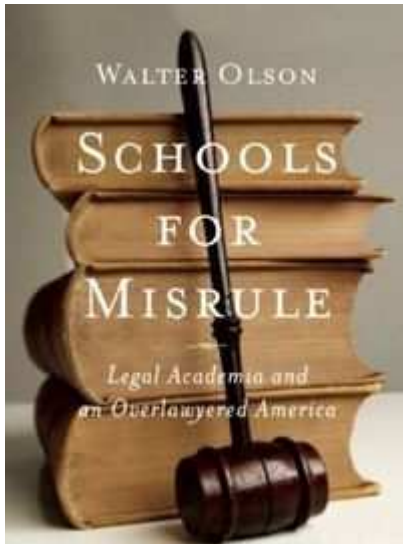


Book: Elite Law School Ideas Are ‘Catastrophically Bad for America’



Coverage of the forthcoming book by [Walter Olson](#) (Cato Institute), [Schools for Misrule: Legal Academia and an Overlawyered America](#) (Encounter Books, Feb. 15, 2011):

From Barack Obama (Harvard and Chicago) to Bill and Hillary Clinton (Yale), many of our national leaders today emerge from the rarefied air of the nation’s top law schools. The ideas taught there in one generation often wind up shaping national policy in the next.

The trouble is, as Walter Olson explains in this book, our elite law schools keep churning out ideas that are catastrophically bad for America. Rights to sue anyone over anything in class actions? Hatched in legal academia. Court orders mandating mass release of prison inmates? Ditto. The movement for slavery reparations? Court takeovers of school funding, at taxpayers’ expense? It’s not by coincidence, Olson argues, that these bad ideas all tend to confer more power on the law schools’ own graduates. In the overlawyered society that results, they are the ones who become the real rulers. And the worst is yet to come, the book demonstrates, as a fast-rising movement in the law schools demands that sovereignty over U.S. legal disputes be handed over to international law and transnational courts.

Some imagine that the law schools possess a finer, purer moral sensitivity than the everyday America outside their walls. (“Welcome to the Republic of Conscience!” Yale Law dean Harold Koh announced to incoming students.) But as this book shows, the pipe dream of training philosopher-monarchs not only leads to one policy disaster after another, but distracts law schools from the most useful function they can serve: training competent, ethical and suitably humble lawyers for tomorrow.