

Hot off the Press 17!

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Members recommend.....

It's Russia Day for Germans thanks to cash from Moscow

Germany *The Times*
Oliver Moody Berlin 4.6.21

The premier of an east German state has been criticised for holding a "Russia Day" to celebrate its ties to Moscow with funding from a Russian-led energy consortium.

The festival in Schwerin, 100 miles northeast of Berlin, received €10,000 in sponsorship money from Nord Stream 2, which is building a €9 billion pipeline from Russia to a nearby German port.

The project's critics, including the United States, France and Britain, say it will give President Putin a chokehold over central Europe's energy supplies.

Russia Day was fronted by Manuela Schwesig, the chief minister of the surrounding state of Mecklenburg-West Pomerania and one of the pipeline's most prominent advocates in Germany.

Once called "Putin's keenest comrade" in German politics, Schwesig, 47, is accused by opposition parties of cosy-ing up to the Kremlin. This year she

established a Foundation for Climate and Environmental Protection with €60 million from Nord Stream 2 and Gazprom, the Russian state-owned oil and gas conglomerate.

Schwesig's Russia Day took place days after Moscow was rebuked by Berlin for effectively banning three German non-profit groups, a measure described by Angela Merkel's spokesman as "utterly incomprehensible".

The festival was intended to promote business ties between Russia and

Mecklenburg-West Pomerania, which was formerly part of East Germany.

Addressing an audience including Nord Stream 2 executives and the Russian ambassador, Schwesig said she wanted to build "bridges of dialogue" instead of "slamming doors shut".

"It's shameful that the chief minister treats the Russia Day as a 'dialogue' without criticising Russia's serious failures in dealing with human rights," René Domke, 49, the local leader of the libertarian Free Democratic Party, said.

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Student attacked on train for reading Jewish history

The Times 3.6.21

Austria

David Crossland Berlin

An Austrian student who was attacked and insulted as a “Jewish slut” and “child murderer” said the police told her she had been acting provocatively for reading a history book about Jews.

The 19-year-old woman was reading *The Jew in the Modern World*, by Paul Mendes-Flohr and Jehuda Reinharz, for a Jewish studies course when she was attacked on the Vienna underground system by three men who pulled her hair.

“I was able to free myself and ran out,” she told the public broadcaster, Ö1. She approached two police officers on the street. In an apparent reference to the recent violence between Palestinians and Israelis, they asked her: “Why do you have to read such a book now in this conflict situation?”

The student said the officers suggested the attack could not be antisemitic because she was not Jewish. She said that they advised her to “forget about

it” and not bother going to a police station.

Daniel Landau, an academic commissioned by the government to devise antisemitism awareness training for Austrian police officers, said the incident was “pretty horrendous”.

“It’s like telling a woman who has been raped: ‘Why did you dress so provocatively,’” he told Austrian television. “It must be made unmistakably clear that reading a book in this country does not constitute complicity.

“I demand that it get through to even the most remote police station ... that there are taboos in this country and antisemitism must be one of these taboos.”

Karl Nehammer, the interior minister, said that making Jewish life more visible was the best way to fight antisemitism, which must not be tolerated in Austria. “The police are a guarantor of this,” he said.

Efforts to find the attackers will be hampered by the absence of CCTV video. Days afterwards the student,

who has not been named, asked the Vienna transport authority for a recording of the incident. She was told it had been deleted because it was kept for only 72 hours unless the police asked for it.

A police spokesman said that all officers on patrol on the day of the attack were being questioned. “If the incident happened in this way the police will face disciplinary and criminal consequences,” the spokesman said.

Oskar Deutsch, president of the Jewish Community of Vienna (IKG), said the case showed that antisemitism was not a Jewish but a social problem. He told the APA news agency that the case was disturbing in three ways.

“Firstly, a student is attacked because she is reading a book about Judaism — a clear case of antisemitism,” he said. “Secondly, none of the witnesses intervene and on top of that the victim is turned away by police officers.”

The IKG reported a 6.4 per cent rise in antisemitic incidents in Vienna last year, to a record 585.

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Members recommend.....



Wedded to tradition Catholic Sorb girls in Crostwitz, Germany, wore bridesmaid dresses for Corpus Christi but parades were cancelled because of the pandemic

How a survivor of Auschwitz and Belsen found help in old age – from an unexpected source

Jewish association says hundreds of other Nazi victims in the UK could apply for financial support from German-backed fund



Click on the blue link below if you would like to read her story!!

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/jun/20/how-a-survivor-of-auschwitz-and-belsen-found-help-in-old-age-from-an-unexpected-source>

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She's game to wean Germany off its fax machine fixation

The Sunday Times 04.07.21

Oliver Moody Berlin

In a country of soberly speaking politicians in sober suits, Dorothee Bär is a rare splash of exuberance.

Angela Merkel's digital minister once caused a stir by turning up to a computer game awards ceremony in a latex Wonder Woman dress that would not have been out of place in one of Berlin's fetish clubs. She describes herself as a "mum, politician, gamer, hunter ... craving sun, intelligent people and a lot of pink".

Yet her day job is anything but fun and games. The 43-year-old rising star from the Bavarian centre-right has the unenviable task of fronting the German state's efforts to drag itself into the world of TikTok, 5G and high-speed hipster capitalism.

Much of the country's bureaucracy still runs on paper; the federal ministries use more than 900 fax machines to exchange documents, because they are thought to be harder to snoop on than email accounts.

Complaining about dodgy rural internet connections and the dreaded *Funklöcher* (signal holes) in the mobile phone network is a national pastime. Yet since the pandemic, these problems have become much more than gripes. In the first months, many contact tracers had to keep track of infections with pens and paper. Tens of thousands of children missed lessons because they did not have computers for online classes.

Bär is sometimes accused

by the press of ineffectual showboating – one recent unflattering profile in *Der Spiegel* magazine cast her as the "happy face of Germany's digital misery" – yet some of the criticism is unfair. Germany's historically dire broadband coverage is now slightly better than Britain's. A new ultra-fast 5G mobile network was launched in 15 cities a few months ago.

Last month Merkel, 66, inaugurated the EU's most powerful quantum computer, in the village of Ehningen. Work is under way on Gaia X, a continent-wide data nursery intended to foster the next generation of big tech firms that might one day rival Facebook and Google. There will also be a focus on training up coders and data scientists as well as creating guidelines for how to spot fake news. Bär may need the powers of a Wonder Woman to pull it off.



Dorothee Bär: "the happy face of Germany's digital misery"