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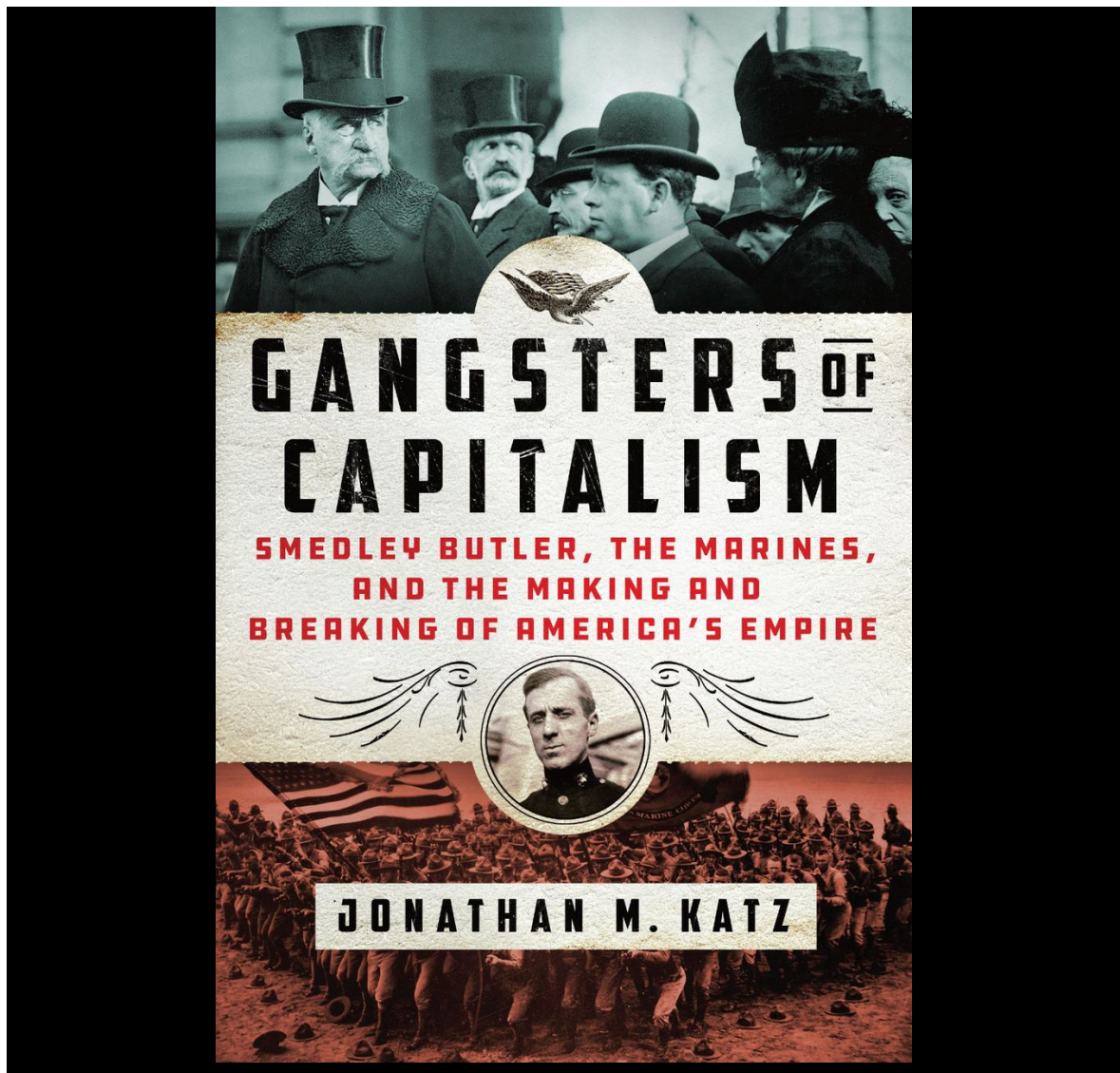
David Walsh

17.11.2022

“A way to tell the story of how the United States operates in the world”: An interview with Jonathan M. Katz, author of *Gangsters of Capitalism: Smedley Butler, the Marines, and the Making and Breaking of America’s Empire*

Gangsters of Capitalism: Smedley Butler, the Marines, and the Making and Breaking of America’s Empire by Jonathan M. Katz, published in January 2022, is an important book.

The WSWS recently commented on David O. Russell’s film, *Amsterdam*. The latter was not successful, but it did have the merit of focusing attention on an important historical episode, the efforts by major Wall Street and corporate figures to organize a right-wing coup against Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1933-34. In the end, those efforts came to naught.



Gangsters of Capitalism

In July 1933, retired Marine Corps Maj. Gen. Smedley Butler was approached by a representative of powerful business concerns. As Butler later told a congressional committee, the agent for these interests eventually proposed that he lead half a million veterans in a march on Washington and force Roosevelt to accept a “secretary of general affairs,” that is, an unelected dictator, appointed by leading financial and business figures, or step aside.

The 1933-34 events have a special significance in light of the attempt by former-President Donald Trump and his fascist forces on January 6, 2021 to overturn the results of the 2020 election and maintain himself in power.

In researching the so-called Wall Street Putsch, valuable insight was provided by Katz’s *Gangsters of Capitalism*, which gives a vivid account of the incident.

Beyond that, however, through recounting Smedley Butler's life and military career, Katz offers a brief but indelible history of the emergence of American imperialism in the first decades of the 20th century. Butler joined the Marines at the time of the Spanish-American War at 16, and proceeded to participate in US military interventions in Cuba, the Philippines, China (at the time of the Boxer Rebellion and later in the 1920s), the Dominican Republic, several countries in Central America, Mexico and Haiti.

As Butler later acknowledged, when his eyes had been opened, in the 1930s, "I spent most of my time [in the Marines] being a high-class muscle man for big business, for Wall Street and for the bankers. In short, I was a racketeer for capitalism."

Katz became aware of Butler's story in its fuller dimensions after he moved to Haiti to be a correspondent for the Associated Press. "To Haitians," Katz writes, "Butler is no hero." Once the Woodrow Wilson administration sent the US Marines into Haiti in July 1915, using the pretext of a political crisis, Butler led a Marine battalion across the northern part of the country to "dismantle" popular resistance by brutal means.

As Katz writes, Butler helped lead the invasion of Haiti

and played a singular role in setting up an occupation that lasted nearly two decades. Most notoriously, Butler instigated a system of forced labor, the *corvée*, in which Haitians were required to build hundreds of miles of roads for no pay, and were killed or jailed if they did not comply. Haitians saw it for what it was: a form of slavery, enraging a people whose ancestors had freed themselves from enslavement and French colonialism over a century before.

More generally, Katz explains, Butler

blazed a path for U.S. empire across the world, helping seize the Philippines and the land for the Panama Canal, and invading and helping plunder Honduras, Nicaragua, Haiti, the Dominican Republic, Mexico, and more. Butler was also a pioneer of the militarization of police: first spearheading the creation of client police forces across Latin America (known in most Spanish-speaking countries as the *Guardia Nacional* and in Haiti as the *Gendarmerie*), then introducing those tactics to U.S. cities during a two-year stint running the Philadelphia police during Prohibition.

At the time of the big business plot in 1933-34, Butler had become deeply suspicious of the corporate interests who had benefited from the various interventions by the Marines. He recognized the type of Wall Street conspirators seeking to install a fascist regime in the US. As Katz points out,

It had been largely on their behalf that Butler and his Marines trained and helped put into power the Hitlers and Mussolinis of Latin America: dictators like the Dominican Republic's Rafael Trujillo and Nicaragua's soon-to-be leader, Anastasio Somoza, who would employ violent repression and their U.S.-created militaries to protect American investments and their own power.

The continuity between the ruthless, criminal actions of American capitalism more than a century ago and the present day is especially vital to underscore at a moment when the Biden administration and the entire US political establishment, including its pseudo-left flank, is pretending, once again, to be supporting “democracy” and “liberating” yet another people, this time in Ukraine.

The WSWS recently spoke to Katz in a video call.

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Jonathan M. Katz [Photo by Jamelle Bouie]

David Walsh: Your book, *Gangsters of Capitalism: Smedley Butler, the Marines, and the Making and Breaking of America's Empire*, takes up a great many issues. It is, on the one hand, through Smedley Butler's experiences, a mini-history of American interventions and American imperialism from the Spanish-American War onward, for about a third of a century, in Nicaragua, Panama, Honduras, the Dominican Republic, Mexico, Haiti, the Philippines and China.

You also discuss the Bonus March on Washington in 1932, the “Big Business Plot” of 1933-34, which also involved Butler, and the January 6, 2021, coup attempt by Donald Trump and his fascist allies.

There is also the matter as well of the horrific Haitian earthquake in 2010 and present-day conditions in that impoverished country.

I would be curious to know how you ended up working in Haiti for the Associated Press.

Jonathan Katz: I started working for AP in graduate school when I covered the Second Intifada in Jerusalem. To make a long story short, I ended up back at AP in Washington. But I really wanted to go overseas. So I ended up in the Dominican Republic, did two years there, and then got a call from my boss. They asked me to move to Haiti. So I did. I often say I was one of the few people to move to Haiti on a bus.

DW: Obviously, the 2010 earthquake was one of the most horrific natural and social disasters of modern times. Can you describe what happened?

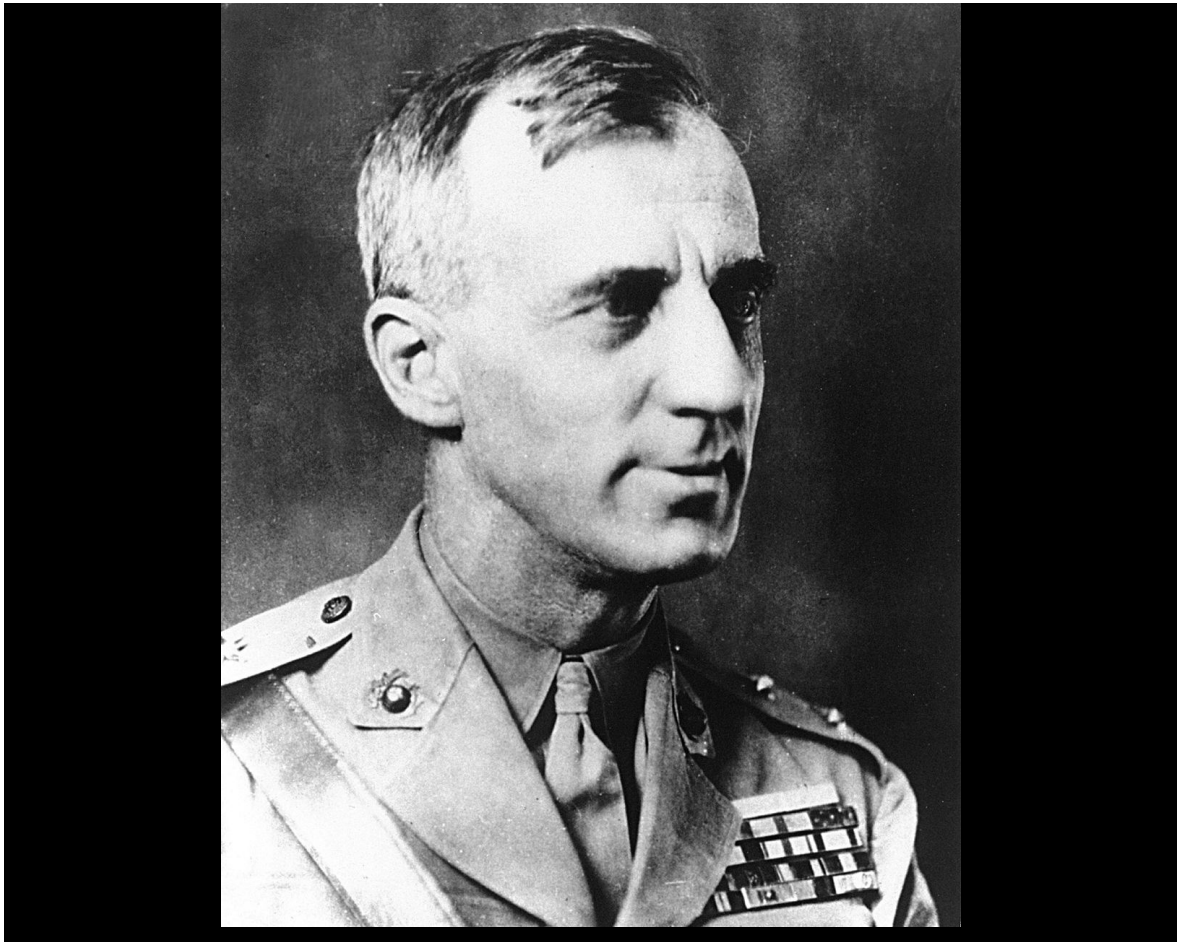
JK: It was awful—worse than awful. Time marches on and it’s now been 12 years, almost 13 years. It used to be something that people knew about as soon as you referenced it and now the memory of it is starting to fade. But it was horrific. The death toll was estimated at somewhere between 100,000 and 316,000. Somewhere along the lines of one in 10 people in the capital’s metropolitan region died. I lost a lot of friends.

I almost lost my own life. My house collapsed around me. I was very lucky. I happened to be in a house built in a way that didn’t pancake, as the saying goes. It wasn’t even really a class issue because the house next to me, which was at the same socio-economic level, did pancake. That one just happened to have a flat concrete roof while mine had an A-frame.

It was an astounding disaster, a literal and figurative leveler. No one was safe, including members of the Haitian elite and the people in the nicest hotels. Actually, one of the best places you could be in that earthquake was in a shantytown. If you were living in corrugated tin, it just fell down around you instead of falling on top of your head. But that social “leveling” aspect of it evaporated very quickly because as soon as the international relief effort came in, the help immediately made a beeline for the wealthiest and most powerful people in Haiti.

It turned out to be the deadliest earthquake ever recorded in the Western Hemisphere. In my first book [*The Big Truck That Went By: How the World Came to Save Haiti and Left Behind a Disaster*], I had to talk about, very briefly, the US occupation of Haiti, because you can’t talk about how Haiti has gotten to be the way that it is today without considering that period from 1915 to 1934.

That was how I first encountered Smedley Butler of the Marines.



Smedley Butler

I don't want to suggest I was naïve when the earthquake hit. I was 29 years old. I knew a lot about how the world worked, about how the United States operated in the world. But it was really that experience and that trauma, for me and the people around me, that drove home the inequalities and the way that the small elites in Haiti and the United States profit directly from those inequalities.

What drove me crazy in the year and a half after the earthquake was the degree to which it was so clear that the US response, led by Bill and Hillary Clinton and the Obama administration, was laser-focused on using the earthquake to build low-wage garment assembly plants, and make money for American and other foreign companies.

Having personally nearly died in this thing, having lost a lot of friends and having seen the incalculable suffering that this disaster visited on this country that I had come to love ... then just to see the crassness, you know?

I think that the Clintons really believed in what they were doing. I think they really believed that putting Haitians to work in factories, making shirts for Target and Old Navy

was the way to curb poverty in Haiti and to prevent future disasters. But it was business as usual. They were doing things that would pass as being entirely kosher to most Americans, including Donald Trump, who complained about the Clintons in Haiti during the 2016 election campaign.

Bill Clinton's favorite phrase about the plans for Haiti was "win-win," or "win-win-win." You know, "This is good for the United States. This is good for the South Korean garment company moving into the industrial park that ends up getting built on the side of the former Marine labor camp."

"Everyone's going to win." And it was a lie. You can't just build a garment factory. No matter how nice and clean. A garment factory paying poverty wages that the workers are going to end up having to spend just getting to and from work, and for food for their families on the side.

There's no infrastructure, nothing going to the government. No allowance for self-determination and sovereignty. You're not doing anything even to leave room for democracy to grow in spite of you, and then you think things are going to change because you pay a couple of thousand people poverty wages.

It was a series of fairy tales in 2010. First, we saved the Haitian people from this terrible disaster, which we didn't. Then, later that year, that we were going to save them from poverty by putting them to work in textiles, which also didn't happen. And then when that inevitably failed, "Oh, it must have been a story of individual greed and sadism," and none of that was true.

So as I was thinking about what my next project would be, I couldn't get Smedley Butler and his incredible life trajectory out of my mind, the earthquake really cemented it for me. This is a way to tell the story of how the United States operates in the world and how the world has been shaped by these interventions and these plots, and the ideas and interests behind them.



Butler (far right) with other Marines in Vera Cruz, Mexico, 1914

DW: Let's get back to Haiti a bit later. Because I would like you to discuss Butler's life, which is so extraordinary. His arrival on the scene coincides with the rise of American imperialism. His first experience, at 16 or so, was the Spanish-American War in 1898. Could you briefly discuss the role he played in the first decades of the 20th century.

JK: So, yes, he joined the Marines at 16, lying about his age, in 1898. The United States was going to war against Spain in Cuba, also in the Philippines, where Butler would get involved shortly thereafter—though, like most Americans, Butler was entirely focused on Cuba.

He was made a junior officer right away because his daddy was a congressman, Thomas Stalker Butler. That's how things were done in those days. So he goes through basic training and then is shipped off to Cuba, where he arrives and meets the Marine battalion that's already down there at the place where they have just arrived about a month before—a little place called Guantánamo Bay. You can't make this stuff up. OK, you could, but it's so much better not to have to. He remains in the Marine Corps for 33 years.

Butler actually goes from Cuba to the Philippines, and then to China and helps put down the Boxer Rebellion. Then he comes back to the Western Hemisphere and gets involved with the Marines in Central America.

He goes to Panama, which at that point is a province of the Republic of Colombia. And the Americans organize a conspiracy, a real-life conspiracy, led by William Nelson Cromwell, the co-founder of the big law firm Sullivan and Cromwell. It was basically a

plot to sever Panama from Colombia for purposes of building the Panama Canal and putting it under US control.

Butler lands in the Canal Zone as the canal is being built, with his wife and children. From Panama, he goes up to Nicaragua, which is one of the places where he really makes his name, basically helping to overthrow a Liberal government and then preventing the Liberals from overthrowing the Conservative government that was partnering with American banks.

All of this is very much on the surface, it's not subtext. In 1912, when Butler was putting down the Liberal revolt, he literally bivouacked half of his Marines in the "National Bank of Nicaragua," which was actually chartered in Connecticut. It's a joint venture of J. & W. Seligman & Co. and Brown Brothers & Co., now Brown Brothers Harriman, the private investment bank.

Butler and the Marines also invade Veracruz, Mexico in 1914, during the revolution, on behalf of the oil companies, directly requested by William Buckley, Sr., a lawyer and oil developer. Then there is Haiti and the Dominican Republic. I could go on and on.

In 1935, Butler gives his famous self-confession that he had been a racketeer for capitalism, that's where the entire book comes from. He lists all these places and interventions.

["I helped make Mexico, especially Tampico, safe for American oil interests in 1914. I helped make Haiti and Cuba a decent place for the National City Bank boys to collect revenues in. I helped in the raping of half a dozen Central American republics for the benefits of Wall Street. The record of racketeering is long. I helped purify Nicaragua for the international banking house of Brown Brothers in 1909-1912 ... I brought light to the Dominican Republic for American sugar interests in 1916. In China I helped see to it that Standard Oil went its way unmolested."]

I'm forgetting some, but it was a long list. He was everywhere doing everything, and the United States was everywhere doing everything.

DW: He obviously was very able. Of course, there's an element of just obeying orders. But if he had to justify it, presumably he would have said, well, yes, it's very bloody and brutal, but this is the line of progress.

JK: Yes, we're working for some nasty people and they're doing some terrible things, but in the long run, American capitalism is more progressive, more prosperous. I presume that he would have justified things that way.

When he talks about joining the Marines in 1898 he has this phrase: “I was determined to shoulder a rifle and help free little Cuba.” He was a teenager, susceptible, and there was an enormous propaganda push in 1898, both in the media and also from the government.

The United States, the public was told, had to intervene in Cuba against the horrendous Spanish empire, which *was* horrendous. They were doing horrible things in Cuba. The Spanish invented the concentration camp in Cuba during that war, which had been going on for decades at that point. So Butler had the mindset of somebody who believes, as many Americans have since time immemorial, at least since Butler’s day, that America is the greatest or the only force for good in the world. There are a lot of obvious parallels to the way Americans understand, for instance, Russia’s invasion of Ukraine right now—a place where Russia, like Spain back then, is indeed committing atrocities.

But in any case, there was a lot of talk in 1898 about how the Cubans were essentially George Washington and Thomas Jefferson, that they were like the colonists fighting against this horrible empire, looking for self-determination, wanting to create a republic and that it was the responsibility of Americans to help them.

Then the Americans say: because we gave you your independence and because we’re going to continue giving you tutelage, we’re going to put our railroad companies in charge of the railroads. We’re going to put our agricultural companies in charge of your agriculture. We’re going to put our mining companies in charge of your mines. We’re going to put our government in charge of your government. We’re going to put our military in charge of your military.

And also, as Bill Clinton would say, well, we may also make a little bit of money on the side here because if we’re going to all this trouble ...

DW: There are obviously continuities. As Trotsky said, ironically, “America is always liberating somebody, that’s her profession.”

And whether it's Noriega or Milosevic or Hussein or Gaddafi or, for that matter, Putin, there’s always a butcher from whom the US has to save the population. And it produces a disaster every time, for everyone involved.

Butler wasn’t the ultimate author of these interventions. As he later said, he was merely the “muscle man.” But in Haiti, he presided over some genuine atrocities.



United States Marines on patrol in 1915 during the occupation of Haiti

JK: Butler had more personal agency in Haiti. He came in as a major, moved up to a colonel, and basically became a general as he was leaving Haiti. He wasn't the one who decided to invade. But, that decision being made, in contrast to his previous situations, he made a lot of the decisions to send people into combat and create many of the policies of control.

The pretext for the invasion was the assassination of a president, and the Americans were very intent on keeping somebody who was critical of the US from succeeding him. So we install a puppet president and dissolve the Haitian armed forces, which was the army that was a direct descendant of the army that defeated Napoleon in the Haitian Revolution and won Haiti's independence in 1804.

As often happens, and there were shades of this in Iraq, the formal Haitian army bleeds into the countryside and reorganizes itself as a guerrilla force and starts an insurgency against the American invaders. So Butler's time in combat in Haiti was spent in what's known as the First Caco War, because Cacos were a nickname the Haitian rebels gave themselves, after a type of bird.

The Battle of Fort Rivière was really kind of the climax of the First Caco War, in which Butler leads an assault on a mountain in northern Haiti. At this point, US forces have cornered the rebels. The Marines are surrounding the mountain on all sides. They are armed with machine guns, while the Cacos are armed with antiquated rifles that could hardly fire.

It was a slaughter. There are differing accounts of the percentage of those killed. Some accounts say that everybody was killed, others say some managed to escape. But that breaks the back of the First Caco rebellion, which, as you can probably gather from the name, is not the last Caco rebellion. They end up rising against the Americans again a couple of years later.

Butler receives his second of two Medals of Honor for the Battle of Fort Rivière. His memories of that haunt him for a long time. I think he's already at that point suffering from what we today would call PTSD. You can definitely trace a moral injury in the way that he talks about that battle, especially in his letters to his wife.

Butler then settles into his role as almost a sort of assistant viceroy of Haiti.

He formed what was known as the Gendarmerie of Haiti, and became the head of this constabulary, which replaced the army. The Gendarmerie became the new armed forces of Haiti, which ends up dominating Haiti throughout the 20th century.

In 1917, two years after the invasion, Butler and the Americans dissolve the Haitian parliament at gunpoint, because they wanted a new constitution promulgated. They wanted a new one because the old Haitian constitution prevented foreigners from owning land in Haiti. This was a product of the independence struggle and memories of the French plantation system in which Haitians had been enslaved.

They had this very clear idea that land is power, land is freedom, land is sovereignty. There's a line in the Haitian national anthem about this: "*Du sol soyons seuls maîtres.*" Let us be the only masters of our soil.

The Americans thought, no, actually, we would like to own the soil, because there's a lot of money to be made in it. But that was too much even for the conservative nationalist faction dominating parliament. So Butler went and took the Marines on to the floor of the Haitian parliament and announced that the parliament was hereby dissolved.

Not only that, but they destroyed the records of everything they did, they destroyed the record of the last vote that was taken in the parliament, they refused to allow Haitian newspapers to report to the public what had happened.

Then they held a national referendum with the Marines basically standing over the ballot boxes, in which the Haitian people resoundingly approved the new constitution. What a surprise. And with that, the Americans were able to own land and start businesses.

DW: The other thing you wrote about in regard to Butler's Haitian legacy was the *corvée* system of forced labor.

JK: Ah yes, the *corvée*. The law was on the books in Haiti. It went back to French medieval law. The idea was that the government could put you to work in any way that it saw fit. The Americans and the Haitian government used it for road building projects. It was slavery. They would round people up, accuse them of this or that and then say, OK, now you're a prisoner and your sentence is to build this road for us. If you try to escape, you were shot, you weren't paid. Or if you were paid, you were paid very little.

DW: Those are all extraordinary details and there's obviously much more, but what about Smedley Butler's growing misgivings? Obviously, as you say, there's a sort of psychological, moral PTSD.

Do you have any sense of what was the turning point?

JK: A lot of what I know about his thinking is because he was such a prolific letter writer. And the first time that I really see him questioning things is in his personal correspondence from Nicaragua. That's the first place where he really started openly questioning in his letters what was the purpose of what he was doing. He has misgivings, but he continues to invade places, to follow orders.

World War I was another turning point, encountering the even more horrific forms of modern warfare, which he sees in the rear in France overseeing an embarkation camp in Brest.

Then he ends up in China for the second time as a general and it's there in the 1920s that really for the first time and the only time in his career Butler makes anti-war decisions as a member of the military.

He goes out of his way to keep his Marines out of the fight and to do everything he can to not provoke a direct conflict between the Americans and the nationalist Chinese, the Guomindang.

He was entering a sort of largely anti-interventionist period of his life.

Butler very much ends up a leftist. He develops a lot of sympathy for socialism. He votes for Norman Thomas of the Socialist Party in 1936 largely because of Thomas' anti-war platform.

Butler appears as a speaker at the Congress Against Fascism and War in Cleveland in 1936, which sets off alarm bells in the Marine Corps. He was never a Communist, however.



Thomas W. Lamont, Jr. in 1918

DW: What about the Big Business Plot of 1933-34? Smedley Butler, now retired from the Marines, claimed that he was contacted by representatives of Wall Street and big corporations to lead a coup against Franklin D. Roosevelt. That is an extraordinary event unto itself. I don't think it's merely an "alleged" plot. Now, why they didn't go through with it, why they didn't feel they needed to go through with it, is another issue.

JK: I'll just explain very briefly. In 1933, FDR has just come to power. He's implementing the New Deal in the midst of the Great Depression. An individual, Gerald MacGuire, who identifies himself as a member of the American Legion, which he was, but he was also an employee of a big Wall Street financial house, attempts to recruit Smedley Butler for some sort of plot.

First, MacGuire simply says he wants Butler to denounce FDR for taking the dollar off the gold standard. By August 1934, MacGuire is proposing a coup and he wants Butler to lead a column of half a million World War I veterans on Washington to intimidate Franklin Roosevelt into stepping aside in favor of an all-powerful cabinet secretary presumably to be named by MacGuire's bosses on Wall Street.

MacGuire tells Butler at the time that an organization is going to emerge in the coming weeks—this is August 1934—that will back this plot financially and with weapons. Butler

identifies this as the American Liberty League, which was launched August 22, 1934 and was a consortium of very powerful industrialists, led by Irénée du Pont of DuPont chemicals, Alfred Sloan of General Motors; there's McCann Erickson, the giant ad agency, the Sun Oil Company, also two former Democratic Party candidates for president, John W. Davis and Al Smith, both of whom were anti-New Deal Democrats. Davis's participation is significant, because he was legal counsel for J.P. Morgan & Co.

In any case, Butler blows the whistle on this and testifies before the committee that was to become the House Un-American Activities Committee, the Dickstein-McCormack Committee.

The committee, which made a very brief investigation, had no reason to believe that Butler was lying. He made the allegations of sound mind and sound body. Gerald MacGuire also testified in front of the committee. And while he perjured himself and contradicted himself constantly, his testimony essentially backs up all the main bits of Butler's story. He didn't say, "I've never seen or heard of this guy in my life."

MacGuire says, yes, Butler and I talked about this. We talked about that. And, yes, I was in Paris and I met with a lot of the far right, "semi-fascist" forces, to use the Biden term, groups that participated in the February 6, 1934 riot in Paris, anti-parliamentary badasses, etc.

Beyond that, it's really hard to say, because there was no serious investigation, the committee didn't do anything. They don't call in Du Pont. They don't call in Thomas Lamont of J.P. Morgan, they don't call in Al Smith. They make no attempt to prove or disprove the things that make the plot seem extremely plausible. But a lot of the people Butler is either directly, or by association, implicating in this conspiracy are themselves full-throated fans of fascism.

They make no bones about it. Lamont, a few years before, had said he was "something like a missionary" for Italian fascism and Mussolini. Mussolini was very popular among a number of especially wealthy Americans at the time. The American Legion, who were supposed to provide manpower for this plot, loved Mussolini. They had invited him to speak at their convention a couple of years earlier and only revoked the invitation because of complaints from organized labor. The American Liberty League was very open about the fact that its purpose was to dismantle the New Deal. Du Pont claims that the New Deal is socialistic doctrine by another name.



Grayson Murphy in 1918

The last piece of this I think is important, and I have I have never seen anybody else write about it. I don't know if somebody has made this connection before. But MacGuire's boss, Grayson Mallet-Prevost Murphy, the head of a financial house, was a longtime veteran of US military intelligence. He was in the Philippines, in Panama. Murphy reported directly to Teddy Roosevelt on the conspiracy to sever Panama from Colombia.

He set up a private intelligence network in Europe after World War I in concert with Wild Bill Donovan, who ended up becoming the head of the OSS, the forerunner of the CIA. Murphy was someone, as I point out in the book, who knew his way around the planning of a coup and was the treasurer of the ultra-right American Liberty League.

McCormack offered a very weak explanation as to why the committee never called Murphy to testify. He said they didn't call Murphy because they didn't want him to have a chance to defend himself and gain sympathy.

In any case, the committee's investigation was very brief and superficial. So we have no way of knowing the exact details. Maybe there's something in the archives somewhere

and perhaps this is a future project for me to dig into. Suffice it to say, there's good reason to think it could have happened. Butler was telling the truth as he saw it. The committee believed him.

Neither the committee nor Roosevelt investigated it further or held anyone accountable. That's why it remains with this kind of official question mark.

Was Butler's blowing the whistle enough to turn on the lights, so to speak, and get the roaches to scatter? Did FDR reach some kind of accommodation with these people because he wanted them on board? In any case, I have zero doubts about Butler's account of the conversations with MacGuire.

DW: Would you like to say anything about January 6, 2021 as a final point? Because here we have a coup plot taking place in plain sight. It was essentially announced for weeks and months in advance.

JK: I've got a newsletter called *The Racket*, for obvious reasons, and on election night 2020, I wrote a blog post on the newsletter whose headline was something like "Good morning, the President just announced a coup." Because he had you know, he had just declared himself the winner. Trump was insisting that he wasn't going to accept the result. Trump was saying, it doesn't matter who actually won this thing, I won, and I'm not going to let anybody tell me different. We saw that go on for four months. Oddly enough, I was actually working on the parts of the book that dealt with the 1933 business plot at the time. It just happened to be the end of 2020, when I was working on the last chapters of the book. Then, I ended up writing the prologue, which deals with Trump's coup attempt. I'm writing these things about the business plot and a coup is happening right in front of our eyes. I wrote in *The Racket* that this was Trump's plot to seize the White House, but who will be Butler this time? I wrote that on January 4, because it was already very, very clear.

I was watching this unfold from my home in Charlottesville, Virginia, which had its own recent experience with the far right in 2017.

Because I had been digging into these past events, January 6 reminded me of nothing so much as the February 6, 1934 riot in France, where a motley crew of far-right and fascist groups stormed the French legislature. They ended up tripping over their own feet.

Most of the people who died on the street February 6 in France were rioters. They end up just fighting with the police. But it ends up having this large knock-on effect, both in terms of forcing the center-left coalition to resign in favor of a conservative government and also helping create the Popular Front.

Gerald MacGuire comes to Butler and literally tells him, this is what we're going to do here in the US.

So here we were in 2021, watching it happen here. For me, it meant, first of all, explaining that these things have been discussed before, that these tendencies have long existed in America and in the American body politic, at least for 90 years.

January 6 lived out the fantasy of the 1933 business plot, up to and including the fact that you have these sorts of deeply reactionary American businessmen who are living out their social and personal resentments and their anti-left, anti-socialist and anti-communist fantasies.

DW: None of it has gone away. On the contrary ...

JK: None of it has gone away.

World Socialist 15.11.2022