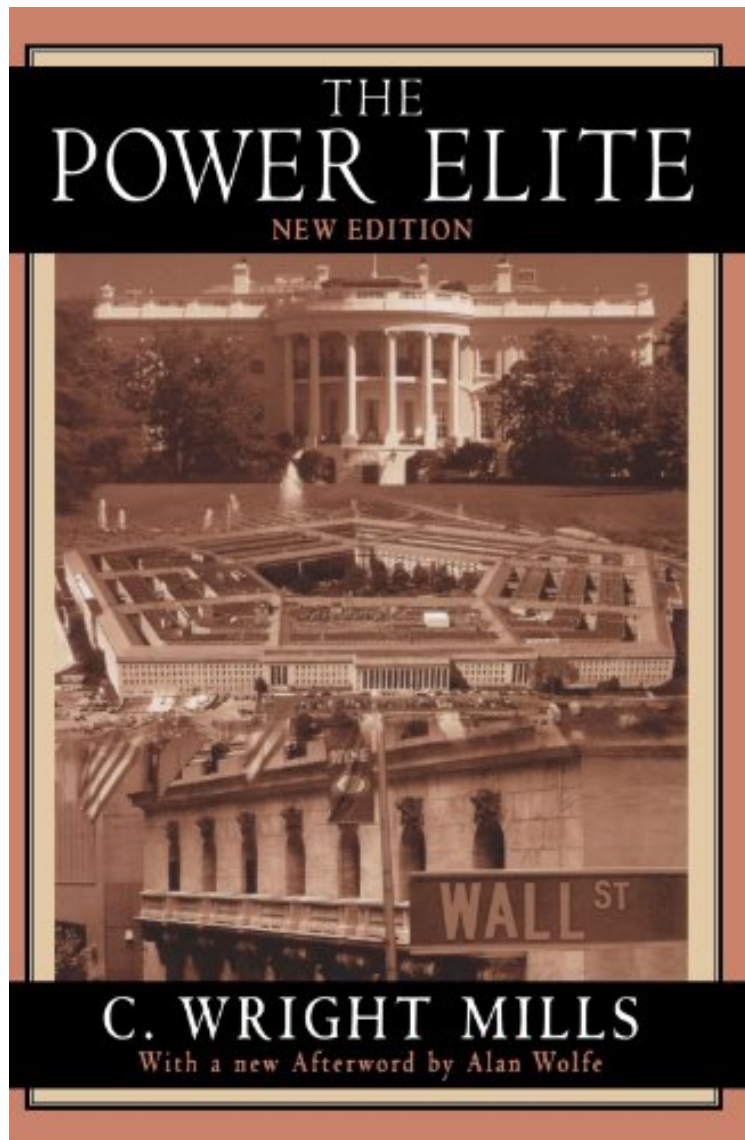


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The Power Elite

C. Wright Mills

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C. Wright Mills : The Power Elite before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Power Elite:

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. A very good boob for understanding how America is ruled.By Joseph BuccaOverall, The Power Elite is a good primer for understanding who rules America. The best way to read the book is from the understanding that the book was written in 1956 and this is 2014. C. Wright Mill does an excellent job of laying out the basics. Power is vested into three spheres: The political (government), the military, and the

economic (corporations). While the basics generally hold true in 2014 the reader should challenge himself or herself to determine what sphere currently has the most weight and calls the shots. The Power Elite is a great primer but the reader must do further research to obtain a deeper understanding. In doing so one should be mindful of Otto Von Bismark statement that "the less one knows how laws and sausages are made the better one will sleep at night". 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. A classic By Grouchy Oldman Mills destroys the democratic myth of government of, by, and for the people. "The Power Elite", written almost 60 years ago, reveals a truth about who governs America: America's economic, social and political life is governed by social, political and economic elites. He shows the interlocking and mutually self-reinforcing effects of relative wealth, education and social opportunity. Mills demonstrates what should be obvious: the more prosperous can afford a better education, have better social and professional opportunities, and are in a better position to impose their values--whether in managing enterprises or running the government--than those of lower economic, social, and intellectual standing. Mills seems to find this state of affairs objectionable, but the alternative would be that the less-educated occupy these positions. This is, and has always been, true of all countries, so this should not have been news even when he wrote the book, but he was the first to point out these facts at length in book form. What was different then from now is that then the elites did think about the effects of their choices and behaviors on America, whereas today they seem to be motivated only by their own aggrandizement. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. The US ruling elite's evolution from the American Revolution through the Cold War By Richard Ballard Mills' extensively footnoted study documents the evolution of the United States' ruling elite. Prior to the War Between The States, landed old families with histories dating back to the American Revolution formed the ruling elites' core, with new moneyed families (industrialists and natural resource barons) socially struggling to join the elite. The War Between The States impacted the power elite in two ways. The war financially ruined many Southern old families who consequently faded away. And the 1868 Fourteenth Amendment to the Constitution legalized business incorporation, creating business entities that could compete with landed old family wealth. Corporate executives used their salaries and their fringe benefits to compete with landed family old wealth; these successful corporate executives had different motivations (e.g., profit instead of noblesse oblige) than the power elite's traditional landed old family members. The power elite changed as corporate wealth diffused into the elite. World War Two caused an expansion of the Federal Executive's powers, and motivated extreme coordination between United States industry and its military. The Federal Executive and the military controlled much taxpayer money, and a series of revolving door opportunities were created to coordinate war-related industrial production. Industrial opportunities opened the power elite's door to Federal Executive politicians and to the military, people who themselves were not wealthy but who controlled taxpayer money. Mills provides extensive discussion of the Eisenhower administration but specifically excludes most of the Congress from his power elite definition: while Congress controls the taxpayer purse strings, Congress simply cannot absorb the detailed knowledge of running the Federal Executive or the Pentagon. And the Cold War following World War Two put the United States on a somewhat permanent war footing: the industrial / Federal Executive / military's power elite portal endured. Mills' study was published originally in 1956 during the Eisenhower administration. It is somewhat ironic IMO that C. Wright Mills' study omits President Eisenhower's January 17, 1961 parting caution: "This conjunction of an immense military establishment and a large arms industry is new in the American experience. We must guard against the acquisition of unwarranted influence, whether sought or unsought, by the military-industrial complex. The potential for the disastrous rise of misplaced power exists and will persist."

First published in 1956, The Power Elite stands as a contemporary classic of social science and social criticism. C. Wright Mills examines and critiques the organization of power in the United States, calling attention to three firmly interlocked prongs of power: the military, corporate, and political elite. The Power Elite can be read as a good account of what was taking place in America at the time it was written, but its underlying question of whether America is as democratic in practice as it is in theory continues to matter very much today. What The Power Elite informed readers of in 1956 was how much the organization of power in America had changed during their lifetimes, and Alan Wolfe's astute afterword to this new edition brings us up to date, illustrating how much more has changed since then. Wolfe sorts out what is helpful in Mills' book and which of his predictions have not come to bear, laying out the radical changes in American capitalism, from intense global competition and the collapse of communism to rapid technological transformations and ever changing consumer tastes. The Power Elite has stimulated generations of readers to think about the kind of society they have and the kind of society they might want, and deserves to be read by every new generation.

"A classic...the first full-scale study of the structure and distribution of power in the United States by a sociologist using the full panoply of modern-day sociological theory and methods."--Contemporary Sociology About the Author The late C. Wright Mills, Professor of Sociology at Columbia University, was a leading critic of modern American civilization. Alan Wolfe is University Professor and Professor of Political Science and Sociology at Boston University. He is the author or editor of more than ten books, including Marginalized in the Middle and One Nation,

After All.