

Turksib Railroad Construction Badge, in Bronze, 1930.

Silver-plated brass, enamels; measures 44.9 mm in height, 33.2 mm in width; weighs 13.0 g not including the screw plate. A very large and imposing badge of beautiful, typically early design. The "1/V" on the blue plaque stands for the 1 May 1930 date of the completion of the construction (a year ahead of schedule).

Very fine condition. The red enamel on the banners is generally well-preserved, having only some hairlines and minor surface rubbing, no chips, flaking or significant scratches - which is quite uncommon for the surviving Turksib badges. The red enamel in the star on the front of the locomotive is missing, as is typically the case. The blue enamel in the plaque surface flaking and some tiny chips in its upper part, barely visible to the unaided eye due to the dark patina to the underlying silver.

The raised details of the cotton flowers and wheat as well as details of the railway and locomotive are beautifully preserved and crisp; the silver finish shows only the tiniest, almost unnoticeable amount of wear at some of their highest points. The reverse is essentially pristine with its silver finish completely intact and showing a dark patina. The screw post is of full length, over 9.5 mm, and includes the original screw plate in bronze-plated steel.

The Turkestan-Siberian Railroad (or Turksib as it is now known by its Novoyaz acronym) connected Siberia with the Soviet Central Asian republics. Its purpose was to provide easy conduit for transportation of cotton grown in the south while sending supplies of grain from the northern regions in the opposite direction (hence the wheat and cotton in the artwork). Cotton was an essential material in the Soviet industrial buildup and also a key component in the ammunition production. Therefore, Turksib was considered one of the two cornerstone projects of the Soviet first Five-Year Plan, on par with the Dneproges Dnieper Dam.

Like most of the massive construction projects of the period, Turksib was built in large part by prisoners although promoted in the Soviet press as a glorious achievement of communist labor. The History of Awards and Insignia of Russian MVD, 1802 - 2002 by Rogov mentions that the bronze badge was awarded to regular laborers as well as "foremost" prisoners, while the silver version was issued exclusively to management.

/See I. Sysolyatin, [Soviet Badges, Volume 2: Law Enforcement Agencies](#), p. 250, fig. 2.333; M. Rogov, [History of Awards and Insignia of Russian MVD, 1802 - 2002](#), p. 107, fig. 1.2.3.31; Avers 8, p. 75, fig. 458.c/.

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