



War Is A Racket

General Smedley D. Butler

Read by: D. S. Harvey

Length: 50 minutes

Language: English

Style: Solo

Genre: Political Philosophy,

War & Military, Economics

Format: MP3 CD in DVD case

Catalog: DB-1189

UPC: 0683422135101

MSLP: \$9.99

After his retirement from the Marine Corps in the early 1930's, General Smedley D. Butler embarked on a national lecture tour, where he gave his speech about how commercial interests benefit from war. The speech was well received and he wrote an expanded version of it, which was published as *War Is A Racket*. The work was published by *Reader's Digest* as a condensed book supplement, which added to its popularity.

The book consists of five chapters. The first chapter cites telling statistics: 21,000 people became millionaires and billionaires during the war; 4 million men served; the growth of national debt by a factor of 25 from 1898 to 1918. The second chapter details the level of profits made by many major U.S. corporations made in the years preceding World War I and compares them to the significantly greater profits made from and during the war. The third chapter lays bare the ways in which the costs are borne by the public, with particular focus on humiliating deductions from the pay of soldiers. Chapter four sets forth three simple methods to limit wars: insist that everyone in the war economy earn the same income as that of the soldiers; conduct a vote to decide whether or not to go to war and limit the voters to those who would serve; limit appropriations and activities to strictly defensive measures. The final chapter shows the futility of arms limitations negotiations and makes it plain that only total disarmament will break the back of the beast.

Smedley D. Butler (July 39, 1881 – June 21, 1940) was a major general in the United States Marine Corps who participated in military activities in the Philippines, China, Central America, the Caribbean and France during his 34-year career. At the time of his retirement he was the most decorated Marine in U. S. History, one only 19 men to receive the Medal of Honor twice. He was born to a well-respected family descended from Quaker ancestors in West Chester, Pennsylvania and was educated at Haverford School. Following his retirement in 1931 he served as Director of Public Safety in Philadelphia, supervising the city's police and fire departments, and ran for the U.S. Senate in 1932. He became an outspoken critic of what has come to be called the military-industrial complex. In 1933 he testified before a congressional committee about the Business Plot: that a cabal of industrialists were plotting a coup to overthrow President Franklin Delano Roosevelt, claims that were confirmed in part by a special congressional report. He toured the country giving his lecture "War Is A Racket" to meetings organized by veterans, pacifists, and church groups, which was published as a short book in 1935. Lowell Thomas, who wrote Butler's oral biography, praised his "moral as well as physical courage" in the introduction.