

## Reading Guide – Organization Men and Their Critics

We close out our unit on the Military-Industrial-Academic-Complex. Our conversation will be focused on critics of the M-I-A-C. As you read try to focus on the major arguments leveled against organizational thinking and organizational men. Why did postwar critics think these concepts were troubling?

### Assigned Materials

- Louis Menand, "Fat Man: Herman Kahn and the Nuclear Age," *The New Yorker* (June 2005) 1-11.
- William H. Whyte, "Introduction," from *The Organization Man* (1956) 3-14.
- C. Wright Mills, selection from *The Power Elite* (1956) 73-78.
- Dwight D. Eisenhower, "Farewell Speech," *Public Papers of the Presidents* (1961) 1-4.
- [OPTIONAL] WATCH: *Dr. Strangelove, Or: How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb* (1964) 1hr34min

### Questions to Consider

Menand is a familiar figure from our "brainwashing" day a couple of weeks back. This article of his is less philosophical and dense, I assure you. Here, he offers a study of Herman Kahn, the prototypical "defense intellectual and "organization man." Read for background on Kahn and the kind of figure he was. What was Kahn's goal in writing "On Thermonuclear War"? How did his work at RAND influence his thinking? What, according to Menand, "drove the Cold War"?

William Whyte was a journalist and social critic. His 1956 book, *The Organization Man*, sold over two million copies. This week we read the introduction to that book. Who/what is "the Organization Man"? What does Whyte think of organizational life? What, in your opinion, Whyte's argument/thesis?

C. Wright Mills was an influential sociologist. Like Whyte, he was interested in the ways organizations influenced American society. In his book, *The Power Elite*, he criticizes the high levels of power wielding by leaders of the M-I-A-C. As you read an excerpt from that book, compare Mills to Whyte – are they addressing the same problem? How do their approaches differ? What is Mill's main argument?

Eisenhower was the 34<sup>th</sup> President of the United States. His farewell speech in 1961 introduced the term "Military-Industrial Complex." What, according to Eisenhower IS the M-I-C? Why did he think it was a problem?

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