
Year of Crisis

Throughout his married life Fritz had too strong a sense of purpose to allow anyone else - even his wife - to affect his decisions about his career or employment. Although he always discussed his plans with Muschi, she knew that her role in his decision-making was to be a sounding-post, allowing him to think aloud in her presence. This time, however, Muschi's role in Fritz's future was vital. To give up the Coal Board and settle down to writing books, with four children, a wife and a mortgage, was a decision which could not be made alone. On the other hand, a period in India did not particularly appeal to Muschi.

Then, at Christmas in 1959, Muschi developed jaundice and the after-effects lingered on well into the spring of 1960. Muschi had never before experienced a day's illness and had it not been for the Swiss *au pair*, Vreni Rosenberger, the household would have collapsed. Fritz was not very domesticated. His contribution was to the necessities of life - bread and garden products - not to such mundane things as clean shirts and shoes. Vreni was only eighteen and very shy. She had to be coaxed to enter into family life and was somewhat overawed by her tall, good-looking employer, so idolized by his wife. She was quite relieved that every evening after returning home from the office he would go straight up to Muschi's room, and spend the evening sitting there at the end of Muschi's bed talking and reading, only leaving to prepare his weekly lectures for London University and deal with his correspondence.

It was clear no plans could be made until Muschi was better and Fritz wrote accordingly to J.P. Narayan, expressing his interest in a spell in India but deferring his decision.

Muschi's recovery was only temporary. In early May 1960 she collapsed again in great pain. After a five-hour operation at Guy's Hospital in London, the surgeon told Fritz that there was little hope. Muschi had cancer of the intestines with secondaries in her liver. That night Fritz returned home exhausted. The only emotion he betrayed was a deep anger against the medical profession. He believed the initial tumour, which was the size of a tennis ball, should have been spotted far earlier. Otherwise, his one aim was to keep life going as normally as possible. He tried to cling on to some hope that a cure could still be found, and told very few people, apart from his mother, the truth about Muschi's illness. Even Muschi's parents were not told. After their experience with Olga's death of the same cancer, Fritz wanted to spare them for as long as possible. But everywhere he turned, whether to 'orthodox' or 'alternative' medicine, the answer was the same: it was too late to help Muschi.

Once again Vreni took over the household. This time it was without direction from upstairs. As soon as Muschi was well enough, she wrote to Vreni from hospital saying that she was not to worry about the house as long as the children were happy. But there was an enormous amount of work to be done, work formerly shared by the two of them: the fires to make for hot water, the clothes to be seen to, the cooking and the shopping, and Fritz's clean white shirts and stiff collars. Vreni had lived alongside Muschi long enough to know the pride she took in her husband's elegant appearance. Fritz began to appreciate Vreni's care more than ever. There was pressing work at the office, pressure from India, and the unthinkable future without Muschi ahead. To be protected from household duties at this stage was at least something for which he could be grateful. Nevertheless, he tried to step up his contribution: on Sundays he would help with the washing-up. It became a family event with Fritz at the sink and Vreni, Virginia and me drying the dishes and putting them away.

In the next months some hard decisions had to be made. Fritz's own future was put to one side as he considered how

Muschi was to be cared for as her illness progressed. The summer holidays were approaching and it was clear that the usual six weeks in Reinbek for Muschi, Virginia and me would not be possible. Fritz suggested that we, now aged fourteen and nine, might accompany him to Switzerland for a change while Muschi went to 'convalesce' in Reinbek. Muschi welcomed this solution. Although no one had told her what was wrong with her, it seems she sensed the truth. Before she left, she said to Mrs Richmond, the wife of the Minister at Caterham Congregational Church where she had been a faithful member, 'I am going to Germany. I don't want the children to see me decline.'

Virginia and I were delighted to be going to Switzerland for a change, although I shared my mother's regret for every missed opportunity to visit Reinbek. As we said goodbye to her I lingered in the cold blue bedroom. I could not bear to leave the small, frail figure whose warm personality had been the centre of my life. Then I hurried to the waiting green Volkswagen, crammed with luggage, where the others were waiting and we drove away without looking back.

The summer passed. As the last hope for Muschi faded, Fritz prepared Christian and John, both away from home, for the truth. Virginia and I were in complete ignorance, aware only that Muschi's illness was serious but not that it was fatal. Then Fritz began to spend more and more time in Reinbek, first with Muschi at her parents' house and then in the Bethesda Hospital in the nearby town of Bergedorf. He spent hours at her bedside reading to her and talking to her of the things of the spirit which for so long had torn them apart and now brought them together in the most extraordinary way. They were closer than ever before, their attentions focused in the same direction. Fritz wondered at Muschi's strength and courage. Determined not to waste her time in hospital she had set herself the task of learning the Gospel of St Matthew by heart. As her body wasted away and she suffered the indignities that cancer of the liver brings, her spirit seemed to grow before his eyes. An intensity burnt fiercely in her blue eyes as they sank deeper into her face.

Only one thing still held them apart. Muschi had not been told the truth about her illness. Fritz would not talk to her

about dying or death. Then one day, after Fritz had returned to the Petersen house from a long spell with Muschi, knowing that it was now only a matter of days, the telephone suddenly rang. It was the hospital. 'Please come at once,' he was told. 'Mrs Schumacher is very upset about something.' Fritz found Muschi in a state of great agitation. With more emotion than she had shown for weeks she cried, 'Why won't anyone tell me the truth? What is the matter with me?' Fritz still shrank from uttering the fatal words. Finally, exasperated, she asked, 'Is it the same as Olga?' As Fritz nodded affirmation, relief and great peace came into her face.

For three more days Muschi radiated joy and peace. On the morning of October 26th Fritz sat with her as usual. His sister Edith, who had joined him in Reinbek, waited outside the room. As she sat there she had a strange experience, as if a huge flock of white birds were flying from Muschi's room up, up, up into the sky. A moment later Fritz opened the door. It was all over.

It was not until after the funeral, at which only Christian represented the children, that Fritz returned home. He now had the ordeal of breaking the news to his two daughters. He had done all he could to protect us from the pain of Muschi's illness and under Vreni's care and the undisturbed routine of term-time, life had passed without too much anxiety. Temporary losses can be accommodated easily enough. He knew that when the telephone rang at Holcombe and the news came that 'Papa is on his way home', there would be joy at the prospect of seeing him again. But he did not have to say anything as he walked through the front door in the early evening, accompanied by Christian. Vreni, Virginia and I stood waiting in the hall. As he came in, the first thing I saw was Muschi's little white plastic overnight bag in his hand. It had always gone everywhere with her. Now it had returned alone. I knew immediately she would never come back.

Fritz, outwardly strong to the children, was completely devastated by his loss. Often Vreni, looking in at the study to say goodnight, would find him weeping uncontrollably. At lunch-time he would frequently leave the office and visit Vera Morley in her little mews flat behind Selfridges. Vera had been one of Muschi's closest English friends and in her company Fritz

talked and wept freely. He longed to make contact with Muschi's spirit in some way and attended a few meetings of the Subud group where, he had been told, bereaved people sometimes felt the presence of those who had died. But always he experienced nothing at all. He felt utterly alone and deserted like a dog without a master, and wrote to Muschi's mother in November:

I notice myself, that for twenty-four years I have, so to speak, carried everything that I have done to Muschi like a dog. What does the dog who must go carrying do now? To whose feet can he bring the things that he has hunted? Just at the end, a few hours before her death, Muschi said her full name a few times, very clearly and distinctly, as though she had drawn a line through her life and now named that which she was taking over with her. So perhaps the 'carrying' can go on, though not to the living but to the heavenly Beatrice who will probably have much higher demands.

But Fritz saw clearly that Muschi's death had in itself been an experience after which he could never be the same as he was before. He added in the same letter: 'It is an extraordinary blessing for me, and reason for gratitude that I was able to be present at her death - a death in which the great spiritual strength that flowed through her became ever clearer.'

In his despair Fritz clung on to one hope: that Muschi's death had not been without meaning in his life. It had happened at a moment when he had been considering change. These decisions could not now be taken. He wrote to his mother: 'My main desire is to wait quietly until perhaps it may become clear to me what Muschi's death "means" for the development of my life. Only when this becomes clear can I take new decisions.'

Meanwhile it was important to carry on as near to normal as possible, and throw himself once more into his job at the Coal Board. This required the solution of an essentially practical problem: how to keep the household going. Vreni agreed to stay on another year while Fritz made alternative arrangements. He tried to make life as simple as possible for her. During Muschi's illness the solid fuel boiler had been replaced

by an automatic gas central-heating system. He replaced his shirts and stiff collars with drip-dry nylon shirts. Vreni, unwilling to see the deterioration in Fritz's appearance, kept on with the ironing until one of his new shirts melted under the iron. But Fritz was realistic enough to recognize that as a normal full-blooded man he would need more than a housekeeper and from the beginning held the desirability of remarriage in his mind. There were plenty of willing candidates: old secretaries, widowed and divorced friends, ladies young and old who had long fallen for his charms. As far as he was concerned only one or two were serious contenders, but a brief and discreet trial prevented what would have probably turned out to be a ghastly mistake. Unaware of this method of elimination Virginia and I instinctively recognized one of these as a real threat. She had been (and remained) a close family friend and I later learned that Muschi had recommended her to Fritz on her deathbed. We merely felt that she was too clever for us and we called her 'the snake'. The others were all known as 'the bogies'. It was quite obvious what their intentions were - even we could see what an attractive proposition Fritz was. We loathed most the ones who tried to get at him through us. One had an enormous bosom and embraced us constantly. We thought the sensation of enveloping darkness must be like drowning. Eventually Virginia, aged nine, said, 'If she does that again I'll punch her in the stomach.' She went straight to the drawing-room and stood affectionately near to her prey. I watched with glee, wishing I had the courage to do the same.

While 1960 was such a disastrous year domestically, it was fortunately very busy at the Coal Board. The National Union of Mineworkers had begun to take action to fight for the life of the coal industry. They were more receptive to Fritz's arguments for maintaining stable coal production and the dangers of severely reducing the industry than some of the Board, and his commitment to the ideals of nationalization made him a natural person to turn to at this moment of crisis. With the active assistance of the National Coal Board, the N.U.M. undertook a massive and unprecedented educational campaign in the form of a study conference to examine and to inform top-level decision-makers about the implications of the new

energy situation and its effect on the coal industry. Fritz lent his unqualified support to the venture, releasing George McRobie for three months specifically to help with the organization and planning.

The study conference was attended at the highest level: politicians, captains of industry, responsible journalists, and international trade unionists. Harold Wilson and George Brown attended as leaders of the Labour Opposition. Their presence was one of the hopeful notes of the conference for they assured different members of the assembled company, including Fritz and George McRobie in a number of private conversations, that they were completely behind the coal industry's cause, that any future Labour Government would take this cause very seriously, and, in particular, that they understood the need to maintain a stable industry. They agreed that the current annual output figure of 200 million tons would be a level of output they would support as the desirable size of the industry.

The conference was one of the more positive highlights of the year. The other was the announcement of the appointment of Alf Robens as Deputy Chairman of the Board, to succeed James Bowman as Chairman in early 1961. Under Alf Robens, the atmosphere at the N.C.B. changed almost overnight. Robens, a charismatic and energetic figure, knew that he had a battle on his hands and was determined to make the most of it. He had the gift of recognizing those who would be useful to him and immediately took Fritz into his confidence. At last, after ten years in the wilderness, Fritz was to come into his own. Rather than being regarded merely as someone whose role was to stimulate discussion and provoke arguments around the Board table, he now became more or less an adviser to the Chairman, and a strong partnership was formed which was to last for nearly ten years. Fritz became utterly devoted to Robens and had nothing but praise for his new boss. Robens gave Fritz new confidence and in the dark days following Muschi's death and his adjustment to life without her, Robens kept Fritz's head above water. By the end of Robens's first year in office, just after Christmas, Fritz wrote to his mother: 'Since Wednesday I have been back at the office where all my ideas and suggestions are being taken up by everyone. The

work of many years now actually seems to be about to become reality. That, of course, is fun. I get on very well with the Chairman.'

At home his devotion to Robens was ridiculed as was the newly found confidence that Robens gave him. Virginia was furious when one day she discovered that in her little notebook listing the top twenty records each week, Fritz had gone through each list carefully altering the title of one popular record at the time called 'Charmain' to 'Chairman'.

Even more annoying was his sudden habit of name-dropping. At every mention of a name in the headlines he would casually remark, 'Oh, look at this, he used to be a friend of mine,' or 'I knew him well during the war.' At other times there would be a few more details. 'Oh look at this picture of Harold Wilson: I remember when I met him at New College in the Senior Common Room where he was a don. Just a young fellow. He came to me and said he was going to give it up and go into politics. I must say I was amazed at his courage to give up such a safe and respectable career for the uncertainties of politics.' As Fritz and Muschi had rarely entertained while at Holcombe, these claims seemed very far-fetched to us. We eventually cured him by pointing to every eminent and unlikely name we saw, saying, 'A friend of yours in the paper again I see, Pop.'

It was not only his rising star at the Coal Board that kept Fritz going that first year after Muschi's death. His other interests (which will be dealt with more fully in subsequent chapters) were also beginning to take up more of his time. Since 1955 he had thought deeply about the links between economics and war, once more in the light of his concept of Buddhist and Gandhian economics. He had been appalled while in Burma to learn that both Britain and France had the atom bomb and had written to Muschi: 'I think that India, Burma and the other countries of South-East Asia are the only hope for the world. If they can keep independent of either the two great power blocs, Nehru and U Nu might introduce something new into the deadlock, a spiritual force that could "overcome the opposites". The fact that Britain and France are now also producing H Bombs is a clear demonstration to me that they cannot do it.'

Linking the problems of international affairs and international violence now that man had the atom bomb, to the problem of 'how to conduct economic affairs in a manner that is compatible with both permanence and peace', he came to the conclusion that, following Gandhi, 'it is also a problem of "non-violence", but a much more subtle one than the first.' These conclusions, published in an article called 'Non-Violent Economics' in August 1960 in the *Observer* brought together a number of threads he had been following since 1955.

A way of life that ever more rapidly depletes the power of earth to sustain it and piles up ever more insoluble problems for each succeeding generation can only be called 'violent'. It is not a way of life that one would like to see exported to countries not yet committed to it. Of course, it has its attractions. But this is not an argument in its favour any more than an individual's enjoyment of lavish living justifies him in squandering his own and other people's capital.

In short, man's urgent task is to discover a non-violent way in his economic as well as in his political life. It is obvious that the two are closely related. Both represent very real challenges to human goodwill, patience, and rationality. The real pessimists are those who declare it impossible even to make a start . . .

Non-violence must permeate the whole of man's activities, if mankind is to be secure against a war of annihilation. Economics, like politics, must be led back to an acceptable philosophical base. Present day economics, while claiming to be ethically neutral, in fact propagates a philosophy of unlimited expansionism without any regard to the true and genuine needs of man which are limited.¹

The article, which provoked quite a large post-bag, was Fritz's manifesto for the next stage of his life: not only to develop a non-violent economics but also to develop a non-violent way of life. The best teacher he knew was Gandhi, whose way of non-violence, *satyagraha*, he later described: 'It is a very, very tough one. To the cowards and so on he [Gandhi] would say, "Oh no you cannot be non-violent. You are not there yet. This is a higher state, not a lower state."' 'We are not here to be passive,' Fritz explained. 'We have to stand up. The Christian

words "Do not resist evil," are not to be interpreted in this [passive] way.'²

Fritz understood this distinction although he was not a pacifist. 'I am perfectly willing to defend myself and my family,' he said. But he was an ardent peacemaker and fully supported the efforts of the C.N.D. campaigners, writing to his mother at the launch of the campaign in 1961: 'The sudden outbreak of sense under the otherwise not very estimable Bertrand Russell has pleased me. Best of all I would like to march with them to Trafalgar Square.'

In early 1961 he visited Poona for a week to address a seminar on 'Paths to Economic Growth' and was stimulated into thinking more and more about India's economic problems in the light of non-violence. At the same time he was engaged in writing a major paper on 'Socialisation in Britain'. This was the next step in his thinking about organizational structures and was a study of various forms of socialized industry in Britain, but it also contained Fritz's views of what he saw as authentic socialism, a view which did not conflict with his plea for a non-violent economics. Tracing the development of socialism from Robert Owen and Patrick Colquhoun he came to the conclusion that English socialism had a unique quality:

The great line of outstanding writers and artists who exercised a decisive influence upon the socialist movement is in itself sufficient indication that 'socialism' was by no means primarily concerned with economic matters. It was man's entire personality, his humanity, that was at stake; indeed, one might even say that this was a religious issue, a battle for the soul of man. . . .

British socialism began, and is only to be understood, as a movement of protest and rejection. It set its face against the exploitation and pauperisation of the masses - an economic critique; against the degradation of the individual and deprivation of his rights - a political critique; against the uprooting and debasement of people and their standards - a social and cultural critique; and against the entire system of values of capitalist society - a predominantly religious and ethical critique. The purely technical economic motive,

namely the desire to increase efficiency through nationalisation, which at the present time stands so much in the foreground, was originally and until quite recently of negligible significance.³

Much of this paper bore the mark of a thorough acquaintance of the work of R.H. Tawney, whom Fritz greatly admired and who had, with Gandhi, greater influence than any other writer on his economic thinking.

With so much work on his hands Fritz began to get up at 6 a.m. again every morning so that he could give some time to Virginia and myself in the evening. Then in May he received another setback. He had decided that it would lighten Vreni's burdens if she could drive the car. The nearest shops were a mile away. On the third driving lesson, driving through the isolated country lanes, Vreni suddenly panicked and crashed full speed into a telegraph pole which collapsed under the impact of the accelerating car. She was unhurt but Fritz was in agony. He had broken two ribs and, to make matters worse, the ambulance could not be reached because the nearest telephone had been put out of order by the fall of the telegraph pole.

The accident had unforeseen reverberations which passed unnoticed by all but the principal players. Fritz, forcibly kept at home for a few days, was nursed tenderly by Vreni. Slowly his vulnerability and her care began to change their relationship. Autumn came. The question of Vreni's successor arose again. A lot of teasing went on over the supper table. 'Vreni will just have to marry one of the boys.' It seemed unthinkable that she should leave in the new year. Yet no alternative arrangements were made. Fritz just smiled.

On the last Sunday in January Fritz and I went to church together. Since my mother's death he had taken her place in the local Congregational church. It was a beautiful sunny winter morning and we walked the mile to church. On the way back we had almost reached home when he suddenly turned to me and said, 'Barbara, I have something very important to tell you.'

I am not given to second sight, nor had anything happened to give me cause to know at once what he was going to say. But before he had uttered another word I knew with horror

that he was going to tell me that he was going to marry Vreni. I heard the words as an echo and could only ask, 'When?'

'Tomorrow,' came the unbelievable reply.

Until that moment I had thought of Vreni as a close friend and confidante. I could not believe that she would allow my father to betray my mother by letting him *really* love her. Anxiously I asked, 'Are you going to sleep with her?'

It was the only time my father ever turned on me in a sudden rage. 'Why don't you leave that to me,' he shouted. He had no understanding of what lay behind the question.

Consequently he was unprepared for the hostility that followed. He showed no psychological insight into the situation into which he had plunged the family. Out of loyalty to Vreni he gave no reassurance, particularly to me as I had been very close to my mother, that his remarriage did not eradicate his love for Muschi. He interpreted my hostility as jealousy. To make matters worse he rarely mentioned Muschi again, referring to her when he did as 'your mother'.

He was more careful and understanding with others. He tried to play down the normal feelings which he had for Vreni, preferring to let people think that the match was just a good solution to his difficulties. He was, after all, thirty years older than his new wife and was slightly embarrassed by the new life welling up inside him. He hid the truth from his mother, writing to her carefully:

Dearest little mother.

Do not fall off your chair when you read this letter. I have made Vreni Rosenberger my wife. It was an extremely difficult decision. The boys were very much in favour; Barbara greatly opposed, which tried me very much. Such a decision at my age, with open eyes without the tailwind of passion, with so much for and against, under pressure of time, against opposition from inside - oh dear, how strenuous, how exhausting! Now the agony of decision is over and I hope that my nearest and dearest will not let us both down in giving us their good wishes.

Last week, by the way, Vreni and I went to her parents in Switzerland. We were well received there. Vreni does me a remarkable amount of good; my worry was whether I would

be able to be worthy of her honour in the time I have left.
Who knows?

With heartfelt love, Fritz.

The force of passion was dulled only in so far as other considerations had been taken into account when making his decision. There was the difference in their ages. Fritz was aware that the chances of leaving a young widow behind him were high. More important were the differences in their interests and experience. Fritz was a man of the world, moving in circles to which Vreni had never had access and was not particularly anxious to experience. But he also had behind him inner struggles which had finally resolved themselves into a certainty about the purpose and direction of his life. Vreni had no such experience. She was still at the beginning of the journey. She looked to him as her guide and the director of her life. At first she was not aware how far he filled her inner space, how he became the meaning and purpose of her life. As she realized that she was only alive when he was at home, and ceased to exist the minute he left the house, she turned to him for advice and guidance on how to improve her character and develop inner strength. He offered her no help. He would merely smile benignly and say, 'To me you are a banquet.'

He no longer felt the need to include those around him on his spiritual journey. Muschi's death had given him the certainty to proceed alone. The 1950s had been a time of preparation both in his inner, and in his outer, public life. Muschi's death had been the final trial of his period of preparation. His marriage to Vreni coincided with a new, more outward-looking phase. Meditation, prayer and spiritual reading was something he could now do alone. For Vreni this was a great hardship. Not only did she genuinely want him to help her put her inner house in order, but she felt that by closing the door of his inner life he was denying her access to the most important part of his being.

There might have been several reasons for Fritz's reserve. He did not deny the anguish his turbulent quest had caused Muschi. He had tried to force his beliefs on her and in the end had seen her make her journey alone. He was also watching his children growing up. He saw how it was necessary to allow

them to think for themselves and make their own discoveries and mistakes. In this sense Vreni was no different from John or Christian, all three were in their early twenties. Fritz may have seen that she must be allowed to develop and flower in her own way without his active guidance or interference. Perhaps too, his attitude reflected the change in himself at which he had been working so hard, that of a transition from a mind-centred life to a heart-centred life. Fritz's mind was a public place, his heart private. As the years wore on and he became a public figure, his mind fed him with information but his heart interpreted it so that all who heard him experienced a direct appeal to their hearts' understanding, not their cold intellectual assent.

So it became at home. While there was still tension after his marriage, he did not talk about what was going on in his heart; what he said, the way he talked, the emotion he began to convey, the warmth of his affection which he slowly allowed to the surface - all reflected the fruits of a new orientation. What he lacked in psychological understanding he made up for with patience and good-humoured affection, avoiding at all times situations where arguments could arise and, by his own example of gentle kindness, gradually defused the tensions. It was an exercise in non-violence as harmony was restored and he attributed none of it to himself but always insisted that it was Vreni who was the 'good spirit in the house', 'a real treasure'.

After the first teething troubles of Fritz's marriage were over, life at Holcombe settled down to normal. John and Christian had left home, Virginia and I were still at school and a new arrival, Robert, was filling the house with the contented gurgles of a plump, happy baby. Fritz was thrilled with this new son, who was a sensitive and deep child, and reminded him of his brother Ernst. As Fritz became an increasingly public figure and spent less time at home with the family he appreciated the harmonious life at Holcombe more than ever before. 'Coming home is for me the best part of travelling,' he said. Although he was always under tremendous pressure from work the study door would be open for all to come and talk, or, as happened on many a winter evening, to play cards with him, listening to Donizetti's *La Sonambula*. In his wrought-iron lampstand was stuck a tiny bunch of plastic roses which

he would ceremoniously present to the winner. The parchment shade of the lamp had a carefully folded piece of carbon paper stapled on to it to shade his eyes when reading, and on his head, keeping his hair out of his eyes, would be a white cloth cap which he also wore when making the bread every week. It was the most disgusting object, greasy inside and dusty yellow outside from the bouts of smoking that interspersed his frequent attempts at being a non-smoker.

Despite his new domestic responsibilities (there were to be three more children after Robert), Fritz worked harder in the 1960s than he had ever done before but he never lost the air of being relaxed and having time for all. As Christian and John left home and married, followed by Virginia and myself, we were replaced first by Robert and then Karen, a bundle of energy whose interest in everything around her contrasted with Robert's more sensitive and inward approach. Karen's birth coincided with that of Fritz's first grandchild, Vanessa, born to John and his wife Jill. It caused a sensation in Caterham when father and son came together to the Congregational Church some months later to have their daughters christened at the same service.

Robert was the only boy for some years. Vreni had another daughter in 1969, Nicola, by which time there were three more granddaughters. Fritz wrote to his mother: 'How this will all look in seventeen years' time is hard to imagine: six Schumacher girls aged between seventeen and twenty! One more than the five Dionesians!'

The only sign that Fritz was busier than ever was the change in his letters to his mother. They were no longer long and detailed accounts of his inner life, but short accounts of the children. As each baby came along he felt he had discovered anew the mystery of life and birth. He was struck each time with wonder at the new personality emerging, describing it to his mother as if he was experiencing it for the first time. For those old enough to observe his infatuations with his youngest child it was an amusing and endearing spectacle. For the child who had been replaced by the baby it was sometimes painful and bewildering. But Fritz did not possess that kind of sensitivity although he might have learned by the time the eighth child, James, made his appearance in 1974.

This full domestic life was kept very much apart from Fritz's professional life although he greatly enjoyed taking Vreni with him to some public functions. He was very proud of her youth and would point to his colleagues, gleefully saying, 'Look at old so-and-so. How can he bear to be stuck with that old creature.' Or, if the wife was attractive despite her thirty or so years' advantage of Vreni, he would say, 'How can she stand being stuck with that senile old fellow.' This was generally after a few glasses of wine when less charitable traits in his character began to emerge. Vreni was so modest she could never understand his pride and assumed that her only value to him was in keeping him comfortable. She suffered from feelings of inadequacy because she was unable to stimulate him mentally and asked him why he had not married someone more intellectual, as his colleagues had done. He was horrified. 'I would never have got any peace,' was his reply. Vreni gave him peace. Not that life is peaceful with four young children, but that was not the kind of peace Fritz meant. He meant freedom from the constant challenge of his professional life, from the high tension of intellectual exchange. Vreni's acceptance of his way of life, her care, and generous understanding that she had to share him with a wide public enabled him to be the relaxed and warm person he became as their relationship matured. She left him free to do the work he knew he must, although the cost to her was high.