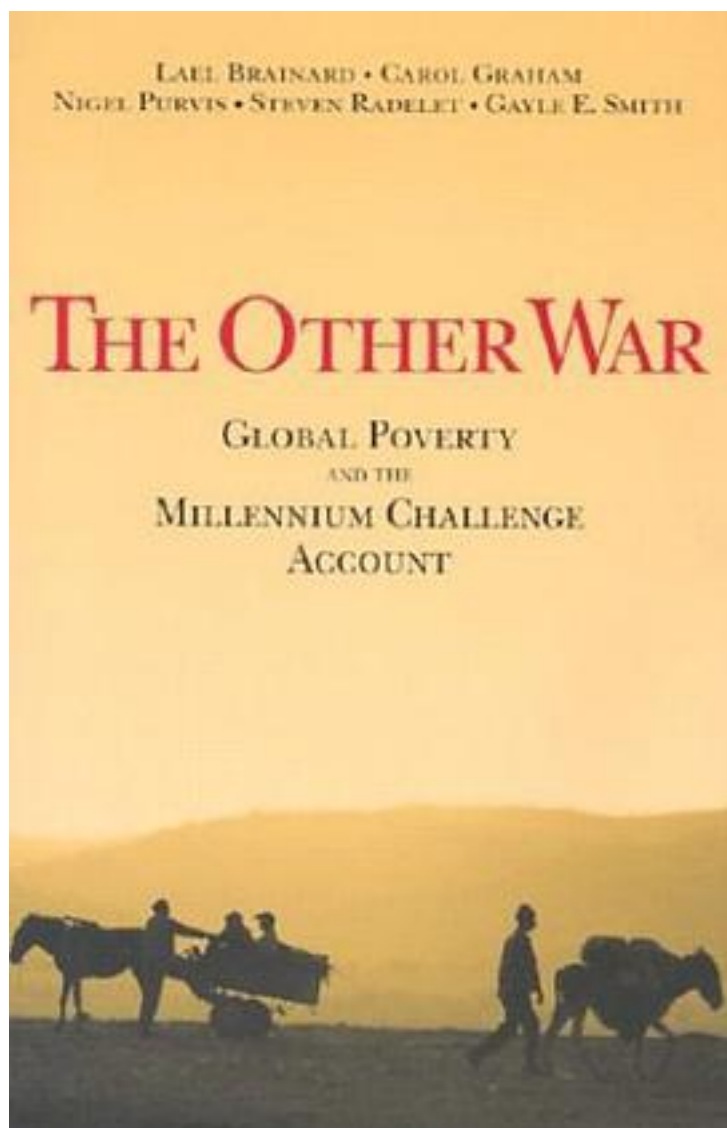


# The Other War



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出版者:Encounter Books

出版时间:2005-9

装帧:精装

isbn:9781893554948

Since its founding, Israel has become legendary for winning wars waged against it by much larger armies. But those were "conventional" conflicts where uniformed soldiers fought on clearly delineated fronts, using tanks, aircraft and artillery. Israel has not fared so well in the new wars of the twenty-first century, where key battles are fought on editorial pages and television screens, and especially on the internet, where photos from the combat zone can ricochet around the world minutes after being snapped. To understand why Israel has floundered on this new battlefield, Stephanie Gutmann, who lived in the Middle East as a teenager, returned to Jerusalem and the West Bank during the second intifada to observe modern news-gathering up close. In *THE OTHER WAR* she documents how regional political and military realities are dependent on a constantly shifting cast of international journalists on the prowl for "good pictures" (their motto: "if it bleeds, it leads") or career-making scoops, and sometimes guided by hardened anti-Israel ideology. In the midst of suicide bombings and armed response, Gutmann watched as the region and its people — Israeli and Palestinian alike — became cardboard cutouts in dramas predetermined by ratings-obsessed editors continents away. Gutmann introduces us to key players in the daily battles for headline supremacy: the mercenary freelance photographers who hawk their bloodiest pictures to the highest bidder; the TV "parachuters" who drop in on the unfolding Mideast tragedy to get their "face time" before flying off to the next international hotspot; the Palestinian Authority spinmeisters; the politically connected, media-savvy "fixers" whose translation services are not typically neutral. We also meet some of those in the trenches, people like Daniel Seaman, beleaguered director of Israel's Government Press Office; and Palestinian reporter Khaled Abu Toameh, who endeavors to do comprehensive reporting about a regime, the Palestinian Authority, that often silences critics brutally. Traveling into the disputed territories herself, Gutmann reconstructs the battle for Jenin, the death of the teenage martyr Mohammed al-Dura, and other climactic moments in the struggle for the world's hearts and minds. We learn! from her absorbing insider's account that there is a reality in this region never touched by the international press corps, and that as in other wars, truth is indeed the first casualty.

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目录:

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