

Alfred Baber Fonds

Chemistry and Part
More Adventures of a Chemist Collector

Contributions

QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY ARCHIVES	
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Contributions

Next book

Subject: Next book

From: "Yechezkel Bar-Chaim" <yechezkel@jdcparis.org>

Date: Wed, 1 Mar 2006 10:25:25 +0100

To: "Alfred BADER (E-mail)" <baderfa@execpc.com>

1 March 2006

Dear Alfred,

Received with delight the latest draft of your chapter "Helping the Neediest and the Ablest."

Page 10 was missing so fortunately you spared me the temptation (to which I always give in) of editing my own writing.

On the other hand, I took the liberty of slightly revising pages 4 and 5, especially the biographical details and some further precisions about the Nis Cemetery Project.

The new versions are attached.

Delighted to see you quote from Paul's poetry concerning the cemetery clean-up.

It's a rough and thoroughly unpalatable reality there.

Recognizing that the cemetery with its unique gravestones was preserved only thanks to the desecration expands one's understanding of the word "irony".

One small and one larger question:

1. Will you be setting off all long quotations in a different print font?

2. The big question I still have is "How will you fit into the book the Via Bono Award Speech?" Could it be in an appendix? Feel it is really important to include the speech (which is both playful and serious) in order to show other sides of you, your interests, and motivations.

Looking forward to meeting Daniel if all goes well tomorrow as planned.

Best regards,

Yechezkel

P.S. Alas, the European Court of Human Rights refused in record time even to hear the lawsuit filed by Dianne Post against the UN in Kosovo. She is now trying another approach.



F

Subject: RE: Essay
From: "Yechiel Bar-Chaim" <yechiel@jdcparis.org>
Date: Sun, 9 Jan 2005 11:14:15 +0100
To: "Alfred Bader Fine Arts" <baderfa@execpc.com>

Dear Alfred,

The essay is eminently fair and dispassionate. If anyone were to think it errs at all, it would be by being too generous in describing their shortcomings.

You would do everyone a favor by sending it to Slovak and Gelnar with a note saying essentially "Here is the way the situation appears to me. Correct me if I am wrong."

It's holding up a mirror to reality, and that is always an excellent thing to do.

Off now to Prague. Dealing with the fierce internal community conflict there, consulting for an endowment fund for Holocaust victims, and set to meet there with our partners on aid to Roma, against domestic violence and for children's rights, and of course Baroque Art HIstory. The chemists in Prague at least seem to manage well on their own.

The Serbian Orthodox New Year is coming up. Happy New Year then too,

Yechiel

-----Original Message-----

From: Alfred Bader Fine Arts [<mailto:baderfa@execpc.com>]
Sent: Friday, January 07, 2005 22:46
To: Yechiel Bar Chaim
Subject: Essay

Dear Yechiel,

Attached is a rough draft of an essay which I hope will not appear in my next book. I will of course change the ending if Jiri will be treated fairly.

In the meantime please let me know whether you think it wise for me to send this to Slovak and Gelnar.

All the best,
Alfred

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A Theater for a Canadian in Love

One of the gifts that made Isabel and me so happy, without any of the problems that often accompany major gifts, was the Isabel Bader Theatre at Victoria University in Toronto.

The famous Old Vic Theatre in London had been bought by a well-known Toronto family, the Mervishes, who tried very hard to improve it. But early in 1999 we learned that they were giving up and wanted to sell it. Of course I immediately called Principal Leggett at Queen's to inquire whether Queen's might like the Old Vic and his answer was "no thanks, we have enough problems with Herstmonceux Castle!" Roseann Runte, the president of Victoria, as intelligent as she is gracious, had become our good friend and so we asked her. Her reply was encouraging "No, we don't want the Old Vic, but why not build a new Vic? For close to a hundred years we have had the land right here on Charles Street, it is just being used as a tennis court, but we have never had the money. Even though Victoria has the oldest dramatic review in North America, an annual comedy show called 'The Bob' and many graduates have become distinguished directors and actors, we have never had a theatre." And how much would it cost? I have never had an answer from Roseann that wasn't clear and simple: Canadian \$6 million.

We have been involved in one major building project at Queen's University, the expansion of the Agnes Etherington Art Centre. This necessitated an architectural competition, at considerable cost, and a great deal of bureaucratic hassle. There were no such complications at Vic. Roseann wanted a Toronto architect, Peter Smith, who had



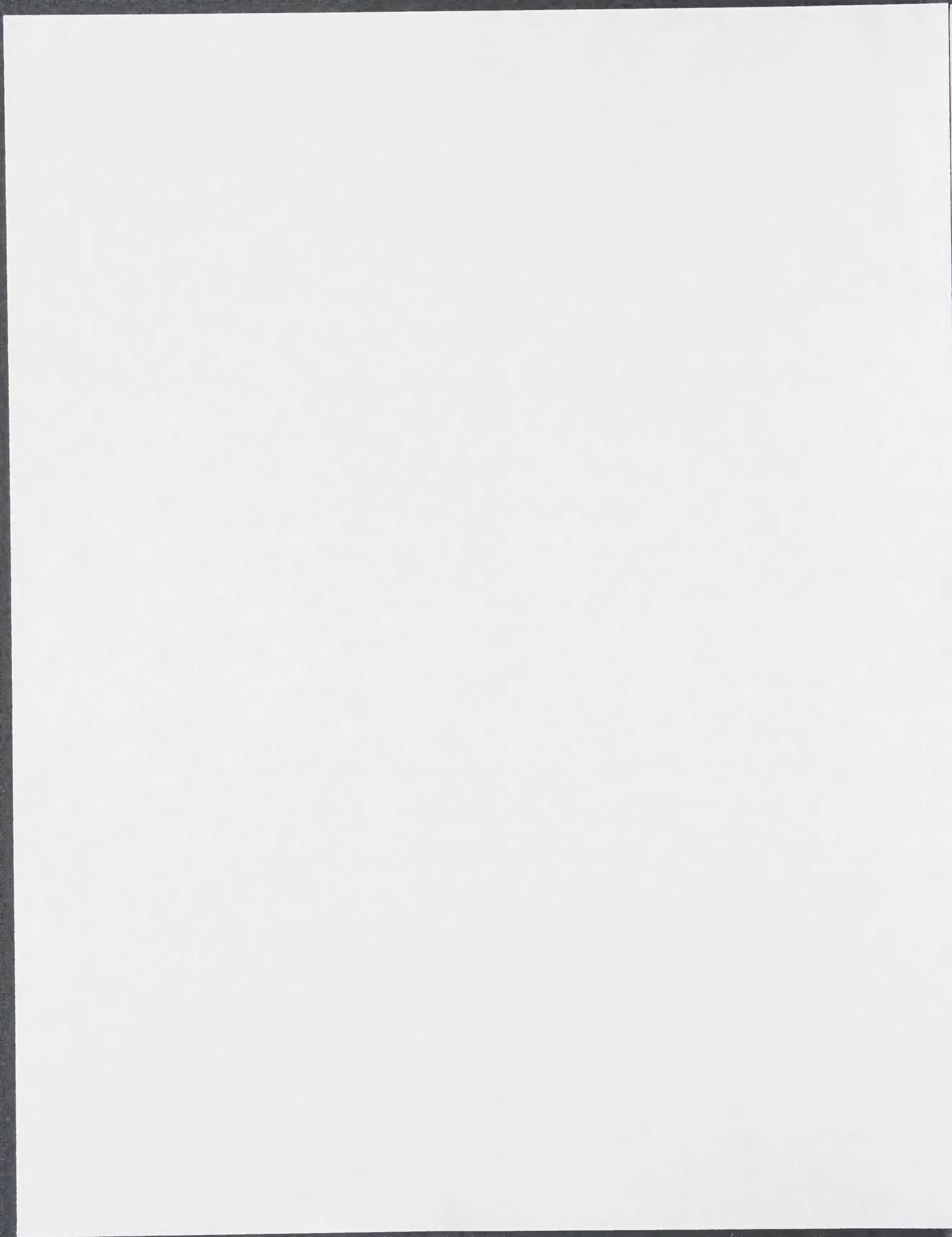
designed many other theatres. Smith described the project as “an ‘intimate’ two-level theatre; it will have basic staging and audio-visual equipment in the first year, with room to grow.” The faculty wanted another floor for lecture rooms and so the university raised an additional Canadian \$2 million. There were no cost overruns.

On June 4, 1999 Isabel, Roseann and I turned the first sod for the theatre during Isabel’s 50th reunion. There were delays to completing the building because of strikes of workers supplying concrete, but finally on March 3, 2001 there was a wonderfully happy celebration for the opening with our families sharing our joy. Roseann said about this largest gift that Victoria University had ever received, “When Alfred gave us the money for the theatre, it was because he wanted to make a gift to Isabel. It’s a kind of a double generosity, and a true love story.”

If only other major gifts would lead so simply to truly happy endings.

While getting to know, like and admire Roseann, it occurred to me that she might be just the right person to edit and publish the 82 letters Isabel had written to me between July 21, 1949 and August 11, 1951. I had kept all of Isabel’s letters, and on each November 1st, her birthday, had read some of her letters. Isabel now often faults me for looking back too much, but how could I not, having met a woman of such inner and outer beauty.

Roseann did a fine job as editor of *A Canadian in Love* published in 2000 as a limited edition of 1000 by the University of Toronto Press. The 82 letters appear unchanged, as

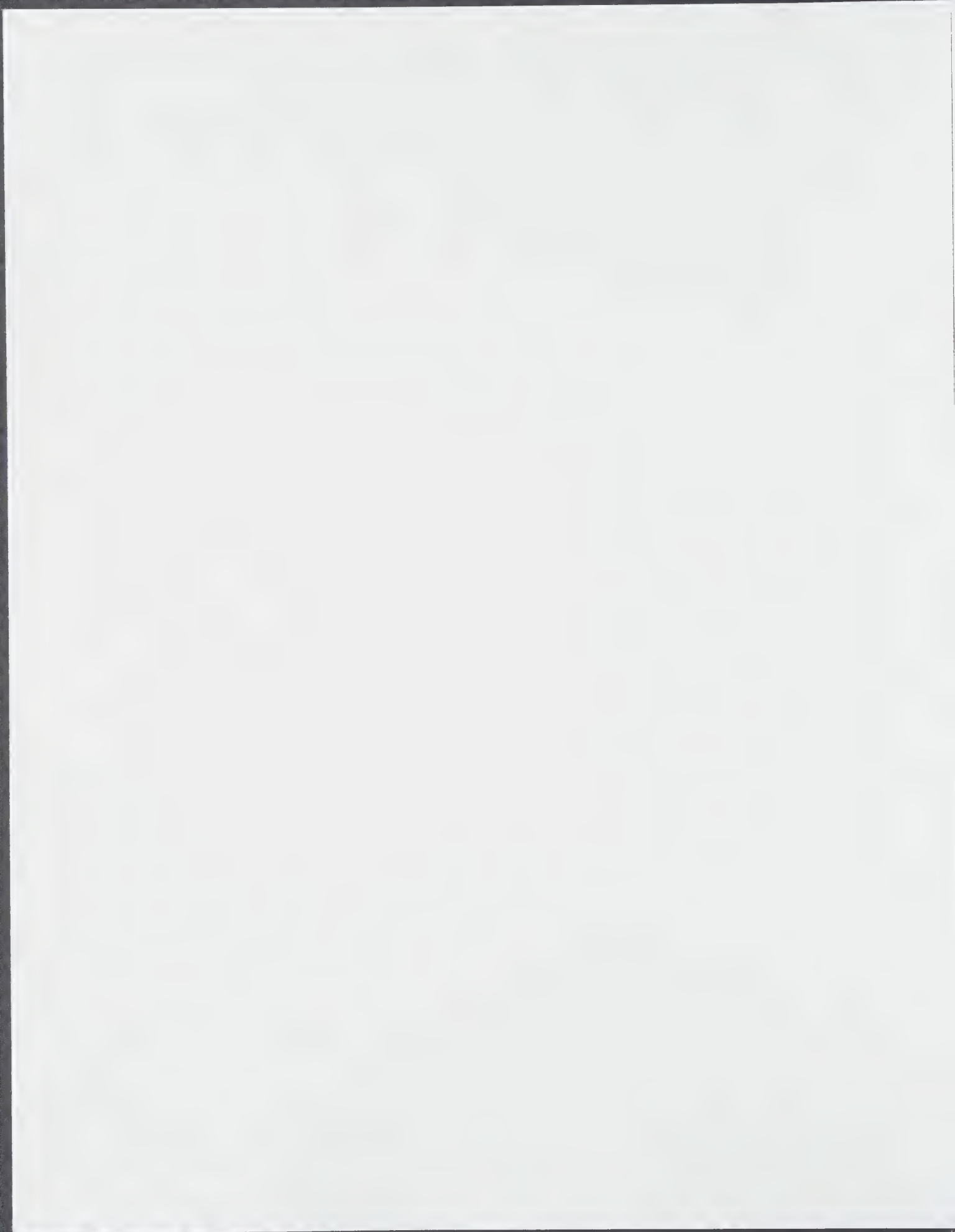


do two of Isabel's mother's letters written in 1951. It ends with Isabel's brief letter, #83 written in March 1975, and my long reply written after our meeting in April.

Roseann's Introduction, describing our lives and love is a gem. Some evenings when I am too weary to fall asleep I read some of the Introduction with a few of Isabel's letters and then fall asleep happily.

Isabel thought that she had thrown all my letters away – they were too painful to look at. But after *A Canadian in Love* appeared, Isabel did find some of my letters and when she showed them to Roseann, she commented that they contained no surprises. Of course we have kept the hundreds of letters we wrote to each other before our marriage in 1982, but these cannot be published in our lifetime.

As a wonderful postscript, Roseann sent Isabel (insert)



Subject: Award Ceremony
From: "Yechiel Bar-Chaim" <yechiel@jdcparis.org>
Date: Wed, 22 Sep 2004 10:25:45 +0100
To: "Alfred BADER \ (E-mail\)" <baderfa@execpc.com>

Dear Alfred,

You and Isabel would have enjoyed the ceremony at the U.S. Ambassador's Residency yesterday. Many of your friends and dinner partners were there: Milena; Martina; Gwen; Simon Panek; Igor Blasevic; Dean Gelnar; Professor Potacek; the Bader Fellowship winner Miroslav Nic; another slight, smiling grey-haired chemist whose name escapes me (could it be Oldrich Paleta?) the new representative of the Czech Chemical Society. Petr and Vera Weber came as well. Jiri Bartha and Tana Hlavata were magnificent hosts. Jiri Damborsky is in Poland and so of course he couldn't come and Professor Sejbal was missing; he is ill I am told.

Attached please find the speech I so much enjoyed delivering to accept the award on your behalf. Will present it to you in Vienna unless you prefer that I mail it now. Pictures will follow.

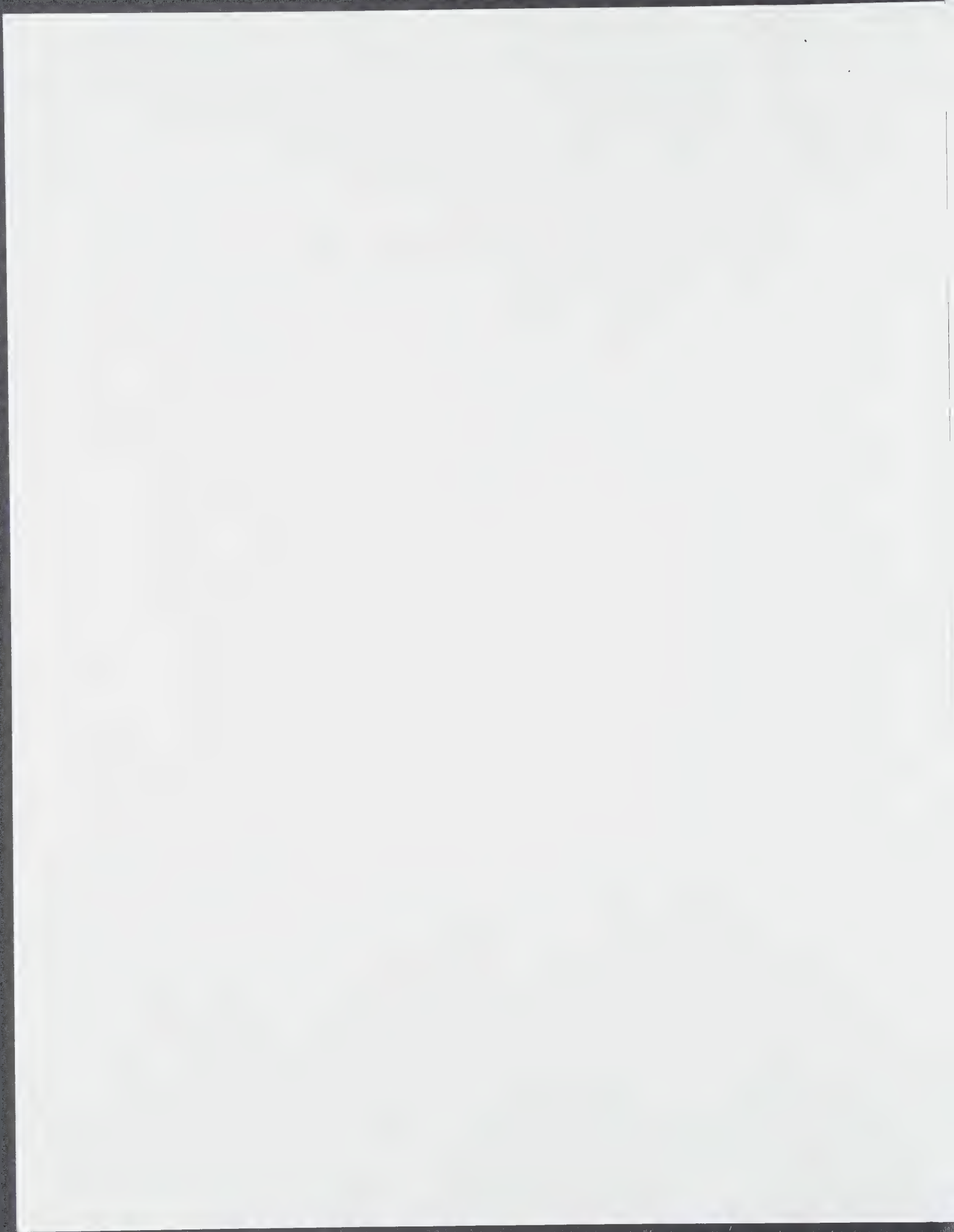
Gmar Hatima Tova

Yechiel

P.S. Gave away my last free copies of your autobiography to the U.S. Ambassador and the Chairman of Nadace Via. How can I get 12-20 copies for further distribution?

A J D C - Paris Office - 5 Avenue Matignon - F-75008 Paris, France
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Acceptance of the Via Bono Award on behalf of Dr. Alfred Bader

Good evening Mr. Ambassador and honored guests,

I have come here today from Paris especially for this occasion, and, many of Dr. Bader's friends and family have also made a special effort to be here. So I ask for your indulgence to say a few words in honor of Dr. Bader.

Alfred Bader likes to define his public passions according to the letters
ABC

A is for Art

B is for Bible

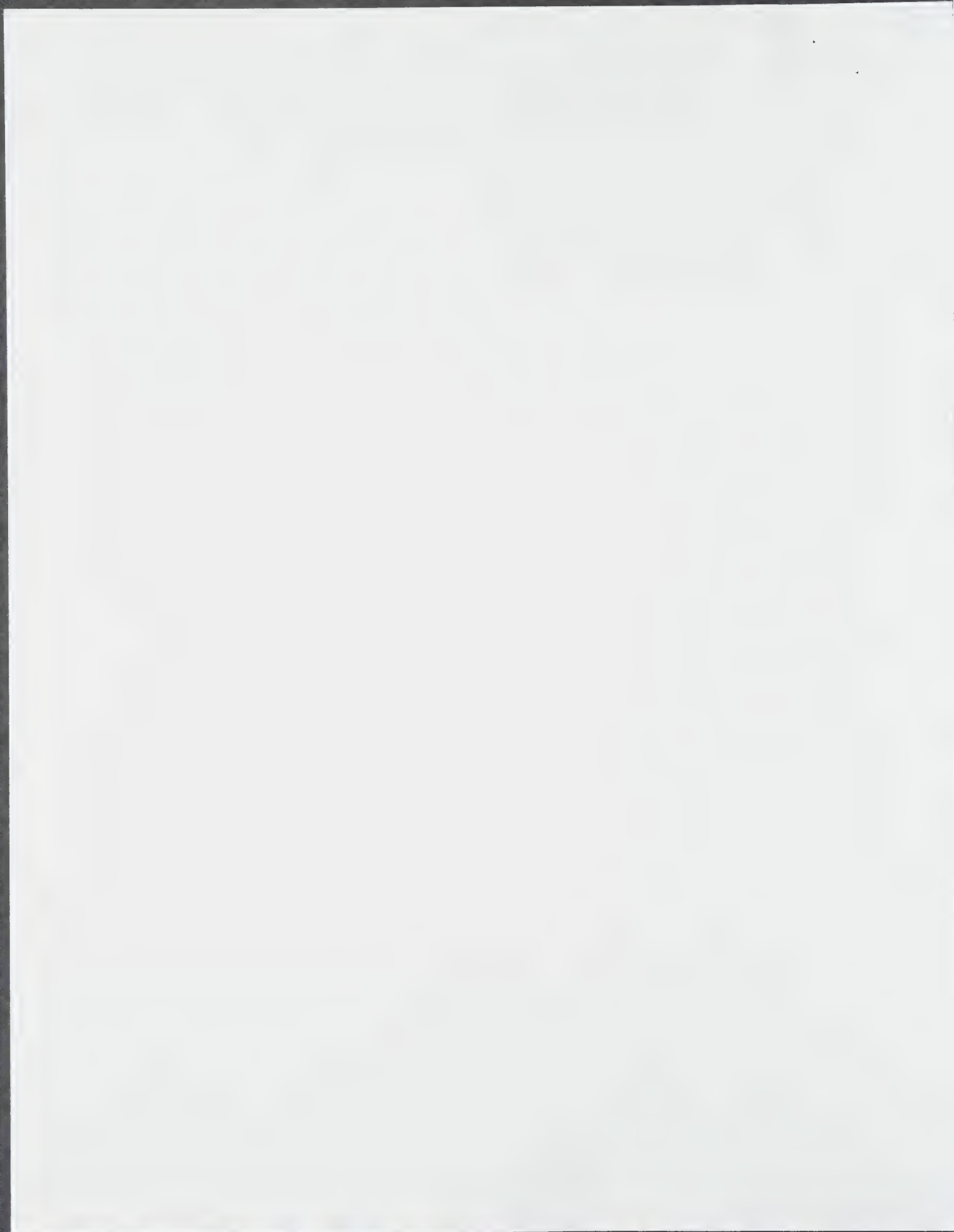
C is for Chemistry

Perhaps the best symbol of these passions is the picture on the cover of his Autobiography, which I show you here. It is a painting of an Alchemist, which I maintain reflects Alfred Bader's true nature.

First the painting is clearly Art

Then please understand that Judaism is a religion focussed on taking the acts of everyday life - getting up, lying down, washing one's hands or taking a meal - and transforming them by proper conduct into holy acts;

And of course the alchemists trying to take lead and other base metals and turn them into gold, were also the first chemists.



In his philanthropy Dr. Bader himself has become a kind of alchemist. Certainly he is motivated by Biblical inspiration. The commandment <Tzedek Tzedek Tirdof> "Justice Justice You Shall Pursue" is frequently on his lips. Or the instruction "You will not stand idly by the blood of your neighbor". But Dr. Bader's generosity is also an expression of defiance. It is his way of transforming the most reprehensible of human acts into pure gold.

As a Jewish boy of 14 he was expelled from Vienna by Adolph Eichman who sent him on a kindertransport and separated him forever from his family. Yet this November on the anniversary of Krystallnacht Alfred Bader will be back in Vienna to reinstate the most important scientific prize of pre-war Austria.

Safe, he thought, in London at age 16 he was then imprisoned by His Majesty's Government as an "enemy alien" and sent to an internment camp in Canada. However he has returned to England as well, buying, renovating, and donating as a university campus one of the fine old castles being left to rot in the English countryside. Recently this "enemy alien" he was named a Commander of the British Empire

Eventually released from the internment camp in Canada, Alfred Bader sought admission to the finest Canadian universities only to be rejected then as a European Jew. You should see now all that he has done for the University that did accept him- Queens University- has now honored Alfred Bader on his eightieth birthday by naming a street after him



These acts of generosity and redemption remove neither the sting nor the suffering caused by past injustice but they do fill Alfred Bader with a zeal to help those who struggle as he did. Where better to do so than here in the Czech lands, home of Alfred Bader's ancestors and birthplace your own great "alchemist" who turned an autocratic Empire into a shining democratic republic: Tomas Garrigue Masaryk.

In closing I would like to think that Dr Bader's defiance of human injustice is also linked to a stalwart football cheer he may have heard while pursuing his doctorate in Chemistry at Harvard. In Latin the key words are "*Illegitimum non carborundum*" Freely translated they mean "Don't let the bastards get you down."

It is in that spirit that I feel honored and privileged to accept the Via Bono Award in Alfred's name.

Djik vam vshem (Thank you)

Yechiel Bar-Chaim
American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee
Country Director for the Czech Republic
Prague, 21 September 2004

