

## Membership Badge of the Detkomissiya (Children Agency) at the Central Executive Committee of the USSR, early to mid 1920s.

Brass, enamel; measures 23.9 mm tall at the flagpole, 26.6 mm wide. The badge bears striking similarity to membership badges of the TsIK (Executive Committee) or the later Supreme Soviet badges.

In fine condition. The enamel has been repaired in the lower left corner of the flag. There is also minor surface flaking around the first letter and at the right edge of the flag. The red enamel nevertheless still looks impressive, with attractive luster. Much of the original silver finish on the reverse is present. The screw post is original, over 8.5 mm in length. The unmarked screw plate is of the period and probably original to the badge.

The Children Agency at the VTsIK (Central Executive Committee) was established on Lenin's orders in January 1921. Also known as "Committee for Improvement of the Lives of Children", it had as its primary goal rounding up and rearing the scores of homeless children that roamed Soviet Russia at the time (their numbers reportedly reached 5 million in the wake of the Civil War). The head of the committee was none other than Feliks Dzerzhinsky, the infamous founder of the Soviet Cheka / OGPU secret police and one of the chief architects of the Red Terror. Not surprisingly, the Soviet state security was heavily involved in the activities of the committee and actually ran at least some of the orphanages and "labor communes".

/ "Avers 8", p. 345, fig. 1686/

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