

First Spartakiada of the USSR, participant's badge, 1928.

In silver and enamels; 38.5 x 31.1 mm. The design is certainly among the best we have seen and the execution is equally stunning, from sculptured details of the athlete to exceptionally fine enamel. This is a truly magnificent piece, in the best traditions of Russian medallic art!

The reverse has stamped maker mark "Г-ВБ БР" and silver hallmark "875". Comes with original wing nut bearing the hallmark of the Leningrad Assay Inspection on one of the loops.

The badge is in outstanding, excellent condition. The enamel and silver parts alike show no wear worth mentioning. The raised details are absolutely pristine; the reverse is likewise untouched. The badge shows beautiful, even patina to silver throughout. The screw post is full length, approx. 9.5 mm. The hallmarked wing nut is original to the badge.

The 1928 Spartakiada (which could be roughly translated as sports tournament in honor of Spartacus) was the first such event organized on the all-Union level - as opposed to the smaller earlier contests run by various organizations e.g. trade unions and volunteer clubs. The idea was to supplant the Olympic movement which the Soviets initially shunned. Much later in the 50s, all-Union "Spartakiadas of the Nations of the USSR" became a kind of large scale Soviet dress rehearsals for the Olympic Games.

According to the book "Sports Souvenirs" by Vasilii Ilyinsky (c. 1979, Moscow), only 7125 athletes took part in the 1928 event which explains the rarity of the participant's badge (the First Spartakiada also had a much smaller, relatively unassuming bronze badge apparently issued to the spectators).

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