

23rd Congress of the Communist Party of the USSR, Delegate's Badge, 1966.

Silver plated and gilded brass, enamels; 27.0 x 17.1 mm. Riveted two-piece construction, fine quality. Early style "MMD" mint mark to the reverse.

In excellent condition. The enamel is perfect and exhibits a beautiful original luster. Lenin's portrait shows no wear; its details are crisp and the original gilt finish are pristine. The gold plating is clearly visible on the fringe of the banner, the numeral XXIII, and the word "congress" underneath. The badge shows attractive patina to silver parts on the obverse and the reverse.

This badge was issued only to the delegates of the Congress, unlike souvenir and commemorative badges. This is the earliest known "exclusive" Congress badge, and its design is distinctly different from the later badges which always incorporated a flag shape. The building in the background is the Congress of Soviets, built in 1961.

The quality of this badge is indicative of the change of times. The only previous congress badge, for the XXII Congress, was very modest by comparison and probably not issued exclusively to the delegates. By 1966 however, the austerity of the Khrushchev era was finally over, and the Soviet leadership had become far more receptive to ostentatious symbols of power and status - including beautiful (and expensive to produce) special badges.

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