In the spring of 1945, as the war was at last drawing to a close, the ‘rehabilitation and re-education of the Nazi Germans’ was very much in Fritz’s mind. The rebuilding of Germany was not just a question of economic recovery but also the ‘de-contamination’, as Fritz put it, and re-education of the German mind, tainted by Nazism and years of false and pernicious propaganda. Earlier in the war he and Kurt Naumann had thought up a publishing venture to flood Germany with a series of well produced and lucid books containing information about all the important issues on which Germans had been deliberately misinformed. The scheme, which they called ‘Star Publications’, never got beyond the conceptual stage and by the end of the war Fritz knew he was destined for something much bigger. The first step came before the war ended. He and Kurt Mandelbaum were roped in to the American Bombing Survey of Germany. It was led by J. K. Galbraith. Fritz was issued with an American army uniform, given the rank of Colonel, and dispatched to Germany.

The Bombing Survey aimed to discover why the bombing of German industrial targets had been so ineffective in destroying Germany’s military strength, but it soon widened into a general survey of the history of the German war economy. For Fritz, as for other Germans on the staff, it was an opportunity to join the millions wandering around Germany trying to trace their relatives and friends amongst the smoking ruins. After nearly six years he had little idea of the fate of his or Muschi’s families,
whether they all still lived or how much they had suffered and lost.

The impact of Germany on Fritz was profound and the reunion with his family brought him face to face with the lasting legacy of Hitler and the divisions which had torn many families apart. It needed all his humanity, all the inner resources he could muster to survive these encounters without succumbing to self-destructive bitterness, and in his suffering he turned to Muschi, writing her long accounts of his disturbing impressions.

The letters tell their own story. They are reproduced in full except where news of friends and relatives is of no interest to the reader.

June 12th, 1945

Dearest Muschi,

This is a place where something is going on all the time, and the day passes like lightning. The impressions are so manifold that it is impossible to write about them. I hope that Lt Dennis kept his promise and rang you up to say that I had arrived safely. We got started without a hitch and had a wonderfully safe and comfortable flight. In Essen – somewhere on the outskirts, there was not much to see – excellent food. Then in another hour (or less) to Frankfurt. Germany, from the air, is very very beautiful. If one could forget about the towns (and a lot of other things) it would be heavenly. Here in Bad Nauheim, life goes on normally – or rather: most abnormally, since most of the shops are completely and utterly empty; there is practically no transport and no economic activity of any kind. It looks like Sunday every day: people walking about in bright coloured dresses – rather an English kind of Sunday. I’ve seen a lot of interesting documents and interviewed some interesting people. We live in the past – the present seems not to exist – and try to think about the future without knowing where to start. It is like trying to count your fingers when you have forgotten numbers one to five.

Soon I might be able to write more concretely, but not
yet. There is something uncanny about all I have seen so far – as if you saw a person walking about who you knew was dead. He speaks and moves and even laughs – and then you notice that he does not breathe. He does not seem to see you and you pretend not to see him.

We are short of nothing except news from England. Please send me The Economist and, if possible, the Daily Herald – at least occasionally. The fact that not an atom of English news ever seems to get here intensifies the strange sensation of living in ghost land.

With luck, I might see the Geheimrat [Professor Schumacher] this weekend – if I can find him.

The children over here don’t look any different from Christian and John. When I see them my heart aches. When I think of you, it leaps with joy.

All love – F.

[No. 2]

Darling Mu,
I just saw Dr Alfred Petersen [Muschi’s uncle] who was quite speechless when he recognized me.

Driving through Frankfurt I could say nothing but ‘My God’. But one seems to get used to it: the town is still beautiful with wonderful rows of trees everywhere. In many houses the ground floors and cellars are still habitable. You see many shops in houses the three upper storeys of which are totally destroyed. Somehow the people seem to find shelter. But enormous numbers of them are still on the roads, moving about with their belongings. Everybody you see is carrying something. I saw one train yesterday which was so overcrowded that there was no room for another mouse. People are living on stocks; there is no production or transport worth speaking of. They fear two things: Russia and starvation.

Don’t forget me.

Love F.
Dearest Mu,
Well, I just completed my first week, and I am beginning to find my way about. Yet it is still impossible to give even a preliminary summing up of impressions. I had another interview with Dr Petersen, at which his sister Clara was present. It gave me a great shock to listen to her general opinions – so narrow, so selfish, so unteachable. I should like to think that she is not representative of anything but herself. More about her and the whole meeting later. I may have to go and see the newly appointed mayor of Hamburg [Rudolf Petersen, Muschi’s father] on Thursday. I hope to pass through Luneburg to find out where my parents are. Someone is going to Bavaria tomorrow to look out for Elisabeth [Fritz’s sister]. I was out in the field yesterday going through Marburg, Giessen, to Fritzlar. Giessen is dreadfully knocked about. But Marburg and Fritzlar are still lovely – so is the whole countryside, indescribably lovely. The woods are so beautiful it almost makes me weep. The fields are large and generous, without silly little hedges everywhere. My present role, of being one of the ‘upper dogs’ doesn’t suit my character well. I’ve been an ‘under-dog’ for too long and developed an almost instinctive sympathy with the under-dog. Luckily the people around here still look wonderfully healthy, excellently dressed, and, in a way, happy.

I am writing this in the midst of crowds, noise, and distraction. I’ve not heard from you yet and am longing for you.
Kiss the boys.
Love F.

June 23rd, 1945

Dearest Mu,
From my last letter you will be expecting news from Hamburg. But I didn’t get there. I couldn’t get away. They have made me the boss of one of the ‘units’, which involves
E. F. Schumacher

supervising a number of people who are inclined to be very unproductive – from inability or from laziness. This was the dilemma: to be irresponsible like the rest and to get a lot of travelling, or to do a decent job of work and become indispensable. So I haven’t got out of this place yet, except for two short afternoon excursions. On the whole I am working from 9 am to 10.30 pm. This makes the time fly. Since there are no newspapers, and there is no radio, we are living outside world history. Friends of mine report that they have seen Rudolf Petersen ‘who looks wonderful and is an excellent man’.

I had a long letter from Liesel [Elisabeth] today. Her parents [i.e. Fritz’s parents] and Edith are in Überlingen/Lake Constance. Erich [Kuby, Edith’s husband] is a P.O.W. since the fall of Brest. Five months after the capitulation of Brest Edith received a Red Cross message that he is well. Nothing since then. Hermann [Fritz’s older brother] was in Norway till the end. Werner [Heisenberg, Elisabeth’s husband] is presumably in Heidelberg (since May 2nd) where I shall make enquiries tomorrow.

(Note: My ink has given out. It is late at night. I can only find red ink.)

My mind is a chaos of thoughts and emotions, and I cannot describe what I feel. I need time to digest it all. There is also so much to digest of the stuff I am learning here. What a bunch of gangsters these Nazis were! I am now looking into their most secret stuff. And what an immeasurable tragedy – this régime and those shortsighted stupid people – owning the most beautiful country in the world, living in the most beautiful houses – and falling for the idiocies of power and glory.

I can’t get cross with individual human beings, but I get very cross with those groups and classes which have caused all this misery. The individuals, as I have seen them so far, are mostly nice-looking people, the girls and children charmingly dressed – no signs of starvation yet – although (it seems) they have very little to eat. Yes, I curse the Nazis every day – even more passionately than I have done for fifteen years – as I see their traces in the countryside and in the minds of the people.

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You cannot imagine how beautiful is this country of Germany. I had forgotten it myself. Ma [Kurt Mandelbaum] came back from Bavaria quite overawed by it. I look around and say nothing but, ‘Why, why, why not be happy here? What is it that makes human beings so inhuman as a nation when they are (as you know, and as everyone can see here) so human as individuals?’

(I am surprised my ink does not turn into red, which would be appropriate as my heart seems to be bleeding over all these riddles of human existence – over this paradox of human folly!)

All these disjointed sentences really sum up to this: As Burke once said ‘I know of no way in which an indictment can be drawn up against a whole nation.’ Let us always value individuals for what they are in themselves. Let us not put nation over human being.

I had two wonderful letters from you – the second one today. Two days ago, the letter from Christian which made me feel extremely pleased. Many, many thanks. I am thinking of you, and the children, and myself as almost incredibly fortunate. Yes – what ought to be just ‘normal’ is now almost incredible.

I shall be very sleepy tomorrow if I go on much longer. It is 1.30 am. Start tomorrow at 8.30. So good night. I shall be missing you until I fall to sleep. Then this queer, puzzling, timeless existence will get hold of me again – when I wake up – and carry me through the day, without much direct thought of you, but leaving a background of intimate feeling for you which is always there and always gives me happiness.

Yours Fritz.

PS. Just call me ‘Mr’ on your envelopes. Love F.

June 29th, 1945

Bad Nauheim

Dearest Mu,

... I should like to write to you more frequently – knowing how anxiously I am always looking out for your letters. But this is a bad place for settling down quietly. It’s a time
E. F. Schumacher

wasting place. And new methods to waste time are being discovered every day. Well, I've been to Heidelberg hoping to find Professor Heisenberg but couldn't locate him. Heidelberg is lovely. After passing through Darmstadt and many other places even the ugliest house that is not blown to bits looks like paradise. I travelled back via Mannheim - Ludwigshafen, Worms, Mainz - crossing the Rhine twice on temporary bridges - to see all the bridges that have been wantonly destroyed makes one terribly furious. How lightly men take the important things of life. The Germans blew the bridges over the Neckar (at Heidelberg) when the Allies were advancing on both sides of the river. I hope other Germans will never forgive them.

If plans are not suddenly changed I shall go to the Bodensee tomorrow. Just had your two letters of June 22nd and 23rd. Many many thanks.

This letter was interrupted by a meeting - and by the news that I can go south tomorrow. I shall be back in two days. I am very excited.

All my love - F.

Forward HQ USSBS
Overall Effects Division
APO 413, U.S. Army

July 2nd, 1945

My dearest Fraule,

My assignment for the weekend, as I wrote in my Friday letter, was to go down to Überlingen to interrogate Professor Schumacher and also to look into some documents located nearby. I was naturally most grateful to the management for giving me this particular job.

We started out at 10.30 in the morning, got to Heidelberg just in time for lunch at 12.30 and arrived at Überlingen at 7.15 pm. It was a lovely sunny day and the countryside - well let me not attempt to describe its beauty, for there are no words to do it justice. We drove up in front of Rehmenhalde No. 5, as I said, at 7.15, and a crowd of little children immediately surrounded our jeep. The Rehmenhalde is the most outward part of the little town, up in the hills. The
road is rough, winding through fields, and the houses lie
hidden in the back of gardens with large trees. A little boy
— the sweetest little boy you’ve ever seen — stepped up to me
and asked: ‘Hast du Schokolade?’ and I asked him his name.
‘Thomas Kuby,’ he said. So I looked at him and asked him
where his mummy was. ‘O, die Mutti ist oben und macht das
Abendessen.’ [Mummy is upstairs making supper.] He was
just as keen as John and Christian are to get into the jeep, to
play about with the steering wheel and to blow the horn. He
asked me if I would give him a lift, ‘bis zur schiefen Ecke’.
‘Where are your grandparents?’ was my next question, but
he was much too pre-occupied with the jeep to answer for
some time, and I was pre-occupied with looking at him. He
then said, after several repetitions of the question: ‘Die Gross-
eltern, meinst Du? Ja die sind weggegangen Kirschen kaufen.’
[My grandparents, you mean? They have gone to buy cher-
ries.] At that moment Erich Kuby stepped out of the front
gate and his surprise was as great as mine.

He went at once to fetch Edith, who exclaimed: ‘I knew it
would happen just like this. A few days ago Erich, and now
you.’ We went into their little two room ‘Mansarde’ where
I unpacked some chocolate for Thomas and tried to clean
myself a bit after the long ride in the open jeep. The door
opened, and my mother came in with a basket full of cher-
ries. She, like Edith, looked just the same as when I saw
them last, and they said I looked just the same, only stronger.

Mama insisted that we should immediately go over to
Papa, but I wanted her to quieten down first and then to
prepare Papa so that he should not get too much of a shock.
I made her go ahead of me but she could not keep more than
five yards ahead, urging me to come as fast as I could. She
rushed upstairs (in the house next door, where they had
moved two days previously) — just one short flight of stairs.
I was waiting at the bottom and urged her to keep her calm.
She opened the door straight ahead and cried:

‘Hermann, der Fritz ist da!’ I saw a very old man sitting at
a table and could not recognize him. He slowly got up,
looked around and said: ‘Was soll das bedeuten?’ [What does
this mean?] Then he saw me standing at the bottom of the
stairs, and I rushed into his arms. He, too, said that I had
not changed a bit, and I did not tell him how difficult I found it to recognize him. He said he had not thought that he would see me again, ‘denn meine Tage gehen zu Ende’. [For my days are coming to an end.]

I insisted that they should go to bed early - at their usual time, as I would see them again the next day. All this happened on Saturday the 30th of June. I came back on Sunday and found that they all had had a very restless night.

There followed many long conversations which, inevitably, were not confined to economics or strategic bombing. I found myself talking most of the time of Christian and John, with Thomas sitting on my lap until Edith complained that I was a very bad husband, forgetting my wife over my children. I said that the boys presented me every day with difficult and often insoluble problems, while you did not. I felt it more strongly than ever before how good you are and how we have grown together into a harmonious unity.

In front of me, on the wall, I noticed the picture of a strikingly beautiful noble young man in uniform whom, I thought, I had never seen before. There was so much freedom in this face, so much honesty and intelligence, that I looked at it for a long time. It never occurred to me that it was Ernst. [Fritz's younger brother.] They then told me a lot about him, and what I heard tore up a wound which time had only incompletely healed. I went through some of his letters which reveal a personality so complete, so full of promise, so beautiful that I know of no one to compare him to - considering his age. They also show - is it a consolation or an additional cause of grief? - that he was abundantly happy till the last day, believing firmly that he was fulfilling a noble duty.

These letters are terrible to read. My father has written a biography of Ernst, about a hundred pages, which tells the whole story. They wanted me to take it along with me (the only copy), but I looked at it and decided to read it there and then. I spent the better part of a night over it, taking it back in the morning, just before leaving.

I could not take it along. I want to forget it. The day - that one precious day - at Überlingen was no time for bitterness. But I was very bitter during the night. Why did they
and has no wish any more to stay alive much longer. Luckily, their landlords are extremely charming to them and do them little acts of kindness every day. They take their meals with Edith next door. Their present rooms are not heated and they have to find something else for the winter. Edith and Kuby, however, have many friends in the neighbourhood and are confident that they can get them properly fixed up. The old people are courageous in their own way; their suffering is mental rather than physical. The young ones have a different sort of courage; they take all material difficulties into their stride and mean to fight for something radically better. They all love you for the memory they have of you and for what they could see you had done to me. Being with them, I loved you and the boys more deeply than ever. Little Thomas appeared to me like an angel. I could not turn my eyes away from him. But I thought with pride of our two little gangsters.

More news when there is time.
Yours completely, F.

July 9th, 1945

Bad Nauheim

My dearest,
I am sorry that a whole week has passed since I wrote you last. I would be quite wrong to say that I have too much to do to find the time for writing. What I have to do does not amount to very much, and what, in fact, I get done amounts to very little.

But I am living in a big crowd of men, and there is simply no limit to the number of opportunities of wasting time without achieving anything in particular. Perhaps, I shouldn’t say ‘wasting’ time – although it feels like it. These innumerable haphazard conversations are perhaps necessary for the process of digestion – there is so much to digest. And this process is necessarily a subconscious one. All sorts of facts and impressions pile up before one’s mind: the conscious effort of thinking about them cannot do much to sort them out – but meanwhile some sort of a picture, some sort of judgment, assembles itself in the subconscious mind
... So that I feel that I am at present learning more and developing faster than perhaps at any other time in my life.

Strange to say, I often find myself coming back to many of the old fundamental slogans which are (at present) believed to be the essence of Christianity - such as - love your neighbour as you love yourself. I am experiencing the greatness of this saying and the smallness of human nature. I don't like the doctrine of original sin - but the fact of human shortcoming is painfully apparent. 'Das ist der Fluch der bösen Tat, dass sie fortzeugend Böses muss gebären.' [That is the curse of the evil deed, that it has to bring forth more evil.] So it goes on and on in a vicious circle. The upperdog embitters the underdog, and when the underdog becomes upperdog, the process continues as before, with roles exchanged. That two bad acts don't make a good one, seems to be too difficult for human beings to understand.

Of course details change. There are different degrees of decency and indecency. There are some things which the Nazis did and we shall never do. But there are others which the Nazis did; which we resented when done by them; and which we now cheerfully do ourselves. Few people seem to have understood that this is the time for human greatness; too many are afraid of their own virtues. So the vicious circle continues to drive us into unhappiness.

In England we are fighting for a system of Government and economic administration that is based on the notion that every human being matters. We are fighting against that callousness towards the ordinary man which has been the hallmark of capitalism. But we shall not succeed if, at the same time, we behave as if the ordinary man of German nationality matters nothing at all. The right hand must know what the left hand is doing. Our present attitudes are those of a split personality. We went to great lengths to fight Hitler because he had no conception of the dignity of man. Have we got the right conception ourselves?

My mind is revolving around these and similar questions. It must be possible to make use of the chance now offered to the upperdog - the chance of breaking the vicious circle of human smallness, greed, pettiness, callousness. I've learned the virtue of patience and I shall go on practising it. I know
that the breath of world history is slower than my own. Nothing has been decided yet but the time for decision is approaching. England, I hope, will not lose her soul now that she is powerful. *Hochmut kommt vor dem Fall!* [Pride comes before a fall!]

Yesterday – to change the subject (otherwise I shall never get to bed) – I was sent out to interrogate Dr Harry Renkl. You can imagine his delight and surprise. He has lived up to all my expectations and is undoubtedly one of the best Germans – one of the best men in general – I have ever met – of the same class as Kurt Naumann or Waldmar Holt. He refused all war work, never joined the army, got into great difficulties with the Gestapo – but pulled through.

I've also had another very interesting talk with Dr Alfred Petersen, who seems to be doing a pretty good job in Frankfurt. He is one of those rare people who are quite indomitable – very much like your father. His energy and vitality are as astonishing as his – what shall I say?... magnanimity – he has patience, understanding, optimism, in short, the things needed today and most lacking amongst the many small people on both sides. I hope that Christian and John have a strong Petersen strain in them.

Well, sweetheart Mule, I often wish you were here. There is so much that is beautiful and would still be more beautiful if we were together. I am exploring a little scheme where under you (or you and the kids) might come over for a short visit. But I rather doubt its possibility. I am living like a monk (which is less upsetting than I thought it might be) and find that life without the feminine element tends to be rather shallow – with two dimensions only instead of three. I find that other women mean nothing to me except to the extent that they resemble you. There are some American women attached to the survey who strike me as exceptionally dull.

The men here are of varying quality – good, bad and indifferent, as one would expect. Ma (with whom I am sharing a room) is one of the best. Kaldor has many pointless personal quarrels which somehow overshadow his abilities. I am I think, on good terms with everyone, often with people who hate one another like poison. I am often reminded of
my experience in the camp. Will Rogers' slogan 'I have never met a man I didn't like' still seems to me the essence of successful living.

Your letters – No 5 of June 28th and No 6 of July 1st, after Boddington – are always eagerly awaited and make a red letter day when they come. The Eastern Economist, two numbers of the London Economist and a bundle of daily papers have arrived so far. Drop me a little love letter whenever you can. I've given away all my photos and am badly in need of a picture of you and the boys. Tell them I am trying to buy them some presents, but that I don't want to take anything here of which the Germans are even shorter than we are in England.

I am having three excellent meals a day [supplied by the Americans and not the starving Germans], and my work does not involve me in the kind of constant nervous tension which my Oxford/London work brought about. All the time there is the most glorious weather – brilliant sunshine (did you see the partial eclipse of the sun today, at around 4 pm?) and an even warm temperature. I couldn't have a more perfect holiday – except for your absence.

The mild kind of work I am doing here is in fact much better for me than no work at all. (I think I am putting on weight.)

People in London and Oxford must be wondering what has happened to me. I cannot bring myself to writing articles now – in any case I don't know whether the articles would get through. If anyone asks just say that I have too much to do.

I may be coming over for a weekend – in a fortnight or so. Perhaps, perhaps not. Don't count on it. The show here certainly will not last longer than say August 15th.

Oh, if I could have you here for just 24 hours.

Yours F.

July 30th, 1945

Bad Nauheim

Dearest Fraule,
I am working here almost every night till 12 o'clock on this
wretched Report, which I am trying to get done as quickly as possible so that there will be some time left for my journeys to Hamburg and the Walchensee.

Well, now, what do you say about the Great Victory? [The Labour victory at the general election.] I am enormously excited about it, as you can imagine. The British people – one cannot deny it – are a sensible lot. What does Christian say now? I think it is absolutely wonderful – the best thing that has happened since the Battle of Britain. Of course I have practically given up the idea of joining Group C.C. [Control Commission]. I am longing to get back to England.

Last Tuesday, I went to see Herbert M. [Morrison], Sir Wilfred Eady and Professor Blackett (with whom I stayed the night). They were all exceedingly nice and encouraging. Blackett knew nothing about Werner H. I think he must by now be back with Liesel.

Eady said he absolutely wanted me to go to Germany for the British Group C.C. but he would allow me to go to the U.S. Group if Sir Percy Mills was unable to have me. Mills meanwhile has asked the Americans to engage me and to lend me out to him. (But all this is now practically out-of-date, except as a stand-by.) Herbert M. didn’t have much time, but was most charming. He said he wanted me for economic work and also said that, although he was against being easy with naturalizations, ‘a man like you ought to be naturalized at once, if I can I shall do it’.

Of course, I know, everything takes a hell of a time with these people, and I may be coming back only to wait about ‘while nothing ever happens’. But still I think this time it may be different. What a chance for Britain and for Europe! If they cannot make up their mind to use me there during the next six months, I shall go to Group C.C. (the one or the other) all the same. On vera.

Darling Mulekind, I hope there will be a letter from you in the post tomorrow. I want to know everything – but particularly about No 3 (or No 5). I love both of you very much.

I thought Christian and John were absolutely marvellous during the days I had with them. People here aren’t half
enough interested in children. But most of them either have none of their own or rather dull ones – if compared to these two.

Ever yours. Fritz.

August 6th, 1945

Dearest Mu,
I had just settled down to write to you when your letter arrived. It was so good to hear from you – that all is well, that the boys are happy, and that you feel as you do.

There is so much to tell you. I am working like a slave, making myself somewhat unpopular with some of the authors, but less so, I think, than others would do if they did the same job.

As so many papers are rotten from beginning to end, my ‘editing’ them means writing a completely new story. Yesterday (Sunday!), I wrote a twenty page paper to replace one of a hundred pages, but saved, I think, every single argument that was worth stating.

In the afternoon, I simply had to get out of this place, for a change, and drove to Kronberg, via Wetzlar and Limburg, to visit Chris and Peter [Bielenberg]. They told me many very interesting stories about Hamburg. The oldest and youngest of the family [Petersen], took a strong nationalist (even semi-Nazi) line till the end. It seems to be the same everywhere with the older generation – and with the youngsters whom they could influence most easily. Peter had enormous rows with his father all the time. But among the younger generation, on the whole, there is still a lot of good stuff.

I simply must get to Hamburg to have a look at it all, it doesn’t sound too good. Of course a lot has changed since V-day, and the old grievances seem now to be forgotten. The personal side of it does not worry me a bit – neither for me nor for you, but the political implications are serious.

Mule, sweetheart, I shall try and describe to you how I think of you and the children. I move about feeling just a little bit lost (sometimes more, sometimes less), with some-
thing like starvation in my heart and mind; every now and then, I realize that what I am missing is you. When I meet a person like Chris, the feeling of starvation abates, because she serves as temporary ‘ersatz’, but, then, she reminds me of you so much that I consciously begin to miss you.

When my thoughts are wandering they reach you more often via the children than directly. Something reminds me of Christian or John – a child’s shout in the street – and I become exceedingly pleased – with you. I pity the great majority of husbands who haven’t got a wife that makes their children really delightful. Frankly, I am then also moderately pleased with myself, because I feel that we have taken this job seriously, distributed functions intelligently, and that we strengthen each other in the effort to do justice to the new generation.

My plans as I wrote in my last letter (and as you anticipated in yours), are now a bit uncertain. The schedule says that I shall be leaving Bad Nauheim on August 19th with the last party. I am still trying to work in two trips – one to Hamburg and one to the Walchensee – if necessary and if at all possible, after August 19th. I expect to be back around the 23rd. Then I shall want to reconnoitre the marvellously transformed scene of ancient Britain, to see what it may mean for me in the immediate future.

See you in just over a fortnight. I shall then make sure that you will not disappoint the boys and me (and perhaps yourself?) again.

Love, F.