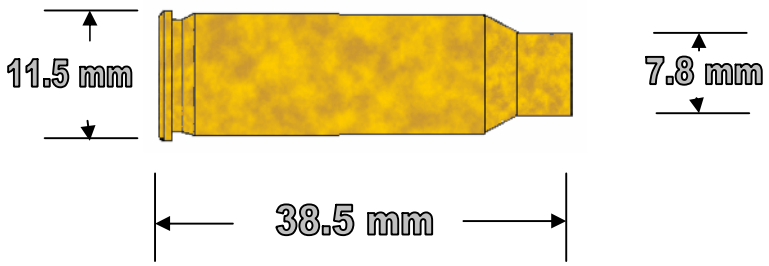
7.62 x 39

I believe this cartridge is a direct result of the Russian experience with the effectiveness of the German 7.9 x 33 Kurz. The Russians will tell you a different story insisting that they invented the concept long before the Germans ever did. Be that as it may the Germans introduced the Kurz into operations in late 1942 at Cholm and the Russian response came along in 1943. I suppose one could say that maybe they developed the idea at similar times and along similar lines but the Germans got in first, as the planning for this calibre was started in 1934 when they began looking at the statistics of WWI and found that most people were shot at less than 300 metres.

Originally the cartridge was used in the SKS and SKK self-loading carbines and finally the doyen of all terrorist weapons, the AK47. The cartridge is also used in the RPD light machine gun. This cartridge has to be one of the most successful exports from any country in the world. The production numbers would almost defy imagination and it is still being produced today. Countries producing this cartridge are:

Bulgaria
Cuba
Czechoslovakia
East Germany, now part of re-unified Germany.
Egypt
Hungary
North Korea
China
Poland
Romania
Russia, now the Commonwealth of Independent States
Yugoslavia



L to R. Chinese showing common olive lacquer, Unknown steel case w/copper wash (probably Chinese), Czechoslovak steel case showing grey lacquer, Egyptian Tracer with brass case, Russian drill cartridge with nickeled and fluted case (Consult the German section to see the influence of German thinking in drill carts) Czechoslovak grenade launcher with steel case and Russian Tracer with steel copper washed case.

L to R. Czechoslovak drill with steel lacquered case, Unknown grenade launcher with steel case, Finnish wooden bulleted blank, Egyptian Tracer showing different colour for the tip with brass case, Russian ball with copper washed steel case and Chinese API with steel case and later colour code of a simple black tip.

L to R. Egyptian grenade launcher, Polish grenade launcher with Czechoslovak H/S?, Chinese API showing the variation in tip colouring, Chinese ball, Yugoslav ball with black tip?, East German drill and Yugoslav grenade launcher.

THE PROJECTILES

There are four standard ball projectiles used in the 7.62 x 39 M43.

1. Soviet PS ball with mild steel core and lead filler.
2. Yugoslav ball with lead core.
3. Bulgarian sintered iron projectile
4. Soviet Heavy Ball version for use with a silenced weapon.

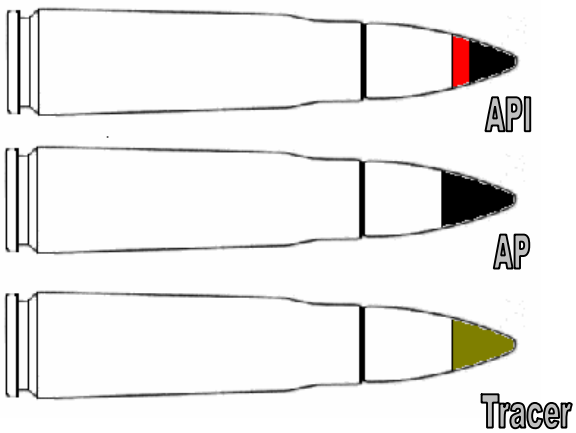
There are five short range practice ball projectiles.

1. East German round nosed, plastic cored with steel copper clad jacket.
2. Yugoslav aluminium core supported with a gilding metal cup.
3. Yugoslav gray plastic round nosed M76.
4. Hungarian ball with two indents pressed into the projectile body.
5. Czechoslovak round nosed, gilding metal clad steel, hollow jacket.

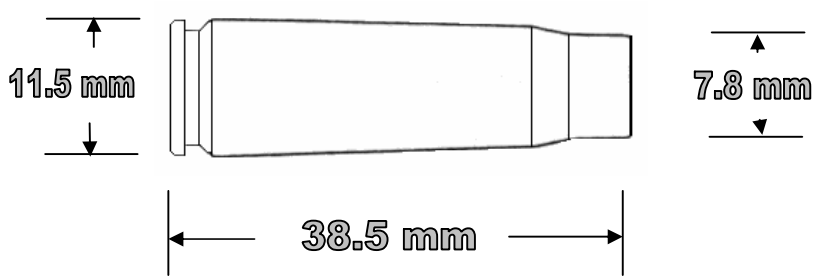
It would seem that there is only one version of Tracer in use by the communist block.

1. Soviet T.45 with gilding metal clad steel jacket and a separate container for the tracer composition.

Top to Bottom. Yugoslavian ball, Soviet PS ball, Soviet Tracer T.45 and a fired PS ball.



The Cartridge Case



In common with all things ecomomic the Soviet system sought the cheapest method of doing things and their small arms cartridges were no exception. They are almost invariably made from steel with various coatings to prevent corrosion and many and varied are the colours of these coatings, a veritable Josephs coat. As with most mass produced items there is a large variation in the dimensional tolerances although it must be said that it is a bit like the .303, very hard to mistake a 7.63 x 39 case when you see one.

The original cartridges were not provided with primer or case mouth seals but later production from all sources are beginning to show the application of various coloured lacquers. It is believed that there is no significance to the colours used.

The cartridge case is normally constructed with a two-hole Berdan system which is the cheapest to manufacture. It is believed that some Yugoslav proof ammunition uses a Boxer primer system. Primer sizes vary from small Czechoslovak 4.6mm to 5.9mm versions found in Egyptian cases.

THE PROPELLANT

The propellant used in almost all cases will be found to be Nitrocellulose Tubular with some exceptions noted in Czechoslovak and Bulgarian ammunition, the loading usually being around 1.58 grms.

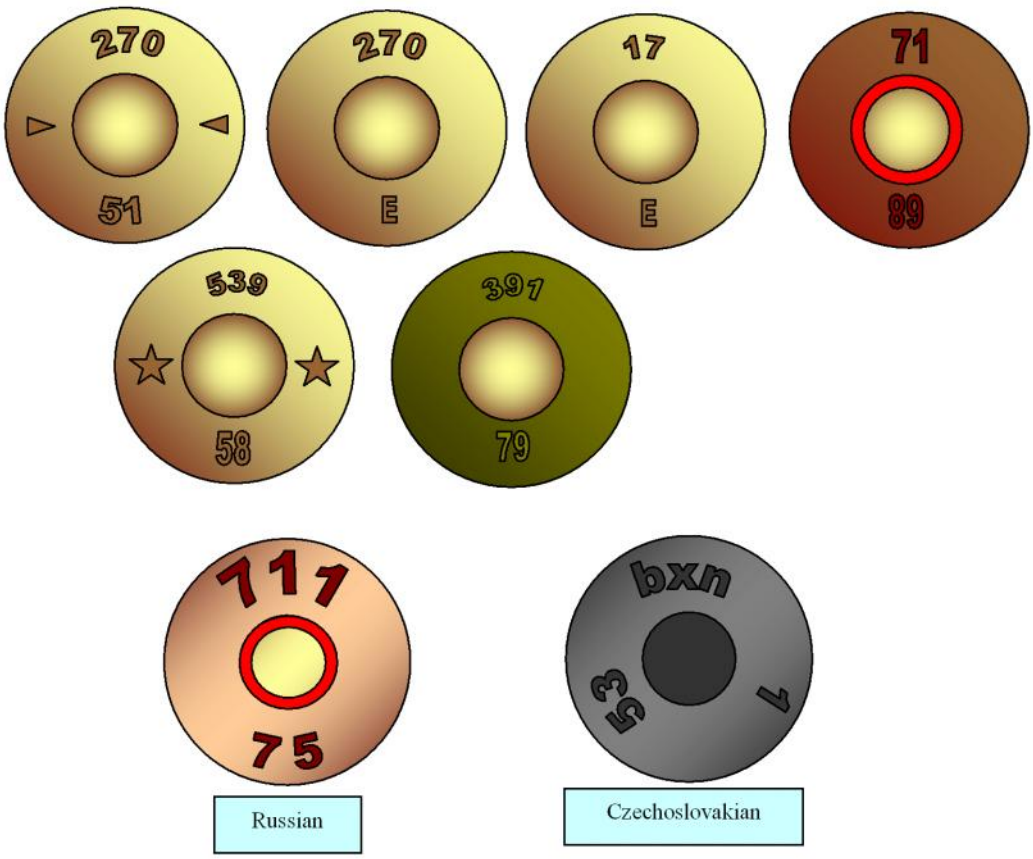
7.62x39 M43 Clips & Links

Linked belt for RPD MG. This style is a direct copy of the German version.

Clip for SKS Carbine.

HEADSTAMPS

Russia and the communist block countries being paranoid in every aspect of life ensured that it was difficult to locate and identify their ammunition facilities, hence they are all numbers with few indications of there origins.



Russian

Czechoslovakian

The table below shows the number used by the Communist system to identify the ammunition production facilities.

NUMERAL	COUNTRY
0	CZECHOSLOVAKIA
01	EAST GERMAN
3	USSR
3D	USA
04	EAST GERMANY
05	EAST GERMANY
06	EAST GERMANY
10	BULGARIA
	EGYPT
	USSR
	CHINA
11	CHINA
	YUGOSLAVIA
12	YUGOSLAVIA
14	YUGOSLAVIA
17	USSR
20	CHINA
21	POLAND
	ROMANIA
21K	UK
21RPR	ROMANIA
22	ROMANIA
22K	UK
22RPR	ROMANIA
23	HUNGARY
26	CHINA
27	EGYPT
30	USSR
31	CHINA
38	USSR
40	CHINA
41	CHINA
46	USSR
50	USSR
51	CHINA
58	USSR
60	USSR
61	CHINA
71	CHINA
81	CHINA
90	CHINA
93	NORTH KOREA
012	USSR
121	CHINA
179	USSR
182	USSRR
184	USSR
188	USSR
270	USSR
304	USSR
311	?
321	CHINA
343	POLAND
353	?
361	CHINA
391	CHINA
451	CHINA

NUMERAL	COUNTRY
501	CHINA
513	USSR
529	USSR
539	USSR
540	USSR
541	USSR
543	USSR
545	USSR
546	USSR
547	USSR
606	USSR
611	USSR
661	CHINA
671	CHINA
710	USSR
711	USSR
791	CHINA
946	?
964	CUBA?
4397	USSR
6201	?
9381	CHINA ?
21215	CHINA

In addition to numbers the Russians used letters from their Cyrillic alphabet to indicate years much the same as Singapore did. The code to this time is:

1952	1953	1954	1955	1956
Г	А	Е	И	К

Some other headstamps may be found on 7.62x39 and their meaning is as shown below.

A79	South Africa, Pretoria Metal Pressings
AD	Indonesia, Angkatan Darat, Bandung
aym	Czechoslovakia
bxn	Czechoslovakia
C.A.	Italy, reformed cases
DAG	West Germany, Dynamit AG, Nuremburg
FN	Belgium, Fabrique Nationale, Herstal
HP	Austria, Hirtenberger Patronen Fabrik
IK	Yugoslavia, Ignan Factory, Konjic
LAPUA	Finland, Lapuan Patruunatehdas, Lapua
L C	United States, Lake City Army Ammunition Plant, Independence, Missouri
MIDWAY	United States, Midway Arms Inc., Columbia, Missouri
norma	Sweden, Norma Projektilfabrik, Amotfors

NORMA Re	Sweden, reformed cases
NWM	Netherlands, Nederland Wapen und Munitiefabrik
XK	Yugoslavia, Ignan Factory, Konjic
nny (Cyrillic)	Yugoslavia, Prvi Partizan, Titovo, Uzice
pp	Yugoslavia, Prvi Partizan, Titovo, Uzice
PT	Finland, Valtion Patruunatehdas, Lapua
RPR	Romanian Peoples Republic
S.A.	Italy, reformed cases
SAKO	Finland, Sako AB, Riihimaki
S.M.I.	Italy, reformed cases
so	Finland, Sako AB, Riihimaki
T	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. Tula Arsenal

Unmarked, metallic cases have been made by:

Austria
Belgium
Peoples Republic of China
France
Finland
Unknown Nationality
United States
Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
West Germany

Unmarked, plastic cases have been made by;

East Germany
Finland
Norway
Unknown Nationality
West Germany

VALMET	Finland, Valtion Patruunatehdas, Lapua
VPT	Finland, Valtion Patruunatehdas, Lapua
Z	Czechoslovakia, Zbrojovka, Bystrica
ZV	Czechoslovakia, Zbrojovka, Bystrica