

## DUX

### Story abstract

News taken from Markes GmbH internet site:

1 July 1904 - Carl MARKES founded a company for the production of cutting and printing tools

1911 - Already 40 different versions of ball holders are made

1916 – The production of metal components for the then novel "Stabil Metallbaukasten" is added – this is the birth of their toy production.

Years '50 - MARKES introduces the new, revolutionary plastic injection molding

1982 - The toy manufacturing is set - at that time toys represents only 7% of revenue

Today – MARKES, with 50 employees, made per year over 20 million of ball bearings as well as accessories for materials handling equipment, stamped and drawn parts, plastic parts.

### The "Metallspielwaren"

The factory Markes & Co. KG Wiesenstraße 61, 58507 Lüdenscheid, Germany, which this year celebrates 110 years since the founding, in the years between 1930 and 1980, also produces metal toys, mainly construction. The latest toys will be in plastic, in which today specializes Markes (bearings, gears, supports ..).

The production begins with kits of planes (very similar to Mecavion) sets 103 104 106 108 109 110 and the complementary sets 104A 106A and 106D. These are boxes that allow you to mount many types of aircraft (monoplane, biplane, floatplane ..), but with only a motor (except set 109). The pieces are in corrugated tin for the wings and smooth to the nacelle. Some pieces are red for a pleasing overall effect. A part could be bought the spring motor that rotates the propeller and the wheels. The signs are the classic ones of the period, with the particularity of the SS swastika and the Fascist Fascio.

Of the same period is the outfit for mounting the Mercedes SSK in two versions with and without clockwork motor. As accessory set you could buy the remote driving with the usual flexible cable. All these are very rare and valuable sets.

Shortly before the war began production of Construction kit (Metallbaukasten); in the catalogs of the '30s (1933 and 1935) there is no trace, the first document is a manual of 1939. The sets are marked with the initials DUX-UNIVERSAL and divided into two product lines, sets A, B, C, and D and sets 1, 2 and 3. For the first 4 the concept is identical to the TRIX, small boxes, containing homogeneous pieces (the A plates, strips and screws, the B wheels, axles, plates, C beams, plates and screws, D the gears) to buy more than one to make large models.

The boxes 1, 2 and 3 are complete sets, Meccano type, of increasing size with the number. Purchasing the boxes A, B, and C will produce virtually the set 1 and adding the box D it goes to set 2; set 3 box instead has virtually twice as many parts.

To achieve large-scale models are coming to the market small boxes each containing a few loose pieces of the same type (plates, strips, wheels ..) identified with numbers from 11 to 20. It is published only a manual (Band 1) and a booklet (Vorlagenheft) of small models. The typology is very different from classical Meccano type, not only for the pitch and diameter of holes and fixing elements, but for structural types that are stiffened strips (missing angles) and plates heavy enough. The holes are not constant pitch. Missing nuts, bolts are like Parker and fixed directly on flat plates or L. The axles are grooved as wheel hubs that have no collar, but a rubber element inside the hub that locks the wheel sideways. The wheels are red as the stripes, the plates of different colors (red, white, silver, blue and green aviation), the small pieces nickel. The production continues during the war, at least until 1942, and resumed immediately after (1945) and only in 1949/50 is renewed, eliminating the sets with alphabetic abbreviation and giving a different distribution of the pieces and the numbers 101 102 and 103 to the old 1, 2 and 3 sets; are also introduced into the market the complementary boxes 101A and 102A; in 1951 it is put on the market the set 104 cardboard or wood case, both on one floor; in this case appear many special pieces that in the future you will be able to buy in part with the boxes 70, 71 and 72 and the flexible plates of silver thin sheet type Minex.

The outfits 101 to 104 are of the conventional type with the amount of parts increasing with the

number and the manuals that differ depending on the box.

The engines are two 52 clockwork and 54 electric, both with reverse.

At these boxes are flanked in 1950 by three sets of special pieces (70, 71 and 72) containing many gears, a bucket, of the cranks, universal joint, flanged plates...

After 1951 the parts fixing goes to the more traditional system with nickel screws and nuts M3. In the following years the wheels become nickel and appear in set 104 the flexible plates of red plastic. The colors change with the arrival of green and blue plates. In the last produced outfits the strips become nickel.

After 1950 enter in production even three special boxes for the construction of a train in scale O. The box 120 allows the construction of an electric locomotive with 8 axes, the 121 of a wagon passengers or goods in various types and 122Z, which has the only special parts (roof, wheels and trolleys), so it must be coupled to the standard sets for the construction of wagons. In 1950, start the production of the kits of small cars (approximately 1/43 scale models and VW, Borgward, Mercedes SL, Studebaker, Veritas ...); the cars consists of a nickel plate which acts as a chassis on which screws the clockwork motor inclusive of the rear axle and the front steering axle. The body was initially in fusion with nickel finish. Normally in the boxes there are various bodywork and one or two chassis and engines, so as to allow to play with more than one model at a time. The initials of the boxes are 60, 60 A-F, 61, 63, 75, 630 640 730 ....) Towards the '60 the body becomes plastic. The availability of these models in the box is not good and the prices are high, especially for some models (Veritas, Mercedes ....). The model Mercedes W194 (racing car) was marketed by DUX in 1953, a year before the presentation in New York of the road model W198, the legendary 300SL gullwing, which stemmed from the racing car; so this is the most popular model in the series.

As a general comment this system is very interesting and original, allowing some beautiful Teutonic models'; the aesthetic effect is good (beautiful screws) but very little realistic. The quality of paint and nickel plating is poor so it is impossible to find the second-hand parts in acceptable conditions; is still possible to find new sets from shop stocks (rare) or never played, in which some pieces are still ruined by fixing pin which is normally rusty.