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## Badge to a Participant of a Voyage of the Whaling Flotilla Slava, circa late-1950s - early 60s.

Brass, enamels; measures 39.6 mm in height, 24.8 mm in width. "Layered" four-piece construction: the silver image of the whaling factory ship Slava (namesake of the flotilla); sky-blue globe with the white map of Antarctica; and the white band with the red flag are separate parts superimposed on the base framed by the anchor and anchor chain. At the bottom, there is a depiction of a blue whale, the biggest prize sought by the Soviet Antarctic hunting voyages. The inscription on the white band is "Participant of a Voyage of the AKF ('Arctic Whale-Hunting Flotilla') Slava".

The badge is in outstanding, excellent condition. The enamel is perfect, free from chips, flaking or any other noticeable wear, and shows beautiful luster. There is attractive even toning to the brass. The screw post is full length, approx. 8 mm, and includes very scarce original screw plate maker-marked "З-д Дарбс. Мет." ("Darbs Metal Factory", a badge manufacturer in Riga, Latvia).

The first Soviet whaling fleet specifically equipped for sailing in Antarctic waters was organized in 1946. It was made possible thanks to the numerous ships transferred to the Soviet Union by Germany as part of WW2 reparations. The main ship of the newly created flotilla was the large whaling factory Slava (i.e. "Glory" in Russian), the former German Wiking. During the following year, the flotilla scored its first kills. Initially, many of its crewmen were Norwegian specialists hired for the purpose, but the Soviet sailors soon gained the necessary experience and by the flotilla's third voyage, all the foreigners had been replaced by Soviet citizens. The flotilla, named Slava after its mothership, gradually expanded reaching its apogee at approximately the time of its 13th voyage which took place in 1958-59 and was deemed a huge success. During the 17th voyage the flotilla set the record by killing over 2000 whales. By the mid-60s however, the more modern Soviet- built whalers made the old Slava obsolete, and it was withdrawn from Antarctic service and subsequently sold for scrap.

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