the Cuban Revolution of 1959.*

understanding of large-scale acts of political violence over time throughout the world.

Oltuski, who is now Cuba's deputy minister of fisheries, remains an unreconstructed believer in the primacy of leaders. "I think to change, or even to evolve history, it's not enough for the popular conditions to exist," he writes. "You also need the man who strikes the spark and knows how to lead the people along the right path in the midst of as complex a situation as a revolution." In his view, Castro has been such a leader, and the Cuban Revolution is unimaginable without him.

By contrast, Sweig, a senior fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations, argues that the late-1950s "battle for Cuba's future was a power struggle . . . as much within the opposition as against the Batista dictatorship." Revolutionary Cubans acted in concert, she argues, and those in the urban areas did more than those in the countryside to weaken Fulgencio Batista's grip until about eight months before his fall. Castro's eventual triumph resulted from many factors, including accidents. Sweig acknowledges his many skills but insists that he did not tower over events all along. Many other revolutionaries also made this revolution.

Oltuski and Sweig concur on the significance of the urban underground. In doing so, they dispute the position taken by the official historian of the Cuban Revolution, Ernesto (Che) Guevara, who maintained that Castro-led guerrillas in the mountains were the architects of revolutionary victory. Guevara failed twice when he tried to implement his

theories of rural revolution elsewhere, first in the Congo and then in Bolivia, where he was killed in 1967. Oltuski and Sweig demonstrate that Guevara was wrong about revolution in Cuba as well.

These books disappoint because they focus solely on the urban underground of the 26th of July Movement (named for the date of a major attack on a barracks). One learns little about other revolutionary movements, such as the Revolutionary

Directorate and the Second Front at the Escambray Mountains, whose acts of violence also contributed to Batista's overthrow. And one learns nothing about the state's collapse from within. Six months before Batista fell, Fidel Castro and his brother Raúl commanded only some 400 guerrillas. The Batista regime imploded from a combination of military unprofessionalism, inadequate training, weaponry unsuitable for guerrilla warfare, the theft of war supplies, and inept strategic decisions.

The books are very well written, however, and they convey a lively sense of battle and commitment, chance and tragedy, human foibles and heroism. Whereas Oltuski simply relates his own tale, Sweig has conducted impressive archival and other primary research, employing documents newly declassified by the Cuban government. Her analysis is thorough, careful, and nuanced, and the book will likely become the key work on the subject.

—JORGE I. DOMÍNGUEZ

#### *SOCIAL SCIENTISTS FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE:*

*Making the Case against Segregation.*  
By John P. Jackson, Jr. New York Univ.  
Press, 289 pp., \$45

The U.S. Supreme Court stimulated years of debate by citing, in *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954), a handful of social science studies attesting to the deleterious effects of legalized racial segregation. Did the Court's reference to "psychological knowledge"



strengthen the decision? Or would *Brown* have been a stronger opinion had the Court simply asserted a constitutional principle without seeking the additional ballast?

Critical commentary has increasingly endorsed the latter view, partly because, as Jackson notes in his valuable new book, “the idea that social scientists’ testimony in *Brown* was unfounded has become the dominant understanding.” But Jackson, a professor of communication at the University of Colorado at Boulder, wants to correct that understanding. He argues that “the social scientists made very limited claims” in their testimony—stressing, for example, “that the problem of [psychological] damage arising from discrimination was exceedingly complex, and that it undoubtedly was intertwined with countless other aspects of society”—and that almost all of the claims were fully justified.

The one exception arose in testimony by Kenneth B. Clark, a professor at City College of New York. In a series of “doll tests,” Clark gave African American children black and white dolls, identical except for skin color, and asked them to choose the “nice” doll, the “bad” doll, and so on. Clark was “only one of dozens of expert witnesses” who testified in the four cases that together made up *Brown*—from South Carolina, Virginia, Delaware, and Kansas—and his *Effect of Prejudice and Discrimination on Personality Development* (1950) was only one of seven social science studies that the Court cited. But the doll tests ended up symbolizing, and tainting, all of the social science evidence.

Ordinarily a rigorous and objective social scientist, Clark “stepped over the bounds of proper scientific procedure and into the realm of advocacy,” Jackson writes. Testifying in the Delaware case, he misrepresented his findings. Elsewhere, he seemed capable of construing contradictory responses on the part of his African American subjects—choosing either the black doll or the white doll as the “bad” one—as proof of psychological damage. “The doll tests became the lightning rod for criticism of the social scientists’ role,” Jackson observes, “and were perhaps the weakest part of the social science evidence in the *Brown* litigation.”

Despite a few troubling errors—for example, a reference to the equal protection clause of the Fifth Amendment (only the Fourteenth Amendment guarantees equal protection)—*Social Scientists for Social Justice* is a thoughtful and original book. Early chapters trace how social scientists were galvanized by “Hitler’s rise to power, the struggle against Nazi ideology, and the perceived need to unify the nation behind the war effort.” These self-described “social engineers” grew convinced that racial prejudice threatened the democratic order. Their most important contribution to *Brown*, a statement filed with the Supreme Court in late 1952, was persuasive because of its neutral, dispassionate tone. Indeed, the doll tests notwithstanding, these social engineers succeeded in their task by functioning “as both objective scientists and effective advocates.”

—DAVID J. GARROW

## ARTS & LETTERS

### *HOW TO LOSE FRIENDS AND ALIENATE PEOPLE.*

By Toby Young. Da Capo Press. 340 pp. \$24

“When *The Front Page* was first produced in 1926,” Young writes, “the *New York Times* theater critic Walter Kerr described the essence of Burns’s appeal as”—stop there: The sentence already contains two factual errors. *The Front Page* premiered in 1928, at which time Walter Kerr was 15 years old. In a one-sentence footnote on the same page of

his memoir, Young tops himself with three mistakes: “When Harold Ross originally conceived of *The New Yorker* in 1922 it was going to be subtitled: ‘Not for the little old lady from Dubuque.’” The magazine was planned in 1924; the phrase was a characterization in the prospectus, never a potential subtitle, and its actual wording was “*The New Yorker* will be the magazine which is not edited for the old lady in Dubuque.”

I break with convention and point out some of Young’s tangential errors at the beginning



critique. Nevertheless, *Skeptical Environmentalism* confirms a long-standing suspicion of mine: No special philosophical principles undergird environmentalism beyond (1) the general biophilic and humanist idea that we should care for living things, particularly if

they are sentient and can feel pain; and (2) the principle that we ought to leave to our descendants a world that makes lives of fulfillment and pleasure possible. Not all good ideas are grand abstractions.

—DENIS DUTTON

## CONTRIBUTORS

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