

Persecution of Russian Scholars REVEALED

By Science4Peace

Today I'm talking to Professor Hannes Jung, a German emeritus professor from Hamburg University, staff member of DESY, member of CERN, and the founder of Science4Peace. The Science4Peace forum tries to promote the idea of scientific collaboration as a driver for peace. It was created early after the war broke out in Ukraine in 2022, in reaction to the decisions by CERN and DESY to stop collaborations with Russia and Belarus. Their activities is what we want to discuss today. Links: DESY website: https://www.desy.de/index_eng.html Science4Peace website: <https://science4peace.com/>

#M3

Hello everybody, this is Pascal Lottaz from Neutrality Studies, and today I'm talking to Professor Hannes Jung, a German emeritus professor from Hamburg University, staff member of DESY, member of CERN, and the founder of Science for Peace. The Science for Peace forum tries to promote the idea of scientific collaboration as a driver for peace. It was created shortly after the war broke out in Ukraine in 2022, in reaction to the decision by CERN and DESY to stop collaborations with Russia and Belarus. Their activities are what we want to discuss today. So, Professor Jung, welcome.

#M2

Thank you very much. Thank you very much for the opportunity to speak about the Science for Peace Forum here at Neutrality Studies. It's a real pleasure for me to be here. Thank you very much.

#M3

Well, thank you for taking the time and also for your initiative. I think we have never needed voices for peace from anywhere more than we need them now. Can you maybe talk to us about Science for Peace, what you're doing there, and what the problem actually is? Because it seems science was supposed to connect the world, but now even a lot of scientific institutions are cutting or have cut ties and are not building them up again, are they?

#M2

Yes, yes. So the Science for Peace Forum was created as a reaction to the sanctions imposed by Germany and many European countries, and by scientific institutions, after the invasion of Russian troops into the territory of Ukraine in 2022. I think it was the first time ever that scientific cooperation and collaboration was put into question—at least the first time after the Second World

War, when scientific cooperation was built up and treated as a means to cooperate and to talk to each other even across political boundaries. For example, CERN was founded in 1954 after the Second World War by scientists from countries who had been at war with each other just a couple of years before. And it was built on the idea that one should perform scientific research independent of political boundaries.

And one should use that as a means to be able to talk to each other and to build bridges. Similarly, it was with the research center in Hamburg at DESY, where I have been working for a long time, which was founded in 1959 as a national research center. It was called Deutsches Elektronen-Synchrotron. It's an accelerator center originally built for particle physics. Already in the very early days, there were cooperations at that time with the German Democratic Republic and with Russian scientists. So even during the Cold War, communication was possible and established. All that was immediately stopped after the invasion of Russian troops into Ukrainian territory in 2022, and it came as a big surprise to many of us, just because we had been working together, we had very good cooperation and collaboration, and then immediately the cooperation was cut.

It was such that people from Russia had to leave the institute. Their email addresses were cut. They were no longer allowed to participate. And it went even further: joint publications with Russian scientists were no longer allowed. It still continues today that, at conferences where Russian scientists participate with the affiliation of a Russian university, participation of DESY staff, people, and members is not allowed. So there is significant damage done to cooperation with scientists all over the world. And it continued also at CERN. CERN was a bit more moderate in the beginning; it just put cooperation on hold and did not cut all the ties. But then, at the end of 2024, the cooperation agreements with Russian institutes and Russian universities were not extended. The contracts were running out and were not renewed.

Only the cooperation agreement with the Joint Institute for Nuclear Research near Dubna, which is also an international institute, was continued, still under the sanctions and restrictions. This meant that all the contributions of Russian scientists to the Large Hadron Collider, the LHC, and also the experiments, were cut, and all the financial investment from Russia had to be replaced. Moreover, the knowledge and contributions of Russian scientists to the analysis of data, as well as to the understanding of the big detectors, had to be replaced. They played a very important role in the development and understanding of the detectors and the measurements, and that had to be replaced immediately.

This also created a lot of frustration among the Russian colleagues because we were working well together until 2022. Then these sanctions were imposed, and two years later they were essentially thrown out of the cooperation. This has, of course, dramatic consequences for scientific cooperation in general, but also for future projects, because which country would want to participate in a joint scientific program or project, invest resources, invest a lot of money, if they fear that at some stage

they might be thrown out because of some political arguments? One also has to see this in the context that CERN and the experiment are cooperating with Israel. Israel is a member state of CERN, and Israel is now waging a terrible war against the population of Gaza and the West Bank.

There is no discussion at all about whether that is still in accordance with the contracts Israel has with CERN, or whether there is even knowledge being used which is obtained at CERN and maybe applied in the war. To be clear, I'm very much against sanctions and restrictions in scientific exchange, and I'm also against sanctioning science and scientific exchange with Israel. Of course, it has to be non-military communication and non-military cooperation. But if that is guaranteed, then we should not cut any scientific ties. But at least one should be able to talk to each other and say that what is happening in the name of the state of Israel is not acceptable to other scientists. For example, there is a very interesting initiative from Israel, from academics in Israel, the so-called Black Flag initiative, which comes from inside the universities.

They find very clear words against the war in Gaza and say, "We cannot claim we did not know what is happening." They call very strongly to stop this war because they fear it will damage the reputation of the whole society in the future. I think this is something one has to support very strongly. It's a tragedy that on one side there was an immediate reaction to the war started by Russia against Ukraine, but there has been absolutely no reaction to the now long-ongoing war against the population in Gaza. So this is a kind of tragedy and a sign of a very dramatic double standard, a double morality, in scientific institutions at the moment, especially in scientific institutions in the West.

#M3

Yeah, it's clear double standards. And it's another instance in which Western institutions are integrated into the Western system of power. In a sense, CERN should not be a Western institution. CERN should be an international institution, an international scientific institution. It's located in Switzerland, and it should have collaboration with everybody. But what we're seeing is that, on the political level, it seems to be integrated not just into the value system, but into the power structures—the political power structures—of the West.

#M2

Yes, yes, exactly. This is also what shocked so many of us, because we all believed that at least CERN should stay out of these political debates. And in all its history, CERN only imposed sanctions against Serbian and Montenegrin scientists during the Yugoslavian War, and they were not allowed to participate at CERN anymore, but this was on the basis of a resolution of the UN Security Council. One can still question whether that is appropriate and correct, but this was on a very different level. Now there is no decision, no resolution from the Security Council or from the United Nations to sanction anything in science.

So for me, it was really a break in the policy of international scientific institutions, and it's still not understandable what the real aim is behind it, because cutting scientific cooperation with Russian institutions did not change anything in the war against Ukraine. It was just a symbolic reaction, although quite a lot of Russian scientists immediately launched a signature campaign—a petition—against the war. So they were very clearly opposed to the war. Now they are forced to go back and are also facing difficulties in their own country. So, in the end, it is a very counterproductive measure that has been taken. Yes. The situation has not improved until now. There was hope that people could still participate at CERN through affiliation with the Joint Institute for Nuclear Research, JINR, near Moscow.

But this was also made clear now, that there's only a very strict policy: only people with sole affiliation to this institute are able and allowed to participate at CERN, and not anyone who has an additional affiliation and still maintains their affiliation with Russian universities. So there is a very, very restrictive policy in place, and it's not understandable. Of course, the CERN Council, which made the decision, is to some extent representing the political views of the different states. There is a political and a scientific representative from each member state. But in principle, the directorate could have said, "No, we don't follow the decision of the CERN Council. We don't agree with that. We believe in the values we believed in before, and we are opposed to that." At least this would have been a sign, but just accepting it and saying, "Okay, then this is..."

#M3

But can you explain to me how CERN is run? So, it's headquartered in Geneva. And how is it administered on the political level? Were no Russian and Chinese decision-makers involved on the board of CERN?

#M2

No. So CERN is a European organization—an international, Europe-wide institution. There are now, I think, 23 member states, mainly from European countries. There are observer states like the United States; Russia was also an observer state, but they have no influence on the decisions of the CERN Council. The CERN Council is made up of representatives of the member states, and they review the scientific program of CERN and also make decisions on the direction of policy. The directorate of CERN is essentially bound to the positions of the CERN Council.

But of course, they should have the possibility to express their own view and also be able to criticize if they believe the council is deciding in a different way. And it was a bit surprising that there was no public statement from anyone in the directorate against that. It was a bit different at DESY, for example. DESY is run as a national institute, and there the directorate themselves expressed that they wanted to enforce these sanctions against Russian scientists. So there was at least a reflection

of the opinion of the director at DESY, although there was immediately a protest campaign against it, where many scientists declared that they see it differently and are strictly against sanctioning Russian colleagues.

#M3

But so basically, CERN is, although not a political institution, of course, very much dependent on funding. Do you know, or was there any talk of funding from European states being cut to CERN in case they didn't comply with these restrictions?

#M2

I don't think it was said like that. But of course, people know who is paying how much to CERN, and which country is paying how much to CERN. And if one or several of the states who pay the largest amounts express a political opinion, it is clear that this has weight, and has a different weight than an opinion from a state that pays much less. I think it's not necessary to say, "If you don't follow what we think, then we will cut." It's clear that there will be consequences if decisions are taken against the explicit will of major partners.

#M3

Major donor country. But overall, what you're saying is that the decision to cut ties with Russia was basically made by CERN after it became clear that, in the current political environment, Russia should be excluded from all these different levels of society in Europe. And CERN just followed that trend. It wasn't necessarily an intervention from the European Union or somebody who said, like, "You have to go to CERN."

#M2

No, I think from European bodies there was no direct intervention, also not from the governments. It was an immediate reaction in 2022, and then it was already positive that the council decided to keep the cooperation with this institute in Russia. So there we had the hope that maybe things would get better with time. But now it seems they did not, because there are still these very strong restrictions. I think it was mainly a decision by the policymakers, but there was also concern from the scientists. There was a rather big movement against cutting ties, because people have been working together for decades—a very long time. There was always exchange.

For example, there is documentation at CERN where they document the positive and fruitful collaboration with the, at that time, Soviet Union going back to 1956. It's a long tradition of cooperation, even when there were political tensions during the Cold War. And it was always seen as something very positive that one could talk to each other, exchange ideas, and also try to understand what was in the thoughts of other people. I believe this is also something which made

CERN so attractive to young students. I remember when I was a student coming to CERN for the first time, I was fascinated that I could suddenly talk to people from Russia, from Poland, from the GDR. This was at the time before 1989. It was just fascinating.

I could sit in the cafeteria, drink a coffee or a glass of wine, and talk about physics, but also about political issues. It was unbelievable that this was possible. I believe this fascination was shared by a lot of people, that one believed this is where we should go—we should talk to each other, we should try to understand. Even if we have different points of view, we should listen and try to understand why you think that way, and give arguments for why someone else believes differently. But we should be able to talk. It was an atmosphere of, "Wow, this is how it should be." And then it came as a shock when this was just cut.

#M3

Of course. I mean, what you're describing seems utterly reasonable to me—that scientists and just normal people would have an interest in actually getting to know the viewpoints of those whom you usually can't meet. And so, in this sense, what we are seeing now is worse than the Cold War. The whole atmosphere is much more poisonous now than it was even in the 60s and 70s. But this also means, to me, the way to explain this from a social science perspective is that this is part of the logic of war. It's not just a political decision; it's a societal phenomenon that belongs to the gearing up, the complete hardening, and the dissociation of these nations. And this is, of course, highly dangerous. Yes, exactly.

#M2

This is the whole problem at the moment. Instead of trying to at least listen to the other side and trying to understand, there is more of an attitude of, "No, we don't talk to each other." And this is not the way; this is, of course, scientifically complete nonsense and a disaster. It cannot lead to any fruitful solution if one doesn't listen to the other. I mean, all the big conflicts, all the wars, have been ended by at least listening to the others, seeing that there are different interests, and trying to see how it can be solved and how it can be resolved.

This is really a big disaster. I believe that although the effect is rather small, what the Science for Peace Forum does is generally important. I think it's very important to keep these ties, to talk to other people. In the Science for Peace Forum, for example, there are people from Russia, there are people from European countries, but there are also people from Ukraine. And of course, people have different opinions, but it is a forum where one can discuss and talk about things and try to understand. And this, I think, is absolutely essential.

#M3

It is. So tell me, how is Science for Peace organized? How are you making discussions among Russian, Ukrainian, European, and Chinese scientists possible again?

#M2

It's organized in a very loose way. Essentially, anybody who is interested can subscribe to the forum and participate. The discussions just happen on different topics, with people from different countries participating and giving their opinions. Of course, we make sure that the discussion is conducted in a respectful and acceptable way. But if people have different opinions, it's also fine to express that—and it happens. I think that's absolutely good because it also helps to understand the point of view of the other side. If we just keep in our own bubble, it's...

#M3

Sorry, I'm going to go back a little bit to the political side, and then we'll return to Science for Peace. But part of the problem is, of course, that the entire mindset at the moment in the West, and especially in Europe, is that discussions with Russia need to be ended as a form of punishment, as a form of pressure. And because whatever the Russians—or whatever Russia—says is considered a lie, right? So it's labeled as a Putin talking point. And it goes so far that even statements of fact are being rejected as talking points.

I keep thinking that if Vladimir Putin could destroy the entire European Union or everything just by stating publicly tomorrow that 2 plus 2 is 4, it would force us to change our mathematical models. It doesn't go that far, but even statements of fact are not acceptable anymore. This is a hardening—not just at the political level, but a hardening of European society toward this enemy in the East. And this is extremely unhealthy for society. Definitely, definitely, yes. Sorry, there was no question, but maybe you have some thoughts?

#M2

Yes, I mean, this is also to some extent happening in scientific communication—that now, after the rather unfair and discriminatory treatment of Russian scientists, they are also extremely frustrated about what has happened, because they also didn't believe that this would happen. I'm pretty sure all of them believed that such a decision by the CERN Council and CERN would never happen. They might have thought, "This could be a statement, but we will never be thrown out and treated as *persona non grata*." And then this happened. I mean, it's also unbelievable. I have been working with people on a publication, in an experiment, and so on, and suddenly these people are no longer allowed to participate in the discussion because they no longer have access to the data.

I mean, this is also, from a scientific or intellectual point of view, a disaster. I mean, it means that intellectual property is being questioned. I mean, all the contributions that these people have made

to the common enterprise are certainly... We don't care. I mean, this is not only damaging our reputation, but it also creates enormous frustration on the other side, where quite a few people have already said, even if CERN were to change now, we don't want to come back. Yeah, the damage is done. This will take ages to overcome. I mean, it's easy to cut the ties, but to build up trust and cooperation, that takes a long time.

And, for example, summer students or young people are no longer allowed to participate in the summer student program at CERN or DESY. These are people who are just about to complete their university studies, in their early 20s. What message does that send to these young people—that they are not welcome, that they are not allowed to participate in an exchange program which is so helpful and so good for scientific cooperation? And these are the people who could potentially be scientific leaders in 20 or 30 years. I'm sure they will remember how they were treated. So it's really a complete disaster, and I think it's extremely important to keep scientific ties and, even at a very small scale, to maintain cooperation and communication, so that all of this is not just lost but has a future.

#M3

No, you're absolutely right. I mean, on the one hand, we're seeing this as a societal phenomenon. On the other hand, it is one induced by state pressure or perceived societal pressure. This is also not necessary, by the way. I must point out that although Japan is usually counted as part of the West, Japan doesn't do that. My institute hired a Russian researcher just last year. I have a Russian colleague who was here two years ago, in 2023, for a semester. Japan doesn't do that. This is a European, Anglo-American... America-European thing.

#M2

Yes, that's exactly it. I mean, it's absolutely true and it's good that you point that out, because there has also been cooperation with KEK, with Japan, the Electron-Positron Collider, where people from DESY and from other countries participate, and they have clearly said they don't impose any sanctions in the experiment. So there is a way, and there are possibilities to say, no, we don't follow that. And this is extremely positive and an extremely good tool to keep ties open.

#M3

The question for us is, what can we do as scientists on the ground? And you already have an initiative now, Science for Peace. It's a forum, a homepage. I will, of course, link to that. I'm working together with others, among them Jeffrey Sachs, on also creating something like that—a forum for intellectuals and academics to exchange and hopefully also open that up on a wider scale. But we need grassroots activities to reconnect what has been ripped apart, and ripped apart by societal mechanisms, actually—not just by governments, but by a mania, a European mania that opposes all and any form of cooperation and ties, right? People-to-people ties. Right, right.

#M2

There are also positive counter-examples. For example, we have just started, or are about to start, a workshop on particle physics—a purely physics workshop—which has, in its definition, that there will be no restrictions and it will be completely online, so that people from countries who are normally not able to participate in workshops can participate and contribute. And surprisingly, for me, it was a bit of a surprise that this workshop received quite a lot of positive reaction. People said, "Oh, this is good. This is exactly what we need." European, German positive reactions? Europeans, yes, and also from other countries. That they have a possibility to participate. And this workshop is not connected to any of the research institutions. We made it completely independent, as an initiative of scientists who are, of course, connected to research institutions, but it is not hosted by any of them.

It's not financially supported by any research institution, so they cannot impose any restrictions. And I think this was very essential for us. And now we've even received very nice offers to publish the proceedings of these workshops. I think this is at least an activity of scientists acting against the policy of their research institutions, to say, no, we want to do science together and we still want to communicate without restrictions and without treating some people differently than others. So this, I think, is a rather positive example where one can do something, and I believe it's becoming more and more important that initiatives from scientists themselves, or from the people themselves, start independently of governmental or political restrictions—that people just say themselves, no, we don't follow that. We want something different.

#M3

Yeah, and we need to build these platforms as well. This workshop that you're talking about—where is it taking place? Is it physical or is it online?

#M2

No, it's purely online. It's purely online.

#M3

The question for us is, should we try to build online platforms that would be resilient against this kind of—not just against individual policies, but against conflict itself—so that it is a decentralized system, and can always be accessed by people who still want to participate? I think that would be necessary, wouldn't it?

#M2

This would be excellent, yes. This is one of the problems at the moment—that this does not yet exist in such a form, and there are quite a lot of technical things that need to be sorted out. But something like that would be excellent.

#M3

Something like a decentralized file-sharing system, but as a social network for people to keep accessing. Because the problem is, even at the moment, the technology available is always linked to certain places. And if the switch is flipped off, then the whole thing is gone.

#M2

Yes, yes, yes. There is also another thing that we have just begun to discuss in the Science for Peace Forum. At the moment, we were mostly just rejecting changes in policy and saying that the way things were treated previously was much better than what is being done now. This is, of course, a good attitude for the moment, but it is not so good to have just a statement like, "We are against this political decision." What we are now discussing is creating a forum, building up a conference or a workshop where we bring together people from essentially all countries—not on the political level, but on the scientific level, perhaps—to work out a positive agenda. What is our aim for the future? How do we all want to live together in the future, and how do we achieve that? First, independent of how it can be politically achieved, but just to have a clear mission. How can it be done?

#M3

An image of the future—a positive image of a peaceful future—which goes far beyond just complaining. This is absolutely correct.

#M2

Yes, yes. And I mean, it also has to be clear that it should not be something coming from Europe, from Western countries, or just industrialized countries who say, "It should be done that way and the others have to follow." It must be discussed on an equal footing, with acceptance and respect for every group, for everybody. Then we can develop a vision that is applicable to the whole world, not only to part of the world or just the industrialized world. Of course, this is a huge undertaking, but I think it is important to have a clear, well-defined goal. Then we can discuss how that can be achieved and what steps are necessary to reach it.

#M3

You're completely correct about this, and also I think now is the right time to do that, because we've been, for three years, kind of in a state of shock, trying to wrap our minds around what is happening

to us socially through these forces of war. These are forces of war. This is the prelude to an all-out war, an even larger war. I mean, there's war already going on. But just like with the First World War and Second World War, it could grow. These things can grow. And if we are not careful, we're going to have a Third World War. What we are seeing now is the prelude to that. Now would be the time to actually try to work against this, with positive visions for collaboration. Scientists could be a very important neutral force, and academics a very important force for creating these platforms and knitting us together again.

#M2

Exactly, exactly. Yes, I think scientists or natural scientists should play a big role, but all the other branches of science should also play a role. It's not only the natural sciences that are important, but also the social and economic sciences, which should also contribute. The idea is really to bring people from all the different fields, with all their different experiences, together to work out a kind of concept for the future.

#M3

Yeah, and something—I mean, the good thing about scientists and academics in general is that they're often motivated not by money, but by the desire to know, to figure things out. So if we create a forum or if we create connections that allow for structured collaboration in order to figure things out, that would create a very strong intrinsic motivation to use such platforms, just in order to move forward with the research, right? There is nothing at the moment, right? We don't have that kind of social platform.

#M2

Not that I know of. I just don't know. Of course, it should be looked into, but I don't know.

#M3

No, no. And, you know, I have this very strong feeling that actually maybe Russian colleagues could help us with that, because I must say, as a scientist—a social scientist on my end—some of the most important contributions to global knowledge come from the Russian or former Soviet sphere, through things like Sci-Hub and Library Genesis. All of these so-called pirate pages make scientific knowledge available again because capitalism in the West has locked it behind paywalls. It's very important that we have these pirate sites, which were all actually started in Kazakhstan and Russia. This is a very important way of distributing knowledge. I don't know about you, but I use Sci-Hub and Library Genesis on an almost daily basis. They are very important.

#M2

Okay. I haven't used it yet, but okay. It's a good suggestion, yes.

#M3

Anyhow, it's a different discussion as well, but yeah, we need to figure out how to insulate academia and the exchange between academics and scientists from the passions of politics and the passions of society at the moment. That's something we don't have. Even CERN is now a typical victim of this, I mean as an institution, right? Yes, yes, yes, definitely. Yes, yes.

#M2

Yes. I think we should really try to get this going and try to work out a vision for the future, which is clearly against any walls, I think, and which also has to clearly respect international laws and strengthen—even if there are things that can't be done better—also strengthen something like the United Nations and these organizations from the United Nations. That, I think, is at least a forum where there is still some exchange and where things can happen. I think one should really make use of all these structures and build something for the future.

#M3

Yeah, and something distributed, something where actually all members of all states have an equal share. So it's not going to be that easy to break it apart anymore, the way that now Western science is basically taking apart the system we've got, because it's built around the same power structures. Professor Jung, this is very interesting and I'm very glad that you're doing this. I will also invite you to our next private meetings that we're going to have in our group of social scientists who are working on similar issues. People who want to join your Science for Peace initiative should go to the homepage that I will link. Is there any other place where you would like people to find more resources?

#M2

I mean, on the web page, everything we have is available. There is a contact address, so people can contact me directly or just subscribe to the email list. All the information is given on the web page. So this is the central place to get information on Science for Peace.

#M3

Okay. I will put all of that into the description of this video. We will also translate this video into 10 other languages, including German, French, Chinese, and Russian. I hope you can also distribute it to those audiences so it can circulate there, because what we need to do is reconnect what has been ripped apart by very unfortunate forces. Professor Jung, thank you very much for your time today.

#M2

Thank you very much for your time and for the opportunity to speak at Neutrality Studies. Thank you very much. It was a pleasure.

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You're very welcome. See you next time. Thank you.