

# Liberal Education and Leadership Training

**Liberalism depends on virtues and beliefs which the liberal state itself cannot nourish or defend. The counterintuitive lesson is that therefore liberal leaders have to be nourished all the more intensively somehow. (From "Yale's Purpose," below.)**

Places like Yale and Harvard did that. They generated civic and political leaders at all levels, even some leaders of insurgencies. These crucibles of civic-republican leadership training were racist and sexist, and many of their privileged charges became merely dray horses of the financial, legal, and business worlds. Yet they did some things extraordinarily, deeply well, as I show below, especially the first review-essay from the *Los Angeles Times*.

If in the 1930s and '40s you'd had to choose between Hitler or Stalin, on the one hand, and such Harvard, Yale, and Princeton graduates as Roosevelt, Acheson, Harriman, Kennan, and other framers of the Atlantic alliance and the postwar order, on the other, you'd have chosen the latter because of how they were nourished and trained. For all the stark differences between them and most Americans in class, race, and gender, they were accountable to civic-republican principles and processes without which the excluded could not have pressed their claims.

In 1964, I note in the first essay below, Yale President Kingman Brewster, Jr., a direct descendant of the minister on the Mayflower, gave one of the university's honorary doctorates to Martin Luther King, Jr., then just released from jail. The honor was controversial within and beyond Yale. Yet something in Yale that was as old and deep as Brewster's lineage enabled -- indeed, drove -- that step and many more.

It's important to understand this. We haven't understood. We've thrown the baby of civic-republican nurture and belonging out with the bathwater of the old national schools' worst presumptions and prejudices. That was a mistake, as the sociologist Jerome Karabel found himself thinking (but not quite admitting) as he examined the pedagogy of exclusive college-preparatory schools like Groton that were feeders to Harvard and Yale.

The challenge is to open the doors to these crucibles of leadership training while continuing to nurture and discipline the new entrants' republican commitments. "Diversity" is a means, not an end, and when it's the latter, it too-easily becomes merely a skittish liberal dodge of the hard work that must be done. That's about all it has been for years now at Harvard, Yale, and Princeton, which have compromised or all-but completely shed their civic-republican missions.

[Training a republic's governing elites](#), *Los Angeles Times Book Review*, 2004. This account of Yale Kingman Brewster, Jr.'s bold pedagogical innovations was written as a review-essay of Geoffrey Kabaservice's *The Guardians*.

The Crimson's Civic Slide, *Boston Globe*, Reviews of [Ross Douthat's em>Privilege: Harvard and the Making of a Ruling Class and Richard Bradley's Harvard Rules](#), [an expose of Lawrence Summers](#) (both in 2005) and of [Harry Lewis' Excellence Without a Soul](#), about how elite universities are abandoning liberal education to create, as I put it, "a global ruling class accountable to no polity or moral code."

[Humanists and Warriors: How and How Not to Study Humanities at Yale](#). The Yale Politic, Oct., 2007

[The Perils of "Jarhead" Pedagogy in Colleges](#), *The Yale Politic*, 2006 "

[Allan Bloom and the Conservative Mind.](#) *New York Times*, 2005, and letters from [David Horowitz](#) and [Nathan Tarcov.](#) [Allan Bloom, 20 Years Later.](#) *The Guardian*, 2008