

## 50th Anniversary of the First Main Directorate of KGB, commemorative badge, 1970.

Aluminum, paint, lacquer, 33.5 x 22.9 mm. Note that the badge shows the dates "1920-1970" and the sword, a traditional attribute of the Soviet state security, but at the same time lacks any explicit reference to the event it commemorates!

Excellent condition. The lacquer and paint on the obverse are nicely preserved having only some tiny manufacturing imperfections visible under magnification, no noticeable wear. There are some scuffs on the reverse that are not detractive, obviously from the badge been worn occasionally.

The Soviet foreign intelligence service started its operations in 1920 under the name INO (Inostrannyi Otdel or "foreign department") of the NKVD. Throughout its history it was renamed a number of times becoming the First Directorate of the NKGB in February 1941 and then the First Main Directorate of MGB in 1952. After the turbulence following the death of Stalin and breakup of MGB, it was briefly transferred to MVD (Ministry of Interior) but from 1954, the foreign intelligence remained under the control of the Committee for State Security. It is currently known as Sluzhba Vneshnei Razvedki (Foreign Intelligence Service) under the Russian FSB.

Almost needless to say, the First Main Directorate shunned limelight and during the Soviet period, there were almost no badges specific to this service. The badge for its 50th anniversary is one of only two known exceptions, the other being the 60th anniversary badge. In all likelihood its recipients - most of whom were probably VIP veterans of the department - wouldn't usually wear the badge, at least among the uninitiated. This humble-looking but extremely interesting award rarely appears on the market.

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**\$275.00**

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