

with
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Soviet mapmakers created a Communist vision of Edinburgh

The Soviet Union continuously mapped out Scottish cities including Edinburgh for more than forty years. They did so in meticulous detail, highlighting and classifying everything from factories to football grounds in anticipation of an expanded iron curtain.

From the end of World War Two till the fall of the Berlin Wall, Cold War cartographers utilised data from a variety of sources to complete the maps, many of which were significantly more detailed than Western equivalents of Soviet-occupied lands.

The maps covered the globe but the eyes of Stalin, Krushchev and Brezhnev were focused on Scotland and Edinburgh as much as anywhere else.

Street names were printed in Cyrillic lettering - chilling at the time in its unfamiliarity - while individual buildings were colour-coded so the Soviets could easily differentiate between industrial zones, government and administrative sites and military targets.

Abbeyhill, Fountainbridge, Waverley Station and the docks at Leith are identified as areas of particular note.

In addition to the maps of Edinburgh, the Soviet regime also created detailed 1:10,000 and 1:25,000 plans of Glasgow, Aberdeen, Gourock, Kilmarnock, Dunfermline and Dundee. Created by a hostile superpower during the most tense years of the post-atomic age, the level of detail alone is enough to make you shudder.

Two comrades who know these maps better than most are John Davies and Alexander J Kent, authors of the brand new The Red Atlas: How the Soviet Union Secretly Mapped the World. "The sheer extent of the Soviet map-



Your attention please: The maps of Edinburgh and Glasgow city centres are startling in their high level of detail

ping project is astounding. Their secret project covered the UK and the world on a large scale," explains co-author John Davies.

"Knowledge is power. You collect this information because one day it might be useful."

John first encountered the maps while working in Latvia as an information systems consultant.

The collapse of the Soviet Union had

been so sudden that many of the maps had become publicly available before they could be destroyed.

John picked up his first Soviet map from a local shop at a cheap price and quickly became fascinated by them.

Further examination has lead John to believe the maps were not created with an aggressive invasion in mind, but to prepare for the organic spread of communism.

"What is most interesting is the paper quality and print quality is really high," says John, "These are beautiful maps to look at, real works of art."

"They are huge - almost definitely not for use in the field, but for office use - to control and command."

First commissioned by Joseph Stalin, the maps would have been invaluable when the time came to control a Britain conquered by communism.