



Title 303 Science in Germany was born again after World War II in 1948 when Otto Hahn (standing right) became the first President of the new *Max-Planck-Society*, the successor to then extinct *Kaiser-Wilhelm-Gesellschaft*. Courtesy Archives of Max-Planck-Society.

## ISR 6/4      \*Recovery of Science in Germany\*      Title 303

Once before, 18 years earlier, I had published an article on the same subject in the *New Scientist* of 1963; I had then been invited by the President of the Max-Planck-Society, Professor Reimar Lüst, to travel through Germany and visit its scientific institutions. He was of the opinion that I might give an objective opinion whether Science had recovered from the disastrous effects of the Hitler regime during the period of 1933-1945. In 1981, and after several more visits to Germany [see Titles 168 and 212], I considered it right to look again at Germany's recovery and I wrote and published a further article in December 1981. Each time I concluded that it had been achieved partially, but not completely. If I had to review this subject for the third time, say in 2000, my answer would be more positive and I would consider recovery as complete.

In my 29-page article for ISR, published in December 1981, I began with a section on *Finis Germaniae?* World War II had led in Germany to the total physical destruction of most scientific institutions, their laboratories gone, their scientists distributed over the four zones of occupation by the Allied Forces under often exceedingly difficult travel arrangements between the American, British, French and Russian Zones. The Russian Zone later became East Germany, the Deutsche Demokratische Republik, the DDR, to which I have never been able to travel and which I could therefore not include in my reviews.

The main factor for the rapid recovery, already very evident during my 1963 visit, was the experience of reconstruction of German science after World War I. Other factors were the foresight of defeat after Stalingrad in 1943, evacuation if possible to the West and very hard work by all scientists, teachers and students alike. The period of 1945-1960 has been characterised as the most creative one, with exceptional improvisation, originality and productivity. The guiding principles "You are alive—use your life" was then the all—pervading thought.

The currency reform of 1948 and the Marshall Plan, contributed greatly, as well as the re-founding of the Emergency Association of 1918 which later became the powerful Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft, DFG, today supporting much of the academic scientific research at the universities. By 1950, more than DM 50 million were available for science. The rebirth of the Kaiser-Wilhelm-Gesellschaft as the Max-Planck-Gesellschaft, as organised by the British Colonel B. Blount, was also a major factor in the rebirth of science in Germany after World War II.

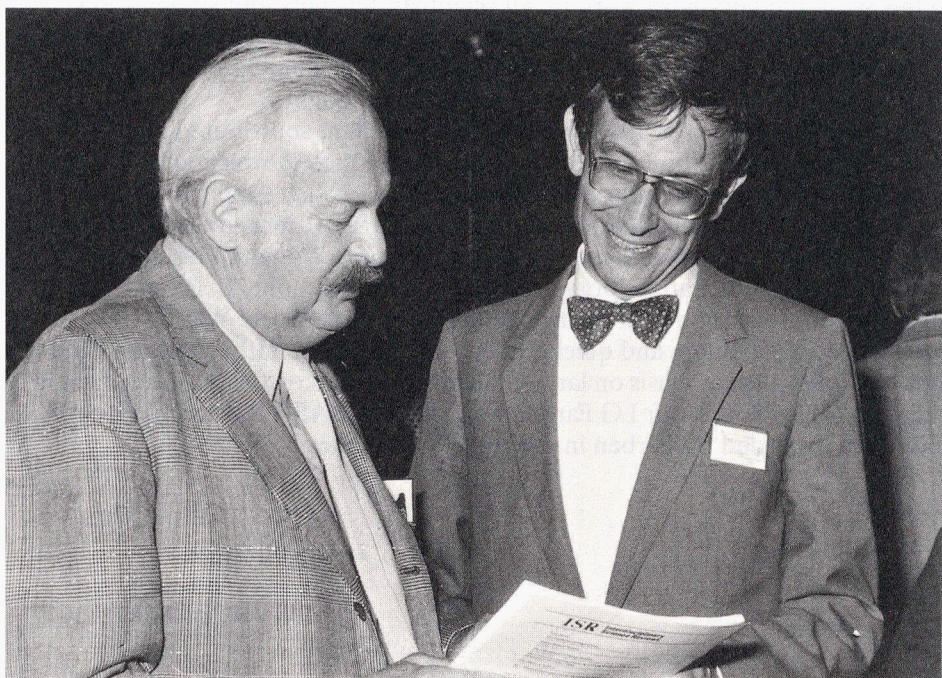
The most outstanding and quickest recovery occurred in the German Chemical industry, due to its emphasis on large-scale research and on the position of chemists at top board level. Pre-war I G Farben was split into BASF, Bayer and Hoechst and soon each exceeded IG Farben in size and performance.





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**Professor Eugen Seibold**, a Member of the ISR Editorial Board, was responsible for bringing German Oceanography up to an international level again after 1945. Later he became the President of the German Research Board.  
*Courtesy Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft, Bonn.*



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Dr Anthony Michaelis (left) showing a copy of his Journal, ISR, to Dr Heinz Riesenhuber (right), the German Federal Minister for Science and Technology at a press conference in Bonn. © Kemmer.