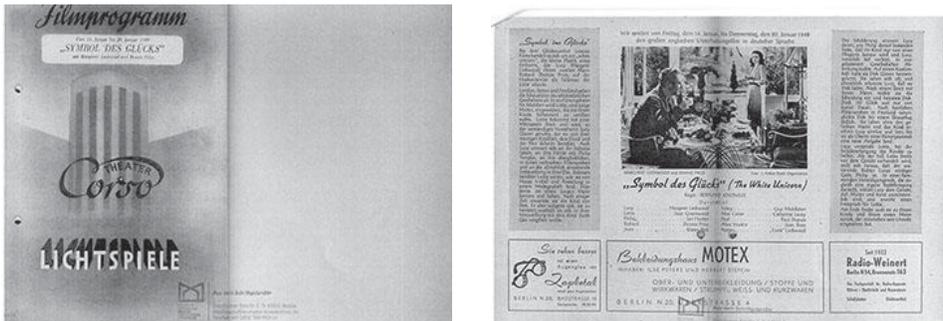


Magdalena Saryusz-Wolska*

Cinema programs as a source for research on historical film audiences. Berlin 1945–1949¹

The term “cinema programs” has two meanings. On the one hand, it refers to combining different films into one screening or the repertoire of a film theatre, which has become a significant field of research in recent years.² On the other hand, it denotes printed information about the program of a particular cinema, i.e. flyers or booklets containing a list of titles screened over a certain period of time; usually a week or month, as well as short descriptions of the films. In this paper, I focus on the latter understanding of cinema programs (the German equivalent being: *Kinoprogramme*, sometimes *Filmprogramme* or *Hausprogramme*). Figures 1–4 show two typical examples of cinema programs in Berlin during the late 1940s.



Figs. 1–2. Cinema program from Corso film theatre, 14–20 January 1949, cover and inside

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² See A. Haller, *Das Kinoprogramm. Zur Genese und Frühen Praxis einer Aufführungsform*, [in:] *The Art of Programming. Film, Programm und Kontext*, ed. H. Klippel, LTI-Verlag 2008, p. 18–52. In the context of the early post-war period in Berlin see W. Mühl-Benninghaus, *Die zweite Stunde Null des deutschen Kinos. Alliierte Kinoprogramme in Berlin 1945/46*, [in:] *Die Spur durch den Siegel. Der Film in der Kultur der Moderne*, eds. M. Hagener, J.N. Schmidt, M. Wedel, Bertz 2004, p. 207–225.



Figs. 3–4. Cinema program from KSB (= Kammerspiele Britz) film theatre, 13–19 June 1947, front and reverse side

Such materials have existed since the early days of cinema, yet the tradition of printed programs for theatrical or operatic performances dates back even further. Today, cinema programs have largely been replaced by digital media. However, printed programs are still in use, especially in small cinemas offering less popular films. In contrast to other types of film promotion, which distributors are often fully in charge of,³ materials produced by cinemas are especially interesting in the field of audience research since they are addressed to local cinemagoers. Obviously, cinema programs do not only supply information as such – they are also one of the “routine procedures for creating consumer identification of [...] theatres to attend”.⁴ Thus, they contain additional elements such as information on the location of the film theatre, its logo or sometimes even a picture of the place. For example, the cover of the Corso theatre program (fig. 5) depicts its façade (in a later version it displays a rather symbolic version of it – see fig. 1), the cover of the Neue Scala program (fig. 6) depicts its silhouette with the characteristic two towers at Nollendorfplatz in Berlin.



Figs. 5–6. Covers of Corso theatre programs, 4–10 June 1948 (left), and Neue Scala theatre, June 1947 (right)

³ See J. Staiger, *Announcing Wares, Winning Patrons, Voicing Ideals: Thinking about the History and Theory of Film Advertising*, “Cinema Journal” 1990, vol. 29(3), p. 3–31.

⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 4.

The emergence of cinema programs in Germany

The earliest programs contained a list of films, the names of the performers and musicians who accompanied the screenings and sometimes additional information about the artists and the theatre itself. Once the concept of film projection had changed and feature films had become the main part of the show, printed programs focused on weekly screening schedules rather than on one particular evening. Apart from information about the titles of films, many programs contained other materials addressed to local viewers such as messages from cinema owners or ads for stores, restaurants, bars etc.

In German, programs ads appeared around 1920. In the 1930s and early 1940s they became a less common part of the programs. After World War II, cinema programs were re-established in some film theatres as early as the fall of 1945 and in 1946 they became very popular again. From then on, one could hardly find a program without ads. One of the reasons for this change might have been the high cost of paper, which was a product in short supply,⁵ so the ads helped to offset and reduce the printing costs. Starting in the early 1950s, ads in cinema programs became less and less popular until they almost completely disappeared in the 1960s and 1970s. One point should be added, though: in most cases it was external companies, not the cinema owners themselves that were responsible for receiving and designing the ads as well as for printing the programs (figs. 7–8).



Fig. 7. Ad for a company that designed and printed cinema programs. Taken from the program of the Neue Alhambra theatre, 20–26 February 1948

9236/1311. 1000. 1. 48.

Herausgeber u. alleinige Anzeigenannahme: „Berliner Anzeigen Dienst“, M. Peißan, Bln.-Friedenau, Kaiserallee 90, Telefon: 24 71 42 — Druck: Georg Girtzig, Berlin-Schöneberg, Feurigstraße 54.

Fig. 8. Upper row: permission number, circulation (1,000 copies) and date of printing (1.48). Bottom row: information about the company responsible for receiving the ads and printing the program. Taken from the program of the Die Kurbel theatre, January 1948

⁵ W. Benz, *Auftrag Demokratie. Die Gründungsgeschichte der Bundesrepublik und die Entstehung der DDR 1945–1949*, Metropolis 2009, p. 149.

It also seems intriguing to look at what was not included in the programs, such as information about newsreels and / or additional documentaries, which were screened before the main film – even though they were an inherent part of the shows. There may have been two reasons for this: firstly, the presence of newsreels was obvious, so they did not need any additional announcement; secondly, most of the cinemagoers did not like them,⁶ so advertising for them would have been counterproductive. Moreover, an analysis focused on the question: what kind of ads accompanied which films would be of no use since the same ads had usually been printed for many weeks or months, next to information about very different films.

Cinema programs in Berlin 1945–1949

In my paper, I analyse programs from cinemas in all four sectors of occupied Berlin from 1945 to 1949. I focus primarily on ads. Looking at cinema programs allows me to conduct research on local audiences by taking into consideration the social structure of the German population under occupation, the Berliners' mobility between the sectors and – if possible – the viewers' habits before, during and after the screenings.



Figs. 9–10. Cinema program from Mila Lichtspiel-Palast in Berlin (Soviet occupation zone), 27 Feb.–4 March 1948, front (upper) and reverse (upper right)

Fig. 11 (bottom). Cinema program from the Babylon film theatre in Schönhauser Allee in the Soviet occupation Zone. 1–9th September 1948

⁶ J. Fay, *Theatres of Occupation. Hollywood and the Re-education of Postwar Germany*, University of Minnesota Press 2008, p. 55.

The analysis is based on research done at the archives of the Stiftung Deutsche Kinemathek in Berlin. The programs collected from the SDK are not representative in terms of statistics, though. The SDK owns programs from 44 Berlin cinemas from the years 1945–1949 (unfortunately all incomplete) making up approximately 20 percent of all the cinemas in the city during that period.⁷ As a result, I examined about 400 programs.⁸ Unfortunately, cinemas from East Berlin are underrepresented in this sample. However, those programs from East Berlin cinemas that are available prove that, with the exception of other titles that were screened in the Soviet zone, the eastern programs did not differ much from the western ones and also included a lot of commercial content (figs. 9–11).⁹

Apart from that, the division into East and West Berlin film theatres is more complex than it seems at first sight. Until 1961, Berliners could move more or less freely between the sectors and thus attend film theatres in other districts. There were exceptional theatres, like the Mercedes-Palast in the French sector, which screened Soviet films delivered by the Soviet distributor Sovexport.¹⁰ Furthermore, in the summer of 1948, a new phenomenon was born: “border cinemas” (*Grenzkinos*), i.e. film theatres in the western districts that offered special screenings for viewers coming from East Berlin¹¹ as well

⁷ The number of cinemas in Germany increased rapidly in the period between 1945 and 1949. In the western zones, 1,150 stationary film theatres were reopened by the end of 1945 and by the end of 1949, there were 3,360 cinemas (see J. Hauser, *Neuaufbau der westdeutschen Filmwirtschaft 1945–1955 und der Einfluß der US-amerikanischen Filmpolitik*, Centaurus-Verlagsgesellschaft 1989, p. 676). In 1947, 217 cinemas were in operation in the four sectors of Berlin (see A. Bähr, *Der Wiederaufbau: von der Illusionswelt zur Filmkunst*, [in:] *Kinoarchitektur in Berlin 1895–1995*, eds. S. Hänsel, A. Schmitt, Reimer 1995, p. 17), 133 of which were located in West Berlin (see G. Bentele, *Berlin als Film- und Kinostadt: eine Bestandaufnahme in Daten und Fakten*, [in:] *Medienstadt Berlin*, eds. G. Bentele, O. Jarren, Vistas Verlag 1988, p. 430–431). In the Soviet occupation zone, there were 1,324 cinemas in the summer of 1946 (yet only 497 were screening daily. Hence, we can assume that many of the rest were travelling cinemas) and 77 cinemas in East Berlin (72 screenings daily) (see K. Enz, *Entwicklung der Filmwiedergabetechnik und des Filmtheaternetzes in der DDR von 1945 bis zur Gegenwart*, DEFA 1982, p. 40). The approximate number of cinemas in Berlin from 1946 to 1949 can thus be estimated at about 200–270. The situation in 1945 was rather exceptional, as the number of cinemas was rising rapidly, so an average number, which would be correct for the whole seven months between May and December 1945, cannot be given. Already on May 15th, there were 17 working cinemas in Berlin (“Tägliche Rundschau”, 15th May, 1945, cited [in:] M. Hanisch, *Um “6 Uhr abends nach Kriegsende” bis “High Noon”. Kino und Film im Berlin der Nachkriegszeit. 1945–1953*, Defa-Stiftung 2004, p. 13.) and two days later 30 cinemas (“Tägliche Rundschau”, 17th May, 1945, cited *ibidem*).

⁸ An exact number cannot be given as in some cases a precise date is lacking and we can only speculate whether the program represents the analysed period.

⁹ Further research on this subject can be done on the basis of the collections at the Landesarchiv Berlin and the Bundesarchiv Filmarchiv in Berlin, although, unlike SDK, they do not specialize in collecting cinema programs.

¹⁰ M. Hanisch, *Um “6 Uhr abends nach Kriegsende”...*, p. 15.

¹¹ See n.n., *Kalter Kinokrieg – Entstehung und Entwicklung der Berliner Grenzkinos*, http://berliner-grenzkinos.de/grenzkinos_geschichte.html, official website of the project “Berliner Grenzkinos 1950–1961” [“Berlin border-cinemas 1950–1950”] realized among others by the Alliierten Museum, Stiftung Deutsche Kinemathek and HFF Potsdam Babelsberg (22.01.2014).

as the possibility of paying for tickets in East German marks. Therefore, cinema-going practices in both West and East Berlin during the early post-war period should not be considered separately.

In the late 1940s, cinema programs were either free of charge or cost a symbolic price of 10 to a maximum of 30 pfennig in both West and East Berlin. In some cases, they were sent by mail to audience members loyal to a particular film theatre, though, usually, they were available in the cinema itself. They functioned alongside other advertising materials offered by the distributors, such as posters, portraits of actors as well as handbills devoted to particular films. Hence, they were an obvious and natural part of the cinema's public sphere.¹² Their circulation varied greatly and, in those cases where we know actual numbers, it does not seem to be very informative. To give an example: the program of the cinema theatre, Die Kurbel was printed in a circulation of 1,000 copies (fig. 8). Presuming that they offered approximately 20 screenings a week (which can be estimated on the basis of the program), we can easily deduce that they sold approximately 50 programs per screening. Since there were over 500 seats in this cinema in those years,¹³ it either meant that every tenth viewer bought a program or, which is rather unlikely for this period, that the tickets never sold out. At the same time, though, the similarly big Rheinschloß-Lichtspiele theatre printed its programs in a circulation of 3,000 copies. Hence, we cannot draw any concrete conclusions about the popularity of the programs merely on the basis of their circulation. It rather seems that the circulation depended on the funds of the theatre, access to paper or the cinema owners' marketing strategies.

Most of the research done on advertising in cinemas comes from later periods and focuses on ads screened before the main film. Researchers usually emphasize that they are perceived in the special context of entertainment.¹⁴ Looking at audiences through commercial material also involves the concept of film viewers as consumers.¹⁵ In the very case of early post-war Germany, however, the theoretical models of cinematic consumer and entertainment culture cannot be implemented directly, seeing as this period represented a shortage-culture rather than a typical consumer-culture. The well-known

¹² For the notion "cinema's public sphere" see C. Müller, H. Segeberg, "Öffentlichkeit" und "Kinoöffentlichkeit". *Zum Hamburger Forschungsprogramm*, [in:] *Kinoöffentlichkeit (1895–1920) / Cinema's Public Sphere (1895–1920)*, eds. M. Corinna, H. Segeberg, Schüren Verlag 2005; M. Hansen, *Early cinema, late cinema. Permutations of the public sphere*, "Screen" 1993, vol. 3(3), p. 197–210.

¹³ S. Hänsel, A. Schmitt (eds.), *Kinoarchitektur in Berlin 1895–1995*, Reimer 1995, p. 51.

¹⁴ See: F.-G. Amberg, *Werbung im Filmtheater*, Kulturbuch 1956; J. Allen, *Film Viewer as Consumer*, "Quarterly Review of Film Studies" 1980, vol. 5(4), p. 481–499; K.F. Johnson, *Cinema Advertising*, "Journal of Advertising" 1981, vol. 10(4), p. 11–19; B.B. Austin, *Cinema Screen Advertising. An Old Technology with New Promise for Consumer Marketing*, "Journal of Consumer Marketing" 1981, vol. 3(1), p. 45–56; J. Phillips, S.M. Noble, *Simply Captivating: Understanding Consumers' Attitudes toward the Cinema as an Advertising Medium*, "Journal of Advertising" 2007, vol. 36(1), p. 81–94.

¹⁵ See J. Allen, *Film Viewer as Consumer...*; M.B. Hansen, *Early cinema...*, p. 85, 112–115.

model of “film viewer as consumer” introduced by Jane Allen underlines the cooperation of film and the product industry in the United States. While it focuses on ads screened in cinemas and product placement and therefore on a rather expensive type of advertising, the concept I develop here concentrates on local audiences and local targets within a shortage-culture as well as on cheap types of advertising.¹⁶



Fig. 12. “outside it says: The film is most warmly recommended

Source: “Film-Echo” 1947, no. 1.

Living conditions in occupied Berlin were undoubtedly very hard and going to cinema theatres was one of the most popular leisure time activities. One of the newspaper surveys, which were very common in those days, claims that 77 percent of all Berliners frequented cinema theatres at least once a week,¹⁷ although the number is certainly too high as participation in the survey was voluntary. Bettina Greffrath cites more credible surveys conducted by the American military government, which resulted in the figure of 54 percent of West Berliners attending cinema regularly.¹⁸ This percentage was significantly higher than in the rest of Germany.¹⁹ Some film scholars claim, seeing as the winter of 1946/1947 was one of the coldest in the whole century, that the possibility of spending two hours in a warm room was one of the reasons why people frequented cinemas.²⁰ It even happened that viewers were requested to bring coal briquettes in order to arrange the screening.²¹ Apart from this

¹⁶ One of the programs at SDK contains hand-written notes on prices: an ad of about 28 square centimetres cost 21.6 RM, yet we can only speculate whether it was the price for a single edition or a longer period of advertising [Blücher, 8–28th Aug. 1947]. References in square brackets refer to cinema programs available in SDK.

¹⁷ H. Müting, *Deutsche Filme bevorzugt*, “National-Zeitung”, Dezember 8th 1948.

¹⁸ B. Greffrath, *Gesellschaftsbilder der Nachkriegszeit. Deutsche Spielfilme 1945–1949*, Centaurus-Verlagsgesellschaft 1995, p. 124.

¹⁹ *Ibidem*.

²⁰ R. Shandley, *Rubble Films. German Cinema in the Shadow of the Third Reich*, Temple University Press 2001, p. 19.

²¹ P. Gleber, *Zwischen Gestern und Morgen. Film und Kino im Nachkriegsjahrzehnt*, [in:] *Nach der Suche nach der neuen Identität. Kultur in Rheinland-Pfalz im Nachkriegsjahrzehnt*, eds. F.-J. Hayen, A.M. Keim, Hase & Koehler Verlag 1996, p. 32. Reprinted: <http://www.lmz-bw>.

interesting, albeit rather marginal motivation, it should be noted that watching movies was a cheap and thus easily available leisure time activity as an average ticket cost 1 RM,²² which was comparable to pre-war prices. Nevertheless, the cinematic experience was a different one, since screenings were often cancelled or interrupted by power cuts,²³ which explains the Kreuzberg Blücher theatre's proud announcement: "Blücher-screenings as on schedule. No power cuts." [Blücher, 12–23 December 1947].

Cinema programs and audience structures

Apart from the aforementioned fact that ads were an obligatory part of all cinema programs in the late 1940s, another reason for choosing this period for my analysis was the abnormal social structure of the German population. Since many men had been killed during the war and many others were still prisoners of war, there was a huge surplus of women in the population²⁴ and hence in the audiences.²⁵ This can also be easily proven on the basis of ads printed in film-magazines, which contained even more typically female-addressed ads targeted at women than women's magazines. The magazines "Filmpost-Magazin" (West) or "Film von Heute" (East) printed many ads for hygienic articles (e.g. sanitary towels, body powder, figs. 13–14.), baby-food or baking powder.²⁶

de/fileadmin/user_upload/Medienbildung_MCO/fileadmin/bibliothek/gleber_nachkriegsfilm/gleber_nachkriegsfilm.pdf, p. 1–65 (access: 12.02.2014).

²² R. Shandley, *Rubble Films...*, p. 36; T. Brandlmeier, *Von Hitler zu Adenauer. Deutsche Trümmerfilme*, [in:] *Zwischen Gestern und Morgen. Westdeutscher Film 1946–1962*, eds. H. Hoffmann, W. Schobert, Deutsches Filmmuseum 1989, p. 34. In his study on Leipzig audiences (Soviet occupation zone), Pavel Skopal writes that ticket prices varied from 0.60 RM to 3 RM [P. Skopal, "It is not enough we have lost the war – now we have to watch it!" *Cinemagoer's attitudes in the Soviet occupation zone of Germany (a case study from Leipzig)*, "Participations. Journal for Audience and Reception Studies" 2011, vol. 8(2), p. 489–521]. An average ticket in the Western zones after the currency reform cost 0.67 DM (1949) (Spitzenorganisation der Filmwirtschaft (1950). *Filmwirtschaftskrise und Filmtheater-Eintrittspreise*. Schriftgutarchiv Stiftung Deutsche Kinemathek, N424_Na_02.). In comparison, the official average price for a pound of butter was 2 RM, the black-market-price reached 350 RM and a loaf of bread officially cost 40 pfennig and 20–30 RM on the black market (J. Echternkamp, *Nach dem Krieg. Alltagsnot, Neuorientierung und die Last der Vergangenheit. 1945–1949*, Pendo Verlag 2003, p. 24).

²³ W. Mühl-Benninghaus, *Die zweite Stunde Null des deutschen Kinos. Alliierte Kinoprogramme in Berlin 1945/46...*, p. 210.

²⁴ H.-U. Wehler, *Deutsche Gesellschaftsgeschichte. Vierter Band. Vom Beginn des Ersten Weltkriegs bis zur Gründung der beiden deutschen Staaten 1914–1949*, Verlag C.H. Beck 2003, p. 961–962.

²⁵ J. Fay, *Theatres of Occupation. Hollywood and the Re-education of Postwar Germany*, University of Minnesota Press 2008, p. 149–151, P. Skopal, "It is not enough we have lost the war – now we have to watch it!" *Cinemagoer's attitudes in the Soviet occupation zone of Germany (a case study from Leipzig)*..., p. 501.

²⁶ For a study on female-addressed magazine ads in the context of cinema and the United States in the 1940s see M. Renov, *Advertising/Photojournalism/Cinema: The Shifting Rhetoric of Forties Female Representation*, "Quarterly Review of Film and Video" 1989, vol. 11(1), p. 1–21.



Fig. 13 (left). Page from “Filmpost-Magazin” 1948, no. 6, containing ads for suitcases (upper left-hand corner), cosmetics for men (upper-right hand corner), an auction house (bottom left hand corner) and sanitary towels (bottom-right hand corner)

Fig. 14 (right). Ad for body powder from “Filmpost-Magazin” 1947, no. 5. Caption: “Powder as a bathing substitute. Try out the refreshing effect of body powder, if you cannot have a normal bath...”

However, the surplus of women was not solely a German phenomenon. Discussing Hollywood, Mary Ann Doane states that “the war served to reinforce the view that the spectator to be addressed is female. The film industry tended to operate under the assumption that the audience was composed primarily of women”.²⁷ The “shortage” of men (and of apartments) becomes apparent in a rather exceptional announcement in a Blücher theatre program: “Marriage? Yes! Find the right husband with a flat with the help of M. Burkhardt, Mehringdamm 23, front III” [Blücher, 23 April 1948]. While at first glance most programs contained many ads for female products or services (perfumeries, chemist shops, hairdressers, beauticians, repair shops specializing in repairing household equipment etc.), their approximate number was not significantly higher than in the years before (fig. 15). This only confirms that watching films had been a rather female than male form of entertainment in the early years of cinema, as Emily Altenloh had already noted in 1914,²⁸ and remained so after World War II. Besides, ads for perfumeries, chemists or shops selling stockings and gloves could have been addressed both to women and men, who bought gifts for the former. Seeing as some of the ads in cinema

²⁷ M.A. Doane, *The Economy of Desire: The Commodity Form in/of the Cinema*, “Quarterly Review of Film and Video” 1989, vol. 11(1), p. 27.

²⁸ E. Altenloh, *A Sociology of the Cinema: the Audience*, “Screen” 2001 [1914], vol. 42(3), p. 249–293.

programs from the American and British sectors were printed in English, they must have also been addressed to foreigners, most notably allied soldiers (fig. 16). Speaking of which, some programs contained ads for language courses and translation services especially for English, French and Russian. Since these ads were written in German, they addressed a German audience who needed or wanted to communicate with foreign soldiers [“Kronen”, April 1947; “Palladium”, September 1947].



Fig. 15 (left). Kronen-Lichtspiele program, ca. 1925. There are ads for a shop selling stockings, jackets and baby-products (upper-left hand corner), floor care products (upper-right hand corner), a watchmaker and a jeweler (left side in the middle) or a gallery and portrait painter (bottom-right hand corner)



Fig. 16 (right). Ad for a souvenir shop in a program of the Neue Scala theatre (June 1947). Caption (in English): “We have a fine assortment of souvenirs and gifts. Visitors welcome”

For the same reasons as for the surplus of women, there were also proportionally many children and teenagers in the population. Their presence in the audiences cannot be deduced from the ads, though. Nevertheless, the fact that youth frequented cinemas is reflected in other announcements. The 1946 pre-Christmas program of the KSB theatre in the American sector included an announcement that children and teenagers would not be allowed to attend the afternoon screenings on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day [KSB, 13–19 December 1946]. The same concerned screenings on Easter until at least 1948. This ban probably resulted from the belief that on such holidays children should be at home with their families (if they had any). In contrast to this situation, we can occasionally find special screenings for children, usually at weekends.

Another factor typical of early post-war society was the high level of social stratification. Few people had a permanent place to live in ruined cities. For the first years, food as well as other basic products were available for ration coupons, the rest was accessible on the black market only. Although in other parts of West Germany the situation soon improved after the currency reform in June 1948, in West Berlin it became even worse since the reform ended with

an almost yearlong blockade of the city. The result of the post-war shortages was a very rigid class structure. Apart from the vast majority of Germans, who had lost their goods or houses, a small but influential minority used the circumstances to enrich themselves, primarily through the black market.²⁹



Figs. 17–18. Tickets from Film-Bühne-Wien theatre, 29 October 1947. Front (left), reverse side (right). On the reverse side there is an ad for a store selling “gifts”, “fashion” and “perfumes” at Kurfürstendamm (Ku’damm), about 300 metres from the cinema

This stratification is reflected in the programs, of both luxury cinemas (e.g. Neue Scala or Film Bühne-Wien) and modest district theatres (e.g. Kammerspiele Britz or Palladium). The differences resulted not only from the cinema’s location or size but also from their repertoire as luxury theatres were allowed to screen premieres. This was not only a matter of prestige but also of quality; the longer a copy of a film was screened in other cinemas the worse the quality of this copy became. Unfortunately, we can hardly confirm the differences between the theatres by comparing ticket prices since they were neither printed in the programs nor on the tickets themselves. Speaking of which, some tickets also displayed ads on the reverse side, as can be seen on an example from the Film-Bühne-Wien theatre.



Fig. 19. The program of the Neue Scala theatre from April 1947, inside (left) and cover (right)

Film-Bühne-Wien as well as some other theatres at Ku’damm and streets nearby belonged to so-called “pleasure-palaces” (*Vergnügungspalast*).³⁰ Many of them contained ads targeted at the upper classes and foreigners. The

²⁹ W. Benz, *Auftrag Demokratie. Die Gründungsgeschichte der Bundesrepublik...*, p. 110.

³⁰ S. Hänzel, A. Schmitt (eds.), *Kinoarchitektur in Berlin 1895–1995...*, p. 42.

program above presents the repertoire of the Neue Scala theatre in the American sector (fig. 19). It contains ads for oriental carpets, pianos, gramophone records with dance music, a jeweller, a portrait painter (ad in English) and luxury draperies – all products for wealthy clients. The carpet shop and jeweller were in walking distance from the theatre, the piano shop and the drapery shop were located further away. The ads also include telephone numbers, which contributes to the thesis of their being addressed to a wealthier public, since private telephones were available to only a few Berliners in those days.

Many of the announcements in cinema programs, especially those of less luxurious theatres, contained the word *Ankauf* (acquiring) rather than *Verkauf* (selling), which allows us to conclude that commonly, cinemagoers were people who wanted or needed to sell their goods rather than to buy them. However, jewels, porcelain, ivory figures or antiques were not the only goods to be acquired. A Palladium theatre program contained the following announcement (fig. 20, circled): “Selling on commission: dresses, coats, costumes, underwear and shoes, men’s coats and suits, underwear and shoes”. Even used underwear could have been sold, here mentioned twice, to differentiate between women’s and men’s clothes. The most significant example of the presence of lower class viewers in the audiences, however, were ads for pest-control companies, shops offering dresses made from old clothes or barter businesses: two rolls of toilet paper for one kilogram of waste paper, for instance, or a towel for one kilogram of rags (fig. 21).

Fig. 20 (right). Cinema program from the Palladium theatre, 6–12 February 1948
 Fig. 21 (left). Ad for a barter business on the front of the KSB theatre program, 13–19th June 1947. See also fig. 3

Over the years, the drastic social stratification of the audience became less and less visible. Ads for barter shops or pest-control companies almost disappeared. Especially the programs of western cinemas showed more signs of prosperity. More and more ads for department stores or household equipment

stores were addressed to cinemagoers. Finally, in 1950, ads for the Volkswagen-Beetle – the very symbol of the West German economic miracle – appeared [Cosima, 9–12 June 1959].

By the end of 1949, the Rheinschloß-Lichtspiele theatre in Berlin-Friedenau (American sector) started to print an ad for moving services, saying the company would move customers’ goods to the West. Since the cinema was not close to the Soviet sector and thus probably not frequented by East Berliners, this ad addressed West Berliners who wanted to move to West Germany. Yet it also makes us think of mobility within Berlin and especially among cinemagoers. Until the Berlin Wall was built, people could move more or less freely between the sectors,³¹ even during the blockade of 1948/1949 although they were not allowed to transport any goods.³²



Fig. 22. A Humboldt Lichtspiel-Bühne program, 23–29 April 1948. The cinema was located in the French occupied zone, even though it contained an ad for a shop for stamp collectors in Pankow, a district in East Berlin

The emergence of the Cold War in Berlin had another impact on film audiences – the aforementioned border cinemas. Behind their appearance lay both political and economic reasons. On the one hand, they were a tool of western propaganda trying to convince the East Berliners of the benefits of liberal values and capitalism.³³ On the other hand, they were a way to attract new viewers after the number of cinemagoers in West Berlin had rapidly decreased in the summer of 1948.³⁴ After some time, even film theatres located in deeper parts of West Berlin joined the idea. For example, the Film-Bühne-Wien theatre organised special screenings for viewers from East Berlin only [Film-Bühne-Wien, 26 August 1950].³⁵ Signs of watching films “between the

³¹ Gerhard Klein presented the topic of teenagers from East Berlin frequenting West Berlin cinemas in his film *Berlin – Ecke Schönhauser* (1957).

³² Speaking of the blockade, there are significantly less programs from this period, which is not only due to the incomplete collection of Stiftung Deutsche Kinemathek. Many cinemas closed or screened less than before because of power cuts.

³³ n.n., *Kalter Kinokrieg – Entstehung und Entwicklung der Berliner Grenzkinos...*

³⁴ A. Bähr, *Der Wiederaufbau: von der Illusionswelt zur Filmkunst...*, p. 18.

³⁵ It is worth mentioning that the film to be screened was *The Third Man* (1949, dir. Carol Reed) – a well-known feature about a divided Vienna.

sectors” can be found in many programs, primarily in ads for stores located in other sectors than the given film theatre (fig. 22). This concerns programs of both western and eastern cinemas. Reassurances in some ads that both currencies would be accepted can also be treated as evidence of the audiences’ mobility.

Furthermore, some programs contained ads for screenings from other sectors. Having mentioned the phenomenon of border cinemas and viewers from East Berlin watching films in western cinemas, I would like to point out that contrary situations happened too, though rarely and – at least on the basis of the programs in the Stiftung Deutsche Kinemathek – before the Berlin blockade. In April 1948, the Blücher theatre printed a program that announced the screening of the film *Straßenbekanntschaft* (1948, dir. Peter Pewas) at the Markgrafen-Lichtspiele theatre in East Berlin [Blücher, 23 April 1948]. The film was an educational feature about venereal diseases, produced in the soviet zone. Similar announcements can be found in earlier programs of this cinema too.

Cinema programs and screenings

Besides insight into audience structures, cinema programs offer useful information about the shows themselves. On this basis, we can see that most titles were screened twice a day, seven days a week, from Friday to Thursday. On weekends, additional screenings in the early afternoon were offered. Some cinemas also organized night screenings, which started at 10 p.m. or even later. The most favourite films were screened on special occasions – Christmas, Easter, the cinema’s anniversary etc. In late 1947, the Blücher theatre conducted a survey in which audiences were asked whether they would like to have a “day-cinema” (*Tageskino*) established, i.e. screenings on weekday mornings. A questionnaire was included in the cinema program [Blücher, 28th November 1947]. The responses were very positive (of 830 votes only 9 were against it). Some viewers argued that there were many people who worked in the afternoons and evenings and thus could not attend regular screenings [Blücher, 6th February 1948].

Most programs also contained information about ticket pre-orders: Tickets were not only sold in the cinemas themselves, but at special points too, so-called *Theaterkassen*. The fact that it did not suffice to come to the cinema a couple of minutes before the screening in order to buy tickets only proves how popular films were in the late 1940s in Germany. The photographs below, both by Gerhard Gronefeld, show a queue in front of the Tivoli cinema³⁶ (left) before a screening of *Operette* (G: 1940, dir. Willi Frost) as well as a sign in front of the

³⁶ However, it was not the famous Tivoli theatre in Berlin-Pankow where Max and Emil Skladanowsky presented their first Bioscope moving images, but the Tivoli theatre in Berlin-Tempelhof (see www.allekinos.com [access 18.02.2014]).

Film-Bühne-Wien theatre (right) saying that tickets for *Große Freiheit Nr 7* (G: 1944, dir. Helmut Käutner, starring Hans Albers) were sold out.³⁷

Source: Deutsches Historisches Museum.



Figs. 23–24. Photographs by Gerhard Gronefeld, Berlin. Left 1947, right 1945 (the premiere of *Große Freiheit Nr 7* took place on 6 September 1945)

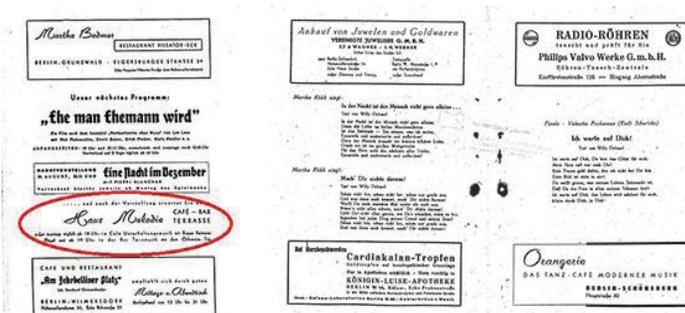


Fig. 25 (left). Page from the program of the Melodie-Lichtspiele theatre in Berlin Grunewald, August 1947. Circled in red is an ad for a café licensed for dancing. The inscription says, “and after the screening we welcome you at Melodie Café – bar and terrace. Daily from 6 p.m. light music in the café with Eugen Reimann at the piano and from 7 p.m. dancing music in the bar with the Ochsmann trio, except on Mondays”. As the name of the café is the same as that of the theatre as well as the lack of information concerning its address, let us assume that the café was located in the same building as the theatre

Fig. 26 (right). BTL (= Biophon Lichtspiele-Theater) program (inside) from 15–21 March 1946 containing song lyrics for the blockbuster *The Woman of my Dreams* (*Die Frau meiner Träume*, 1944, dir. Georg Jacoby)

The programs allow us furthermore to draw conclusions about the audiences’ habits after the show. Many programs contained ads for pubs, bars and restaurants licensed for dancing (fig. 25). These places were usually located

³⁷ In fact, the film by Käutner was the first film to be played at the Film-Bühne-Wien after the war. Its first post-war program was devoted to *Große Freiheit Nr 7*, containing a letter from the cinema’s director who thanked the allied forces for their help in re-establishing the cinema.

close to the cinema and reflected the social stratification of the audience too. There were both luxurious restaurants, especially at Ku'damm, and modest pubs offering cheap beer. Unfortunately, we know little about the audiences' habits during the show. Since the Film-Bühne-Wien theatre promoted their screenings in an open-air cinema by writing that smoking was allowed [Film-Bühne-Wien, 26 August 1950], we can assume that it was prohibited in ordinary theatres. Better sources to confirm this assumption are the memoirs of former cinema workers.³⁸ Contrary to some programs of the 1920s, in which the ladies were asked to take their hats off [Rheinschloß-Lichtspiele, 13–19 February 1920], the programs of the early 1940s did not contain any evidence of how the cinemagoers were to dress or what they did during the screenings. An interesting phenomenon, though, are song lyrics occasionally published in the programs (fig. 26), which leads to the conclusion that at least part of the audience might have sung along during screenings of musicals.

Conclusions

From today's perspective, cinema programs are not the best source for researching former cinemas' repertoires – that being their original purpose. Cinema repertoires can be better studied on the basis of announcements in local newspapers for instance. However, cinema programs are a good source for investigations in the field of audience studies. As this case study of Berlin 1945–1949 has shown, printed programs can be useful in analysing audiences in terms of class and gender stratification. In one case only, they gave evidence of the audience's possible political sympathies, since programs of the Blücher theatre often contained ads for the leftist newspaper "Der Sozialdemokrat". Even though cinema programs cannot replace typical archival documents or – if available – interviews with former cinemagoers, which in many cases would be treated as additional material rather than the main source, they offer interesting insights into local aspects of the theatres. In contrast to ads printed in newspapers and magazines, including film-magazines (figs. 13–14), which were addressed to a broader public and thus gave evidence of a more general consumer-culture, ads in cinema programs referred to the very local context of each theatre. While ads in the press promoted products (diverse brands of cosmetics, food products, cigarettes etc.), cinema programs contained ads for particular shops or department stores where these products could be acquired. Hence, ads for luxury shops, jewellers or expensive restaurants were printed in programs of "pleasure-palaces" like the Neue Scala or Film-Bühne Wien, whereas ads for barter businesses or cheap bars could be found in programs of ordinary district cinemas.

³⁸ P. Gleber, *Zwischen Gestern und Morgen. Film und Kino im Nachkriegsjahrzehnt*, p. 32.

Using cinema programs as a source for research on historical film audiences requires further methodological development. In order to get a deeper perspective on the audiences, we could, for instance, consider comparing ads published in programs with ads published elsewhere during the same period. That would allow us to differentiate between cinema audiences and the rest of the population. However, as of now, this would be the subject for a future research project.