

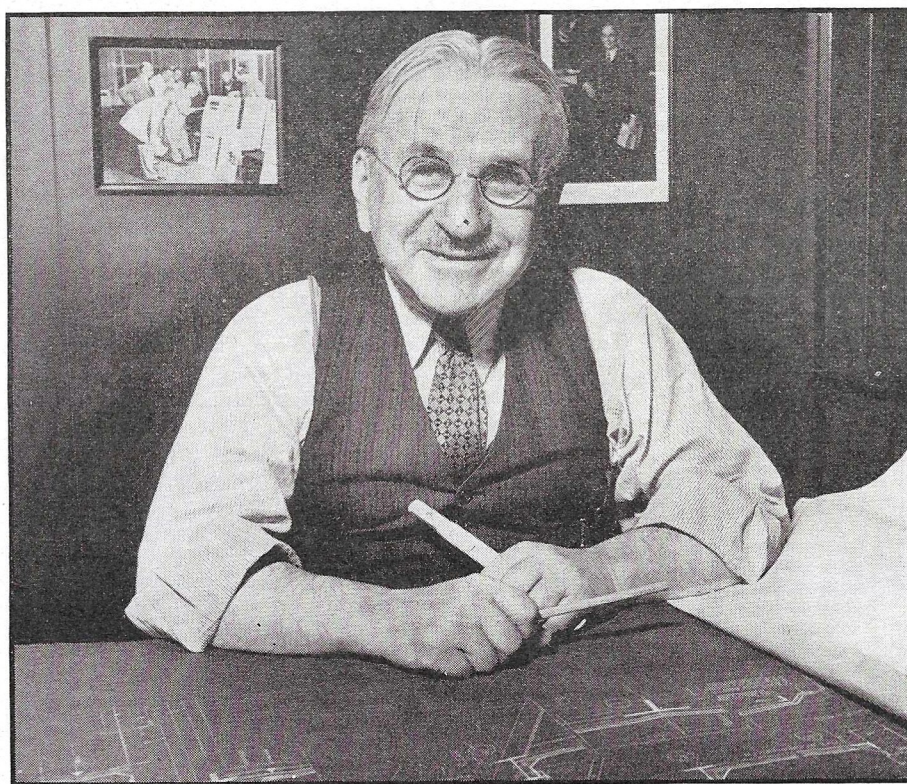
Industry's Architect

The white-haired old man who had just been awarded a medal for distinguished war service had never been closer to the firing line than the desk of blueprints in his office in Detroit. But the applauding members of the American Institute of Architects in Detroit's Hotel Statler this week knew that Albert Kahn's contribution toward the defeat of the Axis powers had been greater than that of many a general. In nearly every United Nations industrial stronghold, from Detroit to Novosibirsk, his art is conspicuous. Albert Kahn, 73, father of modern factory design, is the world's No. 1 industrial architect.

Before U.S. war production could get its second wind after Pearl Harbor, it

were handling last December more factory construction than any other industrial architects in the world. During 1941, his office rolled up the unprecedented figure of 20,000,000 sq. ft. of industrial construction for the national defense effort. He had set a record in building the Wright Aeronautical Corp. factory in Cincinnati. Within a year Kahn was to build a still bigger one: Henry Ford's vast, \$75,000,000 Willow Run bomber plant. Willow Run's record will be broken if a still bigger Kahn job—so far in plans only—goes through: the \$120,000,000 Chrysler airplane engine plant in the Chicago area.

He Did It Before. The problem of rapid industrial building on a national scale was nothing new to Builder Kahn. In 1928 the Soviet Government, after combing the U.S. for a man who could



Bernard Hoffman

FACTORY BUILDER KAHN

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needed factories, and it needed them fast. So industry turned to Albert Kahn. He had long been accustomed to break all records in factory construction. He had designed many a mammoth U.S. plant in a few days, had set it up and delivered the keys in a few months. Packard's architect for 39 years, Ford's for 34, Chrysler's for 17, General Motors' for 150-odd major plants, Kahn had done some two billion dollars' worth of industrial building in the last four decades. He was used to big jobs, done fast.

In the busy offices of Albert Kahn Associated Architects & Engineers, Inc., on several floors of Detroit's New Center Building (which he himself designed) he and 500-odd assistants (soon to be 650)

furnish the building brains for Russia's industrialization, offered the job to Kahn. Twenty-five Kahn engineers and architects went to Moscow. They had to start from scratch. Russia not only lacked factories, but the pencils and drafting boards to design them. There was only one blueprint machine in Moscow. Six months were taken up in compiling a Russian-English technical dictionary so that the U.S. engineers could make the Russians understand what they were talking about. Raw recruits from Russia's farms and city streets had to be converted into expert draftsmen and construction workers.

Soon Kahn's engineers were given full charge of the entire heavy industrial building program of the first Five-Year Plan,

In two years they had built 521 factories from Kiev to Yakutsk, and trained some 4,000 Soviet engineers and apprentices to carry on their work.

Factory of Factories. Secret of Albert Kahn's ability to build factories faster than any other man alive is not primarily an architectural one. It lies in a combination of engineering knowledge and shrewd business organization. Himself a product of the great manufacturing system that grew up in Detroit with the expansion of the modern automobile industry, he has applied the principles of mass production to the art of architecture. His Detroit offices, now running on a feverish schedule, are a veritable factory of factory design.

When a new job of designing enters the Kahn office, Albert Kahn's whole team goes into action. The Executive Division not only scurries after contractors for steel, concrete, excavation and labor, but checks the details of estimates and assures smooth-running coordination. Meanwhile the engineers and architects of the Technical Division have worked out their structural blueprints and are ready with specifications for everything from steel trusses to washroom tile.

Kahn factory designs have been known to get under way before the client has made up his mind on the location of the building.

F.O.B. Detroit. "Don't let anyone tell you that luck doesn't count," says Albert Kahn. "I was born under a lucky star. I got all the breaks." His biggest break was that he happened to be a struggling young architect in Detroit at the time when the automobile was about to make Detroit the biggest mass-production center in the Western Hemisphere.

Born in the small town of Rhaunen, near Germany's Ruhr Basin, Kahn arrived in the U.S. as a gangling boy of twelve. Son of an impoverished small-town Rabbi who peddled fruit for a living on Detroit's streets, young Albert seemed destined to be an infant prodigy musician. But the vicissitudes of fruit peddling made it necessary for young Albert to enter the offices of a Detroit architect as office boy. He was fired from the job because he smelled too strongly of his father's horse, whom he dutifully carried every day.

One day Julius Melchers (father of U.S. Artist Gari Melchers) picked up the downcast Kahn and took him into his drawing school. Learning fast, Albert Kahn was soon ready for another architectural job, with Detroit Architect George D. Mason, where he spent 14 years making himself an expert in his craft. A trip to Europe at 21 (on a \$500 scholarship he got from the magazine *American Architect*) gave him what he considers his real education in architecture. Back in Detroit, at 26, he joined two other architects in opening an office. Within two years one of his partners had died, the other had gone to teach architecture at Cornell University.

Undismayed, Architect Kahn filled his partners' places with his younger brothers Louis, Moritz and Felix, kept an eye out for a still younger brother Julius, who was just finishing college. His faith in the

Kahn family was not misplaced. Louis is still Albert's chief executive and right-hand man. Felix worked with the famous "six companies" group that built Boulder Dam. Moritz, now dead, supervised most of the work on Russia's Five-Year Plan. The young Julius, later an executive with Republic Steel, invented a new and more precisely calculable method of reinforcing concrete which eventually made Albert Kahn the outstanding U.S. authority on concrete construction.

Later, he turned from concrete to steel and glass. Under Henry Ford's influence, he learned to build whole factories as units, getting everything under one roof. Ford also taught him the superiority of vast one-story structures for heavy manufacture, structures that obviated the necessity for carting heavy materials and engines up & down in elevators. For Ford alone Kahn has built approximately 1,000 buildings.

Weekly Pay: \$45. Albert Kahn's personality still reflects that curious mixture of shrewd materialism and esthetic refinement that has made him the prototype of the machine-age architect. Methodical in his working hours, he gets to the office early every morning, drives himself incessantly until evening. Each week he solemnly accepts the weekly paycheck of \$45 which he has been getting for the past 40 years, carefully turning over \$40 of it to his wife and keeping \$5 for "lunches and extras."

Outside his office Albert Kahn leads the quiet life of a man of culture. He owns a whole gallery of French Impressionist paintings, on which he dotes, and spends many happy moments with his record collection, shushing anyone who dares whisper while he is listening to Beethoven or Brahms. A member of six golf clubs, he has yet to make his first pass at a golf ball.

Though his own tastes in architecture are conservative (about once a year he designs and builds a prim little conventional house just for the fun of it), Kahn considers the leaders in U.S. architecture to be Frank Lloyd Wright, Paul Cret and Eliel Saarinen. About his own work as architect laureate to U.S. industry, he is modestly matter-of-fact. Says he: "Architecture is 90% business, 10% art."

Guest Artists

The U.S. art lover has cherished a touching picture of France's conquered but still defiant artists working away, cold and underfed, in their Paris garrets while the conquerors walked away with their work. Last week news came from Germany that a group of top-flight Left-Bank painters and sculptors (some of them formerly listed by Hitler's *Kulturkammer* as "degenerate artists") were touring and lecturing in Germany as guests of the Third Reich. The guests: Painters André Derain, Maurice de Vlaminck, André Dunoyer de Segonzac, Cornelius van Dongen, Othon Friesz, Sculptors Paul Maximiliaen Landowski, Charles Despiau. Notably not there was the name of pre-war Paris' greatest painter, bulky Spanish-born Pablo Picasso, who presumably had had the guts to decline the invitation.

Hearts & Thistles

Classiest contested-will case in a vestryman's age was fought in a White Plains, N.Y. court between the Rev. Dr. Henry Darlington, businesslike, 53-year-old rector of Manhattan's fashionable Church of the Heavenly Rest, and relatives of the late, 78-year-old Mrs. Anna H. Patton, who last year left the minister 30% of her \$1,300,000. The relatives charged that Dr. Darlington had made love to the widow for ten years to get the money; Dr. Darlington's attorneys described the relationship as pure mother-&-son. Twenty-eight affectionate letters were introduced. One of them: "Dear Anna: Lots of love. Off to Paris tonight. Harry." Excerpt from another from Harry: "Everything is so mixed up. But where there is a will, there is a way." It looked like a long, ambiguous fight.

Royalty

Eighteen-year-old King Peter of Yugoslavia arrived by plane in Washington, looked forward to: 1) talking with President Roosevelt; 2) watching airplane production; 3) driving a jeep; 4) playing baseball. It turned out that he had something else to look forward to, but a war-long wait lay ahead. When it's over he will marry pretty Princess Alexandra of Greece.

The little town of Lee, Mass. (pop.: 4,222) was to harbor a royal family this

week: Queen Wilhelmina of The Netherlands, Princess Juliana (who has taken a house in Lee for the summer) and her daughters, Princesses Beatrix, 4, and Irene, 2. Last week 61-year-old Wilhelmina rejoined her daughter and granddaughters in Ottawa after a two-year separation. In the offing before she returns: a visit with the Roosevelts.

In & Out

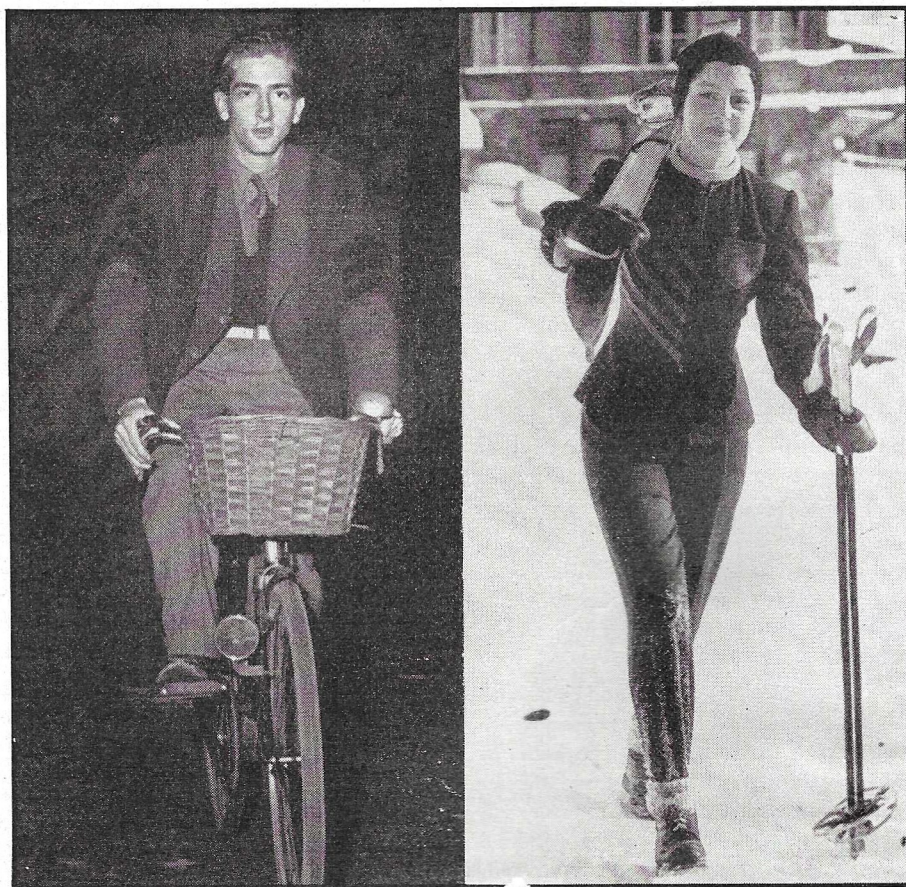
Clark Gable took his physical exam at Washington's Bolling Field for admission to the Army Air Force. He will probably lecture at Air Forces' training schools.

Ralph McAllister Ingersoll, 41-year-old editor of the New York tabloid *PM*, told his draft board he wanted to "be in the job where I can do this country's enemies the most harm," was classified 1-A, ordered to report for induction this week—at 5:45 a.m. But his rejection by Army doctors was still possible.

Lieut. Carl F. Zeidler, Milwaukee's "boy mayor" who took a leave of absence to enlist in the Naval Reserve, went on duty in charge of a gun crew aboard an Atlantic merchantman.

Department of Utter Confusion

"I address you in a state of considerable panic and alarm," wrote Editor Harold Ross of *The New Yorker* to the Governor of Connecticut. "I write in sheer terror,"



YUGOSLAVIA'S KING PETER, GREECE'S PRINCESS ALEXANDRA
Between them, a war.

David E. Scherman, International