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REVIEW ESSAY

The *Deutschland* Series: Cold War Nostalgia for Transnational Audiences

Heather Gumbert

How do you explain the Cold War to a generation who did not live through it? For Jörg and Anna Winger, cocreators and showrunners of the *Deutschland* series, you bring it to life on television. Part pop culture reference, part spy thriller, and part existential crisis, the Wingers' Cold War is a fun, fast-paced story, "sunny and slick and full of twenty-something eye candy."[1] A coproduction of Germany's UFA Fiction and Sundance TV in the United States, the show premiered at the 2015 Berlinale before appearing on American and German television screens later that year. Especially popular in the United Kingdom, it sold widely on the transnational market. It has been touted as a game-changer for the German television industry for breaking new ground for the German television industry abroad and expanding the possibilities of dramatic storytelling in Germany, and is credited with unleashing a new wave of German (historical) dramas including *Babylon Berlin*, *Dark*, and a new production of *Das Boot*.[2]

History buffs and—still—historians often seek historical truths in fictional narratives of the past. But historical film and television always tell us more about the moment in which they were created than the periods in which they are set. That is, because television narratives speak to other media narratives, similar to how historians speak to one another through historiography. In what follows I will set out the basic plot of the series before discussing how the series exemplifies television's mechanisms for telling historical stories. The *Deutschland* series tells us little new about the Cold War or Germany in the 1980s, re-creating at best a familiar and under-nuanced interpretation of the period. Instead, it presents a nostalgic narrative of the origins of the Berlin Republic, presented as the inevitable and legitimate heir to the postwar German order.

The first season is built on the triumvirate of New Wave popular culture, the escalating Cold War, and the emerging AIDS crisis. In a two-episode introduction, the showrunners lay out the central problem of the (first) series. The Reagan administration has denounced the Soviet "Evil Empire," posing an existential threat to divided Germany. Elite Stasi agent Lenora Rauch (Maria Schrader) proposes a bold plan to infiltrate the West German military with one of their own and steal classified NATO plans. The best candidate is her own nephew, Martin Rauch (Jonas Nay), an East German (GDR) border guard with a pretty

[1]Stephen Dalton, "'Deutschland 83': Berlin Review," HollywoodReporter.com, February 11, 2015 (https://www.hollywoodreporter.com/review/deutschland-83-berlin-review-772394).

[2]Gabriel Tate, "Back in the Field," dramaquarterly.com, March 8, 2019 (http://dramaquarterly.com/back-in-the-field/).

girlfriend and a devoted, though sickly, mother (Ingrid Rauch, played by Carina Wiese). Lenora and her superior, Walter Schweppenstette (Sylvester Groth), visit the Rauch home to engage Martin in the plot. He refuses, but it is too late; they have drugged him, and he wakes up in the West. He flees into the street, where he first glimpses life in the West: a well-heeled neighborhood, a community shopping area, and, finally, a grocery store with shelves stocked to the brim. Fellow GDR agent Tobias Tischbier (Alexander Beyer) corners him and lays out the stakes: Martin must help the Stasi find out what the West has planned, or their homeland and Martin's family will perish in the impending nuclear war.

With Martin's grudging acceptance of his situation, the plan is underway. Martin reports for duty to high-ranking General Wolfgang Edel (Ulrich Noethen) at the West German military base in Daun. He copies classified American plans to install Pershing II nuclear missiles in Germany, and the implications of what he sees set him on a path to political awakening. He accompanies Edel to a NATO summit in Brussels, where he first hears the phrase "Able Archer." The plan to copy more documents goes sideways when he finds a floppy disk that he cannot photograph but must steal. He is saved at the eleventh hour when a Chinese femme fatale (played by Yvonne Yung Hee Bormann) breaks into his room, attacks him, and flees, removing suspicion of the burglary from him. He seeks refuge in the hotel bar, safe from suspicion, and more important, safe in the conviction that he can (and will continue to) spy for the GDR.

The rest of the season follows Martin's efforts to find out the nature of the Able Archer military exercise—he narrowly averts nuclear war by facing down the ideologues in the Stasi—with subplots that explore the fate of Martin's family in the East and the sexual and political awakening of General Edel's son, Alexander (Ludwig Trepte). Martin's girlfriend Annett (Sonja Gerhardt) is impatient with his absence and turns her attention to her colleague Thomas Posimski (Vladimir Burlakov). Concerned that Annett's infidelity will undermine Martin's commitment and jeopardize her operation in the West, Lenora moves Annett in with Martin's ailing mother. Pregnant, Annett struggles with her feelings for Thomas and Martin. She finds a way to push Thomas away when she realizes that he is involved in an underground book-smuggling ring. She denounces him to the Stasi, setting in motion a series of events that result in Ingrid's arrest, Thomas's exile to the West, Annett's own recruitment into the Stasi, and the revelation of long-buried family secrets (that Schweppenstette is Martin's father).

Annett is adrift without Martin and makes increasingly radical decisions in an attempt to regain agency over her circumstances. Her counterpart in the West is Alexander Edel. Dutifully, if not unquestioningly, enlisted in the West German army, Alexander reads Petra Kelly and considers himself a left-leaning pacifist. His attraction to Tischbier draws him into the West German protest movement, but, impatient with their commitment to popular, incremental change ("We should assassinate a General," offers Alexander, helpfully. "We're not terrorists!" a horrified organizer retorts), he engages in increasingly radical attempts to disrupt the Cold War. He "walks in" to the heavily surveilled GDR station in Bonn to offer his services. His identity is, of course, "blown" from the start, so, left to his own devices, he resorts to hostage taking. By the end of the first season, he literally (almost) kills his father. With that he gives up his father's war and begins to fight his own battles in the war against AIDS.

The show returns with *Deutschland 86*, this time with a bigger budget and more international attention, thanks to a partnership with Amazon Prime.[3] The bigger budget allowed the show to shoot in South Africa as well as Germany, underpinning a more expansive plot that ranges across South Africa, Angola, Libya, and Paris. By 1986, the GDR is in deep decline—"the state is bankrupt, and the people are starving," Lenora tells Martin—and idealism, even among the true believers, is on the wane. If the first season was tragedy, the second returns as farce. The once powerful and oppressive Schweppenstette has been demoted, replaced by Annett, and reduced to wistfully watching the decision makers through the glass wall of a cramped office. He spends the season trying to get back into the inner circle, which he does when he hits upon a winning scheme: buy the decommissioned Love Boat (yes, from the eponymous series) to ferry deserving East German workers, along with weapons and other contraband, to exotic locations, particularly in Africa. His role as villain has been taken over by an amoral number-crunching bureaucrat, Barbara Dietrich (Anke Engelke), whose main aim is to keep the GDR financially afloat at all costs. From this mandate arise fanciful as well as morbid plots to acquire hard currency from the West. Middle manager Fritz Hartmann (Niels Bormann) waxes poetic about a potential tourist destination: the magical "Star Forest" is so dark, one can see the stars and contemplate one's place in the universe. Stasi chief Markus Fuchs (Uwe Preuss) wistfully imagines a Berlin Wall constructed of raspberry bushes: peaceful, pretty, and cheap to maintain. Instead, the economic agency KoKo resorts to taking garbage shipments from the West, selling the East German blood supply, conducting experiments on unwitting patients for payment from drug companies from the West, and retrofitting a famous boat for dubious shipments in violation of international law.

The action begins in Cape Town, South Africa, where Lenora is undercover as a West German agent selling arms from the West to the South African army. This violates the UN embargo against the apartheid regime and will arm the enemies of the GDR and their allies, the African National Congress and their militant arm the MK (uMkhonto we Sizwe), but hard currency is more important. Martin, exiled to Angola after the calamity of 1983, agrees to help on the condition that he and his now-two-year-old son, Max, be allowed to return to the GDR. The plan goes sideways, forcing Lenora and Martin to improvise to unload the arms. Their ensuing trek across Africa, specifically South Africa, Angola, and Libya, is represented as a minefield of mercenaries and militias. At a rebel camp and arms bazaar in the Libyan desert, Martin (aka the East German master spy "Kolibri") learns scant details of a plan to bomb a European hotel. He is sold to the highest bidder (the BND [the West German Federal Intelligence Service]), then swept off to Paris by BND operative Brigitte Winkelmann (Lavinia Wilson). They try to thwart the bombing, only to find that it is planned not for Paris, but rather West Berlin, and Martin must enlist his father to expose the plot. With that, the action returns to Germany, where Martin works to secure the release of East German dissidents, capture Lenora and turn her over to the BND, and reunite with his son, Max. In the final scene, domestic harmony is restored: Martin enjoys dinner in the comfort of his (resurrected nuclear) family in East Berlin.

Television, particularly entertainment television, has been primarily a medium of realism. This is not to say that what it shows is "real," but rather that it relies heavily on the cultivation of a reality effect to communicate with its audience. Television realism is constructed through

[3]Tate, "Back in the Field."

adherence to particular conventions of representation and narrative tropes that make the content feel true-to-life. This is all the more true for historical dramas, for which production staff and viewers alike pay close attention to the construction of the world in which the characters live, including the *mise en scene*, camerawork, editing, special and visual effects, music, and even extratextual knowledge of the production. SundanceTV's campaign advertising the show in the United States exemplifies how even marketing is used to create the reality effect and, in particular, relatability. Publicity testified to the historical authenticity of the series, featuring an interactive slider series juxtaposing of images of Germany "then" and "now" and noting that the show filmed scenes in the former headquarters of the Stasi. Promotional interviews with cast members revealed that actor Sylvester Groth (Schweppenstette) had been persecuted by the Stasi before being exiled from the GDR in the 1980s. The network also capitalized on the enduring appeal of eighties popular culture, releasing a weekly playlist of relevant period tracks curated by prominent DJs.[4]

The *Deutschland* series cultivates the reality effect by situating a fictional set of characters and storylines within actual world events. In season 1, the historical setting and central plot device is the ideological intensification of the Cold War and NATO's "Able Archer" command post exercise, which set the world on the brink of nuclear war. The show marries the fictional with the real through intercutting archival footage of historical events with the fictional story, the reproduction of the material world of the 1980s, and the reliance on narrative tropes familiar to the transnational audience. The use of the original broadcast footage of Ronald Reagan's "Evil Empire" speech is a productive device that sets the scene and starts the action, for example. Other period references are more contrived and tend toward farce, such as Martin's encounter with the notorious mercenary Carlos the Jackal. In the second season, such devices feel particularly heavy-handed and only tenuously connected to the story.[5]

The show revels in the artifacts and aesthetics of the 1980s without resorting to (much) caricature, giving the show a contemporary feel. East German sets are bathed in warm earth tones, generally eschewing the trope of the dour, gray, and colorless GDR, whereas a cooler palette of primary colors appropriate to the period distinguishes the Federal Republic. Mint condition period telephones and televisions appear without heavy-handed comment. The Walkman is not simply a curious relic but serves as an integral plot device. The costume design is restrained: while extras sometimes sport the "big hair and crazy stuff" associated with 1980s fashion, the main characters wear more subdued apparel that is merely suggestive of eighties style.[6] Lenora's shoulder pads, blouses, and asymmetrical collars feel more stylish than dated.[7] As the *Guardian*'s fashion correspondent enthusiastically reported, Martin's West

[4]"Exclusive: An inside look at SundanceTV's digital strategy for Deutschland 83," the drum.com (https://www.thedrum.com/news/2015/07/06/exclusive-inside-look-sundancetvs-digital-strategy-deutschland-83).

[5]In the second season, historical signposts include the assassination of the Swedish Prime Minister and the Soviet attack on a South Korean passenger jet. These are meant to invoke a climate of uncertainty, fear, and suspicion, but seem too remote from the story at hand. The Chernobyl disaster is underutilized, but I argue that is because the existential threat has passed in *Deutschland 86* (see following).

[6]Lavinia Wilson, cited in Tate, "Back in the Field."

[7]Costumer designer Katrin Unterberger noted that East German clothing was also hand stitched, apparently to differentiate it from West German off-the-rack apparel. Michael Pickard, "Back to the 1980s," dramaquarterly.com, December 12, 2017 (http://dramaquarterly.com/back-to-the-1980s/).

German cover identity begins with "a pair of darker jeans, a red Puma T-shirt and a pair of Stan Smiths. [This is] Retro sportswear that the 2016 world can relate to."[8]

In reproducing the world of the 1980s, the show presents two alternative visions of German modernity. Stasi headquarters, the setting for the "official GDR," is a showcase of seventies modern style. The sets are gorgeous and well-maintained wood-paneled rooms appointed with period furniture. Domestic space, represented by the scenes at Martin's home in Kleinmachnow, is attractively quaint, lived-in (not *too* rundown), spacious enough for a large gathering of friends and family, and *gemütlich* (cozy). The show contrasts these spaces with a different version of German modernity represented by the West German sets. General Edel's military offices are spacious and appointed not too differently from those of Schweppenstette. Edel's home is decorated in upscale 1980s modern style, with tile floors and pastel décor punctuated with jewel tones, a large fish tank (home to Edel's "best, silent friends"), and a massive picture window wall that leads into a large backyard, more formal and open in design than the Rauch's garden. Tischbier's home is a past-its-prime West German manor with the studied unkemptness of the activist intellectual.

The show trades in the tropes of spy fiction, Cold War era narratives, and soapy family dramas, while remaining firmly situated in genre television. Plot devices such as the recruitment of the agent, infiltration of a foreign service, and the encounter with the femme fatale are fundamental to the genre.[9] Nothing is as meets the eye. An attention to tradecraft establishes the credentials of the spy. Here, for example, a training montage assures the audience that Martin learns the all-important art of the "brush pass." He communicates with his handlers through a simple cipher (allowing the audience to learn what Martin knows as soon as he does). The woods surrounding the army base at Daun prove (against all odds) a convenient site for dead drops and secret meetings with handler Lenora.

Similarly, the show explores the tropes of Cold War-era narratives, leaning into and sometimes complicating the expectations Western audiences hold about the GDR and communism more broadly. Communist authorities are (initially) dour, humorless, and ideologically rigid; East Germany's drab austerity is juxtaposed with West German abundance; and the GDR is woefully technologically backward. For example, the audience first meets Martin in his role as an East German border guard, lecturing West German students caught smuggling books out of East Berlin on the superiority of the GDR. Left alone, it

[8]Imogen Fox, "The Seven Things We Like about the Fashion in *Deutschland 83*," *The Guardian*, January 4, 2016 (https://www.theguardian.com/fashion/tvandradioblog/2016/jan/04/fashion-in-deutschland-83).

[9]As I suggested previously the femme fatale here is a device that commits Martin to the mission. She remains undeveloped, as do most of the (Western) women characters in the show. The attack on Martin in his hotel room is familiar to viewers from Bond films, while also allowing the production to mount "a spectacular action scene worthy of a Jason Bourne movie" to close out its first two episodes (Dalton, "'Deutschland 83.'") In service of the plot, she internationalizes the Cold War and, by losing to Martin, contributes to the myth of master spy "Kolibri."

She also served to diversify the cast. In a 2018 interview, Anna Winger noted, "I'm actually really struck now by how white German shows are. When we made *Deutschland 83*, I said, speaking as an American, 'Everybody can't be white, we have to mix that up.' And the answer always was: 'Yeah, but in 1983 everybody WAS white.'" Of course, they were not. The casting decisions relegating nonwhite actors to minor roles—as femme fatale and bellicose American General Arnold Jackson (played by African American Errol Trotman-Harewood)—reflect the parochial expectations of contemporary German television producers. Winger cited in Lars Weisbrod, "Why *Deutschland 86* Isn't a 'Black-and-White' Cold War Spy Thriller," Vulture.com, October 25, 2018 (https://www.vulture.com/2018/10/deutschland-86-anna-jorg-winger-interview.html).

becomes clear that Martin has given the students "the speech," and the guards guffaw at their own performance of authority.[10] The West German grocery store into which Martin first stumbles is a picture of overabundance that never would have been found in 1980s West Germany; the production specifically employed heightened realism here to amplify the differences between East and West.[11] In well-crafted comic scenes, the show constructs East German characters as unsophisticated and inexperienced with technologies presumed to be widely available in the West. To do so, the show defies the trope of the spy and his gadgets, and the most advanced technologies provided to Martin are a tiny camera and a coffee can. Confronted with a floppy disk, he has no idea what it is or how to proceed. Neither does the ensemble of Stasi agents anxiously awaiting revelation of NATO plans.

What really drives the show, however, are the long-standing devices borrowed from family dramas. Love triangles, infidelity, unplanned pregnancy, revelations of long-buried secrets, father-son generational conflict, sexual awakening, terminal illness, and the eleventh-hour organ transplant for which only the protagonist is a match, are just a few of the devices that drive the action in the *Deutschland* series. Indeed, what I find most compelling about the series is its exploration of how the (family) secrets of the past are buried in the present.

Even storylines that appear to be driven by Cold War conflict really explore the complicated domestic drama of the Rauch family. Stasi agent Walter Schweppenstette is, perhaps predictably, the villain of the first season, which is established from the first moments of his encounter with Martin. Schweppenstette violates the Rauch home by entering unannounced and uninvited; he exploits Ingrid's illness to pressure Martin to cooperate; he sprains Martin's hand to establish the ruse that will allow him to go to work for Edel; and he drugs and smuggles Martin westward. Sylvester Groth's Schweppenstette is inscrutable and deliberate, quietly smoking his cigarettes from the East. Read one way, this is suggestive of the quiet brutality of the man and the system he represents. In time, however, revelations cast new light on what we know: Schweppenstette, it turns out, is Martin's estranged father. So, for example, Ingrid's shock at Schweppenstette's unexpected appearance at her home no longer represents the fear of a citizen beset by the secret police, but rather the shock of recognition.[12] His quiet consideration of Martin can now be read as that of a man sizing up the son he does not know. Of course, the ability to manipulate one's own family in service to the regime is brutality of a different kind.

The figure of Schweppenstette is central to the show's interpretation of the East German past. He is a chilling authority figure in season 1; by season 2, he is irrelevant, and the show revels in the absurdities of his life. Reunited with Ingrid in season 1, he briefly and ineffectually tries to woo her in season 2. His superiors ignore him, so he goes to authorities in the West to expose the hotel bombing—not directly, of course, but by warning his mother on a tapped phone line. When an American diplomat moves into the next apartment,

[10]Martin's politics are thus reduced to political paroles and official pronouncements. This is underscored when Martin meets Alexander Edel in the barracks in Daun. Edel, an admirer of Green Party leader Petra Kelly, probes Martin's politics. Martin, indifferent, disappoints: "You sound just like my father," Alexander says.

[11]Jörg Winger in SundanceTV Presents, "Q&A with Cast and Creators at the Goethe-Institut," *Deutschland 83*, Disc 3 (New York: Kino Lorber, 2015).

[12]Moreover, the final episode of season 1 suggests that Schweppenstette has long protected Ingrid from the vagaries of the state.

Schweppenstette holds a water glass to the wall, listening in with childlike curiosity rather than the training and technology one might expect of a career Stasi agent. Sent to the West for the first time since 1960, he flounders at every turn. Shopping for a keepsake, the cashier teases him that she will have to charge him for looking and, to her horror, he earnestly offers her a twenty deutsche mark bill. The show reserves such farcical situations almost exclusively for its characters from the East, which has the paradoxical effect of endearing those characters more fully to the audience, while also undermining their authority in the show.

The periodic reminder that a historical reality frames this narrative, the faithful reproduction of 1980s culture, and the reliance on tropes familiar to audiences all help to cultivate the realism of the *Deutschland* series. The show's attention to period detail has led critics to compare it to the meticulous world-making of *Mad Men*.[13] That series explored the world of postwar American advertising, similarly situating its narrative in relation to significant historical and cultural milestones and using objects, artifacts, and settings to create an authentic period piece. In *Mad Men*, however, the latter served not just historical verisimilitude, but also were a means through which the show critiqued the disciplinary mechanisms of mid-century America. As Jeremy Butler points out, for example, the office sets (which change from season to season) reproduce contemporary power structures and shift over time, while the individual miseries of the Draper family destabilize the idealized domestic space of the Draper home.[14]

Deutschland does not examine its world this deeply. An instructive example is the show's shift to South Africa in the second season. On the face of it, the show seems to be expanding outward into the world, fulfilling both a trope of spy narratives and a device common to genre television (see, for example, the shifting settings of *24* or *Homeland* from season to season). Narratively, however, the GDR pulls focus, and even the Federal Republic recedes to become little more than a plot device. The choice of South Africa, ruled by the apartheid regime, is fertile ground for exploring the nature of divided nations, not to mention notions of racial superiority. In the first episode, the show sketches the contours of a racially divided society: leaving their apartment, Lenora and her Black South African companion Rose Seithathi (the deliciously charismatic Florence Kasumba) must ride separate elevators to the parking garage; thereafter, Rose dons a driver uniform while Lenora sits comfortably in the backseat. But this is largely an "establishing shot," primarily serving period recognition, and the show never returns to this theme. Thus, apartheid here is simply a device to establish a new set of allies and adversaries for Martin and Lenora. It is not an easy device to deploy: the show must insert an animated history lesson to sketch out the geopolitics of the South African regime for viewers who are a bit fuzzy on the details. The clip concludes, and Martin asks, "And who are the good guys?"

Similarly, because of its focus on the 1980s and espionage, some critics want to compare the show to the prestigious American drama *The Americans*.[15] That show, also inspired by a

[13]See, for example, Emily Nussbaum, "Clone Club: The Eighties Flashbacks of 'Halt and Catch Fire' and 'Deutschland 83'," *The New Yorker*, August 10 and 17, 2015 (https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2015/08/10/clone-club), and Walter Iuzzolino in "Walter's World," dramaquarterly.com, February 12, 2016 (http://dramaquarterly.com/walters-world/).

[14]Jeremy G. Butler, "Mad Men," in *How to Watch Television*, ed. Ethan Thompson and Jason Mittell (New York: New York University Press, 2013), 42.

[15]See, for example, Cynthia Littleton, "SundanceTV's 'Deutschland 83' Breaks Cultural Barriers with Cold War Chiller," Variety.com, June 17, 2015 (https://variety.com/2015/tv/news/deutschland-83-sundancetv-german-language-drama-1201522499/).

historical reality–the revelation of a Russian "sleeper" agent in Canada—is a character study of the motivations and trials of people who are ideologically committed to communism (or at least anti-capitalism) and living a double life in the United States.[16] It reflects on the conditions and implications of the situations in which it mires its characters, and its resolutions are open-ended. The two shows share an interest in Cold War espionage, family drama, and the 1980s setting, but the similarities end there. *Deutschland* is less contemplative, less interested in its characters' motivations and inner lives, and much more loosely written and faster paced. It relies on superficial and easily resolved struggles. Martin's political commitment is reflexive: there is none of the interiority of the Jennings family's confrontation with the choices they must make. Moreover, Martin's identity and domestic space are intact in East Germany. He does not struggle with the task of making one's life permanently in a foreign space and, indeed, he is firmly anchored to the GDR through his parents, girlfriend, and, ultimately, his child. Unlike the Jennings, Martin's goal over two seasons is just to get back home.

While *Mad Men* and *The Americans* used their period settings to interrogate themes such as alienation, racism, sexism, and the limits of political commitment, *Deutschland* uses its setting as a period display shelf and mobilizes the visual vocabulary of the 1980s as the primary means of demarcating and differentiating between two German societies. That is, the people and the things they do are basically the same on either side of the Berlin Wall. Schweppenstette's counterpart is the rigid and hawkish American, General Arnold Jackson (Errol Trotman-Harewood); Martin and General Wolfgang Edel are faced with the same burden and responsibility to rein in the bellicose tendencies of their superiors; and, as I suggested previously, Annett and Alexander seek resolution of their respective situations through increasingly radical means. Germans on both sides of the border engage in the same social practices, such as the backyard barbecue, the swimming hole tryst, a love of New Wave music, and, in season 2, the pursuit of American dollars. *Deutschland* finds the differences between East and West primarily in their respective material worlds, represented by the clothes that Germans wore and the products they consumed.[17]

The show is an extended flashback narrative that takes the end of the Cold War and reunification of Germany for granted and shows us how Germany got there. It foreshortens history in the process. Although the circumstances of the early 1980s were very different from those of 1988–1989, it is the conditions of the late 1980s that abound in the series. The economy of scarcity, technological backwardness, and financial chaos that characterized the end of the GDR are here fundamental plot devices. By *Deutschland 86*, the fatal blow has already landed, and what we see are the final absurd death throes of a state in a slow-motion collapse that is as inevitable as the radioactive cloud making its way from Chernobyl to central Europe. The telegraphed resolution is the end of the GDR and a reunited German nation. But in the Berlin Republic, the postwar order is still unfinished. Reunification has imposed an ongoing cost on Germans in East and West alike. Colonized rather than

[16] Shaun Walker, "The Russian Spy Who Posed as a Canadian for More Than 20 years," *The Guardian*, August 23, 2019 (https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/aug/23/russian-spy-elena-vavilova-posed-as-a-canadian-estate-agent-for-over-20-years).

[17] Consider that, in order to successfully complete his mission, Martin must "pass" in West Germany. He adapts easily to Western society, faltering only when it comes to certain goods. His knowledge of popular culture is solid. He is also on top of military protocol, given that he slips seamlessly into the employ of a West German general. It is not his accent that gets him in trouble, but his dental work; he can adopt West German dialect easily enough (*Orangen*, not *Apfelsinen*), but he does not know how to order a proper steak.

unified, forced to make unexpected sacrifices after the neoliberal triumph over communism, former East Germans continue to endure higher unemployment and underinvestment in their communities.

This is not the case in *Deutschland*, which is a nostalgic and even romantic narrative that provides a measure of how far the Cold War and the GDR have receded into the gauzy mists of the past. In an interview, the twenty-somethings in the cast agreed that there were no real "differences, just stereotypes" between the former Germanys.[18] Anna Winger, a forty-something American living in Germany, has said that she cannot imagine Germany divided. For Winger, "Germany now is a utopia. It's really tolerant, it's diverse, and a special time. If you live in New York, you wish you lived there in the 1970s, but in Germany you feel lucky to live here now."[19]

VIRGINIA TECH

[18]Asked what they would miss if they had to live in the actual GDR, they reproduced some of those stereotypes: "the freedom to travel," "freedom—bananas, good coffee, and travel." SundanceTV Presents, "Q&A."

[19]David Renshaw, "Meeting the Creators of 'Deutschland 83,' the German TV Show That Will Make You Nostalgic for the Cold War," Vice.com, January 26, 2016 (https://www.vice.com/en_ca/article/dp59gj/germany-now-is-a-utopia-meeting-the-creators-of-deutschland-83).