



War is a Racket: The Profit Motive Behind Warfare

Smedley Butler

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Smedley Darlington Butler (1881-1940), nicknamed "The Fighting Quaker" and "Old Gimlet Eye," was a Major General in the U.S. Marine Corps, and at the time of his death the most decorated Marine in U.S. history. By the end of his career he had received 16 medals, five of which were for heroism. He is one of 19 people to be twice awarded the Medal of Honor, one of three to be awarded both the Marine Corps Brevet Medal and the Medal of Honor, and the only person to be awarded the Brevet Medal and two Medals of Honor, all for separate actions. He became widely-known for his outspoken lectures against war profiteering, U.S. military adventurism and what he viewed as nascent fascism in the United States. In addition to his speeches to pacifist groups, from 1935 to 1937 he served as a spokesman for the American League Against War and Fascism. In 1935, he wrote the exposé "War Is a Racket," a trenchant condemnation of the profit motive behind warfare.



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