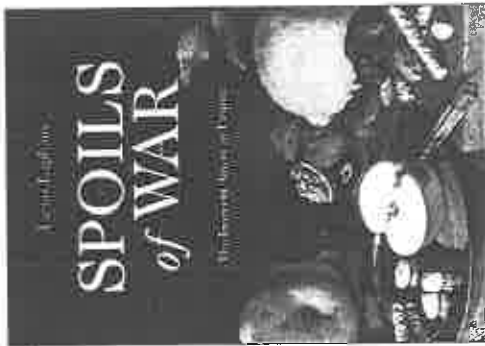


# Spoils of War

## The Innocent American Empire

Lewis Lapham

A critical look at America's new war by the author Annie Dillard calls "one of our most brilliant writers and thinkers."



Nothing will be the same after September 11. This is the wisdom offered and widely received since the announcement of the war on terrorism, a permanent war declared on both an unknown enemy and an abstract noun. But in *Spoils of War*, Lewis Lapham shows with customary intelligence and wit that the recent imperial behavior of the United States government is perfectly consistent with the practice of past administrations.

Finding skeptics in the battle against evil has been a rare achievement. For example, as Lapham points out: "Ted Koppel struck the preferred note of caution on November 2 when introducing the *Nightline* audience to critics of the American bombing of Afghanistan: 'Some of you, many of you, are hot going to like what you hear tonight. You don't have to listen.' " Unpopular opinions seldom make an appearance on the network news, and during the months since the destruction of the World Trade Center, the voices of dissent have been few and far between. Lewis Lapham is an exception. Almost alone among mainstream political commentators, he has had the courage to question the motive and feasibility, as well as the imperial pretension, of the Bush administration's infinite crusade against the world's evildoers.

Lewis Lapham is the editor of Harper's Magazine and received a National Magazine Award for his essay writing. He is the author of several books, including *Money and Class in America*, *Imperial Masquerade*, *The Wish for Kings*, *Hotel America*, and *Waiting for the Barbarians*. He lives in New York City.



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Praise for Lewis Lapham and his work:

"Exquisite . . . [Lapham's] dour yet witty ruminations spare no one and nothing."  
—*The New York Times Book Review*

"Lapham refuses to talk down to his audience, much less cozy up to its ignorance and prejudices. . . . Nor will he surrender a jot of his wit, erudition and style."  
—*Los Angeles Times Book Review*

"Lapham's portraits of his country are astute and his dry wit as sharp as a knife."  
—*The Times (London)*

"Few writers match Lapham's witty, entertaining style, and his insight . . . is challenging and thought-provoking."  
—*Library Journal*

"Absent the excitements of a foreign war, <sup>is</sup> what domestic political accident might we not have lost the wooden figure-head of President George Bush? Six months ago we were looking at a man so obviously in the service of the plutocracy that he could have been mistaken for a lawn jockey in the parking lot of a Houston golf club. . . . On September 11, like Pinocchio brushed with the good fairy's wand on old Gepetto's shelf of toys, the wooden figure turned into flesh and blood. A great leader had been born, within a month compared (by David Broder in the Washington Post) to Abraham Lincoln."  
—from *Spoils of War*