

This is an Accepted Manuscript of an article published by Taylor & Francis in *Journal of Modern Jewish Studies* on 03/09/2020, available online:
<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/14725886.2020.1814017>

Gregg Carlstrom, *How Long Will Israel Survive? The Threat From Within*, C. Hurst & Co: London, 2017, pp. xviii + 260, £20 (hardback), ISBN978-1849048040.

The question of how long will Israel survive is not a new one. Since its establishment in 1948, the question has been asked on numerous occasions. Nevertheless, and as Gregg Carlstrom, the Israel based Middle East correspondent for the Times and the Economist, acknowledges, there has been no serious debate over Israel's survival in recent decades. Notwithstanding fears of a potential Iranian nuclear weapon, there are currently no existential military threats to Israel. The question Carlstrom is trying to answer, however, is how long will Israel survive as an apparent prosperous, liberal and democratic state.

Using a non-linear narrative and basing the book on his time in Israel, Carlstrom uses his travels, interviews and knowledge of Israeli society and politics to tell the story of the state and the challenges it faces. Starting with the case of Elor Azaria, the Israeli soldier charged with the murder of a wounded and supine Palestinian assailant, Carlstrom interweaves the story of Zionism, Israel and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, through the main events he experienced, which include, among others, the 2014 Gaza War, the Duma arson attack, the Social Justice Protest, and the 2015 Israeli legislative elections.

The challenges facing Israel, according to Carlstrom, are multifaceted and are directly linked to its political, economic and social structures and fault lines. He rejects the premise that Israel is 'a western-style democracy that made a single bad choice in 1967' (12). The longevity of Israel's occupation and the decline in support for the peace process and two-state solution give credence to that view. Carlstrom presents the reader with an unflinching and hard hitting account of the challenges and ills that affect the conflict and pervade the state. The Israel he describes is one that is growing increasingly insular, nationalistic, unequal and polarised; a society that is less than the sums of its parts; an amalgamation of separate and at times irreconcilable and conflicting tribes, based on religion, levels of religiosity, gender, class, nationalism and ethnicity.

While the book provides a vivid and up to date account, it is not without its faults. It is not clear who the book's target audience is. Those who follow Israeli politics closely, while appreciating the analysis, might not find much new, while those who do not, might struggle with the way the book is written and structured. The non-linear narrative often means meandering across time and between very different issues. Lastly, despite the title, there is also, disappointingly, no clear answer to the main question.

Ronald Ranta

Department of Politics and International Relations, Kingston University London

Ronald.ranta@kingston.ac.uk