Russian Headlight Assemblies
Part XXX-1: Heritage from the German R71
(Also See Parts XXX-2 thru -12)

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02 / 2018
Transition from German R71 to Russian M-72

• German R71 Motorcycle Production
  – Start of Production: 1938
  – End of Production: 1941
  – Number Produced: 3,458

• In 1940, the Soviet Union Acquired Design and Production Techniques for German BMW R 71 Motorcycles and Sidecars
  – First Russian M-72 Model Was Completed in 1941

• In 1940, the Soviets are said to have purchased several BMW R71s in Sweden. They were tested, evaluated, dismantled, and ultimately reverse engineered. Within two years, the Soviets were producing the nearly identical M-72

• Soviet aircraft engineer Serdjukow had been employed at BMW's Munich manufacturing plant since 1935. In 1940, he secured R71 blueprints and several bikes which were sent to Russia. The M-72 appeared two years later.

• Prior to the German invasion, the Soviets were building BMW R71s under license. BMW had discontinued R71 production in favor of the new R75 and other models. The R71 was considered obsolete and unsuited for military use.

The BMW R71 was the primary reconnaissance motorcycle from 1938 to 1941, when the larger BMW/Zundapp R75 was put into production to make up for its predecessor’s lack of versatile off-road capabilities.
The mechanical details of the German R71 were copied over to the Russian M-72.
Just as the Chinese decided to retain the mechanical aspects of the headlight assembly, the Russians used their own electrical components.
One would be hard pressed to ascertain the exact model of the headlight assembly from the outside; whether German R71 or Russian M-72.
The German R71 headlight assembly fits into the Russian M-72.
German BMW R71 Headlight Assembly

Headlamp, BMW R71
Item #: 002.012
Complete with switches, connection diagram, left side dimmer switch, perfect replica
List Price: 570.00€
(www.oldtimergarage.eu)
Interestingly the German electrical system was 12-volts, negative ground. The Russians chose to replace the electrical components with 6-volt, positive ground devices.
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German BMW R-71

Central Switch
Fuse

“Charge” Alarm Light

Handlebar Control Switch, showing Hi/Lo Beam Dimmer lever

Dual-Filament Hi/Lo Lamp
Parking Light
Hi/Lo Beam Dimmer Switch

Fuse

“Charge” Alarm

Central Switch