

Some GERMAN SYSTEMS Below notes on various systems that are not in MCS, and extra points about some that are. Many of them are small sets that appeared in the decade following WW2 and were only produced for a few years. My thanks to Jeannot Buteux who sent much of the information, some of it from the *CONSTRUCTORAMA* archive. Many other details have been taken from *EISENZEIT* (EZ), the invaluable book reviewed in 14/377, and from data that Werner Sticht kindly sent. However, as will be seen, there are still many gaps and any additional information will be very welcome. Also with my limited German I may have misunderstood EZ in places, and so, as always, corrections will be much appreciated.

AKRON This set dates from the WW2 to the early 1950s period and there's a small photo of the lid, and some notes on it, in EZ. Under the name is Stahl-Leichtbau-Kasten (Steel Lightweight Building Set) and what I can understand of the note says that thin elastic steel Strips were used with holes in them at 5mm pitch. And there's mention of spiral springs, possibly used as the method of fixing?

ALPHA MCS has 2 systems of this name and from the start date of 1931 given, the notes in EZ refer to the second one in MCS, the one with the 12mm spacing. The end date is given as c1970 though unless this encompasses both there may have been 2 ALPHAs on sale at the same time. There were 4 main and 5 linking sets, plus a small 50-Pfennig outfit, and it was the first system to have parts made of coloured plastic. The models included such non-technical subjects as a Weightlifter, an Ibex and Dancing Hares.

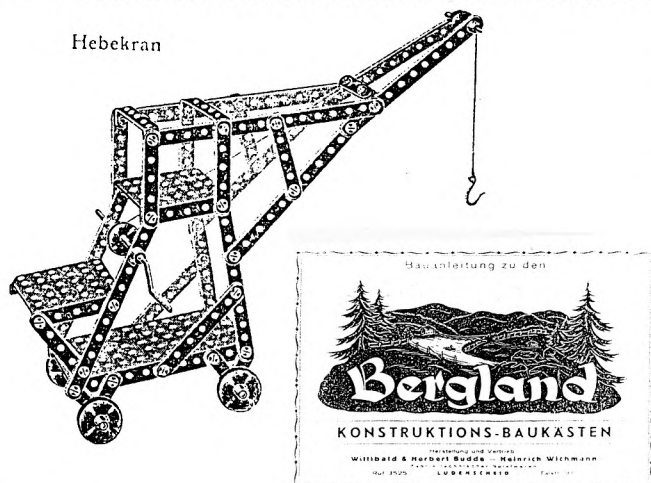
AUKI The box lid of this early 1950s set is shown in EZ but without any details, and the model on it is too small to see.

AUTO-CONSTRUKTOR This system is mentioned in EZ but no details are given. It may be the same as AUTO-CONSTRUCTEUR in MCS - that name came from a manual in Dutch, but the titles in the figures in it were still in German. EZ gives the start of production as 1928 and the maker as Curt Schrader of Eisenach, and from 1929 München. This firm had earlier made METALLO-TRIGON although it was called Stanzwerke GmbH at that time.

BAUFIX EZ gives the start date as 1932, and the maker as Saalheimer & Strauss, Nürnberg. It also refers to 'BAUFIX and **SIMPLEX**' as two cheap sets from that firm, but I'm not certain whether they were identical systems.

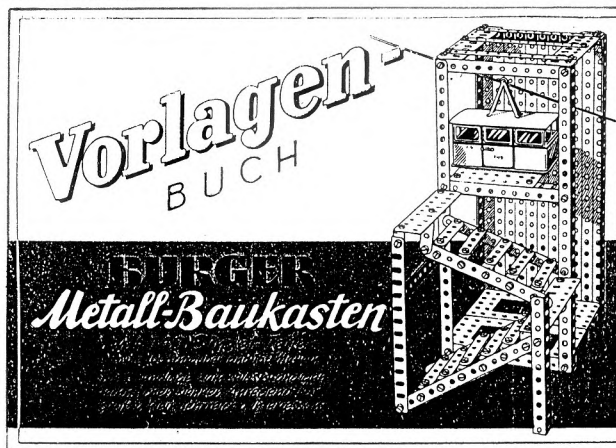
BENCO The start date isn't given in MCS - a set from around the early 1950s is shown in EZ.

BERGLAND Made by Willibald & Herbert Budde/Heinrich Wichmann, in Lüdenscheld from c1945 to about 1950. The



manual cover with its mountain scene is shown at the foot of the last column; an inner page has two Nr.1 models that can also be made from Sets 0 + 0a. About 18 parts can be seen in the Crane, including Strips from 2 to 15 holes, a 5*11h Plate flanged along its longer sides, and a smaller one, probably 5*5h but sometimes it appears to be 6h long.

BURGER Probably from the 1950s, only one set is mentioned on the manual cover (below), and the text on it says that it contains 140 parts plus 100 Bolts and 150 Nuts. That might suggest that Threaded Rods were used as axles. Other parts that can be seen in the Cable Car Station on the cover are 5*11 Flanged Plates with the STABIL-style centre 7*3h cutout; 25,14 & 11h Strips and A/Gs; and 9 & 11h Flat Girders.



CONSTRUCTION EZ gives the start date as around 1965 and the original manufacturer as VEB (K) Metallwaren Schmerbach bei Gotha. From sometime between 1979 and 1982 production passed to VEB Ppaffschwende, and the original sets numbered from 100 upwards were replaced by the series starting with C01. KONSTRUKTION, the forerunner of CONSTRUCTION (see 8/181), isn't mentioned in EZ but the manufacturer given in MCS was from Gotha (a town near Erfurt).

Of the earliest parts EZ says that the Flanged Plates were sometimes painted, and the large plastic Circular Plates (Lochscheibe) was bright blue. This might have been the 50mm Ø Scheibe shown in MCS for CONSTRUCTION but it may be noted that for KONSTRUKTION a 70mm Lochscheibe is listed as well as a 50mm version. Both look as if they are metal, but the MCS entry may well not show the earliest parts.

DER KLEINE INGENIEUR EZ has 2 references to a system of this name and I'm not sure if they are one and the same. There's a photo of a small box lid from the WW2-early '50s period, with a model of a Ferris Wheel on it, and elsewhere talk of a DDR set with STABIL-like steel parts.

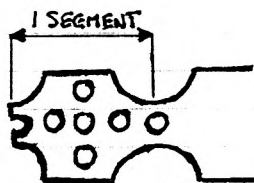
DER JUNGE KONSTRUKTEUR There is quite a bit about this DDR system in EZ. It was made by Hans Wunsch of Niederwiesa and appeared in 1959. The hole spacing was 12.5mm and the parts were black, of good quality, with plastic gears. As well as the outfits in MCS there was a theme set to make a Tractor, 3-Furrow Plough, Roller, and Harrow, and a Nr.1000 outfit with about 1000 parts. Later on (after 1966?) there were sets to make bridges and cranes; railway locos and wagons; and cars and other motor vehicles. No reference to the system is known after 1972.

DER KONSTRUKTEUR FMF A small set from the WW2-early '50s period. The box lid shown in EZ has 3 boys and a girl admiring a very simple model of an open-topped

More on GERMAN SYSTEMS

Following the notes in 15/412, Jeannot Buteux, Sven-Ulrich Glage and Don Redmond have been good enough to sent comments, additional information, and the names of yet more German systems. For reference purposes the initials JB, SG or DR after each contribution indicates its origin. [The illustrations from Jeannot are courtesy of the *Constructorama* archive.]

- The form of **AKRON** parts is as sketched opposite, and some contain as many as 17 segments. (JB)



- An early 1930s commercial catalogue lists 5 main **ALPHA** sets (ALPHA [2] in MCS) and 4 linking sets. No set numbers are given, only catalogue references, but No.2 can be seen on the one set illustrated. It's the middle sized of the 5 main sets and it's the same as the No.2 in MCS, and with the same numbers of parts. So it's likely that the main sets listed are Nos.00, 0, 1, 2 & 3.

Also included is a Kanonen-Baukasten with 227 parts in a box 34*18cm. A model is shown (right) and with a geared drive for elevation at least, it is more sophisticated than the 1930s STABIL Kanonen models. (SG)



- Is **AUTO-CONSTRUKTOR** (15/412) a printing error? [Probably yes, it is spelt that way in *Eisenzeit*, p177, but if it's the same as the Dutch AUTO-CONSTRUCTEUR, which seems likely, the name on the pages still in German in the Dutch manual is AUTO-CONSTRUCTOR.] (JB)

- **BURGER** has 4.1mm diameter holes at 12.5mm pitch, Bolts are M4 with hex Nuts, and Axles are 4mm Ø. The parts are painted red, blue, green & cream, and are poorly finished. (SG)

- The lid from a photo of a small **DER KLEINE INGENIEUR** Outfit is shown opposite, and the parts in the box include various Strips, an 8-hole Wheel Disc, a STABIL-pattern Flanged Sector Plate, and 2 of what appear to be Screwdrivers, with large tapering wooden handles. (JB)



- On **DORANDO**. Unlike INGÉNIO (16/430) for example, the metal frame is on the inside and is hidden in the finished model. (JB)

- The initials **F.D.K.K.** stand for FÜR DEN KLEINE KONSTRUKTEUR. (JB)

- There was a connection between **INDUSTRIE** and **PHANTASIE** (15/417) in that the models in the manuals owned by *Constructorama* are identical: the PHANTASIE Crane in 15/417 is Model 33 on p10, and the same model, but reversed right to left, is in the INDUSTRIE manual, again on p10, but it is No.24. Also the parts in it are held together by snap fasteners. Those are the only differences as far as the manuals are concerned, but the parts in the 2 systems aren't compatible, with a different hole size and pitch. [N&B are shown for INDUSTRIE in MCS and snap fasteners were used in an earlier period] (JB)

- **KONSTRUX** is larger than stated in OSN 15 and there were 5 sets called MIKROS, DEUTERON, MEGA, MAKROS, REX - Greek or Latin names all relating to size in some way. (JB)

- The French patent (No.707915) for **MAFELL** (15/415) was granted in 1930. A model is shown at the top of the next column. (JB)



- **MECANIC/MEKANIK**. The change of name occurred in 1949 when the system was still being made by Dörken & Mankel. (The company still exists under the name Dorma and is now a leading manufacturer of door closing systems.) According to information from the firm, production of constructional toys ceased in the mid 50s [a catalogue from 1957 is known] because of problems of distribution in the toy market. A manufacturer has to be listed by VEDES, the powerful organisation of German toy retailers, to be able to sell products nationwide. D&M, (and also the firm who made MIGNON) were apparently not on good terms with VEDES. As a matter of interest it is said that VEDES played an important role in the confiscation of Meccano's rights during WW1 and their sale to Märklin.

Sven continued that he has some 25 MECANIC/MEKANIK sets in his collection but not one made by Adrian & Rode, and so he would like to know more about their period. In a mid 50s Leaflet a new Gears Set is shown but was it ever introduced? The parts were included in Parts Lists (see 3/33) but he has never seen any of them. (SG)

- **MIKRONO, ROSETTA, & PYTHAGORAS** were different names for the same system, and their parts may be wooden, but this isn't sure yet. (JB)

- On **MÖWE** (15/416) the original firm would have been Möninghoff & Weiß, the brand name coming from the first 2 letters of each. (DR)

Sven's **MÖWE** set is packed in a nickel plated box with a sliding lid and hazardous sharp edges. It measures 28.5*8.3*2.3cm and the lettering on it is stamped into the metal. Holes are 4.3mm Ø at 13.0mm pitch, and the Bolts are M4 with (unusually for German systems) square Nuts. Strips, Plates and Brackets are nickel plated steel of various thicknesses around 1mm. Pulleys have a brown finish like thin brass plating. [Sven kindly sent an 8h Strip and it is 13.2mm wide by 1.18mm thick, with 4.4mm Ø holes. Its end radius is 7mm. And in a photo of the Set can be seen a 12*5h Perforated Plate, the Flat Sector Plate mentioned in OSN 15 (with straight ends and all holes parallel to them), and 2 of the STABIL-type Flanged Pulley Discs. The manual has landscape pages almost the size of the box, against the near A5 size of the page the model in OSN 15 was taken from.] (SG)

- The EMB4 **PLASTICON** set includes a motor and other electrical parts, with some plastic parts, and others of nickel plated steel. (JB)

- The parts shown in a photo of a **RECORD** Set include some short Strips and Brackets with semi-radiused ends,

AUTO-CONSTRUCTOR **AUTO-CONSTRUCTEUR** **AUTO-KONSTRUKTOR**

This is about 5 sets from this 1920s German system, all called AUTO-CONSTRUCTOR on their lids. 3 included a manual, one in German also called AUTO-CONSTRUCTOR, and 2 in Dutch called AUTO-CONSTRUCTEUR. All that was known in the past was that German boxes were called AUTO-CONSTRUCTOR, and that a manual in Dutch was called AUTO-CONSTRUCTEUR. It was thus assumed that Dutch sets would also be called AUTO-CONSTRUCTEUR, but it seems not. To confuse matters a little more one of the Dutch sets has an 'AUTO-KONSTRUKTOR Nr.1' label on its lid apron.

The 5 sets comprise one recently acquired Dutch Nr.1, near complete and with extra parts, and photos of the others. They are less complete, one Dutch, one German, and 2 without manuals – one of the latter is in Baukästen, p27, and one was offered from Germany on Ebay. Also photos of 2 smaller 'mystery' sets which have no lids, or manuals. My thanks to Chris Freeman & Karst Quast for the material they sent me.

HISTORY There is no indication of date or manufacturer in any of the material to hand, except that the AUTO-CONSTRUCTOR manual has the 'Philipp Kühner, Eisenach' logo right on its back cover. Nothing else is known of this firm.

Eisenzeit gives the start date as 1928 and the maker as Curt Schrader of Eisenach, then from 1929, of Munich. In 1927 Curt Schrader succeeded a firm called Stanzwerke, also at Eisenach, and it had, under various names, produced METALLO-TRIGON from 1913 to 1926. And that may be relevant to certain parts found in some of the sets considered here. There is a slight element of doubt over this Eisenzeit material though because 'CONSTRUCTOR' is spelt 'KONSTRUKTOR', and preceded by 'Der'.

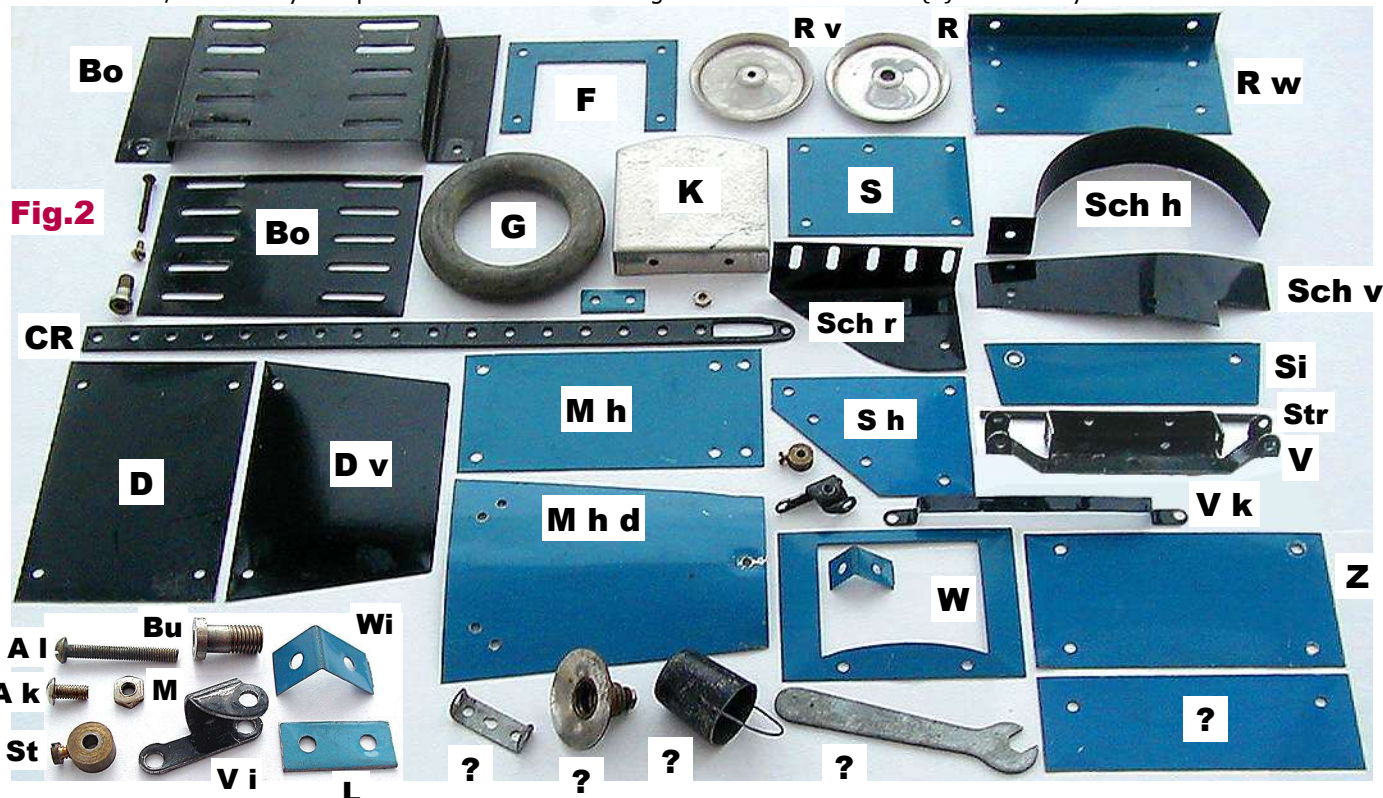
Baukästen also mentions a set called AUTOCONSTRUCTOR (no hyphen) made by Heinrich Fischer & Co. of Nürnberg, end date 1931/32, and the AUTO-CONSTRUCTOR set on p27 is in fact attributed to this firm, though perhaps wrongly.

The PARTS The different parts in the Set are shown in Fig.2 with the small parts at a larger scale in the bottom left corner. The actual blue is rather darker than in the photo. **Key dimensions** (overall) The Chassis Side Member #CR is 245mm long. The #Bo Floor Panel with Running Boards is 138mm wide o/a. The body side parts #F & #S are 47mm high

& 65mm wide. The Roof #D is 94mm wide & 65mm long. The Bonnet #M h d is 100mm long, and in width tapers from 74 to 55mm. The Tyre #G is 65mm o.d. & 13mm wide. The Wheel Discs #R & R v, are 46½mm Ø. **Holes** are 3.2mm Ø; their pitch varies. **Material/finishes.** All the parts are steel except the aluminium Radiator & Wheel Discs, & a few small brass parts as noted. Chassis & roof parts are painted black; other body parts blue, or in one German set, red.

There follows a list of all the known parts with their original PNs, but my names. The quantities shown in the Dutch manual are given in curly brackets and they allow the models shown for Set Nr.1 to be built. Models for Sets 'Nr.1 u. 2' need extra parts and those found in my Dutch set, above the Nr.1 quantities, are also given in the curly brackets, but in red.

- **A k Short Bolt**, nickelled, M3, 6½mm u/h, with 5.5mm Ø button (shallow round) head. {160, 38}
- **A l Long Bolt**, as A k but 23mm u/h. {4}
- **Bo Floor Panel with Running Boards**. {3, 1}
- **Bo Floor Panel**. {1}
- **Bu Bush** for front wheel. Nickelled brass, 13.8mm long o/a with 8.4mm Ø head, and 5.6mm Ø shank, with part of it threaded at .8mm pitch. No Nut to fit this thread has been seen. The bore is 3.5mm and is a loose fit on the Long Bolt, #A l, on which it runs (see Fig.10). {2}
- **CR Chassis Side Member**: the holes are at 13.0mm pitch. {4, 3} The 3 extra are only used for the ladder on the Fire Engine (Fig.6).
- **D Roof Panel**. {3, 1}
- **D v Front Roof Panel**. {1}
- **F Body Window Panel**. {6, 2}
- **G Tyre**. {4}
- **H Back Axle**. Not seen but probably about 140-145mm long and either 2.75mm Ø, like #Str, or larger to suit the 3.2mm bore of one of the Collars, #St. {1}
- **K Radiator**. It is bolted to the top of the Front Axle and has a pattern of fine, broken, diagonal lines engraved into the front face. {1}
- **L Flat Bracket**, typically 10.3*22.3mm with holes at 12 – 12½mm pitch. {30, 55: of the 85, 77 blue, 8 black.}
- **M Nut**, hexagonal, pressed, M3, nickelled, 6.0mm A/F, 2mm thick. {170, 37}
- **M h Engine Bay Side Panel**. {2}
- **M h d Bonnet**. {1} It has only the 4 corner holes in the



Manual's Illustrated Parts.

- **R Front Wheel Disc.** 5.9mm Ø centre hole. {4}
- **R v Rear Wheel Disc.** As #R but 3.2mm centre hole. {4}
- **R w Rear Body Panel.** In Fig.2 the flange is at 90° but should be at 45° to fit around the left side of #S h. {1}
- **S Body Side Panel.** {8, 4} Only 10 would be needed for any of the Manual models, & 2 are a distinctly darker shade.
- **Sch h Rear Mudguard.** {2}
- **Sch r Valance for Front Mudguard,** handed. {1 pair}
- **Sch v Front Mudguard.** {2}
- **S h Side Rear Body Panel.** {2, 4}
- **Si Seat.** {6, of which 3 blue & 3 black}
- **St Collar,** brass, 8.5mm Ø, 4mm wide, single-tapped. The Set Screw is brass, threaded 2.5mm Ø x .6mm, with a 4.1mm Ø cheesehead, & is 3.8mm u/h. {8} 6 were found, 5 with a 2.8mm bore & one 3.2mm. Only 6 seem to be needed for the Manual models, 1 on either side of each back wheel, & the Steering Wheel. If the 3.2mm fits the missing Back Axle then there would have needed to be 3 more of that size. If not it's not clear what the 3.2 mm would be used for.
- **Str Steering Wheel & Column.** {1} The Column is a 2.75mm Ø rod, 92mm long. The Wheel was missing and is not shown in the Illustrated Parts – in the Manual models it looks like a Pulley and in a photo of what may be the actual part it has spokes.
- **V Front Axle.** {1}
- **V i Steering Arm,** handed. {1 pair}
- **V k Track Rod.** {1}
- **W Windscreen.** {1}
- **Wi A/B,** typically 16*12¼mm o/a, & 10.4mm wide. {45, 7}
- **Z Body Cross Panel.** {2, 5} Used at back, as internal partition, and seat back.
- **#? Narrow Body Cross Panel.** Used between the Rear Panels #S h. {1, but not listed in the Manual.}
- **#? Headlamp.** A 30mm slightly concave nickelled disc with a brass lamp holder peened to it. The connection is to a #A k N&B isolated by 2 fibre washers, one inside and one outside the end of the lamp holder. 2 are needed for each of the '1 & 2' models. {0, 2}
- **#? Bucket.** A one-piece black painted steel body (24mm deep and 22mm Ø at the top) with a wire handle. 4 are used in the Fire Engine. {0, 4}
- **#? DAS.** Identical to the METALLO TRIGON #7, see 5/92. 14 were in the Set and they could possibly be used as the rungs of the Fire Engine's (strange 3-stile) ladder, though 16 would be needed.
- **#? Spanner.** One was found, zinc plated and 1.8mm thick.
- **#? Screwdriver.** A wire Screwdriver seen in another set is about 7cm long with a very narrow handle. Both the Spanner & Screwdriver look like METALLO TRIGON parts.
- **#? Motor.** A small flat clockwork Motor is shown by the set in Baukästen (p27). It has a long shaft on either side but there is no indication of how the wheels would be held fast on them, and it's hard to see how the Motor could be incorporated in the models.

The SETS All the sets are in partitioned boxes, black on the outside and red inside. Ignoring the 2 small sets for the moment, all have the Fig.3 lid label. Small parts and N&B are in 4 red matchbox-style boxes, two 6½*6½*1¼cm, and two 6½*3*1¼cm.

Two sizes of box are known 37*27*3cm (including my Dutch set), and 41½*31*3cm. No set number can be seen on any of the boxes except the Nr.1 on my Dutch set's lid apron. And apart from my set none of the others include any of the parts unique to the Nr.2: the Bucket, Headlamp, and DAS (or some other part for the ladder rungs).

The non-Nr.1 models in the Manual are said to be 'Gebaut mit Nr.1 u. 2' - Built with Nr.1 & 2 – and to me this indicates that the Nr.2 was probably an add-on set with just the extra parts needed to make the Nr.2 models. However in the



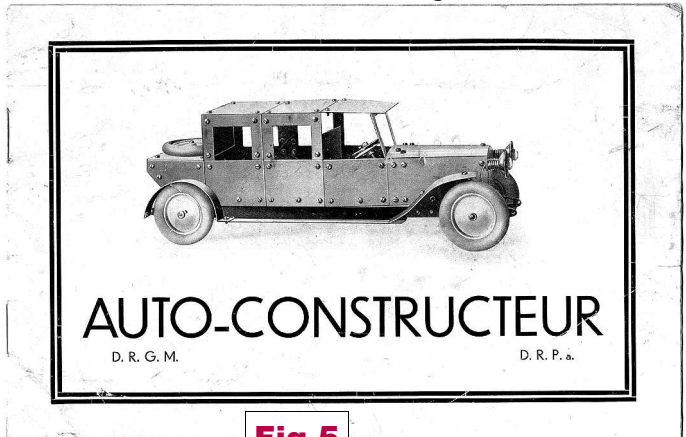
German manual there is just a photo of each model with no mention of which set or sets are needed. So just possibly there was only one set at that time, and it had all the parts needed for all of the models. Another point in favour of this theory is that all the manual models are shown fitted with Headlights and in the Dutch manuals there is a note '(ohne Beleuchtung)' – 'without Headlights' – but in the German one this qualification is absent. One could imagine further that the larger boxes were for this original, larger set – but neither of the two seen included any of the 'Nr.2 parts, so I wouldn't put money on it.

Now the 2 small 'mystery' sets shown below.



The boxes are in the same style as the larger ones and they scale at very approximately 26*13 & 16*11cm. They were in a mixed lot which otherwise included some conventional parts & some Plates in several colours with centre cutouts – they had a cardboard look to them and could have been from an architectural system. Apart from the blue Panels, 4 shiny Buckets and a number of the DAS can be seen in the box on the left. Also just visible top right of the DAS the possible Steering Wheel – silvery with spokes, and a diameter of about the length of the DAS. This box would be large enough to accommodate all the extra parts needed for the 'Nr.1 u. 2 models, and so could be the Nr.2 outfit.

The righthand box has more Panels, a few A/Bs, and also some DAS which look like the 100mm long METALLO TRIGON part #9. If this size of DAS were part of an AUTO-CONSTRUCTOR set it can't be seen in any of the Manual models. The box isn't long enough to take the 3 extra Chassis Side Members needed for the Fire Engine and so if it is an



AUTO-CONSTRUCTOR set one can only think that it was another add-on outfit, hitherto unknown.

The MANUALS It will be best to consider the Dutch & German versions separately. Starting with the Dutch, it has 12 pages, including covers, 213*143mm, plus loose sheets with the Illustrated Parts and the models on them. p1 is shown in Fig.5, p2 is blank, p3 lists 7 models from the 2-Seater on the lid to the Fire Engine in Fig.6. There are 2 versions of Model 6, a Bus with and without seats on the roof – both are shown on the lid.

The building instructions start on p3 and continue through p9. p10 has a list of the parts and quantities for each, enough to make the Nr.1 models though this isn't said. pp11-12, the back covers, are blank.

The loose sheet showing the Illustrated Parts has no heading but the parts are again those needed for the Nr.1 models. Each of the other sheets has one photo of one of the models, with above it the German text already mentioned (despite this being a Dutch manual): 'Gebaut mit Auto-Constructor Nr.1' (or where appropriate 'Nr.1 u. Nr.2'), & '(ohne Beleuchtung)'. Presumably there was one sheet for each of the models listed on p3 but one, for Reiswagen (Touring Car?), is missing, and also the one for the Bus with Roof Seats if there was one for this variant.

The German manual is a photocopy. The front cover is the same apart from the name, and also the list of models. The instructions cover the same ground but extend to a few lines on p10, with an elaborate letter 'J' underneath, elongated downwards, another logo perhaps. The list of parts is on p11,

Gebaut mit Auto-Constructor Nr. 1 u. 2

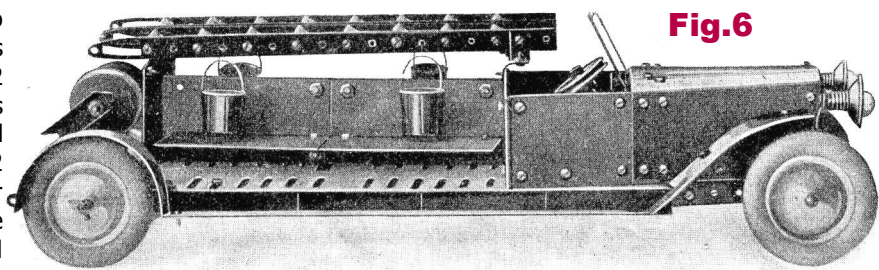


Fig.6

Gebaut mit Auto-Constructor Nr. 1

(ohne Beleuchtung)

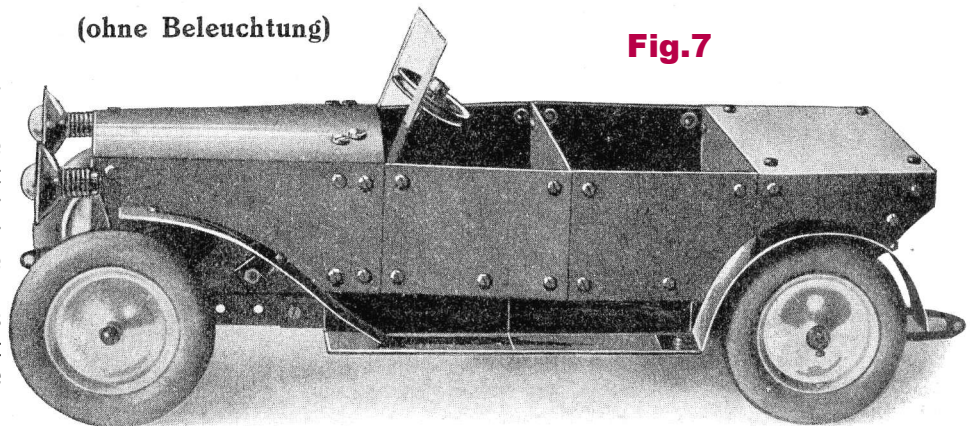


Fig.7

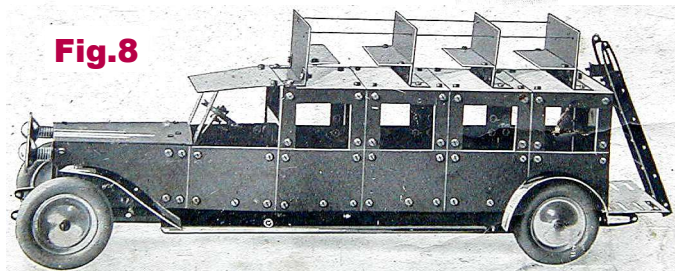
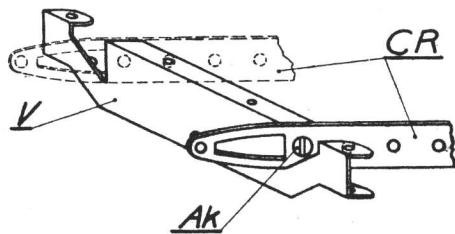
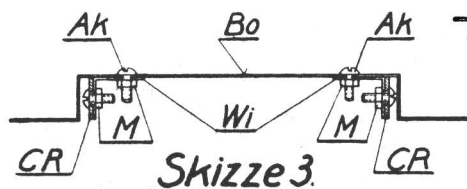


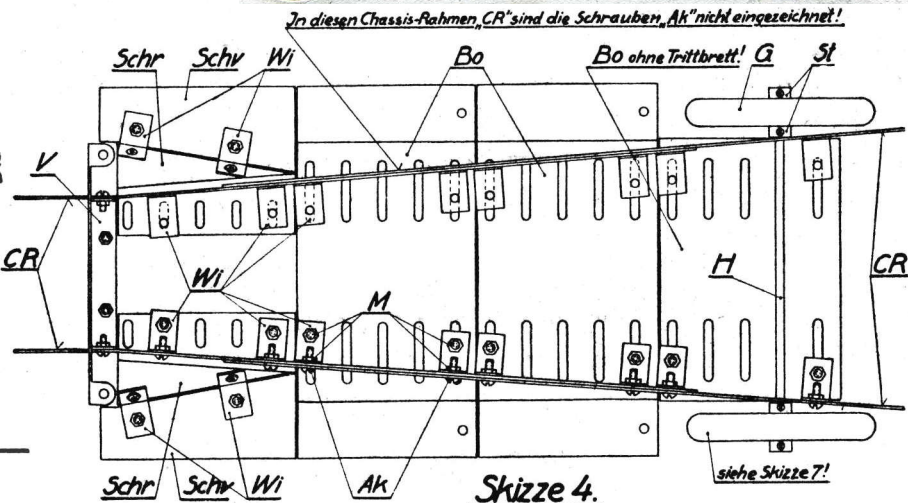
Fig.8



Skizze 2. Fig.9



Skizze 3.



Chassis-Rahmen mit Vorderachse und Bodenblechen von unten gesehen.

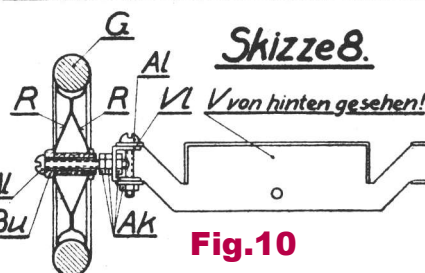


Fig.10

the inside back cover and the Fig.1 logo is on its outside. Of the loose sheets only 4 have survived, 3 with what are Nr.1 models in the Dutch manual, and one a Nr.1 u. Nr.2. All have a photo identical to the Dutch version, but as already noted, no text at all.

Of the manual models 3 can be seen on the lid label, and one on the manual cover (on the Model Sheet for this Nr.1 model it is still shown with the spare wheel, a part not in the Nr.1 set and in any case there isn't a suitable hole to which it could be

bolted). The other four are a shorter, 3 window version of the Bus, the missing Reiswagen, the Fire Engine in Fig.6, and the Open Tourer in Fig.7 (both at the original size). Fig.8 is an enlargement of the Bus with Roof Seats from the lid label. Parts that can be seen in the models, but not otherwise known, are the hose reel on the back of the Fire Engine, & the ladder on the back of the Bus – with stiles like shortened

Chassis Sides and the small, strange shaped, spike-ended pieces near the top.

The building instructions include 10 diagrams and 4 are shown in Figs.9 and 10 (the wording in the Dutch manual is again in German). To start with, 2 chassis side members are made by joining a pair of Chassis Side Members, #C R, for each side, overlapped to give the correct length, as given on p3 – from 27cm for the 2-Seater to 48cm for the Large Bus. Then these are joined by the Front Axle plus the Floor parts, and the back wheels added. The back wheels are simply the Tyre with a rear Wheel Disc on either side, squeezed together by a Collar on either side. The front wheel assembly is shown in Fig.10. It appears that there is narrow Nut on the end of the Bush #Bu, and one would be essential to allow the Discs to grip the Tyre and allow the whole assembly to rotate on the Bolt #Al. There seems no reason for the left Nut #Ak unless it simply acts as a spacer. Although the Steering Arm and front wheels could pivot on the Front Axle, the king pin Bolt has only one Nut on it and so presumably it is intended that the wheels are locked in position. And indeed there is no indication that the Steering Wheel/Column is anything other than decorative. The body is built up from butted Panels joined by the Flat & Angle Brackets. It is attached to the chassis by 2 A/Bs towards the rear and by bolting the bottom of the Radiator to the Front Axle.

A MODEL Above right the model I built, the one on the manual cover, some 38cm long. The actual blue is again a little darker than in the photo and the roof is black like the wings & chassis. Building it took quite a long time because the butt-jointed parts require careful assembly and numerous Brackets are needed – including virtually all of the 50 Angle Brackets available.

The chassis was generally straightforward except for two

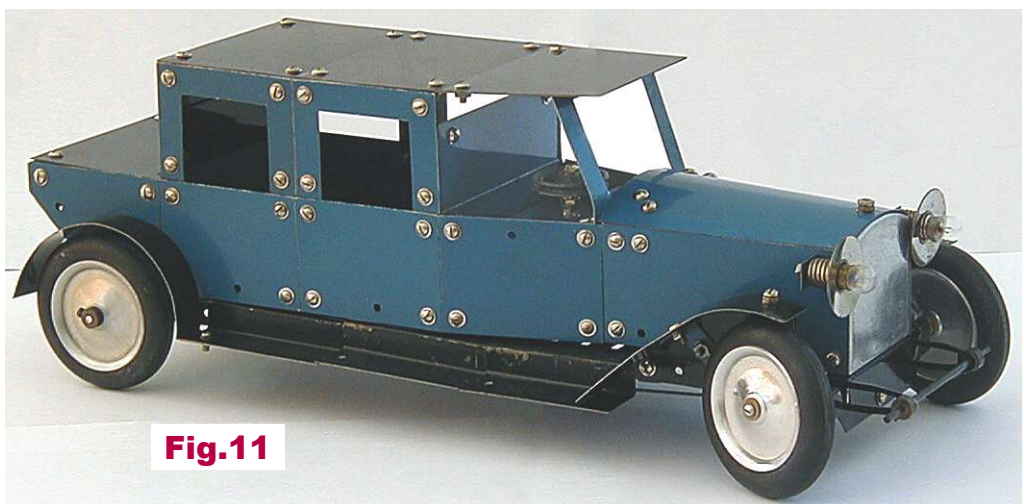


Fig.11

major problems. First, the holes at the ends of the Track Rod #V k were 4mm too far apart, and secondly, the Bushes #Bu, 12mm u/h, were too short by about 4mm. In both cases substitute parts had to be made, and also Nuts to fit the new Bushes.

It was best to make the body separately, without the roof, and then attach it to the chassis, with the roof added last. The Body Panels were accurately made and mostly fitted together surprisingly well. Care though had to be taken where, as was often the case, two Brackets had to be overlaid – their order had to be correct if a neat job was to result. Even so the holes in a few Brackets had to be elongated, as did the holes for mounting the Windscreen.

Given that the Steering Arms could be made to pivot it seemed a pity not to have working steering. This was achieved by substituting a suitable length of Screwed Rod for the Steering Column so that a substitute Steering Wheel could be nipped to it. Then a length of cord was wrapped several times around its lower end, with the ends of the cord attached to the Steering Arms after passing around a vertical Long Bolt situated just behind the centre of the Track Rod. The actual Steering Column was used a badge bar at the front of the Chassis Side members.

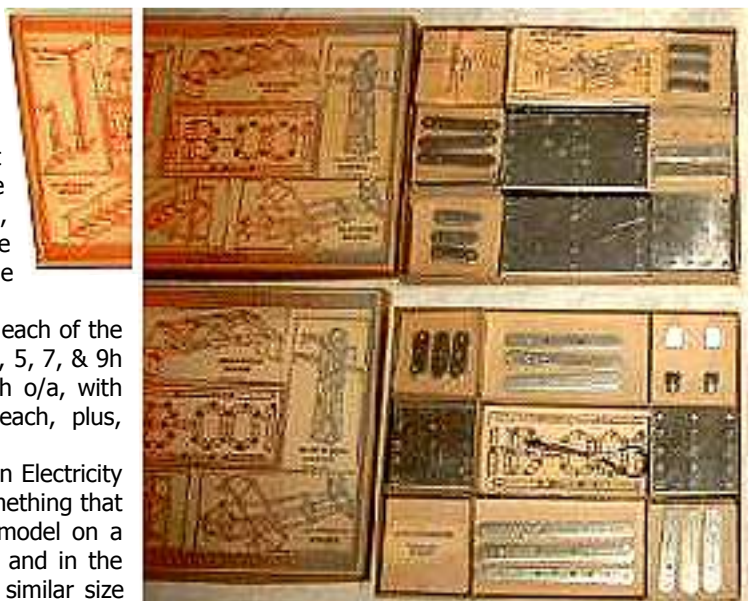
AUTO-CONSTRUCTOR: S4

OSN 40/1218

Snippet. 'New' System: BREMEN 4 sets, described as 'HB-Spielzeug Bremen 001', were offered on Ebay, with a blurry photo showing the open boxes and part of the lids. Two of the Sets are shown right with the left side of the lid taken from one of the Sets not shown. The lids look to be identical and HB-001 can just be seen in the centre panel (and more clearly in the centre compartment of the lower box), but not 'Bremen', and possibly it is part of the maker's name or address. The contents of each Set differed and had no doubt become muddled at some earlier stage.

The parts were said to be aluminium and examples of each of the main ones can be seen in the two sets right. They are: 3, 5, 7, & 9h Strips; Plates, perhaps flanged on 2 sides, 5*5 & 5*11h o/a, with only the outer holes and the centre 5-hole row in each, plus, probably, 3 & 5h long DAS, and an A/B.

The 5 models on the lid are an Aeroplane, a Bridge, an Electricity Pylon, what might be a Street Lighting Standard, and something that looks like a Flight of Steps. There is probably another model on a panel or model sheet in the top of the upper set right, and in the centre compartment of one of the Sets not shown is a similar size 'sheet' with the Aeroplane on it. No Wheels were among the parts but the models are too indistinct to say for sure that none are used in any of them.



BREMEN: S1

OSN 40/1218

Snippets. More on AUTO-CONSTRUCTOR Two lots have recently been seen on Ebay and they add to the notes in 40/1216. The first consisted of 4 sets; the second a large number of loose parts.

THE 4 SETS The first has a lid identical to Fig.3 in OSN 40, that's to say the smaller size of the basic outfit, with Nr.1 on the one example seen of its lid apron. The lids of the other sets are shown in Figs.1-3, all roughly to the same scale, and in the original photos their set numbers can just about be seen as, from the left, Nr.2, Nr.3, & Nr.4. None of the sets are complete and some of the parts have ended up in the wrong box.

The 'Nr.1' has the same partitioning as the OSN 40 set and the parts in it are mainly as would be expected. The METALLO TRIGON (M T) Screwdriver described in OSN 40 can be seen in the small part box (Fig.4), and also there, a 6-spoke diecast wheel, perhaps the part used as a Steering Wheel. It might be the M T 32mm Pulley, though if so it is a little larger than would be ideal. Parts probably not from the Set are (a) an Angle Plate with a rightangle bend in it which could be part of the seats on top on the OSN 40, Fig.8, 'Double-Decker' Bus; (b) 2 of the M T 10cm long DAS that were in the smaller OSN 40 'mystery' set, use still unknown; and (c) 2 of the 5h, 5cm long M T DAS #8, which might be for use as the interplane struts on the Nr.3 Biplane. A manual in the Lot has the same cover as Fig.5 in OSN 40, & one of the loose model sheets in it, not seen previously, is for the Double-Decker Bus.

The Nr.2 base matches the larger of the two 'mystery' sets in OSN 40. It scales at about the size given there, and has the same partitioning. Apart from some Brackets & a Plate from the Nr.1, the parts include a number needed for the Fire Engine on the lid: a Chassis Side Member as used for the stiles of the ladder, 12 of the M T DAS for its rungs, 4 Buckets, and what may be the Hose reel Ends (Fig.5)

Presumably this set should have all the parts needed, over and above those in the Nr.1, for the 'Nr.1 u. 2' models. Some would be more of the Panels already in the Nr.1, and of the 'specials' one of the seat parts for the Bus has already been mentioned. But there is no sign of the parts needed for the ladder on the back of the Bus.

The Nr.3 base (Fig.6) is the smaller of the 'mystery' bases in OSN 40; again it scales at the size given there & has the same partition-

ing. It is no doubt another add-on set to allow at least the Biplane on the lid to be made. The wooden Propeller, as in OSN 40, would seem to be genuine. The 5cm DAS is, as noted already, a possible Biplane part, & the 4 shorter DAS, together with those in the Nr.2, make up the 16 needed for the Fire Engine ladder. Could the yellow part top right be the Biplane's Cabin Roof? And what of the 'Stop' & 'Go' Signs to its left? I'm told that school buses in certain countries are fitted with Stop/Go signs of some sort for use when the bus is stationary. Fig.7 is the cover of the Nr.3 manual, the other manual in the Lot.

The Nr.4, Fig.8, contains a clockwork Motor which is presumably intended to fit into the floor of the chassis. The short winding shaft can just be seen near the centre of the sideplate. There is nothing to indicate how the the wheels would be held to the output shafts.

THE LOOSE PARTS A large unbalanced selection, with mainly Body Panels including no less than 8 Bonnets. 2 parts not seen before are shown in Fig.9. One, the black strip, could be a Stile from the ladder on the Bus though its hole spacing differs from that in OSN 40 (Fig.8). The second is the black Curved Ended Plate, use unknown. The parts are in 4 colours, the known red, blue, & black, plus yellow. The latter were all Body Panels, including a Bonnet, and a few of them can be seen in Fig.9. Also in the Lot a number of red Strips & DAS with irregularly spaced holes, or no holes at all in the case of the 2 short parts in Fig.9. Possibly these were DIY parts & I then wondered if the yellow parts had been home painted, but against this, there were some yellow parts in the Nr.3 set.

HISTORY On Ebay the Sets were said to be by Heinrich Fischer, c1920, one of the 3 firms mentioned in OSN 40. Evidence for this can be seen in Fig.10, the bottom of the Set 4 box, which has a pattern including the company's fish logo (Fig.11). I still wonder though about the METALLO TRIGON parts and so don't rule out the possibility of the Stanzwerke or Curt Schrader companies in Eisenach being connected with AUTO-CONSTRUCTOR. Also the Fischer firm was in Nürnberg and that's quite a long way from the Philipp Kühner company in Eisenach, possibly a printer, whose logo, shown in OSN 40 (Fig.1), was taken from one of a manual described there.

FIG.1



FIG.2



FIG.3



FIG.4



FIG.6



FIG.7



FIG.5



FIG.10

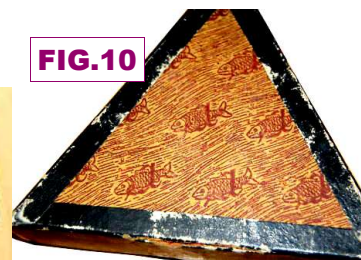


FIG.8



FIG.9



FIG.11



5. STABIL Website Update. Werner Sticht wrote that he has recently updated his (already very comprehensive) STABIL website: www.stabilbaukasten.de.vu Click on Neuigkeiten to see what is new, and erweitert or Änderungen for updated items. The first new topic is a brochure showing 20+ models for dealers to display, and they can be enlarged by clicking on them. The following 3 items all include photos of factory display models. There is also a full account of the LILIENTHAL system, something of which was given in 22/623. It will be recalled that it was based on an 1888 patent and though it had wooden parts it could claim two firsts: Strips with equispaced holes, and one model, a Windmill, with an Axle to allow the blades to rotate. Surprisingly the Axle wasn't used in any of the other models. Another unique feature was that sets were available with 2 sizes of parts: their hole pitch was 25mm in one series, and (probably) 100mm in the larger version.

STABIL: S9

[51/1549]

Snippets. AUTO-CONSTRUCTOR Update. A number of sets have been seen on Ebay since the last notes in 42/1291, and have contained a few points of interest.

Basic Sets It will be recalled that 2 basic sets are known, one in a larger box than the other, and it seems that, with one exception, they all have the same contents, enough parts to build the Nr.1 manual models. The additional parts in the exception, a 'large' box, include 4 Buckets, some DAS, extra Chassis Side Members, & a Headlamp (with a second noted as missing), the same extra parts that were in my 'small' set (see OSN 40) but there is no way of knowing if they were originally in that set or if they came from say another outfit. The Set is unusual in having yellow Body Panels, all the parts that are usually blue or sometimes red.

All 3 of the larger sets seen & 1 of the 7 smaller ones, have 'Auto-Constructor' on the lid; in the others all the letters are capitals, as are those on all the manual covers. Where a maker is given in the Ebay ads it is usually Heinrich Fischer but Philipp Kühner is sometimes mentioned. However it now seems likely that the latter was the printer of at least some of the manuals, and the maker before Fischer was Curt Schrader.

Set Nr.1A None of the sets seen have the set number on the top of the lid but it may have been on one of the lid aprons, as in the Nr.1, a small set, mentioned in 40/1216. Most Ebay photos don't show all the aprons and the only set number that can be seen, from another small set, is shown left.



Apart from its unexpected 1A designation, it looks a typical

6. Snippet: Another FALCO Set. Like the outfit in 39/1165 it has 2 layers of parts, but is larger and some parts, mostly those with piercing, were not in the OSN 39 set. But not all the earlier parts can be seen, only a single Wheel size for instance. The lid is as before except that the white Set No. circle is missing.



FALCO [2]: S2

[51/1549]

small set, and fairly complete, but it does have at least 12 of the DAS in it. However they probably belonged to a Nr.2 set which was included in the Ebay lot, and which, though looking largely complete, had no DAS in it. No reasonable explanation of the 1A designation comes to mind. It's of dubious relevance but the box had a trade label from a shop in Prague on it.

Set Nr.2 2 sets have been seen, both similar to the one in Fig.5 of OSN 42 but more complete, and the better one is shown below. Its dimensions were given as 25.5*15.5*3cm.

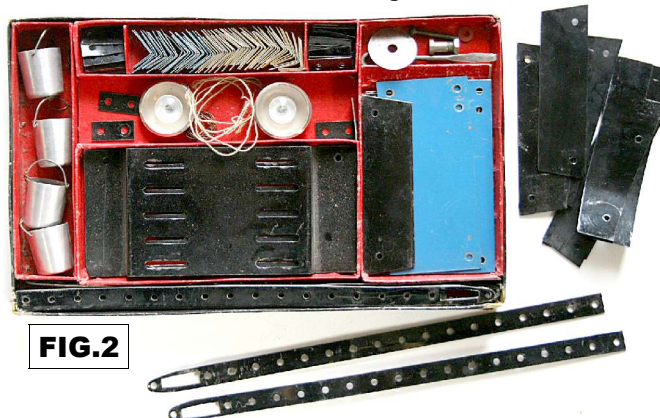


FIG.2

Its DAS are missing, but as explained above they may well be the ones in the Set 1A. The disc top right could be one of the Hose Reel Ends. It was suggested in OSN 42 that the latter were in the Fig.5 set but on a second look it is clear they are Headlamps with a deeper reflector than those in Figs.2 & 11 of OSN 40. No doubt a later, more realistic design. The Headlamps in the other 'new' Nr.2 are also this 'later' type.

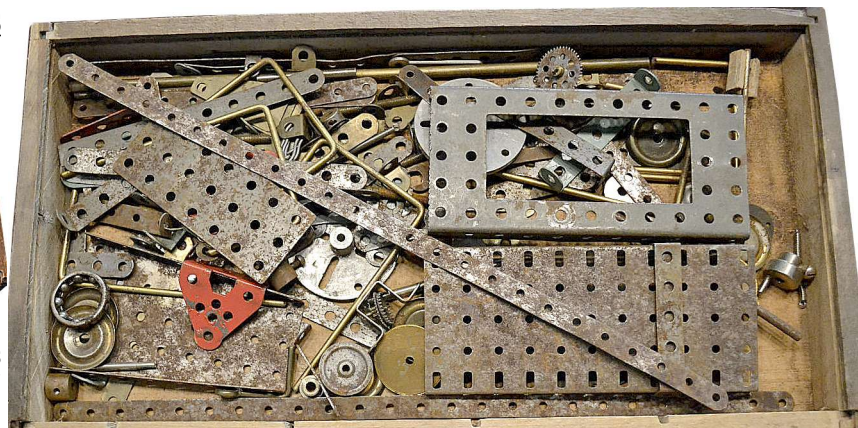
OSN 51/1549

AUTO-CONSTRUCTOR: S6

Snippet. 'New' System: MECHANIKUS



The set shown here was offered on the German Ebay recently. A PR bottom left on the lid reads (Dr.?) 2443 1047 10000 MDV Haldensleben ??/ 2456. 1047 seems a likely date and Haldensleben is a town 30km NW of Magdeburg. All that can usefully be said of the parts in the box is that they are clearly from more than one system.



OSN 51/1549

MECHANIKUS: S1