

Alfred Baber Fonds

Chemistry and Art  
More Adventures of a Chemist Collector

Chapter 17  
Family and Friends

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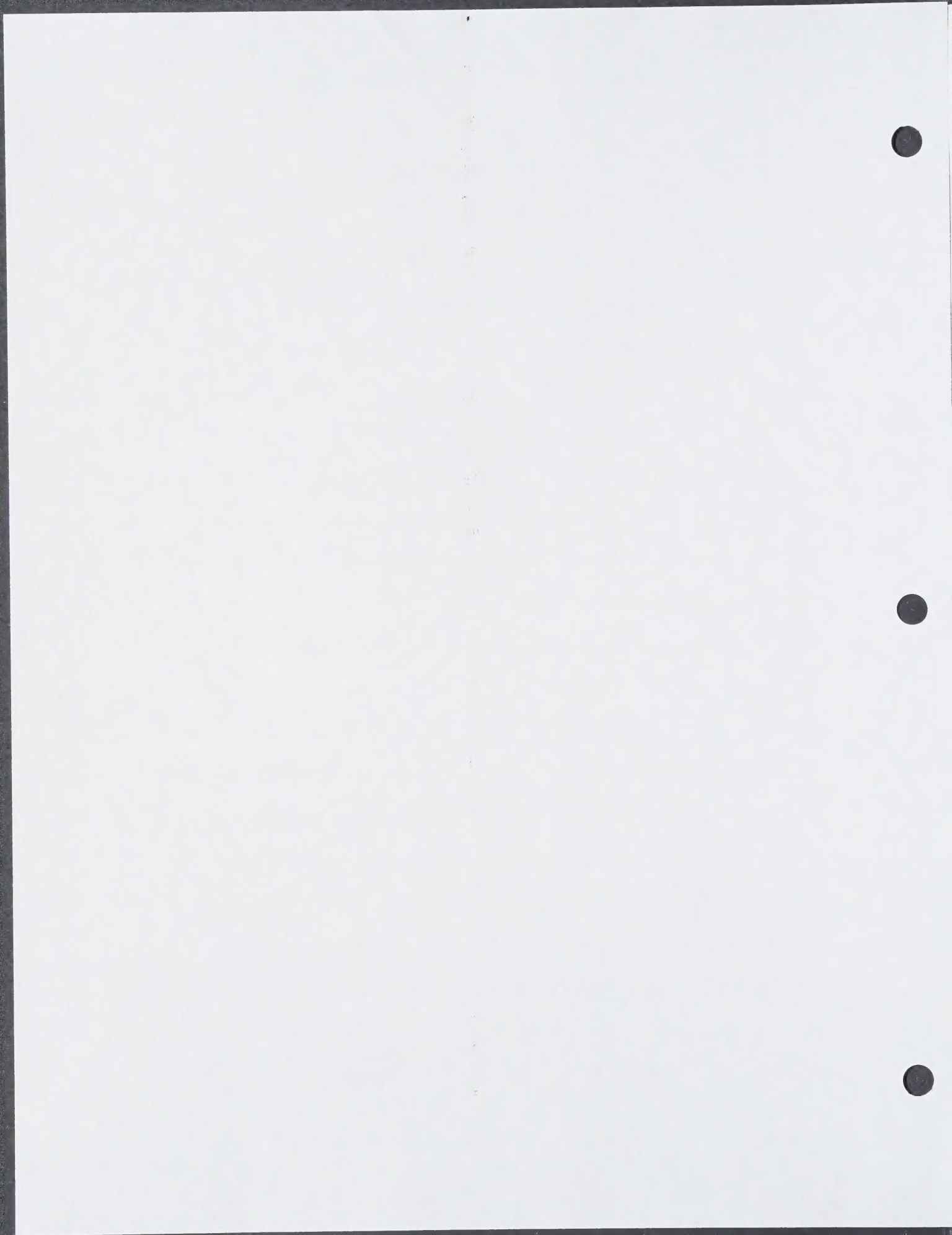
## Chapter 17

### Family and Friends

Life since my expulsion from Sigma-Aldrich in 1992 has been happy and productive; the only serious cloud was when my son David's wife, Michelle, left him in the summer of 2002. David was totally distraught, thinking until then that he was happily married to Michelle, who was carrying his third child, Noa, a daughter born in January 2003.

Since their divorce, David and Michelle have shared custody of the children, and as Michelle does not live far away, Helena, Isaiah, and now Noa spend alternate weeks in their lovely home near the Delaware River. We were all relieved to see that the children seemed to adapt very well to this new lifestyle, and when David eventually met a caring woman, Michelle Berrong, whom the family call Chellie, it was wonderful to see how the children came to love her as much as she loves them.

David and Chellie were married in April 2005,<sup>(fig.)</sup> and the family is overjoyed to have a new baby, Faye Ella, born in December 2006. Isaiah hoped for a girl so he would be the only prince in the family. Upon reflection, which didn't take long, he decided that a boy would have been more fun for him but he would make do with the situation. Noa emptied out her big doll crib for her new younger sister and wanted to do everything for her. They are a very busy household and we love to be with them.<sup>(fig.)</sup> We spent a wonderful few days with them in the summer of 2006, together with the Milwaukee Bader family and Isabel's sister, Marion. We were able to celebrate both David's and Linda's birthdays. David's love of dramatics provided us with two hilarious birthday



parties. And then at the end of March 2007 all of us flew east again for Faye's naming ceremony, a really fun weekend.

Daniel and Linda and their three children<sup>(fig.)</sup> live just a few blocks from us in Milwaukee, so we see them much more often. Two of their children, Carlos and Jessie Gisela, were adopted in Guatemala. Their son Alex, who has Down's syndrome, has benefited from the great love and care both parents and his siblings give him. He is making great strides with all the help he has received at school and in therapy for some of his difficulties. They are a strong, lively family of whom we are very proud. Daniel does a great deal of traveling, largely in connection with his position as president of the Helen Bader Foundation, which gives ten to twelve million dollars annually to help education in Milwaukee and Israel and on care for Alzheimer patients. Linda holds the family together while he is away, often with the help of members of her family. Together they make a wonderful team.

Daniel's work was recognized with an honorary doctorate from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee in May 2006, twenty-six years after I received my first honorary doctorate from that same university. Honorary degrees and awards are fun to receive. In the last ten years, I have received a number, but the one I have enjoyed the most was the Centennial Human Relations Award presented to Daniel and me jointly by the American Jewish Committee on 30 May 2006. <sup>(fig.)</sup>

Daniel gave a moving speech outlining the work of the Helen Bader Foundation, Yechiel Bar Chaim of the Joint sent a video presentation from Paris (see appendix A), and I tried to summarize my life's aim:





This is the first time that my son Daniel and I are being honored together and naturally this gives me a great deal of pleasure.

But of course I am mindful of the advice that I gave my Sunday school students at Temple Emanuel every second year when we were studying the Books of the Prophets. It gave me immense pleasure to shake hands with eighteen of these students this evening! Jeremiah in Chapter 9 put it so clearly, "Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches: But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me ....

Knowing and understanding means knowing and keeping the commandments.

There are some rabbis who say that each of the 613 commandments is equally important, but I find this hard to believe. To me, among the most important commandments, next to the Ten Commandments, are the commandments Justice, Justice You Shall Seek, and You Shall Not Stand Idly by the Blood of Your Neighbor.

Another of the important commandments is one which I say twice a day: Veshinantom Levonecho. You shall teach your children, and I am truly happy to know that I have taught my sons, and they have learned.



Recently, I read a wonderful speech given by Professor Yehudah Bauer, the director of Holocaust Studies at the Yad Vashem in Jerusalem. In that speech, given in January 1998 to the German Parliament, Professor Bauer outlined most cogently how it could happen that in the center of European culture, in Germany, Nazis could grab and retain power for twelve years and plan for the final solution to kill every Jew. Just the day before yesterday the German Pope Benedict XVI visited Auschwitz and, speaking in Italian (so as not to offend the Poles), explained that the Holocaust was the Nazi effort to banish belief in God. The Pope's speech last Sunday was, I think, very much guided by Professor Bauer's speech. Professor Bauer ended his great speech by saying that perhaps we should add to the Ten Commandments three more:

1. That neither you nor your children nor your children's children should ever become perpetrators.
2. That neither you nor your children nor your children's children should ever become victims; and
3. That neither you nor your children nor your children's children should ever stand by passively during mass murders.

And yet since the Holocaust we have seen mass murders in Bosnia, in Rwanda, and now in Darfur, and right here in Milwaukee there is such poverty. My sons and I are trying as much as we can never to stand by idly. The keys in Milwaukee are education and employment. The Helen Bader Foundation is trying to help education, Jewish education, and in the inner city. And the first buildings Aldrich bought were at 29th and 30<sup>th</sup> Streets and Meinecke Avenue, so that we would find it easier to



employ African Americans. And it gives Isabel and me a great deal of pleasure to attend the annual Aldrich award dinner and to note that about half the employees attending are people of color.

But is not standing by idly enough?

I am reminded of what Martin Buber in his *Tales of the Hasidim* calls the Query of Queries asked by Rabbi Zusya of Hanipol shortly before his death in 1800. Rabbi Zusya said, "When I come before the Heavenly Judge, He will not ask me, Zusya, why were you not as great as Moses, our teacher. He will only ask me, Zusya, why were you not as great as you, Zusya, could have been?"

When I come before the Dajan Emes, I will not be asked, Alfred Bader, why were you not as great a chemist as you could have been? Why were you not as great an art dealer as you could have been? I will be asked, as I ask myself many times, and not only on Yom Kippur, why were you not as good a husband, why were you not as good a father as you could have been?

When my son Daniel comes before the Heavenly Judge, I hope many years from now, he will *not* be asked, why were you not as great a president of the Helen Bader Foundation as you could have been? Why were you not as good a husband, a father, a son, as you could have been? Because I am convinced that my son Daniel is truly as good as he can be.



I cannot conclude without mentioning Marvin Klitsner, the ablest lawyer I ever knew and my best friend. Our success in life would not have been possible without him. When the company was very small, he arranged for each of my sons to own 6.5 percent of Aldrich which, now Sigma-Aldrich, is the world's most profitable chemical company. Marvin helped Helen Bader to write her will, leading to the Helen Bader Foundation. And he helped Isabel and me to write our wills which will lead to a similar foundation to be headed, I hope, by Daniel.

I can say with King David, "The Lord is my Shepherd; *causi revojo*, my cup runneth over.

I believe that as a family, the Baders are all trying to do the best they can. Yet it is hard to see yourself as others see you, and I was delighted to read a description of Isabel and myself in "A Song of Stone. Herstmonceux Castle", a book written by Andrew Loman, now teaching English at the University of Newfoundland. Andrew had taught at the castle during three summer terms and hopes to teach there again. He wrote:

When I first heard that a septuagenarian millionaire had donated Herstmonceux Castle to Queen's University, I envisioned a wizened Donald Trump, a man conferring magnificent gifts on his alma mater in order to construct a vulgar shrine to his own eminence. I imagined silk ties and pinky rings, tailored suits and cigars, wealth and a trophy wife, and more power than principle, a man in the mould of





Jeffrey Archer or Conrad Black. It would have been repulsive, and it would have been sordid, and it would, in its way, have been fabulous.

The reality is far different. Bader is a small man who wears a beige overcoat and who shuffles. He's unassuming to the point of invisibility, and he dresses down to an almost alarming degree. (In his rise to riches, a wag might say, he has not forgotten the rags; he wears them still.) Physically - but only physically - he calls to mind Laszlo Carreidas, the millionaire who never laughs in Hergé's *Vol 714 Pour Sydney*, the man to whom Captain Haddock, mistaking him for a pauper, gives money.

And just as Bader spectacularly defies one's expectations, so too does Isabel Bader. Her manner reflects her childhood in rural Canada (she comes from Kirkland Lake in northern Ontario); she is the picture of a pioneer matriarch, a woman who won't brook nonsense, an angel of common sense. Her eyes are steely, her manner sober. Together they are far from what one would imagine a couple to be that can virtually on a whim buy a castle and then give it away. They seem like a couple that, in a frenzy of extravagance, would order a third cookie with their coffee.

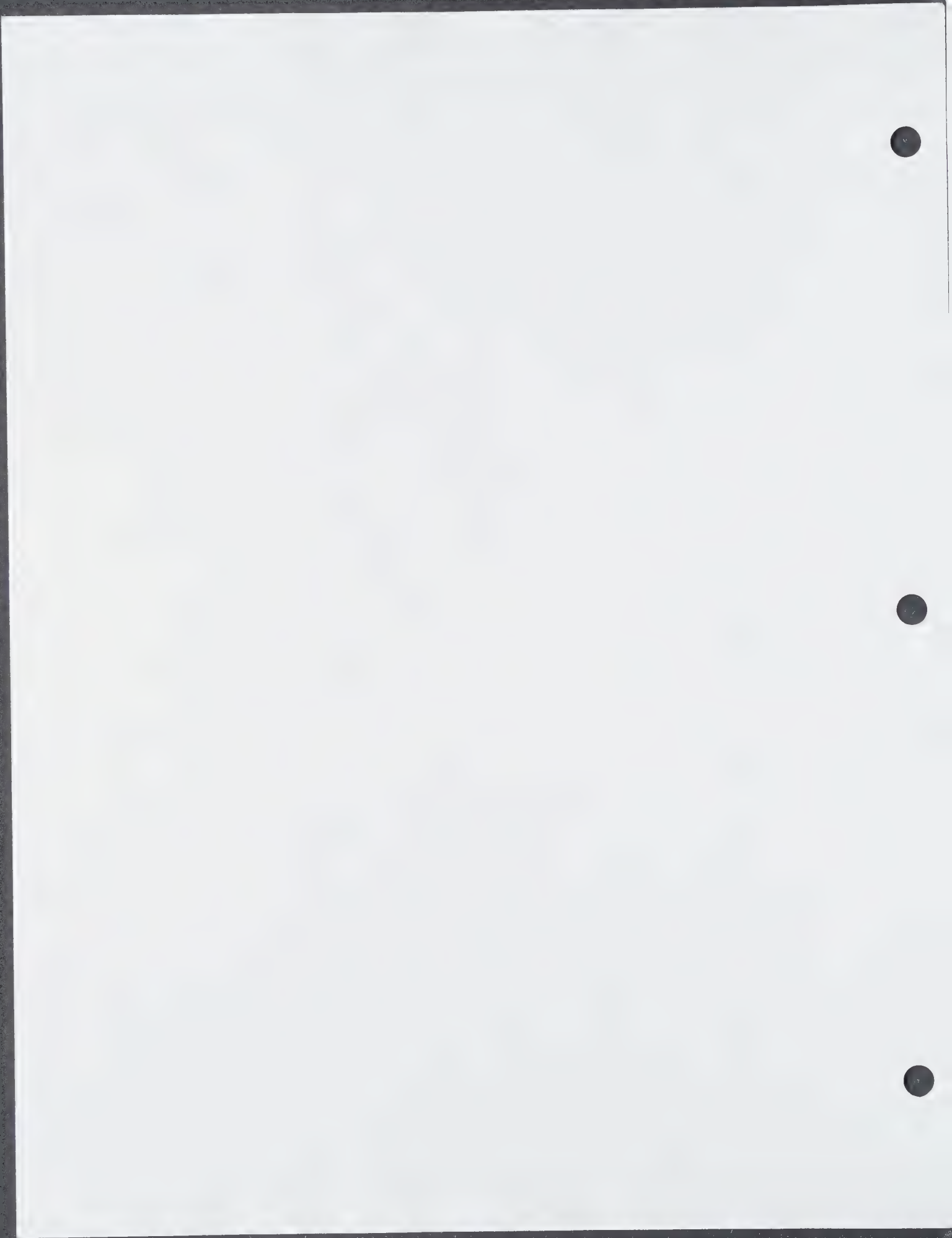
Their asceticism is principled, however. Alfred Bader raised the issue of his appearance himself when I interviewed him. It's true, he admitted, that he doesn't dress fashionably. But the less we spend on ourselves, he said, the more we can give away. And perhaps the most astonishing thing about Alfred Bader is that when he says such things, he's in earnest. I try to imagine what I'd do with his resources, and



I'm afraid I'd spend my money on silk ties and pinky rings. The Baders no doubt have their indulgences. But they also donate extraordinary sums to charity; the castle is only the most striking example of many. As one learns the scope of their generosity, one can't help but be impressed and humbled. "I am at heart a socialist," Bader told me, and one might plausibly suggest that his charity is a function of his political convictions, born of the tension between his socialist heart and his capitalist success.

We are so thankful that during the last few years we have become really good friends with two Milwaukeeans who have enriched our lives in very different ways. I have known Lucy and Norman Cohn, good friends of Jane and Marvin Klitsner, for many years, but not really well. Only after Norman died in 2000 did Isabel and I really get to know and love Lucy <sup>(fig.)</sup>. We have never known a woman in her eighties so active and caring of others. She received a diploma in nursing from the Jewish Hospital in Cincinnati, and after working as a nurse, a head nurse in psychiatry, a time in the army, many volunteer jobs, and bringing up a family, she eventually took a bachelor's degree in nursing from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee and, in 1972, a doctorate in psychology, guidance and counseling from Marquette University.

Lucy now spends much of her day counseling patients referred to her by doctors who know of her wonderful ability and kindness. These patients often come early in the morning or after 5 p.m. so as not to interfere with their work. Lucy then spends much of the day in nursing homes. Hardest but most gratifying for her may be the Thursdays



spent at the Columbia-St.Mary's Hospital hospice. One day a nurse in the hospice said "Lucy Cohn is as close to a saint as you can find".

Lucy and Isabel really enjoy spending time together going to plays (where I sometime join them), ballets, and concerts. Early in June 2006, she went with us to Ottawa when I received an honorary doctorate there. She stayed with us with Isabel's sister Marion, and we all appreciated the easy direct flight, courtesy of Daniel's gift of a time-sharing flight. We returned to Milwaukee on Friday, 9 June, to leave for England the following Monday. That Saturday, Lucy was taken to Columbia Hospital for a heart valve replacement, followed shortly thereafter by the insertion of a pacemaker. Always very slim, she says she had to go on a diet of extra bananas and milk shakes to put on weight before she could get into the army, Lucy now weighs less than 80 pounds, and so these operations must have been very difficult.

They went well, but a nightmare followed when she was taken for rehabilitation to the Sarah Chudnow Campus, a facility of the Jewish Home and Care Center. The community spent millions on impressive bricks and mortar, but the care experienced by Lucy was abysmal. Lucy's cardiologist impressed on the staff that the pills to be given daily were vital. They were not given to her there, and when she left they were not with her other pills. She observed even worse treatment of other patients, and when she left, she handed the administrator a detailed report (sadly without keeping a copy). That administrator was just quitting; I wonder whether she gave the report to her successor. One of the most important commandments in the Bible is in Leviticus XIX: Do not stand idly by the blood of your neighbor. I hope that when Lucy is fully recovered, she will



keep that commandment by ensuring that others of the Jewish community do not encounter what she experienced at the Sarah Chudnow Campus.

Our second great friend is Joseph Bernstein,<sup>(fig.)</sup> one of Milwaukee's ablest lawyers, of the firm of Godfrey & Kahn, with a BS in economics from the Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania and a juris doctor from the University of Wisconsin Law School. I don't know whether he spends more time on his legal practice, specializing in financial planning and various investment ventures, or with pro bono activities. These include the Blood Center of Southeastern Wisconsin, the Blood Research Institute, the Milwaukee Public Museum, and many Jewish organizations. Joe and I worked together first eliminating our local Chabad's substantial debt and are now building its endowment fund. We have formed a partnership, Bader-Bernstein, LLC, with investments in chemical companies. One of these is Materia, utilizing the catalysts invented by the Nobel Laureate Professor Robert H. Grubbs. Joe has joined Materia's board of directors, and I would not be surprised if Materia grew to be as important a chemical company as Sigma-Aldrich has become. Incidentally, Sigma-Aldrich is the exclusive seller of research quantities of Materia's catalysts.

Another company in which we invested recently is FineTech Labs in Haifa, Israel. Many years ago Marvin Klitsner and I had helped the foundation of that company staffed entirely by Russian chemists, with the Technion in Haifa initially owning 20 percent. It has grown quite steadily, headed by Dr. Arie Gutman, a Russian-born graduate of Cambridge University. The company has gone through various hands, most recently Parr Pharmaceuticals, an American generic manufacturer of which Arie was a director. In





2006, Arie bought FineTech back from Parr and Bader-Bernstein made a substantial investment in the company, still with an all-Russian team of chemists.

Joe often joins me for Friday lunch at the Astor Hotel, and our conversation moves briskly from chemical companies to Jewish charities and on to art. He and Audrey, his wife, love art, though mainly modern art, but have now also acquired some fine Old Masters from Alfred Bader Fine Arts. Luckily they own two homes, one here and the other in California, so lack of wall space has not yet become a major problem. Unfortunately for me, he and Audrey spend a lot of time in California, but we really enjoy the shared interests we have. I think that Joe and I have a very similar outlook on life, and my friendship with him has helped fill the terrible void left by Marvin Klitsner's death.

As I think back on my life, I realize how lucky I have been. If I had stayed with my biological mother, Mama in Vienna, I probably would not have survived the war. If mother, Muttili, had not applied for me to go on the Kindertransport to England in December 1938, I might well have died with her in Terezin. If I had not found such a good summer job with the Murphy Paint Company in 1943, I might not have gone to Harvard, nor come to Milwaukee in 1950. Most importantly, if I had not gone on the Franconia to England in July 1949, I would not have met Isabel, and what would my life be like today? If I had not met Danny, would I have two such good sons? If I had not met Marvin Klitsner, where would Sigma-Aldrich be today, and would the Helen Bader Foundation exist? And what if Aldrich in its first twenty years had had serious



competition rather than only one major competitor, Eastman Kodak, not really interested in the business, and eventually leaving it altogether?

And on and on. Muttilli had a word for it, "beschert", it was meant to be, that I should live to help many, the neediest and the ablest, as Isabel and I are trying to do.



## Appendix A

### A Video Presentation about Dr. Alfred Bader

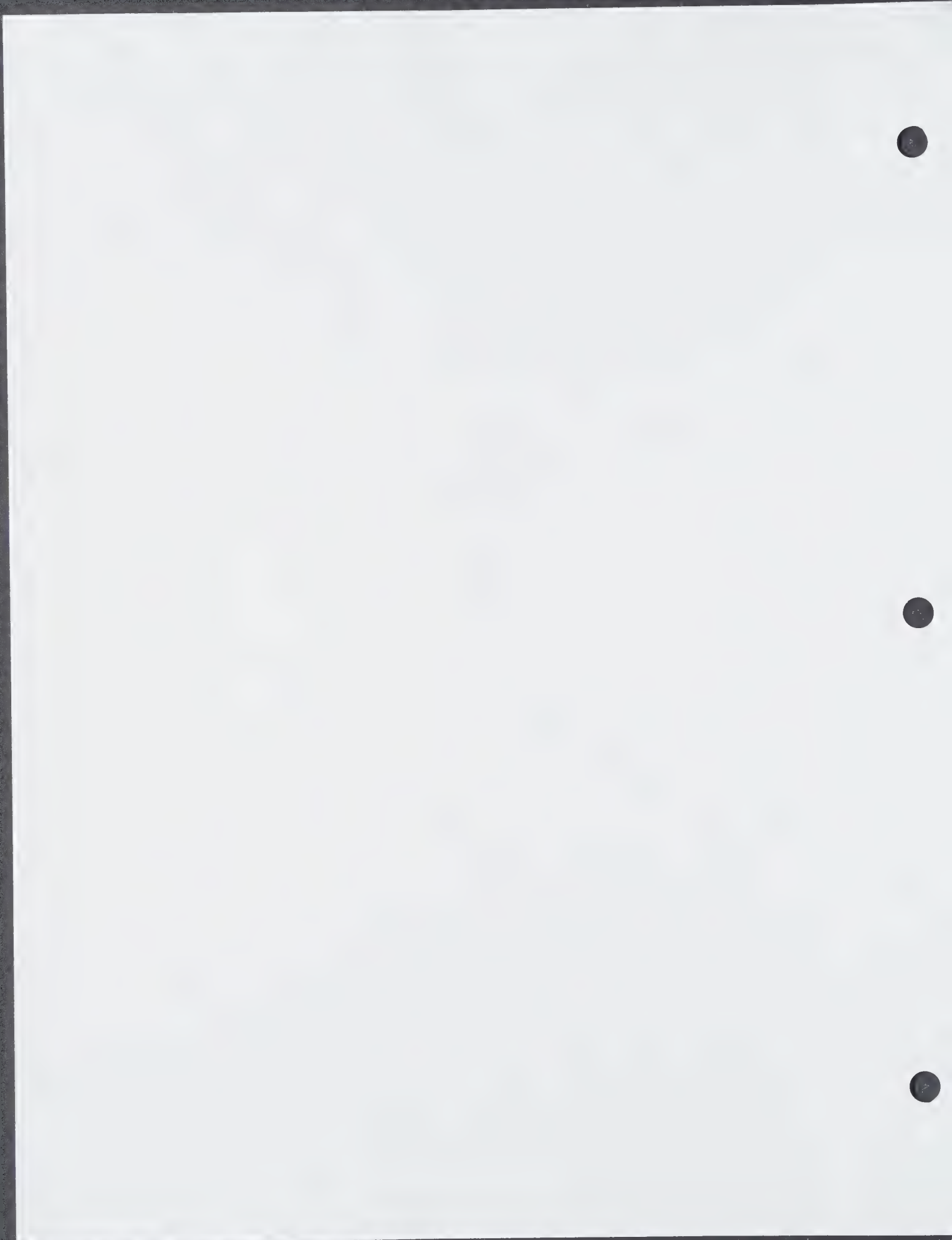
*On the occasion of his receiving the Centennial Humanitarian Award from  
the American Jewish Committee in Milwaukee, Wisconsin*

#### INTRODUCTION

For you to understand the following remarks, I need to introduce myself and describe how I came to know Dr. Alfred Bader.

My name is Yechiel Bar-Chaim, and I represent the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee in the Czech Republic; the various successor states to the former Yugoslavia, Algeria, and Tunisia.

When Alfred Bader asked to channel through the JOINT his annual grants to various programs in the Czech Republic, I became his liaison. Soon, in addition to his gifts for Chemistry Prizes, traveling fellowships in the history of Baroque Art, and Community Development projects for Roma (Gypsies), Alfred began to give substantial donations to the JOINT to be used at my discretion to "*help the most needy people you come across*" in the former Yugoslavia.



In the course of my work I am exposed to a wide range of people

- Living in 7 countries
- Representing all generations
- Active in different fields of interest
- Showing such a variety of character and temperament that sometimes I find it mind-boggling

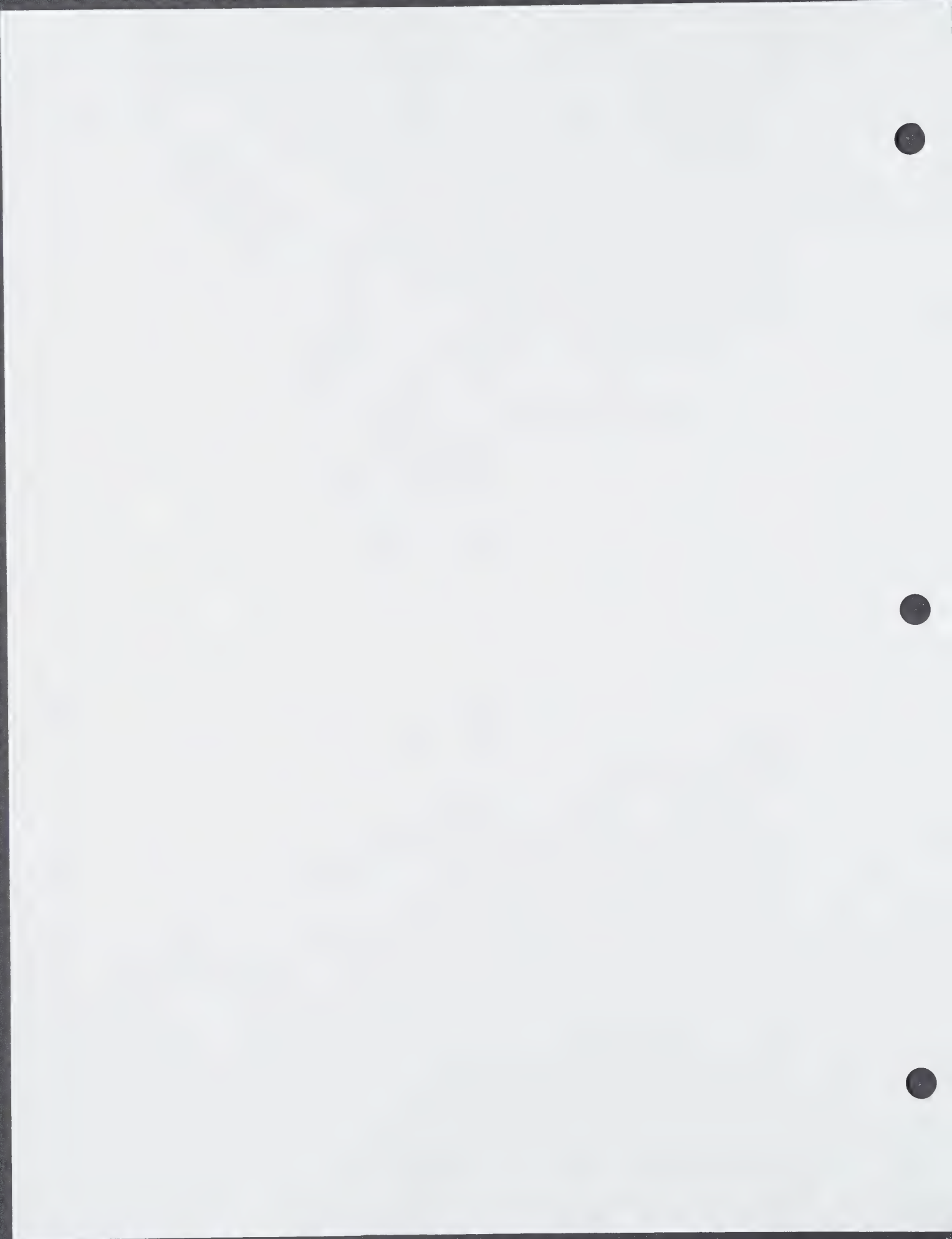
Being able to respond to this multiplicity of contact demands:

- Attention
- Concentration
- Patience, and
- A duty to Empathize

At the same time, by the very nature of things, I am myself indelibly marked by this experience.

I have to learn to recognize complexity and be sensitive to differences and nuances, to respect aspects of life and attitudes that are far from anything I knew before or was ever brought up to appreciate:

- Orthodox Jews and old-time Communists
- Holocaust survivors and rebellious youth
- Introverted, serious-minded Czechs and observant yet playful Jews from the island of Djerba in Tunisia





And then - without any advance warning - into my very own art gallery of character portraits, carefully collected and sorted and analyzed over many years, walks Dr. Alfred Bader.

- Viennese and American
- A chemist and an art collector
- A Bible expert and a businessman
- A hard-driving entrepreneur and a self-made man who is also a pretty stubborn old-school moralist
- This hopelessly romantic husband and yet shrewd judge of men and ideas
- Someone careful with every penny, who yet can turn around and give away so much with an open hand
- A philanthropist whose projects must suit his personal convictions, who at the same time will say to me, "*Use your own discretion and I hope you'll come back to me when you need more!*"

In all honesty nothing in my - fairly rich - experience ever prepared me to meet up with my good friend Alfred.

Now, when I am still perplexed and in the middle of trying to figure him out, you're already signaling with this great humanitarian award an act of completion. For me we are just in the midst of a process.



What I can share with you on this occasion are the marks Alfred has imprinted on me.

He has freed up and spurred my moral imagination, and after encountering him I suddenly find myself caught up in new and unexpected fields of activity.

What did I have to do until now with Gypsies and their virtually insolvable predicament?

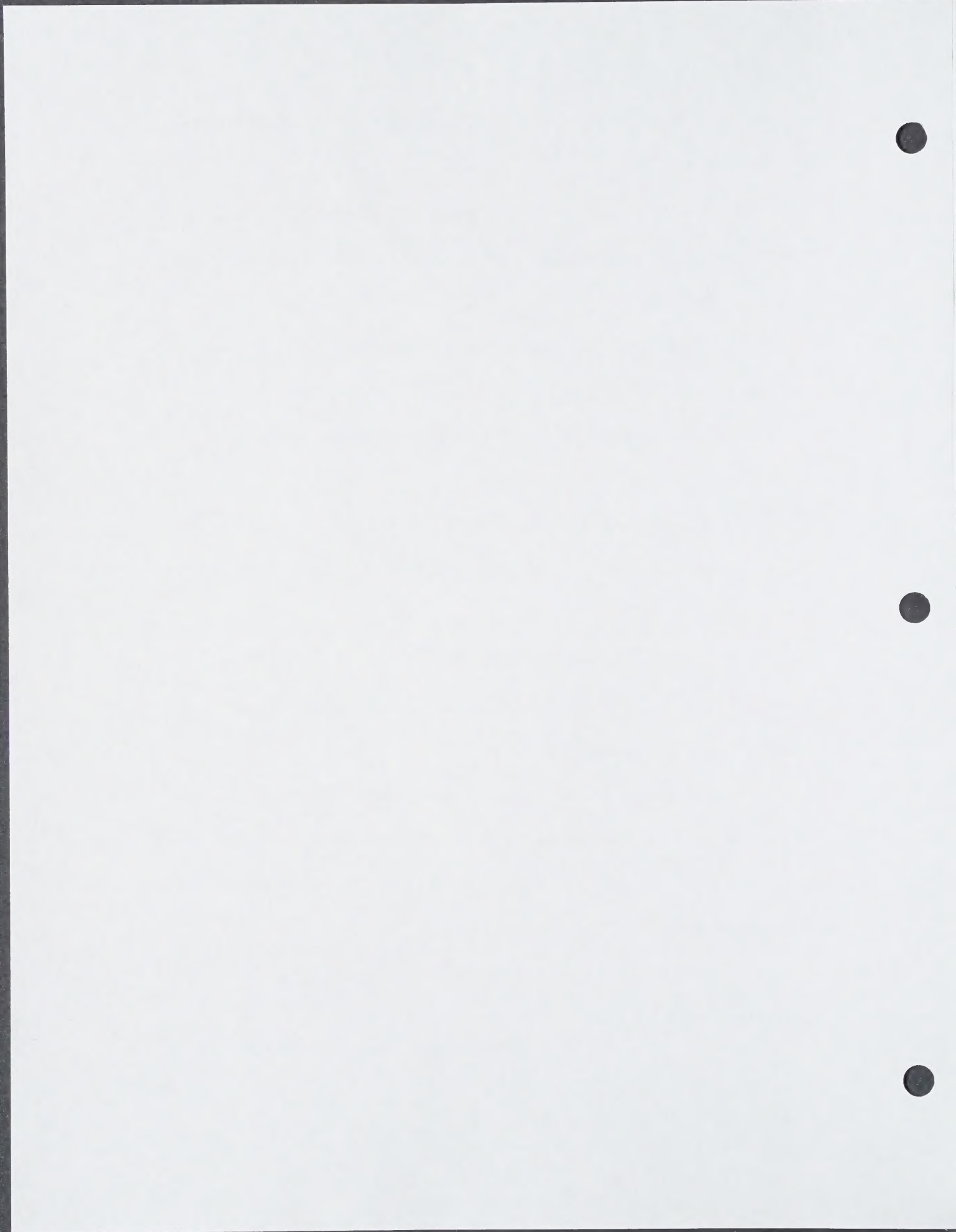
Who knew anything about developing job opportunities for the disabled?

Why should anyone focused on dealing with Jews and others in distress end up negotiating for chemical laboratory space at a major Czech university?

And how did I find myself initiating a post-graduate seminar in Baroque Art and involved in a few other weird projects that frankly have no link to what I started out to do?

Once I complained to Alfred when the complexities of the Gypsy dilemma became too great for me, "*Alfred, you got me into this!*" to which he somberly replied, "Yechiel, I'm not the one who said *Thou shalt not stand idly by the blood of thy brother.*"

The confidence he has shown humbles me, while at the same time his expectations stretch my capabilities to the utmost.



Into my world of practical good deeds Alfred has introduced his own far-reaching dimensions. So please count me as one of his many beneficiaries.

Yechiel Bar-Chaim

Paris, May 2006

