Berlin Under the Sign of the Cinematograph: Urban Mobility and Cinema Location in Wilhelmine Berlin

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While urbanisation was one of the principal facets of modernisation, new means of transportation were prior to almost every other innovation as Wilhelmine Berlin grew and expanded to become a modern metropolis. Sometimes called 'Chicago on the Spree' – and definitely the most modern European capital at the time – Berlin's infrastructure of road and rail networks constituted the core of urban communication. In the year 1900, more than 80 million passengers used the city's public transportation network.[1] A similar infrastructural assumption serves as the guiding principle of this study on urban mobility and transportation, population density and cinema as a new media institution. The article, in short, argues that transportation facilities and pedestrian traffic are the definitive factors to describe and understand the dispersion of the early Berlin *Kintopps* (the equivalent of the US nickelodeons).

Berlin transportation

Alan Trachtenberg once noted that historical knowledge seems to declare 'its true value by its photographability.'[2] Hence, besides conveying aesthetic ideals and media practices, photographs and film record ephemeral actions and events of everyday life – or at least give this impression. One of the more striking photographs of Berlin's rapid urban development during the Wilhelmine era was taken by Waldemar Titzenthaler in the winter of 1907 (see figure 1). It portrays an almost deserted Reichskanzlerplatz. Situated on the western brink of Charlottenburg – not yet a district of Berlin, but a city of its own – it was, indeed, remote at the time. In the 1900 *Baedeker* guide to Berlin and its environs, the Reichskanzlerplatz was regarded as too inaccessible to be included on the main map.[3]

A few years later, however, while Berlin continued to grow at a breathtaking speed, the Reichskanzlerplatz constituted the edge of the ever-expanding metropolis. Berlin's population doubled from 1 million in the late 1870s to almost 2 million by 1900. Population growth was primarily constituted by large-scale immigration, especially from the East, to which the upper classes reacted by moving west (vividly expressed in the phrase *Zug nach Westen*), leaving the eastern and northern parts of the city to the working classes. The Reichskanzlerplatz belonged to such a bourgeois locality: Westend, a fashionable residential area of the wealthy. These inhabitants are, however, more or less absent in Titzenthaler's photograph, which displays only a few shadowy figures, even though unpopulated spaces are atypical of Titzenthaler's urban imagery.[4]

Berlin has sometimes been called a 'nowhere city', and Titzenthaler's image of the empty Reichskanzlerplatz is an appropriate illustration for such a motto. It is a photograph of an overgrown metropolis, where even more spaces await urbanization. What is most striking in Titzenthaler's image is the lack of buildings despite the existing traffic infrastructure. A huge white signboard announces *Baustellen verkäuflich* ('construction sites for sale'), directing potential investors to an address further downtown. However, the almost uncanny quality of the photograph principally derives from the two underground railway entrances, which are visible in the foreground.

In March 1908, the very first commuter to the new underground station was no lesser person than Kaiser Wilhelm II. His so-called *Kaiserfahrt* to inaugurate Berlin's newest underground line took him from the station Knie, along the Kaiserdamm through Charlottenburg towards Westend and ended on the Reichskanzlerplatz. Two weeks later the route was open to the general public. The circumstances were aptly described by the *Berliner Volks-Zeitung*, declaring that 'at the Reichskanzlerplatz everything ends – outside there is only a sandpit.'[5] Hence, travellers were literally going nowhere.[6]

For a further depiction of the rapid development of urban transportation around 1900, two early Lumière films can serve as examples. The wonderful meta-historical *Entrée du Cinématographe*, shot in London during spring 1896, visually testifies that even if film seemed like the quintessential medium of modernity, people were still arriving at the cinema with horse and cart. Besides revealing a Victorian class structure – where bourgeois gentlemen, carrying canes, strolled by a poorly clad

sandwich man – the film depicts a vanishing society in rapid change. The film camera clearly captures the hallmarks of modernity: a hectic public space full of activity, with rapid traffic and numerous billboards. The closest Berlin equivalent is probably *Panoptikum Friedrichstrasse*, also from 1896.[7] It depicts the entrance of the Kaisergalerie, a location with a similar bustling atmosphere. More than ten horse-drawn carriages, busses and carts pass by on the Friedrichstraße during the films' mere 30 seconds. Hence, the Lumière short shows that electrification of the public transportation system had hardly begun in Berlin at the time. Horsepower still constituted the primary energy for city travel.

If a pedestrian could walk two and a half kilometres in 30 minutes, a horse drawn tram was two kilometres faster. The latter so-called *Pferdebahnen* dominated urban traffic and were estimated to travel at the speed of 9 km/hour. By contrast, electric streetcars would run at 15 km/hour, at least according to a statistical chart provided by Erich Giese in his extensive investigation on the future transportation network of Berlin, *Das zukünftige Schnellbahnnetz für Groß-Berlin* (see figure 3).[8] The main purpose of Giese's publication was to figure out where new transportation facilities were needed most in the expanding metropolis. Through empirical research undertaken in the early teens, Giese collected statistics for a number of charts, depicting, for example, population density and traffic flows. From such data, he conceived suggestions for new transportation routes.

Furthermore, his book also presented the historical development of different forms of communication and transport, as well as Berlin's demographic development. Two charts in the beginning of the book, for instance, display the population density in central Berlin around Friedrichstraße. In 1880, almost 260,000 persons were living in the area, a figure that, by 1914, had decreased to less than 140,000. Berlin's (old) city centre, thus, had few inhabitants in 1914, and almost 120.000 people left the city centre during a thirty-year period. In another chart, or rather, a map of population density, Giese estimated where people would move in the near future (see figure 4).[9] Giese expected the primary population growth around the industrial areas in the northeast of the city. According to Giese, there were two main reasons for this population dispersion. Firstly, because of the development of a new network of streetcars, the *Straßenbahnnetz*, workers no longer needed to live within walking distance from their place of work. Secondly, the general *Zug nach Westen* contributed to this trend, and one reason why the urban haute bourgeoisie

could – or, indeed, would – move westwards were the new transportation facilities. The completion of the *Berliner Ringbahn* ('circular railway') in 1877 had already laid the foundation of a western 'inner' urban space, of which real estate speculators soon became aware and from which they profited. Legend has it that the old potato farmers of Schöneberg did the same: overnight they became millionaires by selling their fields to various construction companies.

As Berlin grew, urban planners were continually looking for new solutions to its increasing traffic problems. Between 1896 and 1902, all horse-powered means of public transportation were gradually electrified, and streetcar tracks were embedded into the city's vast road system. In the centre, however, one exception remained – Unter den Linden. Apparently, Kaiser Wilhelm II did not allow his *Prachtallee* to be subjected to such 'imprints of modernity'. Nonetheless, by 1914, more than 130 electric streetcar lines were in operation, adding up to more than 50 percent of Berliners' transportation system.[10]

Hence, Streetcars were electrified prior to the underground. Since Berlin was largely built on *Sumpf und Sand* ('marsh and sand'), city administrators were doubtful and hesitant as to whether an underground system was feasible at all. Among other things, they feared that it would damage the city sewers. Apparently, Siemens suggested the construction of an elevated railway, while AEG proposed an underground system. In the end, a joint proposal succeeded, and in 1896, work began on a railway through the new southwestern part of the city. The so-called *Stammstrecke* of the Berlin underground was eventually opened in 1902. The – as it turned out – partly elevated and partly underground railway soon became very popular. Traffic became more and more congested – and soon the inevitable happened. In September 1908, Berlin witnessed its first major railway accident. At the intersection Gleisdreieck – the modern transportation node *par prèference* in Berlin – the so-called *Hochbahn* went in three different directions. It appears that one train crashed into the side of another and a wagon fell from the viaduct, causing the death of more than twenty people. The event headed all newspapers, and five film companies were soon on location, among them Messter (see figure 5).

Furthermore, in conjunction with the underground, a number of major commercial ventures were also established, notably the modern department store Kaufhaus des Westens (KaDeWe). It opened in March 1907, five years after the inauguration of the underground station Wittenbergplatz. Retailers such as KaDeWe

took advantage of new transportation facilities. On the one hand, it made shopping more convenient for customers, and on the other hand, the store gained walk-in customers through the increased traffic. Payments were co-ordinated through a network of 150 cash decks connected to a central cashier's office via a pneumatic dispatch system. Thus, as people poured in and through KaDeWe's numerous departments, money floated through its inner network of tubes.[11]

But not only KaDeWe had a pneumatic dispatch system. The city of Berlin had built a similar postal network, which in fact anticipated its underground railway system by more than 40 years. The *Berliner Rohrpost* began operation in 1865 (see figure 6). Over the years, with some 90 stations and 400 kilometres of tubes, it developed into the second largest of its kind after Paris. German production of pneumatic dispatch systems was also located in Berlin, and several companies were exporting equipment on a large scale. Since its transportation patterns are comparable to later traffic routes, Berlin's pneumatic dispatch system serves as an interesting predecessor of the transportation network built around 1900. Apparently, the *Rohrpost* system was able to deliver up to eight million dispatches annually, and messages only took about an hour to reach the various recipients across the city. Hence, in more than one sense, this underground postal system was an innovative technology indicative of ways in which communication and transportation later became the most important features of urban modernity.[12]

Berlin cinemas

In June 1907, the cinema reformer Hermann Lemke went for a stroll through Berlin. In an article in *Der Kinematograph* based on this leisurely promenade, Lemke argued that if one had been away from Berlin for a while, one would, upon return, immediately notice a brand new constituent of its everyday life: 'No matter in which street one walks', Lemke claimed, 'everywhere one reads "Vitaskoptheater", "Theater lebende Photographien", "Kinematographentheater". Berlin is living under the sign of the cinematograph! I took pleasure in walking through the north, south, east and west of the city in order to count the numbers of cinemas. At 200, I gave up.'[13] In January of the same year, 'Bardolph' in *Berliner Tageblatt* claimed that Berlin had 280 *Kintopps*, a figure probably taken from the first issue of the same trade paper where Lemke published his *flanerie*.[14] However, statistical confusion

reigns, not only due to contradictory reports, but also the fact that it was only in 1920 that all of Berlin's separate districts became part of the metropolis.

Alexander Jason, in his dissertation on film industry statistics, claims that the number of Berlin cinemas increased from 21 to 132 between 1905 and 1907; by 1910 there were 139 cinemas, and by 1912 the figure had risen to 195.[15] However, in 1912, the journalist Ulrich Rauscher claimed that Berlin had as many as 400 *Kintopps*,[16] while the cinema and housing reformer Viktor Noack referred to a study in which Berlin was said to have around 300 cinemas. As a regular writer on film, Noack was aware of the uncertainty in this matter, and he explicitly proposed 'a municipal investigation concerning the influence of cinema on the mental life of the inhabitants of Berlin.'[17] Noack's proposal, of course, indicates that no such investigation had been done before in Berlin, in contrast, for example, to Vienna, where the Wiener Magistrat had undertaken such an investigation, to which Noack referred.

According to Noack, in 1913 in Germany, there were around 3,000 cinemas, which were attended by some 1.5 million people a day.[18] However, as Jeanpaul Goergen has reminded us, proof and verification of such figures in, for example, the daily press, is rather difficult to find, especially in the case of Berlin. For instance, in 1909 the city was said to have between 150 and 200 *Kintopps*, but only 26 are listed in the city index of addresses, the *Berliner Adreßbuch*.[19] Consequently, Goergen has proposed to 'distinguish between two classes of cinema: the visible cinema and the invisible cinema'.[20] Following Goergen, the smaller *Kintopps* belonged to an invisible cinema culture, hidden mainly because of their limited impact on an urban public sphere. Hence, a *Kintopp* in a local Berlin district had a restricted scope, and its only means of communication was its facade.

By contrast, companies dealing with moving pictures, first and foremost the world-market leader Pathé Frères, were conspicuously present within the new urban cinemascape. For example, in 1909, some fifty companies were listed in the *Berliner Adreßbuch*. Film advertising was prolific and sometimes occupied nearly two pages. Berlin was the main film distribution hub for Germany, as well as for Eastern Europe and Scandinavia. Most film companies established themselves in the so-called *Filmviertel* ('film quarter'), along the south of Friedrichstraße, which also hosted a number of film studios. Even though the *Berliner Adreßbuch* was probably financed by small fees, it remains a fascinating resource, hinting at the gradual

development of an urban media sphere. The directory, for example, situated Berlin's early cinema in a larger media framework, where phonographic companies, not to mention photographic ones, strongly outnumbered motion picture companies.[21]

These film companies and their production and distribution of films were, of course, the basic prerequisite for the emergence of permanent cinemas during the first decade of the twentieth century. However, means of transport were also a very important factor. The earliest permanent cinemas in Berlin established themselves in busy thoroughfares in the city centre, notably on Unter den Linden and in the area around Friedrichstraße.[22] The Kinematograph Unter den Linden 21, for instance, was situated near the famous Kranzlereck, a popular location with cafés and restaurants, *Tanzbars* and amusement attractions.[23] The Friedrichstraße, sometimes nicknamed *Saufstraße* ('booze street') because of its more than 250 pubs, was the centre of the red light district. It also served as a mass cultural entertainment hub with numerous cinemas, wax museums, circuses and variety stages. At some of the latter, notably the Berliner Wintergarten, moving pictures were shown as early as the mid 1890s.

Hence, the economic achievement and popular success of cinema as a new media institution – as is the case with most commercial undertakings – was dependent on the immediate environment. However, the establishment of permanent cinemas was also 'always traffic oriented', as Max Kullmann noted in his 1935 dissertation on the development of German *Lichtspieltheater*.[24] The location was not enough in itself; logistics, patterns of public transportation and pedestrian traffic mattered at least as much. In fact, this seems to have been evident from the very introduction of film. Historians have linked the Skladanowsky brothers' success at the Wintergarten – the most well-known Berlin variety theatre – to its location near one of the city's densest transportation hubs, the Bahnhof Friedrichstraße.[25] In comparison, the Apollo-Theater – where, in 1896, Oskar Messter began with his Kosmograph film projections and where he continued with his so called *Tonbilder* ('song slides') in 1903 – lay much further down on Friedrichstraße, 'and, thus, not at all as profitable and advantageous in terms of passenger transfer as the Wintergarten'.[26]

Audiences were of course dependent on means to get to the *Kintopp*, but factual extensions of transportation routes (i.e. exactly what streets were traversed) were even more significant. Still, before 1908/09, purpose-built cinemas were rare in Berlin. Even though cinema swiftly became an institution of urban social life, the

early Berlin *Kintopps* were predominantly located in buildings originally designed for other purposes than film projection. For example, in January 1907, 'Bardolph' of the *Berliner Tageblatt* paid a visit to a Berlin *Kinoladen* ('cinema shop'). 'The establishment of a *Kintopp* is very simple', 'Bardolph' states. All that was required was 'a local shop, made dark by blackened windows; rows of chairs, held together by a wooden rod, and some kind of screen on which to project the moving images; a piano or a nickelodeon and a counter selling beer and refreshments.'[27] As Brigitte Flickinger has shown, early cinemas in Berlin were usually part of certain integrated architectural patterns. They were either situated in tenement blocks, or in commercial areas, in buildings that were combinations of living apartments and places of business. Hence, from early on, different entrepreneurs and owners of various locations accepted, and even appreciated, the new entertainment form as a part of cultural and commercial urban life. As Flickinger accurately notes, they did so 'in spite of the raging debate on the usefulness or the moral and cultural dangers'[28] of the new medium.

As a background to these debates (which existed in several European countries, but seem to have been particularly vehement in Germany) it is important to stress that 'cinema-going' – a cultural concept yet to come – was very different during the early period than it was later. A film culture based on attention, silence and narrative immersion had not yet developed (i.e. 'classical cinema'). Instead, attending a *Kintopp* literally meant arriving at a fairly arbitrary moment. One would watch for a while, constantly interrupted by the changes of reels and salesmen of refreshments. Finally, one would depart, not always as the programme ended, but when one got tired and had seen enough. The fact that numerous Berlin *Kintopps* offered standing room tickets at a lower price is further testimony of such walk-in and almost restless reception. 'Bardolph' mentions that 'those who could not find a seat stand close to the walls.'[29] Some cinemas even sold tickets for reversed seats – with patrons sitting behind the screen either in a straight line or at a right angle (in which case a mirror was used to relay the projection), so that half of the audience would see the film reversed. It goes without saying that this made intertitles difficult to read, but since Berlin cinemas sometimes had an *Erklärer*, a commentator explaining what went on, he usually also read the inverted text out loud.

Hence, early Berlin cinema audiences came and went at random. At the time, watching films was almost like consuming any other product – or at least exhibitors

promoted the new medium this way. Catering to public demand, they sought to create film programmes that would attract audiences enough to return. In fact, the very institution of urban cinema depended on the establishment of a *Stammpublikum* ('regulars') – a paradox indeed, since audiences were unpredictable and often inconsistent in their preferences.[30] Hence, exhibitors had to go out of their way to present new and exciting programmes, or risk losing their business. 'Some smaller *Kintopps* continue to show old pictures, and sometimes even rerun films from previous years', an annoyed critic in *Der Kinematograph* stated in August 1908. 'They still manage to find an audience for such screenings, but they should consider the damage done to their theatre's reputation and not be surprised if audiences never return.'[31] Even though longer films – what Corinna Müller has termed the *Langfilmszeit* of early cinema – appeared around 1910, the programme structure of film exhibition, and thus the mode of reception connected with it, was relatively persistent.[32]

Furthermore, attending the cinema remained linked to transportation and communication patterns. For example, Albert Brocke, in a 1908 introduction to the requirements for operating a cinema, argued that a cinema entrepreneur should, in the first place, 'seek out a locality in the busiest streets, if possible close to a railway station.' Brocke's advice mainly targeted exhibitors in smaller cities.[33] However, Max Kullmann later, in a historical study, made a similar claim, noting that German cinema entrepreneurs in general had acted briskly and efficiently, in accord with the latest developments in the urban transportation system. Since people decided to attend a cinema impulsively and on a whim, countless cinemas were, according to Kullmann, established 'in the busiest areas of the suburbs.' Consequently, cinemas tended to be situated in close proximity to one another (even though this intensified competition). By and large, this pattern seems to have been the same in most German cities. 'All over [Germany], cinemas were tightly clustered', Kullmann noted, 'not least because the most recent cinema owners always believed they had to choose the same place to attain a favourable location.'[34]

Berlin audiences

In the summer of 1911, the journalist Franz Pfemfert gave the terse comment that one could form an opinion on a national culture by reading entertainment statistics.

The masses of modernity craved amusement and distraction, and pivotal among these were, of course, moving pictures: 'Nick Carter, cinema and Berlin tenement houses – this trivial trinity belongs together', Pfemfert laconically stated.[35] Many comments in the German trade press were, in fact, arrogant and ostentatious towards members of the lower classes who frequented cinemas. For example, blue-collar workers had bad manners; they were noisy and reeked: 'the cheap seats are occupied by people who do not exactly smell like nectar and ambrosia', as one critic put it in 1908.[36]

As in other big cities, the audiences of early Berlin *Kintopps* were predominantly workers and children. The composition of early film audiences has been discussed in detail by various scholars, notably in the *Cinema Journal* debate on Manhattan nickelodeons. Interestingly, cinema location was a major topic of the discussion.[37] For example, Ben Singer, in the first of his articles on the subject, argued that 'a range of factors shaped the distribution of nickelodeons in Manhattan: neighbourhood class, population density, ethnic concentration, municipal codes and regulation, transportation patterns, the availability of commercial space, rent rates and so on.' Singer states that these factors, often combined in various ways, were the prime reasons for encouraging – or discouraging – the opening of a new cinema. According to him, population concentration was the 'best predicator of nickelodeon distribution', since cinemas most frequently 'clustered in the densest areas of the city – densest either in terms of residential concentration or volume of pedestrian traffic.'[38] Hence, although trying to make a case in point, Singer's concept of 'density' seems somewhat ambiguous, designating either residential concentration or pedestrian traffic. But these are not necessarily the same, and moreover, Singer, in fact, stresses population density as the primary factor for cinema location.

However, in the case of Berlin, I would argue that traffic routes and hubs in general, and pedestrian traffic in particular, are factors that are superior to population density for describing and understanding the dispersion of the Berlin *Kintopps*. Certainly, people were inclined to attend cinemas in their neighbourhood. However, the primary factor for cinema entrepreneurs seems to have been proximity to the public transportation network. For example, in the district of Friedrichshain, one of the most densely populated blue-collar boroughs of Berlin, only 2 out of 18 cinemas were located in crowded residential areas far from transportation nodes – at least according to the so called Kino-Pharus-Plan from 1919. This map marked out

300 Berlin cinemas, and its publication testifies to the status of moving pictures by the late teens. However, it contained numerous cinemas that had been in operation for more than a decade, which also makes it useful for describing the period of early cinema.[39] In the case of Friedrichshain, high population density made some quarters economically viable for local tradesmen, craftsmen and small shops. By contrast, local cinema owners apparently disfavoured such localities. In trying to attract an audience – from school children on their way home to workers leaving their factories – moving picture vendors were keener on establishing themselves near places of urban mobility. According to the Kino-Pharus-Plan, 16 out of 18 cinemas in Friedrichshain were situated in the proximity of the transportation network, either clustered around the Bahnhof Frankfurter Allee, or along various streetcar lines running through the area (see figure 7).

The district of Wedding can serve as another example. In Wedding – often nicknamed *Rote Wedding* because many socialists lived there – the working classes also dominated the overall demography. Around 1910, Wedding had 17 *Kintopps*, the second largest number of Berlin districts (after the central district Mitte). Wedding was a blue-collar borough, where many people both lived and worked, since a number of the city's industries were located in the area, notably AEG. As Julie Ann Lindstrom has shown in her dissertation on Chicago nickelodeons, establishment of cinemas often seemed to have been dependent on where people lived *and* were they worked.[40] Hence, Wedding testifies to a similar pattern. However, cinemas were still firmly linked to transportation nodes and routes. For example, 6 *Kintopps* were clustered around the main train station Bahnhof Wedding, and another 8 around the streetcar intersection on Pank Straße. Interestingly, in the eastern part of Wedding, cinemas did not establish themselves along the main thoroughfare, the Brunnen Straße, but on the adjacent, smaller Swinemünder Straße. Both streets had streetcars, but Swinemünder Straße was probably more densely populated, since parts of the Brunnen Straße faced the park Humboldthain (see figure 8). Hence, even though Wedding and Friedrichshain were densely populated urban areas, cinema owners were nevertheless inclined to favour transportation nodes and routes.

One might offer two basic explanations why transportation facilities were a more important factor than population density for early cinema location in Berlin. On the one hand, Berliners attending *Kintopps* seem to have done this spontaneously, and

on the other, population density is, undeniably, a problematic concept in relation to Berlin housing, since the city is often said to have been the largest tenement house in the world. This expression also appears in the subtitle of Werner Hegemann's classic *Das steinerne Berlin* from 1930.[41] Population density is a statistical variable that is used in various topics of urban history. According to Hegemann, with an average of 75.9 persons per building, Berlin had the highest inhabitant density in the Western world; in comparison, Manhattan had only 20.4. Hegemann based his statistics on earlier investigations, primarily done by Rudolf Eberstadt in 1910, and interestingly, when planning the future transportation network of the city, Erich Giese also drew upon them. The Berlin *Mietskasernen* were immense rental barracks with three to four damp courtyards extending from the street. The high density, however, was largely due to the sheer size of the building block, and hence population density as a statistical category gives a somewhat distorted notion of living conditions.

The other reason why the transportation network and pedestrian traffic seems more suitable than population density is the fact that film viewing at the time was almost literally a 'moving' experience. Berlin's cinema audiences were often described by contemporary observers as a *laufpublikum* ('walk-in audience'), i.e. on the move, hurrying into and out of the *Kintopp*. 'Cinema is convenient', noted the critic Raoul Auernheimer, since *Kintopps* 'lie temptingly at every street corner. Regardless of the hour, this automatic restaurant of the mind is always willing to satisfy one's appetite.'[42] The *raison d'être* of this viewing pattern was the city's vast public transportation network. Hundreds of connecting lines made it exceptionally easy to jump off, jump in and see a film. For example, around 1910, in the southwest district of Steglitz, cinemas were situated along the main thoroughfare, the Schloßstraße, with its *Straßenbahnlinie*. Similarly in the northeastern district of Prenzlauer Berg, audiences travelling with the *Hochbahn* along Schönhauser Allee could choose between several cinemas.

Mass transportation hubs serve as another case in point. Prior to 1910, on a regular day, the Alexanderplatz – the eastern centre of Berlin – saw some 140,000 pedestrians and 13,000 vehicles pass by.[43] Some were heading for the train station *Stadtbahnhof* – opened in 1882 and part of the railway line traversing the central city – others proceeded towards the *Berliner Stadtbahn*, the underground or the numerous electrical streetcars (see figure 8). Obviously, pedestrian traffic was

immense – and in all likelihood the main reason why Berlin's first Riesen-Kinematograph ('giant cinema'), the 'Union-Theater am Alexanderplatz', opened opposite to the Tietz department store in September 1909. Hermann Tietz had inaugurated his lavish store five years earlier. The magnificent four-storey palace transformed shopping into a spectacular experience, which could be effortlessly continued by crossing the street to the 'most beautiful cinema of its kind in the world', according to advertisements. Apparently, some 800 persons could be seated in the 'Union-Theater am Alexanderplatz', a figure no other Berlin cinema matched at the time.[44]

Conclusion

Due to a lack of extant documents, historical research on early cinema in Wilhelmine Berlin is very difficult. Much was lost in the two world wars. Furthermore, the Berlin daily press published very little on film – especially compared to the USA.[45] In accordance with a reformist press agenda, newspapers avoided reporting on film as entertainment, and instead wanted to associate it with information and education. Nevertheless, voices in the trade press and a few items gleaned from the daily press testify to the centrality of transportation as a factor for *Kintopp* location. For example, in his often quoted essay entitled 'Kino und Schaulust' ('cinema and visual pleasure'), the Dadaist artist Walter Serner reflected on the boom of permanent cinemas in 1907/08. The two main reasons for the success of the Berlin *Kintopp*, Serner argued, were the 'convenient location on thoroughfares and the continuous film programme.'[46] For the Berlin *laufpublikum*, these were significant characteristics of the cinema experience. Hence, attending the cinema was effortless entertainment: *Kintopps* positioned themselves temptingly at busy street corners, willing to satisfy one's visual pleasure at almost any time.

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[1] See Uwe Poppel and Sigurd Hilkenbach, *Ein Jahrhundert Berliner U-Bahn in Streckenplänen und Fotos* (Berlin: Jaron, 2002), 81.
[2] Alan Trachtenberg, 'Albums of War: On Reading Civil War Photographs', *Representations* 9 (1985): 1-32, quote p. 1.
[3] See Baedeker, *Berlin und Umgebungen* (Leipzig: Baedeker, 1900).
[4] For a discussion of Waldemar Titzenthaler's photographs, see e.g. the catalogue *Berlin – Photographien von Waldemar Titzenthaler* (Berlin: Nicolai, 1987). Titzenthaler's photographs are now in the public domain. Consequently, almost 50 of them can be found on the web at

http://commons.wikimedia.org (15 September 2008). Titzenthaler had originally worked in advertising, as well as providing the illustrated press with images. But he was also a keen urban photographer. His images were often taken from a high angle, emphasizing perspective and spatial depth.

[5] The *Berliner Volks-Zeitung* is quoted from Ruth Glatzer (ed.), *Das Wilhelminische Berlin: Panorama einer Metropole 1890-1918* (Berlin: Siedler, 1997), 303.

[6] For a graphic introduction to the Berlin underground, see Poppel and Hilkenbach, *Ein Jahrhundert Berliner U-Bahn in Streckenplänen und Fotos*.

[7] For a general introduction to early German non-fiction cinema, see Uli Jung and Martin Loiperdinger (eds.), *Geschichte des dokumentarischen Films in Deutschland*, Vol. 1: *Kaiserreich 1895-1918* (Stuttgart: Reclam, 2005).

[8] See Erich Giese, *Das zukünftige Schnellbahnnetz für Groß Berlin*, Berlin: Moeser, 1919.

[9] The black dots on his map illustrate approximately where a thousand people lived, and the red ones represent where a thousand inhabitants would presumably live in the forthcoming years. The purple parts, in turn, mark the most important industrial areas at the time.

[10] Michael Erbe, 'Berlin im Kaiserreich (1871-1918)', in Wolfgang Ribbe (ed.), *Geschichte Berlins*, Vol. 2: *Von der Märzrevolution bis zur Gegenwart* (München: Beck, 1987), 691-793, specif. p. 737.

[11] For a discussion of Berlin's department stores, see e.g. Alexander Sedlmaier*, From Department Store To Shopping Mall* (Berlin: Akademischer Verlag, 2005).

[12] For an introduction to the Berlin pneumatic dispatch system, see Ingmar Arnold, *Luft-Züge: die Geschichte der Rohrpost in Berlin und anderswo* (Berlin: GWE, 2000).

[13] Hermann Lemke, 'Berlin – Kinematograph und Sittlichkeit', *Der Kinematograph* 24 (June 1907).

[14] 'Zur Geschichte des Kinematographen-Theaters', *Der Kinematograph* 1 (January 1907).

[15] Alexander Jason, *Der Film in Ziffern und Zahlen: Die Statistik der Lichtspielhäuser in Deutschland 1895-1925* (Berlin: Hackebeil, 1925), 21. For a discussion of the early cinema landscape in Berlin, see also Gabriele Kilchenstein, *Frühe Filmzensur in Deutschland: Eine vergleichende Studie zur Prüfungspraxis in Berlin und München (1906-1914)* (München: diskurs film, 1997), 46-57.

[16] Ulrich Rauscher, 'Die Welt im Film', *Frankfurter Zeitung* 31 (December 1912).

[17] Victor Noack, *Der Kino: Etwas über sein Wesen und seine Bedeutung* (Leipzig: Dietrich, 1913), 12.

[18] Ibid.

[19] See the heading 'Kinematographen-Theater' in *Berliner Adreßbuch IV: Handel und Gewerbebetriebe* (Berlin: Scherl, 1909).

[20] Jeanpaul Goergen, 'Cinema In the Spotlight: The *Lichtspiel*-Theaters and the Newspapers In Berlin, September 1913 – A Case Study', in Corinna Müller and Harro Segeberg (eds), *Kinoöffentlichkeit (1895-1920)* (Marburg: Schüren Verlag, 2008), 66-86, quote p. 67.

[21] See various media-related headings in the *Berliner Adreßbuch IV*.

[22] See e.g. Sylvaine Hänsel and Angelika Schmitt (eds.), *Kinoarchitektur in Berlin 1895-1995* (Berlin: Reimer, 1995), 100-101.

[23] For a discussion of the establishment of the Kinematograph Unter den Linden 21, see Jeanpaul Goergen, 'Der Kinematograph Unter den Linden 21: Das erste Berliner "Kino" 1896/97', *KINtop: Jahrbuch zur Erforschung des frühen Films* 6 (1997): 143-165.

[24] Max Kullmann, *Die Entwicklung des deutschen Lichtspieltheaters* (Kallmünz: Laßleben, 1935), 136.

[25] Michael Hanisch, for example, notes the centrality of the Central-Hotel at Bahnhof Friedrichstraße and its winter garden when describing the Skladanowsky brothers' first screenings there. Michael Hanisch, *Auf den Spuren der Filmgeschichte: Berliner Schauplätze* (Berlin: Henschel, 1991), 13-16.

[26] Iris Kronauer, 'Vergnügen, Politik und Propaganda: Kinematographie im Berlin der Jahrhundertwende (1896-1905)' (PhD dissertation Humboldt Universität Berlin, 1999), 81.

[27] Bardolph, 'Im Kientopp', *Berliner Tageblatt* (10 January 1907).

[28] Brigitte Flickinger, 'Cinemas In the City: Berlin's Public Space In the 1910s and 1920s', *Film Studies* 10 (2007): 72-86, specif. 79.

[29] Bardolph, 'Im Kientopp'.

[30] For a discussion see Thomas Elsaesser, *Filmgeschichte und frühes Kino* (München: edition text + kritik, 2002), 94-117.

[31] 'Berliner Plauderei', *Der Kinematograph* 87 (August 1908).

[32] See Corinna Müller, *Frühe deutsche Kinematographie* (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1994).

[33] Albert Brocke, 'Ständige Kinematographen-Theater in Provinzial-Städten', *Der Kinematograph* 100 (November 1908).

[34] Kullmann, *Die Entwicklung des deutschen Lichtspieltheaters*, 136-137. For a comparison within Germany, see Michael Töteberg, 'Neben dem Operetten-Theater und vis-à-vis Schauspielhaus: Eine Kino-Topographie von Hamburg 1896-1912', in Corinna Müller and Harro Segeberg (eds.), *Kinoöffentlichkeit (1895-1920)* (Marburg: Schüren, 2008), 87-104.

[35] Franz Pfemfert, 'Kino als Erzieher', *Die Aktion* 1, 18 (1911): 560-563, reprinted in Jörg Schweinitz (ed.), *Prolog vor dem Film: Nachdenken über ein neues Medium 1909-1914* (Leipzig: Reclam, 1992), 165-169, quote p. 167.

[36] Paul Levy, 'Die sachgemässe Entlüftung des Kinematographen-Theaters', *Der Kinematograph* 94 (October 1908).

[37] The debate went on for two years, and seven articles were published on the topic in *Cinema Journal*: Ben Singer, 'Manhattan Nickelodeons: New Data On Audiences and Exhibitors', *Cinema Journal* 3 (1995): 5-35; Sumiko Higashi, 'Manhattan's Nickelodeons', Robert C. Allen, 'Manhattan Myopia; or, Oh! Iowa!', 75-103 and Ben Singer, 'New York, Just Like I Pictured It ...', 104-128, *Cinema Journal* 3 (1996); William Uricchio and Roberta E. Pearson, 'Manhattan's Nickelodeons: New York? New York!', 98-102, Judith Thiessen, 'Oy, Myopia!', 102-107 and Ben Singer, 'Manhattan Melodrama', 107-112, *Cinema Journal* 4 (1997).

[38] Singer 'Manhattan Nickelodeons', 19.

[39] The Kino-Pharus-Plan – published by the renowned Pharus Verlag in 1919 – contained 300 Berlin cinemas, graphically divided into four categories. A black dot represented small *Kintopps* with less than 301 seats. According to the Kino-Pharus-Plan there were 181 of these; most of the smaller cinemas had been in operation for a decade or more. The next category was cinemas with between 301 and 600 seats. 90 of them, marked with an x, were mapped out. Cinemas with 601 to 1,000 seats were represented with an encircled x, of which there were 20. Finally, a large dot with a circle around it represented film palaces with more than a thousand seats, of which there were only 9 at the time. For a discussion of the map, see Brigitte Flickinger, 'Zwischen Intimität und Öffentlichkeit: Kino im Großstadtraum – London, Berlin und St. Petersburg bis 1930', in Clemens Zimmermann (ed.), *Raumgefüge und Medialität der Großstädte im 20. Jahrhundert* (Stuttgart: Steiner, 2006), 135-152.

[40] Julie Ann Lindstrom, '"Getting a Hold Deeper In the Life of the City": Chicago Nickelodeons, 1905-1914', (PhD dissertation, Northwestern University, Evanston/Chicago IL, 1998).

[41] Werner Hegemann, *Das steinerne Berlin: Geschichte der größten Mietskasernenstadt der Welt* (Berlin: Kiepenhauer, 1930), 55.

[42] *Der Kinematograph* 300 (1912), quoted from Bernhard Zeller (ed) *Hätte ich das Kino! Die Schriftsteller und der Stummfilm* (Stuttgart: Klett, 1976), 23.

[43] Dieter Glatzer and Ruth Glatzer, *Berliner Leben 1900-1914* (Berlin: Rütten and Loening, 1986), 57.

[44] Hanisch claims, however, that only 600 persons could be seated. Still, the Union-Theater am Alexanderplatz also boasted a restaurant of its own, an orchestra and a printed film program – all in order to resemble an ordinary first-class theatre. For a discussion, see Hanisch 1991, 204-209.

[45] For a recent example, see Jan Olsson's book on the early film culture in Los Angeles, almost entirely gleaned from sources in the daily press. Jan Olsson, *Los Angeles Before Hollywood: Journalism and American Film Culture, 1905 To 1915* (Stockholm: SLBA, 2009).

[46] Walter Serner, 'Kino und Schaulust', *Schaubüne* 9, 34/35, Vol. 2 (1913): 807-811, quoted from Zeller, *Hätte ich das Kino!,* 57.