

attacks on Israel that are intellectually and morally insupportable.

The authors describe the roles of students, faculty, administrators, trustees, and donors, attributing their actions—or inaction—to, mostly, radical relativism and a 1960's support of whoever is perceived as the underdog (faculty), to lack of information and insecure Jewish commitment (most Jewish students), to a meek desire to avoid controversy (administrators), and to acceptance of professorial dominance in the content of the university curriculum and extracurricular program (trustees, donors, and political leaders).

The authors urge administrators, trustees, and political leaders to take a more active role in determining what happens on campus. They do not consider that a restructuring of roles in American university life is highly unlikely and, if it were to take place, could well be a double-edged sword. What is missing in the book is exploration of how to rebuild the academic community's understanding that support of Israel is, in fact, consonant with the basic ideals that most university people accept and how to provide Jewish students more generally with the background and commitment that will predispose and enable them to defend their own interests. *The Uncivil University* has dramatically called attention to a serious problem. Now we need to think through and develop appropriate and effective long-range responses. **MFV**

Elisa New

Basic Books, 2009. 328 pp. \$27.95
ISBN: 978-0-465-01525-2

At a certain point in this carefully researched and beautifully written story of a remarkable family, you begin to feel as if you have gotten to know the people the author is writing about. You admire the exceptional accomplishments of New's great-grandfather, the inventor and businessman Jacob Levy, and the man who brought him to Baltimore from Lithuania, her great-great uncle, tobacco magnate and philanthropist Bernhard Baron. You become absorbed in the drama of how two men who were close friends, and whose family members married each other, could become enemies. And your heart aches at the fate of the Levy family members in Lithuania who were murdered by the Nazis and their collaborators. Intertwined in the author's sensitive and deeply felt quest to understand the personalities and everyday lives of her ancestors is an in-depth look at the history of the tobacco industry, which became the basis of Baron's fortune after he moved to England in the late 1800's. But the

emotional power of this book resides in the author's journey back to Lithuania, to the places where her relatives and their Jewish neighbors lived and died, and to the streets of Baltimore where Levy and Baron toiled over groundbreaking inventions intended to improve the condition of the common workingman. The result is a book that celebrates the triumph of the Jewish immigrant over adversity and that truly gives a *yad vashem*, a memorial and a name, to Elisa New's relatives who perished in the Holocaust. Selected further readings. **SRL**



Danielle Ofri

Beacon Press, 2010. 208 pp. \$24.95
ISBN: 978-0-8070-7320-9

Often lost in rancorous public debates is the impact proposed social changes will have on individuals. The health care reform bill recently passed by Congress is one such case. Billions of dollars may be saved and millions of people will have health insurance. But what can happen to a specific, living, breathing individual?

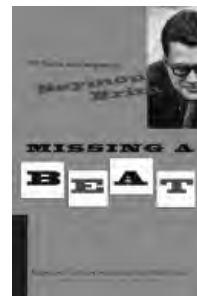
Danielle Ofri's latest offering, *Medicine in Translation*, may shed some light on this issue. This book tells the story, patient by patient, of what occurs in a big city public hospital. We meet patients of various cultures, many of whom don't speak English, a few of whom have survived torture, and all of whom have a compelling story. The common

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thread in these vignettes is that each patient is different and will be touched differently by changes in the health care system.

Whether or not your political views become changed or crystallized from reading this book, you can't help but be moved by

these patients' experiences. Ofri masterfully weaves their stories into a tapestry of memoir and medicine, and in so doing honors the Jewish mitzvah to "heal the sick." **PMA**



MISSING A BEAT: THE RANTS AND REGRETS OF SEYMOUR KRIM

Mark Cohen, ed. and intro.

Syracuse University Press, 2010. 296 pp. \$29.95
ISBN: 978-0-8156-0948-3

It is tempting to call Seymour Krim a kvetch for all seasons, but the pieces in this collection indicate that he was definitely a man of his time and place—Greenwich Village during the decades following World War II.

This volume brings together several highly individualistic documents of an era that is all too easily caricatured and dismissed, showing the surprising range of views that were possible (if not popular) within the bounds of 1950's and 1960's hipness, especially in matters of race and ethnicity. Instinctively drawn to Harlem for its authenticity, Krim is quick to condemn both the social dysfunction that underlay much of black jazz culture and his white contemporaries who were even quicker to romanticize it. And he was deeply disturbed by the debasing effect of black English on the language in general.

On the personal level, these "rants and regrets" document that it wasn't easy being Krim. He was consumed by a sense of inadequacy, raging with varying degrees of effectiveness against a panoply of luminaries whose shadows eclipsed his own light, from the Village intellectual Milton Kronsky to Norman Mailer and Mario Puzo.

Concerns about his own Jewish identity provide a repeating bass line under Krim's flowing prose riffs. While owning that he is at least in some measure what today would be called a self-hating Jew ("fixed" nose and all), he does not hesitate to inveigh against Jews who evoked embarrassment (most notably the Canadian artist Sam Goodman, best known for his sculptures of human excrement) as well as grudging admiration (Dr. Joyce Brothers). Confessional writing as candid as this is both rare and refreshing. **BB**