



Kaganovich Subway Badge, 1938 (Second Stage of Construction), #24090.

Silver, enamels; measures 36.8 mm in height, 33.1 mm in width; weighs 15.8 g without the screw plate. Riveted three-piece construction. Shows a subway car with waving red flags on the sides, hammer and sickle emblem at the top, superimposed letter "M" for "Metro" at the bottom and writing "L.M. Kaganovich Subway". On the reverse, there is a stamped serial number and a raised maker mark "MD". The enamel and overall design are of spectacular quality.

In fine condition. On the right-hand side of the badge, the enamel is replaced on the banners starting from the third from the top down, in approximately the 2 to 5 o'clock segment. Elsewhere, the enamel is very nicely preserved, free of wear visible to the unaided eye, and shows a nice luster. The raised artwork is crisp, essentially pristine. The hammer & sickle emblem at the top still retains some of its original gilt finish. The rivets are intact and tight. The screw post is nearly 12 mm in length? it has not been shortened - and comes with a scarce original screw plate in silver.

This badge is a historically significant award issued to one of the most distinguished participants of the second stage of the Moscow subway construction program. The subway stations were lavishly designed to be a subterranean "people's palace" and were built primarily by slave prison labor. The first lines of the Moscow Metro opened on 15 May 1935, pretty much on schedule. The metro was subsequently named in honor of Lazar Kaganovich, Stalin's Commissar (Narkom) of the railways who was in charge of the project. The award badge instituted the same year was to be issued to the best engineers, administrators and communist party bosses who supervised the construction as well as NKVD officers who guarded the prisoners. The special significance of the second stage of the program is that it came on the eve of WW2. Just a few years later, Moscow would come under siege and the Moscow Subway would be used as an air raid shelter for the Soviet government and top military command.

/See Breast Badges of the USSR of the Era of Labor Victories, 1920-1940, A. Zsak, I. Kalistratov, V. Voronchenko, page 108, fig. 153; Avers 8, p. 76, fig. 462/.

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