

Award Banner to Winner of All-Union Socialist Competition, circa early- to mid-1950s.

In burgundy velvet with gold fringe on 3 sides. Measures approx. 5' x 4'. The communist slogan "Proletarians of all countries, unite!" soars above everything else, transparently hinting at the most sacrosanct goal of the communists - world domination. The banner originally had profile portraits of Stalin and Lenin (with Stalin in the foreground, of course) resting on an elaborately executed wreath of oak leaves wrapped in a red banner anchored by the hammer and sickle emblem. The portrayed duo was removed, apparently shortly after Stalin's death because, evidently, both heads were done inseparably, on a single piece of fabric. The intension was probably to replace it with the profile of Lenin alone but, for some reason, that did not happen. The slogan under the portraits, which used to read "Under the banner of Lenin-Stalin, under the leadership of the Communist Party - forward, toward the victory of Communism!" lost the word "Stalin" in a similar fashion. What the demolition team could not do was erase the outlines of all the removed items, which are still clearly visible on the velvet. Stalin's image became "politically incorrect" in the late 50s, during Khrushchev's destalinization campaign. Instead of disposing with the expensive banner altogether, a typically Soviet solution was found in removing the name of Stalin and replacing the artwork in the center. Why this work was left half-done in this case is anybody's guess.

The other side of the banner features the State Emblem of the RSFSR in the center. Above it is the lettering identifying the issuers of the award: the Central Committee of State Trade and Public Food Service, and the "Rostorgtrans" (abbreviation for "Russian Trade & Transportation") Enterprise under the Ministry of Trade of the RSFSR. The phrase under the emblem states that the banner is issued to the Winner of All-Union Socialist Competition. Considering that the state trade and public food service ruled over the ultimate treasure, food, an award for this level of socialist competition in this sphere was really important.

Overall, the banner is in very fine condition. The velvet has acquired a few faint traces of what looks like white paint smudges to the right of the RSFSR emblem, but they are mostly lost in the rich burgundy and moiré sheen of the velvet. What's left of the embroidery and decorative elements is in superb condition. The colors are fresh and vibrant, all the stitching is intact, the gold color of the fringe and lettering has retained its full original luster. More importantly, the ghosts of the two greatest communists are still right there, watching.

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\$650.00







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