

Xárene Eskandar 289 Spring 2009

War as Myth_From Mobilization to Fetishization



Mobilization is the reallocation of a nation's resources for the assembly, preparation, and equipping of forces for war: assembly of vehicles and airplanes, production of small arms ammunition and the myriad other items in the Army Supply Program, and training and housing for the millions of soldiers who were filling the ranks. Mobilization necessitated the re-design of existing equipment, as well as the design of new products for specific and new activities. Following, I will introduce a number of new objects and methods of mobilization under two conditions of war: war as a demystified event leading to utilitarian post-war commoditization; and war as myth which is evident in today's fetishization of war-inspired objects.

Mobilization

The word mobilization was first used in the 1850s to describe the preparation of the army of Prussia for deployment. The 1850s were the time of the second Industrial Revolution which brought steam generated ships and railways. The Crimean War marks the "first modern" war where among many things, a strategy of 'mobility of deployment' was brought on by powerful and faster steam ships, rail transportation and the telegraph. Steam ships were employed, as opposed to traditional naval strategies, mainly in the formation of a line, contrary to the old column formation. In war, where getting 'there' first is a factor in winning, and this formation allowed a greater number of warships to move faster and separately without being easily attacked and sunk. In addition to steam, the development of the rail also lent itself to rapid deployment by both supplying and moving forces faster than any previous foot army. Therefore, the Crimean War, was also first war where demand for tents for the cavalry was higher than any previous war because they were able to deploy greater numbers further and at faster rates. However, lack of sufficient and skilled labour in England meant that of the 3000 requested tents in November of 1854 for the British army in Crimea, only 1000 were supplied, eight months later. On 25 November the correspondent of *The Times* began his dispatch in the following words¹:

¹ Lysons, Daniel. *The Crimean War From First to Last*. London: J. Murray, 1895.

It is now pouring rain - the skies are black as ink - the wind is howling over the staggering tents - the trenches are turned into dykes - in the tents the water is sometimes a foot deep - our men have not either, warm or waterproof clothing - they are out for twelve hours at a time in the trenches - they are plunged into the inevitable miseries of a winter campaign - and not a soul seems to care for their comfort or even for their lives.

Following this, in the 1880 and 90s, the internal combustion engine and diesel fuel lead to transportation advancements, namely the automobile and airplane which marked the advancements of WWI. The US entered WWI without a plan for mobilization; primarily, no stockpile of equipment or plans for creating them. Worse, the Army had no clear idea of the character and magnitude of its wartime needs, and no detailed specifications for production of many kinds of equipment. It was not until WWII and specifically the attack on Pearl Harbour in 1941, that the US went full force into mobilization for war, which effectively ended the Depression. The Gross National Product doubled from 1940 to 1945, and thousands of new jobs were created to produce the weapons, aircraft and other needs to support the war effort.²

With greater advancements in mobilization, airborne infantry (paratroopers) and armored infantry (troops with vehicles) were deployed to strategic locations. Military camps could be set up and active in a matter of hours. Efficiency in production brought on a new, mobile military force unlike past wars. During this time, not only are housing, auto and ammunition industry growing, but also are industrial design (product design) as well as fashion design for utility are also growing and taking off on new directions from this point in the war. To compensate for the manpower demands of the new mobile military, the government encouraged women to enter the workforce to fill both industrial and service jobs supporting the war effort. The public also strongly supported the war through its investment in War Bonds, which in 1942 alone generated \$1 billion for military needs.³ As an example of how work was created—and not just by building new factories, cars and airplanes—is that there was a need for new designs for the new mobile infantry. For example there were no organized paratrooper units prior to 1940 and standard army issue gear did not work for this new infantry division. Therefore new designs were needed from the parachute itself, to helmets, uniforms with specific closures and attachments, shoes to withstand impact, haversacks to carry

² Eagleton Institute of Politics Archive. Rutgers University. Retrieved 11 April 2009.

³ Eagleton Institute of Politics Archive. Rutgers University. <http://www.eagleton.rutgers.edu/e-gov/e-politicalarchive-WWII-1mobil.htm>. Retrieved 11 April 2009.

weaponry and survival gear, and the survival gear itself, such as special pocketknives that could be opened with one flick of the thumb.

The haversack and its contents alone have proliferated into a market of off-shoots, still strong today, from recreational sky-diving, to camping, hiking and mountaineering, all done family-style, not forgetting the factory-working women during the war-era, lusting after the new modernized kitchen, as compactly packed and ergonomic as the infantry's haversack.

[See img.1]

The Haversack

The haversack was made of cotton duck and webbing, and it was equipped with shoulder straps and tabs for attaching the entrenching tools and bayonet. It was supplemented by the pack carrier, which attached to the bottom of the haversack when a full field pack was carried.⁴ U.S. Troops were still using haversacks issued during and after WWI, which were inadequate for the new demands of the infantry. Finally a new pattern was issued in 1941, and revised in 1942, 1944 and 1945, to allow for better weight distribution and more specialized compartments and attachments for carrying necessary equipment. [However, reading comments by veterans on on-line forums reveals that the new designs hardly made it to the troops in time, reminiscent of the tents in Crimea. Their claims can be supported with the information provided in the War Department Field Manual of 1945, FM 21-15 where the assembly and attaching of M-1928 haversacks and carriers, and M-1936 and 1937 pistol and magazine belts for automatic rifles are described and not the M-1942, 44 or 45.]

Each piece of personal equipment carried by the soldier involved a very specific ritual for folding in order to maximize space efficiency of the haversack—first the sleeping bags (or blankets) and half-tents were rolled as one item, placing tent poles and pins as well as clothing and personal toiletry neatly within the folds of the tent/blanket roll;

⁴ War Department Field Manual, FM 21-15, Section III, 21. 1945

then the overcoat was also folded by given guidelines and rolled (this is the roll on top of the haversack that many mistakenly believe is the blanket); and before these items are attached to the haversack, the pack is first filled with the six cans of C-rations, then the rolled blanket is packed in and the soldier continues attaching the overcoat and all other equipment to the outside of the haversack.

The systematic folding, packing and use of the haversack and its contents was echoed in the modernization that had been taking place in all spheres of daily life, a modernization which itself was a result of military modernizations pre-WWII. The area most impacted was domesticity where the kitchen, living room and bedroom items and space were obsessively measured, re-designed, simplified and packed, in other words 'modernized'.

[See img.2-4]

House "work"

Early 20th century is a turn from the previous century where 'work' and 'home' were vehemently separated. The factory environment was one where the workers subordinated themselves to the rules of the managers; they had no freedom to decide when to break. The oppressive conditions of the factory encouraged men to further separate their work life from home life, which further involved the homemaker—the wife—to make the home a haven.⁵ This shift from the craftsman and artisan style of working and living in the home to the industrialized state of work separate from home not only created new spaces within the home—the sitting room—but also brought on new strategies for design of home tools and appliances where the notion of 'work' had to be dissociated from the chores of the home.

⁵ Forty, Adrian. *Objects of Desire: Design and Society Since 1750*. Thames & Hudson, 1992. pp.94-119.

From around 1912-13 Mrs. Christine Frederick founded and directed the Applecroft Home Experiment Station at her home in Greenlawn, Long Island. Here, labour-saving food preparations were tested in the kitchen, while a laboratory investigated household products from appliances to foodstuffs. Her 1919 book *Household Engineering: Scientific Management in the Home*, where her title is not 'Author' but 'Household Efficiency Engineer' and is published by the American School of Home Economics, begins with a photograph of the Applecroft Country Kitchen where "cooking cabinet, stove and serving table" are in sequence, "permitting step-saving food preparation", pre-dating the 1926 Frankfurt Kitchen by Austrian architect Margarete Schütte-Lihotzky.

[See img.11]

Mrs. Frederick revolutionized American domestic consumerism with her later book, *Selling Mrs. Consumer* (1929), which was a highly influential source of information about consumer opinions and how the consumer could be reached most effectively, which led to her being consulted by companies wanting to breach into the female markets. At this time in domestic history, traditionally men would leave the home for work, and many women were at home, and responsible for all aspects of housework, from making purchasing decisions to use and cleaning of wares and appliances. The resultant communication between manufacturer of consumer goods and the market was in the language of the bride, promising her the refrigerator is "the one she always wanted".⁶

Two contributing factors to early 20th century society's change of class were World War I and the looming Depression where the servant class effectively vanishes and middle class women take on the chores previously done by their servants and maids. For the success of home consumer goods, there needed to be a mental division between the work done by the servant and the work done by the housewife by means of the

mechanical servant, be it washing machine, toaster, or vacuum cleaner.⁷ World War II further changed the notion of work for women when they were introduced into the workforce by the necessities of war. Work, whether in the home raising strong, healthy children in a hygienic environment, or in the factory, was seen as a patriotic duty, entered into voluntarily. This once again led to another shift in both advertising and design where the positive elements of the war, primarily efficiency, were introduced into the domestic realm.

“Do with Less so They’ll Have Enough”

Efficiency was not only viewed in terms of saved time and labour. Shortage in raw materials and fuel during war and the rationing of consumer goods from food to fabric, knitting wool, cosmetics and footwear produced an austere fashion and mentality of ‘make do and mend’ as well as creative ways to get by. Rationing was very strict in the UK and US and operated on a controlled coupon system redeemable for goods. For clothing, rationing started in June 1941. However, the numbers of coupons available to each family were reduced by the year, and by 1945 only 36 coupons per family were issued, nearly 50% less than when they were first introduced. Certain items such as necessities for infants under four months of age, as well as boiler suits, workmen’s bib, brace and overalls, hats and caps, sewing thread, mending wool, mending silk, boot and shoe laces, tapes, braids, ribbons and other fabrics less than three inches in width, elastic, lace, lace net, sanitary towels, braces, suspenders, garters, hard haberdashery, clogs and black out dyed cloth were all ration free. Coupons were not needed for second hand articles either.

Details of the rationing were announced in newspapers and women’s magazines in simple language for everyone to understand [See img.5 for US advert]:

Rationing Of Clothing, Cloth and Footwear from June, 1941

⁶ 1938 General Electric advertising for a line of refrigerators designed by Henry Dreyfuss.

⁷ Forty, Adrian. *Objects of Desire: Design and Society Since 1750*. Thames & Hudson, 1992.

Rationing has been introduced not to deprive you of your real needs, but to make more certain that you get your share of the country's goods—to get fair shares with everybody else.

When the shops re-open you will be able to buy cloth, clothes, footwear and knitting wool only if you bring your food ration book with you. The shopkeeper will detach the required number of coupons from the unused margarine page. Each margarine coupon counts as one coupon towards the purchase of clothing and footwear. You will have a total of 66 coupons to last you a year; so go sparingly. You can buy where you like and when you like without registering.

In Europe uniforms were seen at all civilian social occasions from cinemas, weddings, and restaurants to gala events. It was impossible to go anywhere without being aware of war as uniformed men and women in auxiliary services were an everyday fact. In 1942 under the Civilian Clothing Order CC41, the British government introduced sumptuary laws that made it illegal and unpatriotic to spend time embellishing clothing for sale, and forbade manufacturers using the CC41 label from using fancy trimmings, unnecessary buttons, extra stitching or tucks or pleats or pockets more than was essential to function. In the US, a range of “utility clothing” with a special label was also designed which for males allowed only three buttons and no pockets, and pants without cuffs. Female dresses could have no pleats or elastic bands. Women repurposed old items such as sheets, blankets and curtains to make new items and knitting socks, scarves and gloves for soldiers occupied the time of those women who were not working in factories.⁸

In addition to rationing of goods, food was also rationed and food rationing was far more generously provided for the military than for civilians. The weekly allowances of civilian foodstuffs (in the UK) for each adult were advertised as follows⁹:

Food Rations for 1 Week for 1 Person:
4oz bacon or ham
8oz sugar
2oz tea

⁸ Weston Thomas, Pauline. <http://www.fashion-era.com>. Retrieved 24 May 2009. Edited by author.

⁹ Ibid.

2oz jam spread
1oz cheese
1 shilling's worth of meat
8oz fats of which only 2oz could be butter
Later sweets and tinned goods could be had on a points system

In the US rationing for sugar and coffee began in 1942 followed in 1943 with meat, cheese, canned goods, fats, oils and butter. Each American citizen, regardless of age, was issued two ration books each month that allowed them 2 pounds of canned food, 12 ounces of sugar, 4 ounces of cheese and up to 2.5 pounds of meat per week. The coffee allowance was one pound for a five-week period.

Though rationing civilian goods was primarily meant for providing for soldiers, it did not mean that soldiers had access to abundant resources and goods. The haversack each soldier was given contained the necessities needed, indefinitely, meaning in case of loss, it was not as easy to replace. Each soldier also carried his ration of food—weighing approximately 5pounds—that was to be used at times of heavy field combat when setting up a field kitchen was not possible. The food was known as C rations, canned, prepared food with 2974 calories, 114 grams of protein, and an adequate supply of vitamins and minerals, intended for operational needs of three to twenty-one days. Though intended for limited use, sometimes it was used as the sole source of nutrition for weeks. C rations were developed in 1938, as an attempt to produce a stable, palatable, nutritionally balanced combat ration, which would provide the individual soldier with three full meals per day. Issued as one boxed ration per person per day, one case of C-Rations contained 6 rations. Each ration was composed of a B-unit and a M-unit: B-unit was three (3) 12-ounce cans of bread, coffee and sugar; and M-unit was three (3) 12-ounce cans of meat and vegetable components. The first version of US C rations contained:

[See img.6]

Package of Biscuits
Package of Graham Crackers
Package of Sugar Tablets

Meat Can of Ham (Breakfast), Chicken (Dinner), Turkey (Supper)
Fruit Bar (Breakfast), Caramels (Dinner), Chocolate Bar (Supper)
Powdered Coffee (Breakfast), Bouillon (Dinner), Lemon (Supper)
Piece Chewing Gum
4-Pack Cigarettes
Package of Toilet Tissue
Wooden Spoon
Matches

War as Myth

Reflecting back on Forty's analysis of home and kitchen appliances, once the factory work became a constant reality beyond wartime mobilization of domestic workforce, working post-war women slowly rejected the idea of coming home to another reminder of the work they engaged in on a daily basis. Hence manufacturers began responding with new designs and new slogans for old designs. Simply put, the Man's workplace, the factory, was demystified for women and they yearned for a place that would provide another myth, of happiness and luxury and modernism. In the same manner, during WWII the violence and reality of war was demystified for the average civilian. In Europe it was as real as the Blitz, and in the US as real as men being deployed and a large population of war-widows working in the factories of military production. War was too real to enter people's lives as an element of decoration, entertainment or amusement of any kind.

Under the conditions for civilians and soldiers that I mention above, life was tough and war was very real. Today, for much of the Western world, with un-manned stealth bombers and remote guided missiles, war is a myth. We do not need to ration our fuel, food or wool for the military, because our military is not deployed in the numbers of WWII. We do not need to mobilize civilians for anything other than moral support and prayers because military mobilization is now more robotic than organic. Because war is a myth, we feel comfortable designing hand soaps as replicas of hand grenades and cute canned cakes reminiscent of C rations—in which cake, based on the civilian food rations during the war, would be a luxury (bread was not rationed until post war in 1946, but sugar and dairy were heavily rationed in both US and UK). [See img.7-9]

The myth of war has not only led to frivolous and quite often, stupid designs, it has led to a fetish. Marx borrowed the term fetish for describing the psychological value attached to commodities, and a universal way of thought characteristic of everyday life under capitalist social relations that appears to be perfectly normal and natural, but in actuality is unusual. He argued that the most pervasive and widespread kind of fetishism had to do with necessary objects of everyday life—commodities. The imaginary value added to commodities is what he called fetishism of commodities. In capitalist society, value of commodities are constructed, yet we tend to forget that what gave them value is a set of social relations, primarily labour which was exploited for profit, and that value is not inherent in any object. Marx implied that fetishism of commodities is the simplest example of how the economic and material forms of capitalist production—understood as relations between things—conceal and distort the underlying and more fundamental relations between people. Therefore, when the event of war is mystified and obscured, the value of the object of war is lost, as is the understanding of the relationship of the object to the event. The object, detached from the event and the circumstances of its production gain an imaginary value and are fetishized.

In addition to objects, many objectives of war-related actions are also obscured and therefore open to fetishization. For example, 'modern' as expressed in the book *So wollen wir wohnen* (1931), meant "plucking" the excess. [See img.10] This excess was either shunned as a result of Marxist ideals or from rejecting unproductive aristocracy, or simplifying because of war and Depression. On the contrary, contemporary 'modern' magazines such as *Dwell* are merely catalogues selling modernization as an excess of decoration by means of objects, and promote absolute commodity fetishization by photographing every domestic scene furnished with Eames chairs, while the objective behind the Eames' products were mass production for accessibility and affordability.

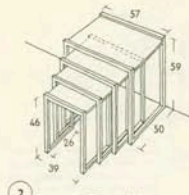
To end on a slightly positive side of our culture, I will acknowledge current trends in hand-made crafts such as pottery, sewing and knitting whose re-emergence—unlike war-times' where being crafty was patriotic, frugal and resourceful—is an out lash to corporate mobilization, efficiently deploying multi-national (primarily Chinese) consumer products as far and fast as possible. Paralleling war-time efficiency, the new domestic realm is moving towards self-reliance and sustainability in order to avoid enslavement by the enemy, not the Germans this time, but corporations.

So what does 'patriotism' mean today?

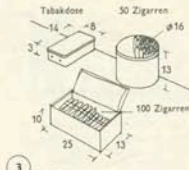
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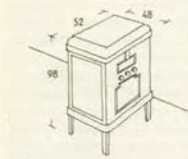
1 Platzbedarf für Sitzgruppe



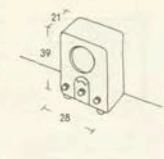
2 Satzische (Teetische)



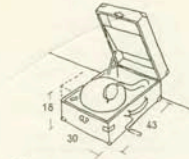
3 Rauchwaren



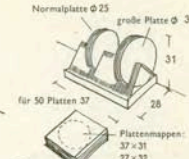
4 Musikschrank für Radio und Platten



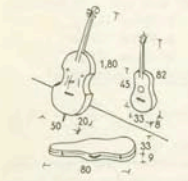
5 Volksempfänger (Radio)



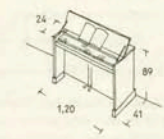
6 Kofferapparat



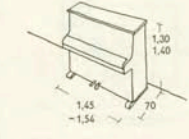
7 Plattenbehälter



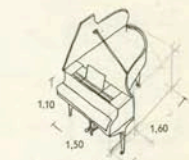
8 Baßgeige, Gitarre, Geigenkasten



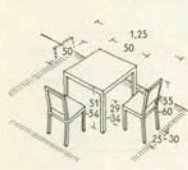
9 Volksklavier



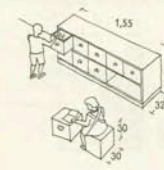
10 Klavier



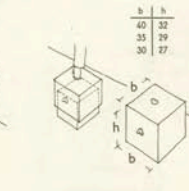
11 Tafelklavier (Stutzflügel 1,40x1,40)



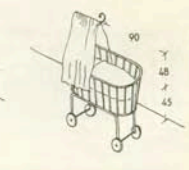
12 Kindertisch mit Kinderstühlen



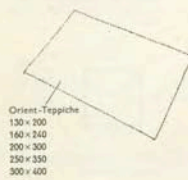
13 Spielzeugschrank mit Spielkästen



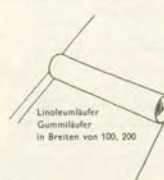
14 Ineinanderstellbare Spielkästen mit Maßen nach G. Schneck



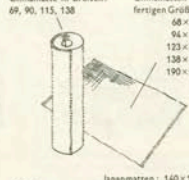
15 Kleinkinderkorb mit Fahrgestell



16 Teppiche



17 Läufer

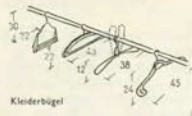


18 Matten

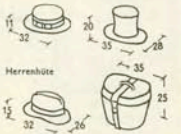
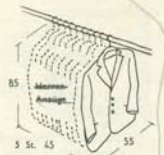
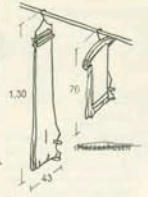
Chinamatten in Breiten: 69, 90, 115, 138
 Chinamatten in fertigen Größen: 68x45, 94x62, 123x60, 138x67, 190x91
 Dekorationsstoffe in Breiten von 130-150
 Vorhangstoffe in Breiten von 120
 Gardinensstoffe in Breiten von 140
 Gitterrüll in Breiten von 150-330
 ggf.-800
 Reiskleiden in Breiten von 70, 130
 Gemusterte Kunststoffe in Breiten von 65
 Küper in Breiten von 80-160
 Woll-Voile in Breiten von 110
 Cretonne in Breiten von 70-130
 Tischdecken: 130, 130, 130, 180
 150, 150, 150, 180
 Divandeecken: 150, 300

19 Stoffe — Decken

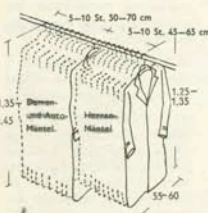
ANKLEIDERÄUME



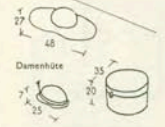
Kleiderbügel



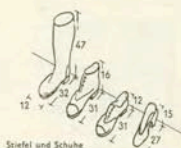
Herrenhüte



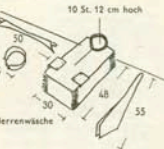
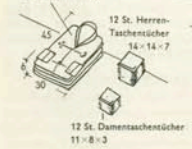
3 St. Schlafanzüge



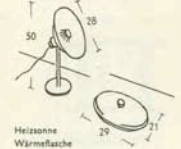
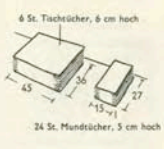
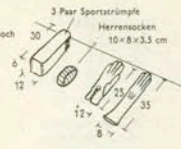
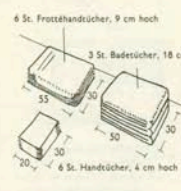
Damenhüte



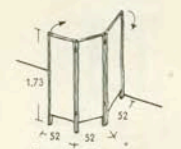
Stiefel und Schuhe



Herrenwäsche



Heizzone Wärmeflasche

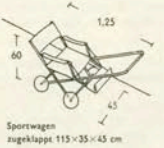


Spanische Wand zugeklappt 173x52x10 cm

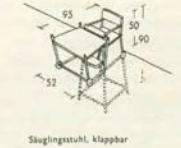
KINDERZIMMER



Kinderwagen



Sportwagen zugeklappt 115x35x45 cm



Säuglingsstuhl, klappbar



Spielgitter

MARCH 10, 1943

Ration Dates

Processed Food

A, B and C blue stamps in War Ration Book Two, totaling 48 points, good for the purchase of canned, bottled and processed foods during the month of March. Use your high point stamps first; buy carefully so your points last out the month. Use fresh vegetables and fruits—they are not rationed. Those who have not received Book Two can apply at boards any day.

Sugar

Stamp number 11 in War Ration Book One is valid for three pounds until March 15.

Coffee

Stamp number 25 in War Ration Book One is good for one pound of coffee until March 21.

Shoes

Stamp number 17 in War Ration Book One is good until June 15 for the purchase of one pair of shoes.

Tire Inspection

Holders of A gasoline ration books must have tires inspected before March 31. Holders of B and C gasoline ration books were required to have their first tire inspection by February 28. No supplemental gasoline rations will be issued until tires have been inspected.

Fuel Oil

Period 4 coupons good for 8 gallons of fuel oil or kerosene until April 12; period 5 coupons now good for 10 gallons.

Gasoline

Number 4 stamps in A gasoline ration books good for three gallons until March 21.



③ *Third step.*

Figure 10. Haversack packed with rations (cont'd).

img.7_hand grenade soap

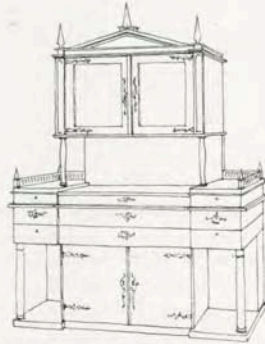


img.8-9_canned cake in Tokyo

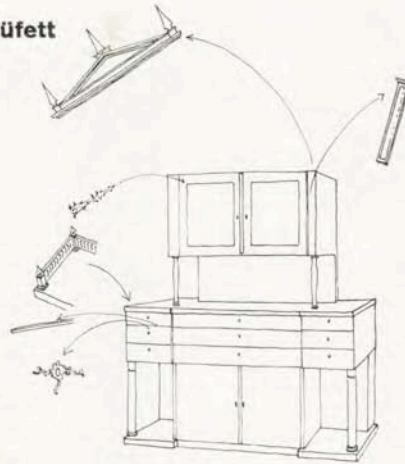


img.10_scan from *So wollen wir wohnen*

Alte Möbel verändern — 2. Das Büfett



Büfett modernisieren ?

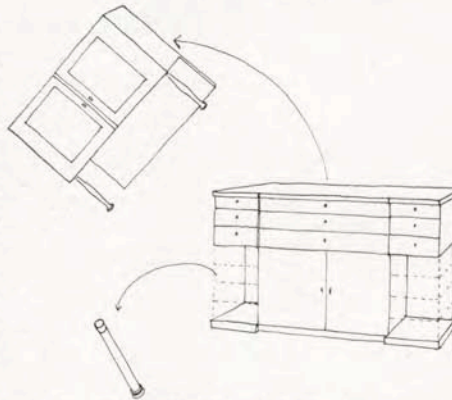


Alle nicht konstruktiven Teile sind entfernt. Das gerupfte Huhn?

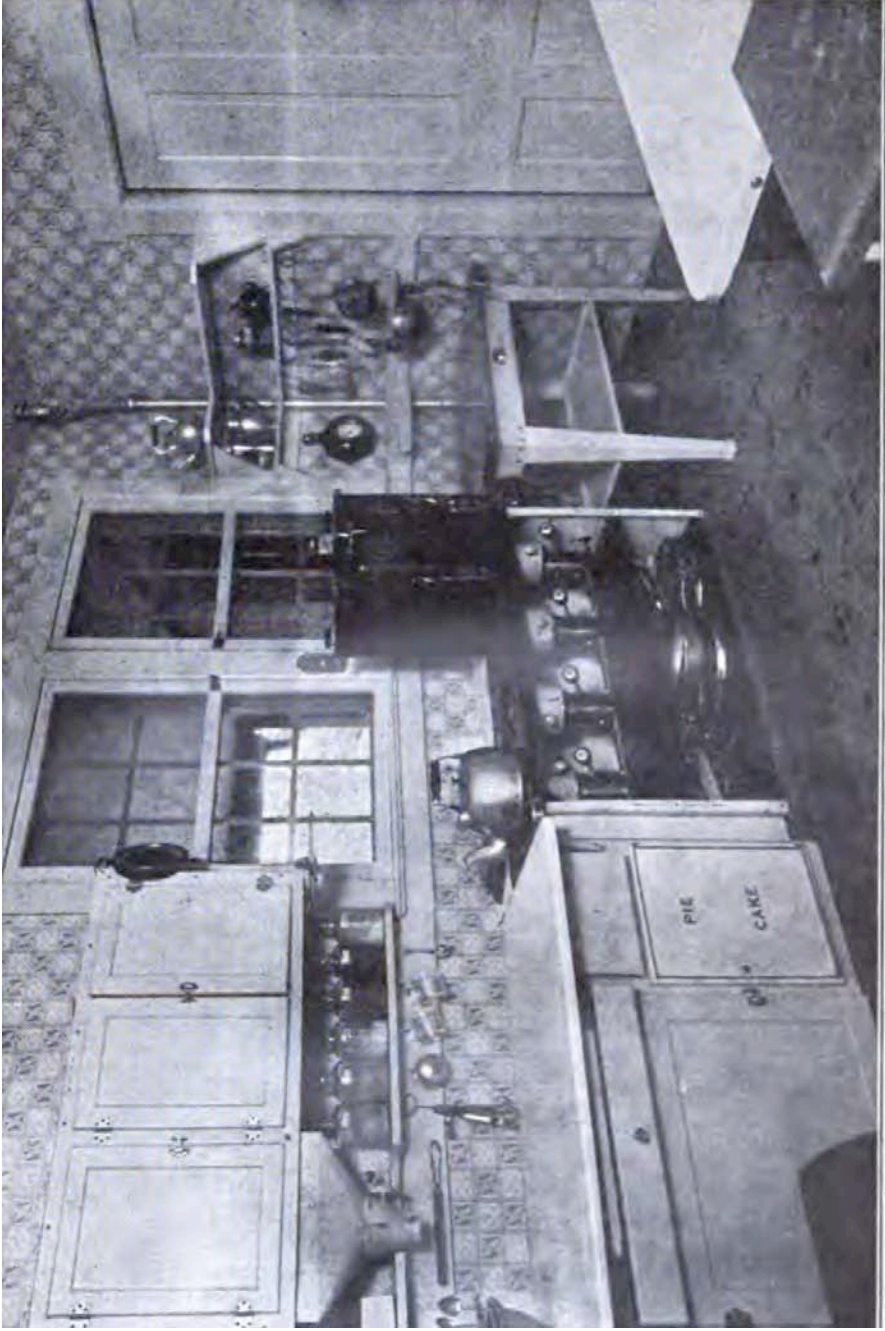
eine solche Durchbrechung der Wände ermöglicht.

Die alte „Garderobe“ wird nicht mitgenommen. In den Flur kommt eine fest verankerte einfache Hut- und Kleiderablage, noch besser ein paar gut geformte Kleiderhaken und ein kleiner Spiegel an einer Stelle, die genügend Licht hat, um sich in dem Spiegel auch betrachten zu können. Bei der Aufteilung der Aufgaben der alten Garderobe kommt so jedes an seinen Platz, die Kleider, wo sie nicht im Weg sind, der Spiegel ins Licht.

Kleider ändert man, um den teuren Stoff zu verwerten und dem Ganzen doch ein anderes Aussehen zu geben. Warum ändert man Möbel nicht ebenso um? Es gibt Kleider, an deren Form sieht man sich nie müde; es gibt auch solche Möbel. Sie passen in jeden Raum. Sind aber die Möbel modisch gewesen, dann müssen sie verändert werden. Es ist nicht einzusehen, warum das nicht häufiger getan wird. Die Handwerker suchen nach Arbeit. Hier ist eine, die niemand anpackt. Das Her-

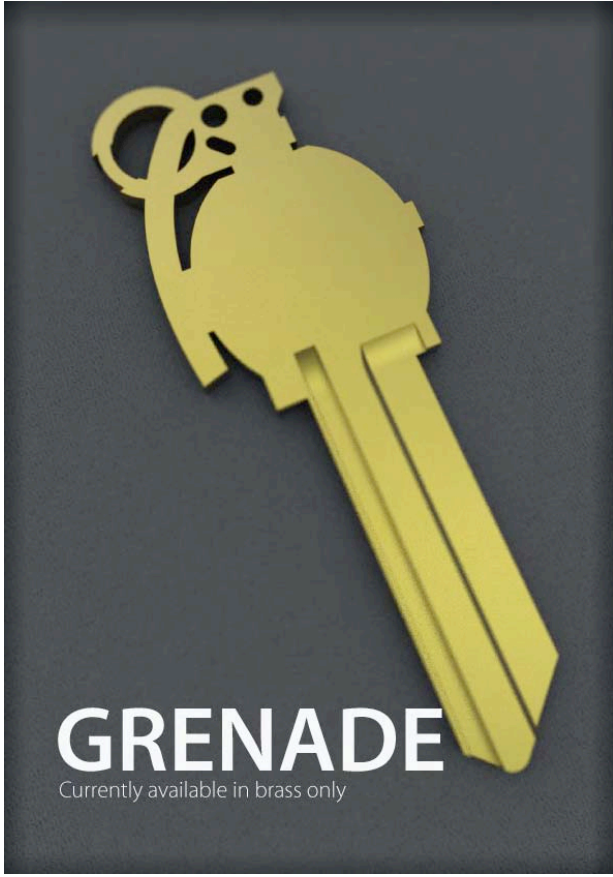


Noch einen Schritt weiter. In den seitlichen Nischen sind Schubfächer als Ersatz für den Oberteil eingebaut



• LATER VIEW OF APPECROFT COUNTRY KITCHEN.
Cooking cabinet, stove and serving table in sequence, permitting step-saving food preparation.

2 more objects for your viewing pleasure:



GRENADA

Currently available in brass only

