

Fighting for the rich

In his eloquent attack on the Cockburns (father Claud and son Alexander) for linking Al Capone's gangsterism and U.S. capitalism, (Daily News, June 18), Joseph Sobran reckons that the current "moral decline" is due, in part, to Alexander Cockburn's presence among us. How does Sobran judge Marine Major Gen. Smedley Butler, who also made the Cockburns' point in the 1930s?

Late in a distinguished career (with two congressional medals of honor), Butler realized that he had led hundreds of young Americans to their deaths in foreign lands, not to defend U.S. security, but to enable U.S. capitalists to do business unhindered anywhere in the world. He then spoke out passionately against this squandering of America's youth for the benefit of America's rich.

In 1931, Butler addressed an American Legion convention: "I spent 33 years . . . (as) . . . a racketeer for capitalism. . . . I might have given Al Capone a few hints. The best he could do was to operate a racket in three cities. The Marines operated on three continents."

It seems that the Cockburns are not in such bad company after all. The sad thing is that we, as a nation, have not yet taken Butler's message to heart.

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