

KSI (Red Sports International) Physical Culture badge, 1925- 30 issue.

In silver-plated brass and enamel; measures 28.0 mm in height, 25.6 mm in width. The artwork in characteristically early Constructivist style incorporates an unusual mixture of elements: hammer, sickle, plow, and a sportsman holding an ice axe. The inscription along the top on the left side is "Physical Culture", with lettering "USSR KSI" on the red banner.

Excellent condition, outstanding for this early award. The enamel is perfect, details of the artwork essentially pristine. The silver plating is extremely well preserved showing only minor wear to the raised points of the athlete's figure. The screw post is full length, over 10 mm, and includes very scarce original wing nut that holds reasonably well despite somewhat worn threads in mid portion of the screw.

The KSI or Red Sports International was created in 1921 as a volunteer organization having the ambitious global goal of uniting "all workers' and peasants' gymnastics and sports organizations that are oriented toward class struggle..." The charter of the society didn't make any secret of the true purpose of physical training: it was to prepare the masses for violent actions by creating "physically nimble, vigorous, fully determined fighters capable of [armed] resistance." Soon the organization came up with a set of physical fitness requirements appropriately named "Ready for Class Struggle" - a model for the later GTO "Ready for Labor and Defense" program. The 1925 "Physical Fitness" badge established a year after the formation of the USSR was awarded to athletes that passed the rigorous qualification tests. This badge thus became the first Soviet sports qualification award of "all-Union" level.

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