

## A PIONIERUL

### CONSTRUCTOR Set

PIONIERUL is a Romanian system and the word just means Pioneer. The Set is near complete, and with manual. PIONIERUL is mentioned in MCS but with few details. The main wording on the MCS manual cover is the same as the present one, and the featured models on them have some similarities, but most of the other MCS information, the maker, the hole pitch, and the colour of the parts, differs.

**Maker:** Cooperativa 'Tehnometalica' ARAD of Str. Dimitrov nr. 81-85. Str is short for Strada, and no town is given. Google doesn't show a Dimitrov street in Romania but there is a Dimitrov Post Office in Bucharest. The company in MCS is Metaloglobus of Bucharest.

**Date:** The date in MCS is the 1970s and in the present manual's Intro it says that Ministry of Education approval was given in June 1974. The only other possible date is the '-87' on the lid (above) but I've not been able to find what the preceding 'S.T.I.' means.

**The PARTS Holes** Holes are often 4.1mm but some are up to 4.3mm, and a few up to 4.5mm. The pitch 12.5mm. (MCS : 4.1mm at 12.8mm.) **Slots** are 7.5mm long but 7.2 in #3 & 26. The **thread** is M4.

**Material/Finish** All the metal parts are steel, mostly nickelled but with some staining. The Strips are of (rather too) soft steel. The DAS, A/B, & Rods have a very dark grey, anti-rust finish, and the Flanged Plates & Bush Wheel a very tough palish green crackle finish (it is nearer the shade in Fig.7 than in Fig.2). The N&B have a green tinged sheen. MCS gives the Strips as blue, beige & green, and the Plates red & blue.

**List of Parts** The parts are listed below, with my English names, and quantities, from a list in the manual, in curly brackets. Representative examples are shown in Fig.2.

**#1,2 Flanged Plates:** 11\*5h; Sector, 7h long, with straight ends. All the flanges have slotted holes, and all differ slightly in depth. {1,1}

**#3-7 Strips:** 2h (the Flat Bracket), 3, 5, 7, 11h. They are 11.5-11.9mm wide depending on length, and .7mm thick. Their ends vary, see Fig.2, and their lines of holes are off centre in several. {2,2,4,2,3}

**#8 DAS & #9 A/B.** The bends are mostly not quite at right angles to the length. {4,4}

**#10 Double Bent Strip.** {1}

**#11 Washer,** 9mm Ø {10}

**#12 Hook,** flat with 48cm of thin black Cord attached. {1}

**#13 Crank Handle,** 108mm o/a. {1}

**#14 Spring Clips,** bronzed with wings 6½mm long and 5-6mm long. They grip very well. {4}

**#15 Bush Wheel,** 36mm Ø. No doubt it should have 12 equi-spaced face holes but 2 have been incorrectly pierced.

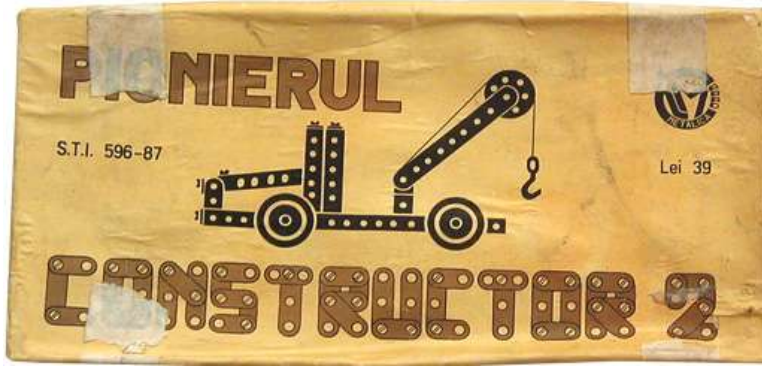


FIG.1

**#20 Road Wheel,** hard plastic, 37mm Ø, 6.6mm wide. It is a good push fit on the Axles. {4}

**#21,22 Screwed Rods,** 50, 100mm long. {2,2}

**#23,24 Axle Rods,** 50, 100mm, 4.0mm Ø. {2,2}

**#25 Long Bolt,** 20mm under a 6.8mm Ø cheesehead. Iridescent finish. {5}

**#26,27 Plastic Flexible Plates:** 3\*11h clear; 5\*9h, not seen. {1,1}

**Quality** Of the various imperfections noted above only the slanted bends in the DAS & A/B, and perhaps the Spanner, pose real problems in model building.

**The SET** The box measures 16½\*34¼\*3cm. The 39 Lei is the price and the logo top left is 'TM' surrounded by 'Tehno ARAD METALICA'. The parts are housed in a clear moulded plastic tray, with recesses for most, mainly just slightly too small for them. As found the N&B etc were loose in the box. The parts seemed unused and were as per the manual quantities except for a few missing N&B, and 2 of the #26 Plastic Plates but no #27.

Presumably the '2' on the lid is a Set No. but there is no mention of set numbers in the manual, or of any other sets.

**The MODELS** The manual has 16 pages, 207\*158mm, including the covers, all printed blue on beige. (pp1-3 are not

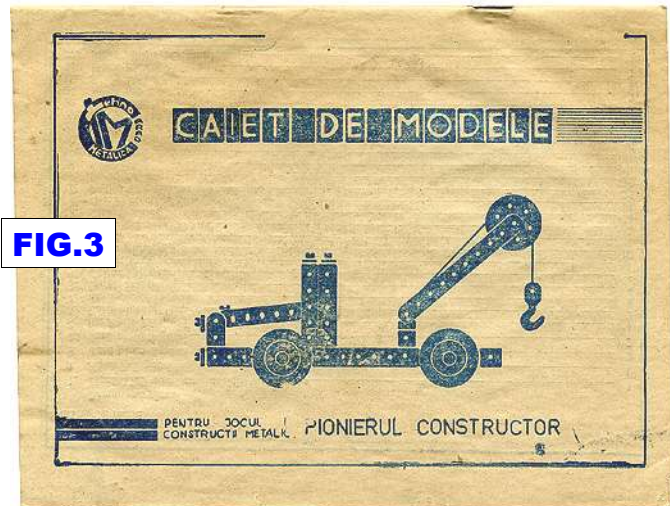


FIG.3

numbered.) The front is shown above with the logo as on the lid. The stapling is along the top edge. p2 has the Set Contents

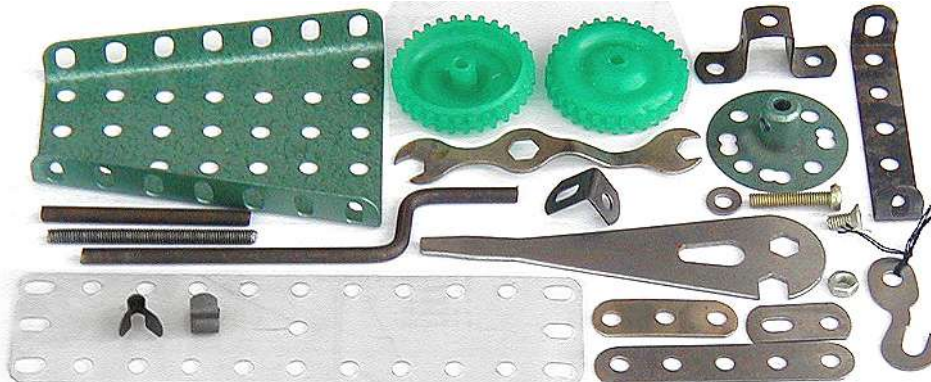


FIG.2

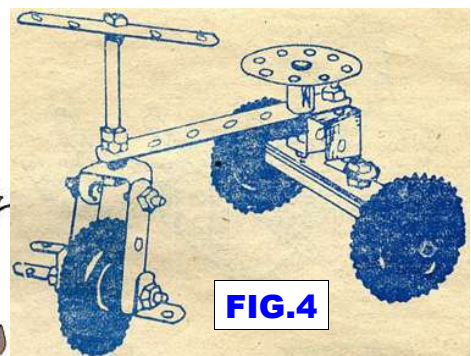


FIG.4



and p3 the Introduction. It says the Set is intended for 4-10 year olds,

The other pages show 50 unnamed models, from an 11h Strip with 3 DAS bolted to its top hole through their centre holes, and equispaced (a Flower?), to the Breakdown Lorry in Fig.5 (60% full-size). There is one line drawing for each, often rather crudely drawn with lengths of Strips etc that are not in the Set.

The first 45 models are very simple furniture & domestic items, simple cranes, trolleys, barrows, etc with a Letter Balance as a highlight (Fig.6, full-size – I wonder how many of the 4-10 year olds worked out how to make it work).

The last 5 models including the Trike in Fig.4 (70% f-s), are a little more ambitious but only the Breakdown Lorry uses most of the parts in the Set. (The Plastic Plates are not used in any of the manual models.) Some of the models seem to use parts which are not in the Set, the Double Bracket in the Trike for instance. But, except for those which need 4 of the 11h Strips, alternative parts could probably be used in most cases.

I made a version of the Breakdown Lorry (right) which needed all the parts in the Set, apart from the Plastic Plates, plus a few extra Nuts. The aim was to have a fixed, braced jib and to provide the driver with somewhere to sit. There was no Pulley for the jib head and as the original's Bush Wheel seemed pointless it was used as a steering wheel, even if a touch oversize.

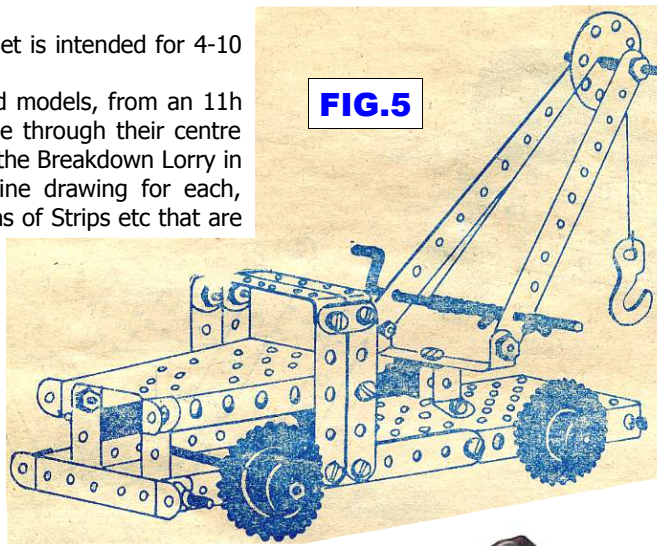


FIG.5

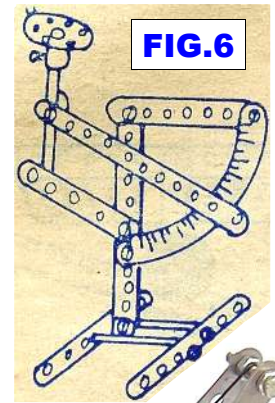


FIG.6

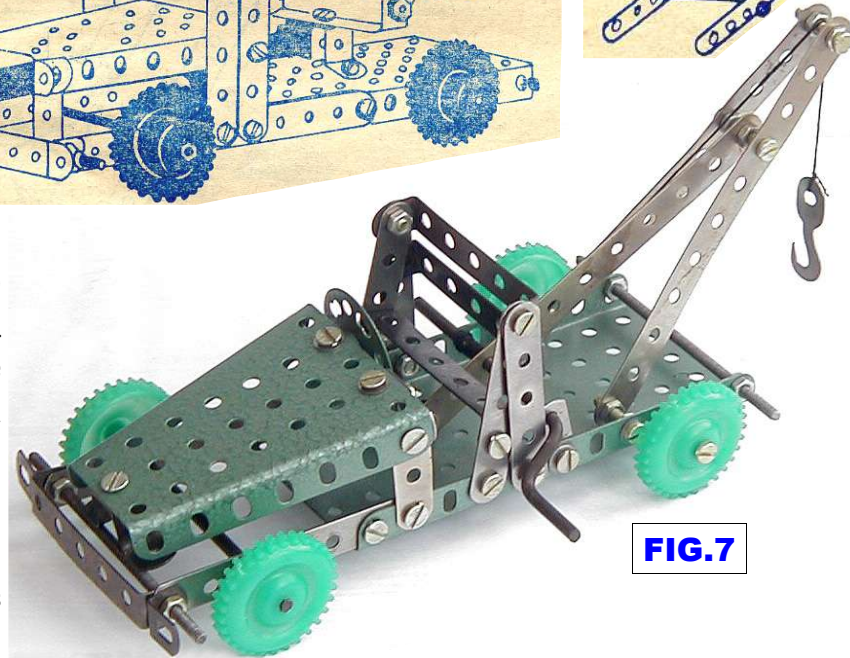


FIG.7

**PIONIERUL CONSTRUCTOR: S2**

OSN 44/1336

**Snippet. 'New' German System: ERKO**

The Ebay photo far right shows the manual cover and the parts offered, with another view of the Pulleys inset in the bottom left corner. And right, the Crane on the cover enlarged.

The main structural parts are A/Gs and they are unusual in having 2 rows of staggered hole in each arm, and in not being perforated over their whole length. The latter an uncommon OS feature which seems to have no advantages, and which in this case leaves the two shorter A/Gs without a centre hole.

There was nothing to indicate the size of the parts, or their maker, but the seller was from Dresden. I wonder in ERKO arose from the maker's name: ERik KO?..? perhaps.

The different parts that can be seen are:

- 4 lengths of A/G.
- A Perforated Plate, with 6 rows of staggered holes, and 8 holes long, like the shortest A/G, but plus the 2 smaller holes at one end.
- A Pulley with boss, and another, slightly larger with 4 face



holes, and perhaps without boss.

- An Axle & a Crank Handle.
- Then there is the Spoked Wheel, and the patterned Plate bottom centre with 2 holes at one end, both foreigners most likely.

The Crane's framework looks to be made of A/Gs plus perhaps a Plate or two, with 4h Pulleys used as wheels and at the jib head, and the other Pulley used to weight the Hook.

**ERKO: S1**

OSN 44/1336