

A 'New' East German System: LEICHTMETALL

BAUKASTEN Thank you to Urs Flammer for sending photos & details of a set from what was no doubt an early post-WW2 system. Nothing is known of the maker and a manual has yet to be found.

The box right, 38*38*4cm, is made of corrugated cardboard. Its label, below, claims 240 parts and carries the slogan, Des Knaben schönsten Spiel ist und bleibt der Metallbaukasten [Boys best play is and will remain the metal construction set]. Its PR reads 'Dr 800 Stadtdruckerei Radeberg 11.48 Rg 259'. Radeberg is a small town about 20km northeast of Dresden. Notice the generous quantities of the longer Strips in the box right, particularly the 19h.

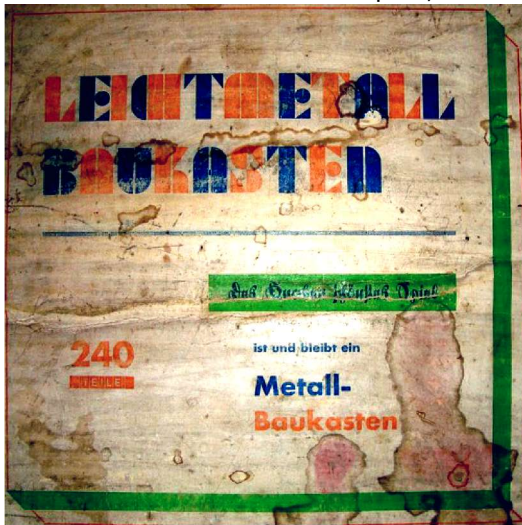
The 27 parts are aluminium except for a few steel items such as the N&B, bosses, & the unusual (hexagonal) Collar. Holes are 4.2-4.5mm at 12.7mm pitch, and Axles are 4mm Ø. The thread is



Fig.1



Fig.2



M4, but bosses etc are tapped M3. Nuts are hexagonal, & the Bolts look to have a pan or perhaps a round head. The Set Screw is cheese-headed. Strips are 2mm thick, bent parts 1 or 1½mm. 'A' in Fig.4 shows both faces of what appears to be a Flanged Pulley.

Fig.3

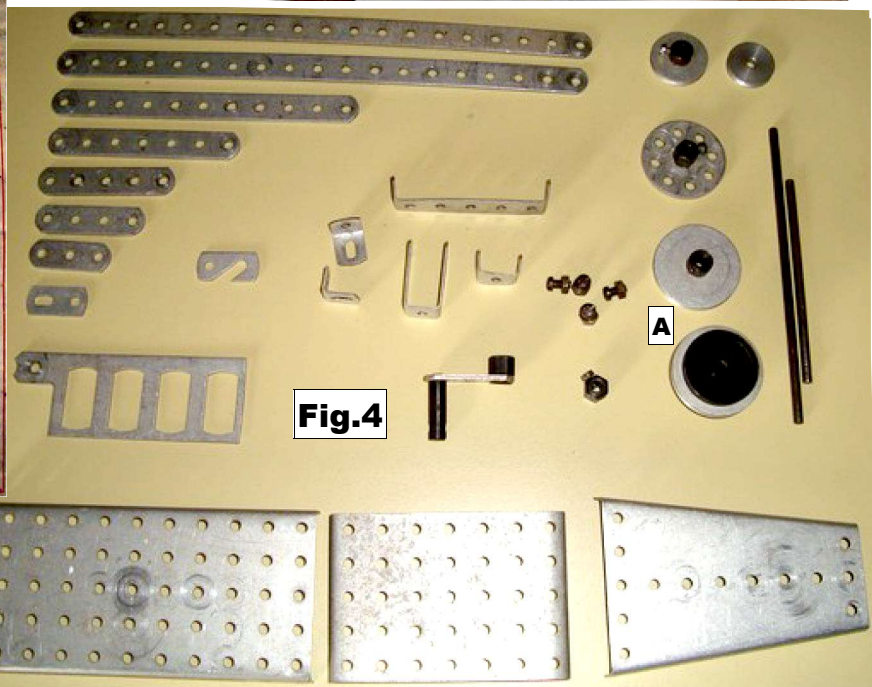


Fig.4

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LEICHTMETALL BAUKASTEN: S1

More on MAFELL. Further to the account on p1589 Jacques Pitrat kindly sent the following note.

I can answer some of your questions. I have a mint No.III set & several photos. My set is the actual one displayed in Fig.4, Set I is in Fig.5, Set II in Fig.2. The boxes are identical but the set number is glued onto one side of the lid.

In the single sheet (254*355mm) brochure the N&B is definitely described as 3/8"/20, and 20 seems to be a length. Although not shown in the sheet, there are 2 lengths of Bolt: short 18 mm, & long 24mm. In both cases the depth of the hexagonal head is 5mm, the same as the Nut. Bolts are 18mm A/F; the Nut 17mm. The thread is 8.5mm (.33") diameter.

As the Bolt head is not slotted, one has to use the Spanner for both the Nut & Bolt. The Screwdriver is only necessary for the Grub Screw (part #15); its diameter is 6 mm.

The hole pitch is 62mm; the hole diameter 10mm.

The contents of Set III is: #1:4, #3:2, #12:4, #14 short:5, long:10, #15:4, #18:1.

The steel parts are very well made, the best I have seen in a child-size set. However, it does not seem that this system

was successful, and one probable reason concerns the models. No manual is known so far although on the back of the Sheet one was said to be included in each set (Fig.4 shows the front of the sheet, not a manual). However from the models known, one can imagine that the likely manual models for the individual sets, or even for all 3 sets, would not be very exciting. For example even the Bench on the box lid needs two No.I's. And consider the 3 models that are displayed in Fig.1. They are very simple, similar to some for Meccano's Set No.00 of the same period. One each of the 3 basic sets are not enough for any of them: each model needs 13 DAS. There are 2 DAS in Set III, 1 or 2 in Set II, & (from another photo) 6 in Set I. Therefore another Set I is needed: 4 sets, weighing together more than 25 kilos, are necessary to build any of these 3 simple models! Moreover, the sheet does not mention the possibility of buying separate parts. One must spend a lot of money to build some not very interesting models: the very high quality of the parts is not enough.

I also had the possibility of buying Sets I & II. I did not do so: too heavy, too costly, and not original enough.'

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MAFELL: S2