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Order of Lenin, Type 2, Variation 2 "Gold Head" (McDaniel classification), #1345, circa 1935.

Solid 18 K gold, enamels; measures 38.8 mm in height (from the bottom to the top edge of the banner, not including the flagpole finial), 38.4 mm in width; weighs 26.8 g without the screw plate. Variation 2 featuring double-tier screw post base and approx. 4 mm-thick screw post. This early version of the Variation 2 had extremely thin and fragile silver plating which led to it being separated into its own type according to the McDaniel classification. Note that the Orders of Lenin with serial numbers just above 1300 and up had more durable silver plating on the Lenin's bust (so-called "Silver Heads"). Although currently accepted classification by Durov considers both "Silver Head" and "Gold Head" versions a single type, there is a mentioning of the difference in manufacture between the two on page 46 of the reference guide Order of Lenin. Order of Stalin by V. Durov.

This particular piece is literally a textbook example: it was used to illustrate The Comprehensive Guide to Soviet Orders and Medals by McDaniel and Schmitt published in 1997 (obverse and reverse, page 54) . Its provenance makes it a unique opportunity for the serious collector of Soviet awards.

The order is in fine condition, commendable for this rare version of the award. There is a relatively small repair to the enamel on the banner in a narrow strip along its upper edge above the letters. The enamel also has a few tiny hairlines in the surrounding area and a few tiny surface flakes along the edge of the banner. The enamel on the banner overall, however, is remarkably well-preserved for an Order of Lenin of its vintage. It does not have excessive rubbing, shows a nice luster, and has most of its original enamel intact - a very uncommon occurrence for the surviving examples. The enamel on the star and the hammer & sickle emblem shows only minor contact marks and microscopic flakes, no significant wear.

There are some tiny contact marks and minor scratches to the center medallion, mostly on its recessed field, but the raised details of the bas-relief portrait are exceptionally well-preserved and crisp, exhibiting only the mildest wear to the high points. As typical for its serial number range, the silver plating in the center is completely missing - which is the entire reason for the "Gold Head" controversy. The ears of wheat forming the wreath are perfect, free of significant wear or dings.

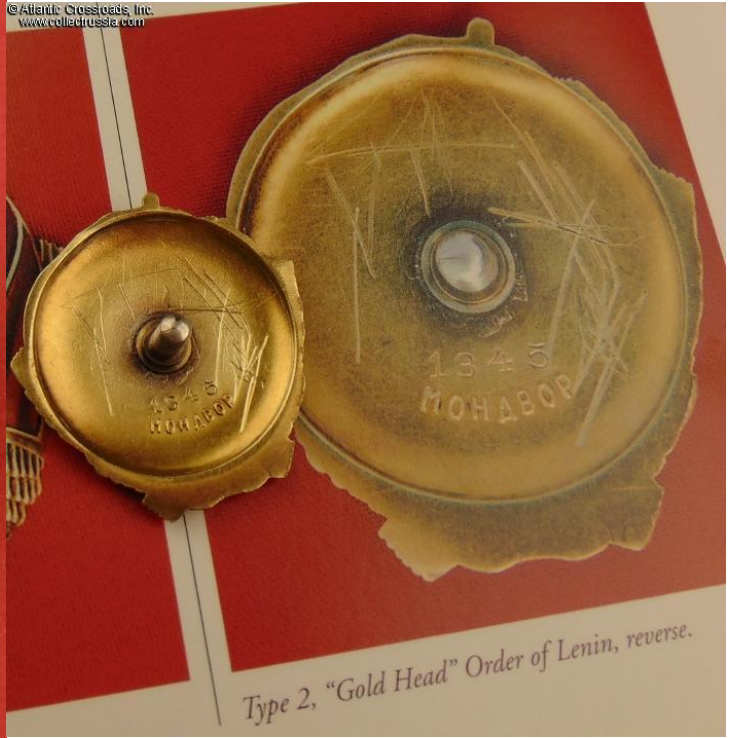
The order was never converted to suspension and retains its original, full-size screw post measuring approx. 9 mm in length from its base (over 9 mm long measured from the reverse of the badge). The reverse has some deep scratches, obviously a result of an amateur testing for gold content (decades ago, when no information about the single piece, 18-K gold version of the Order of Lenin was available in published sources and the Internet was still in its infancy, the "pale" look of the metal may have caused some concern among the uninitiated!) The scratches however do not affect either the serial number or the mint mark. The order comes with a silver screw plate which is of a slightly later, WW2 era, but fits the screw perfectly.

Out of the total of 1690 of the single-piece, Type 2 Orders of Lenin ever produced, only approximately 800 were "Gold Heads" and just half that number Variation 2 "Gold Heads". Many of the prominent recipients of this highest Soviet award were soon to become victims of the Stalin's purges, resulting in the confiscation and destruction of their decorations. At the same time, a significant percentage of the Type 2 specimens (both "Gold Heads" and "Silver Heads") were exchanged for the Type 4 issues in gold and platinum. Almost invariably, the early awards were sent back to the Mint and melted down for scrap.

/The Comprehensive Guide to Soviet Orders and Medals, pp. 53, 54/.

Item# 46892

\$18,500.00



Type 2, "Gold Head" Order of Lenin, reverse.



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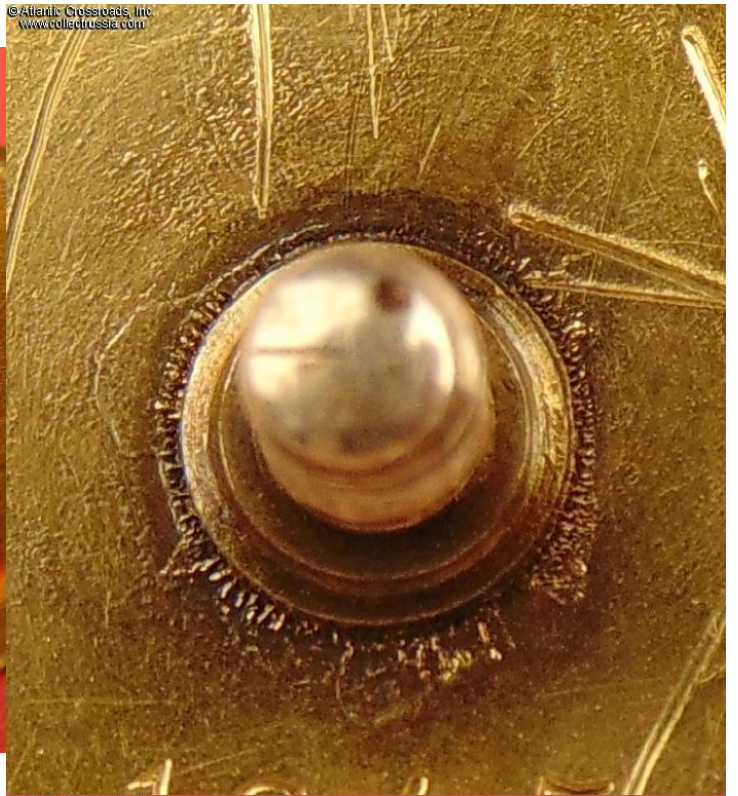
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The banner pole is not included in the measurement. The serial numbers are stamped and approximately 1.75mm in height. The order uses the common screwback plate of 33mm. The lowest serial number observed is 1,476 and the highest is 2,649. The serial number range does not include 1,476.

Screwback

The Type 4, "Platinum Head" Lenin, was awarded from June 11, 1936 until June 19, 1943. It incorporated an additional change to the Lenin profile. The "Platinum Head" Lenin was made from a separate piece of



Type 2, "Gold Head" Order of Lenin, obverse.

Type 2, "Gold Head" Order of Lenin, reverse.