

My walk to school every morning, with my satchel on my back, took me along the Lützow Strasse to the Falk Real Gymnasium. This, in all its old ugliness has remained unchanged to this day, just as I remembered it. It has only changed its name, Falk is perhaps rightly now forgotten, and the school has received a bureaucratic number. A square five-floor brick building with windows in five horizontal rows, it was opened in 1880, hence also its association with Falk.

During the first day at any school, one might expect that new boys would be told about the name, history and foundation of the awe-inspiring institution to which they had been admitted, bribed and cajoled perhaps by their parents. But not so in the still Prussian Berlin of the 1920s. I never knew who Falk was and therefore decided to look him up in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. Adalbert Falk [1827-1900], a Prussian bureaucrat, was the State Minister for Ecclesiastical Affairs under Bismarck in the newly founded German Reich of 1871. Falk was responsible for the *Kulturkampf* against the Roman Catholic Church.

I very much doubt whether his activities had a subconscious influence on me and made me into a life-long critic of that schism of Christianity. I was christened on 30 March 1917 in the Lutheran faith at the famous Dom Cathedral in Berlin and later confirmed in it at the Zwölf-Apostel Kirche, also in West Berlin. When I visited it after World War II, it was still standing as a red brick edifice, but when I called on the vicar he could only tell me that all books and records of his church had been destroyed during the war.

No doubt it is due more to my mother's Lutheran influence, than to any religious instruction I ever received, that I have remained a Lutheran all my life. I recommend this faith to all Christians as it is so pure. It places no ecclesiastical hierarchy between the individual and God, its churches are bereft of any seductive art, and thus it strengthened, in me at least, true Christianity.

There was one man at my school who had much to do with my choice of science as my life's endeavour. He was short and rotund, wore spectacles and of course was *Herr Doktor*—my chemistry master, Herr Ober-Studienrat Dr Arthur Kundt. It is a great tribute to the higher German school authorities of the time that such a well qualified chemist was appointed to teach his discipline to school boys of 10 to 17 years of age. For me his lessons were all-absorbing, he inspired me, and soon I was helping him to prepare the apparatus for his demonstrations, to wash the glass ware afterwards and I was able to spend time talking to him for hours. I wish I could now talk to Kundt and tell him of my career, I am sure he would be pleased.