

In the 21st century, modern technology has evolved to such an extent that travel can be done without paper maps. Just open your Waze app on your mobile smartphone or turn on another GPS device in your car and enter the address to reach your intended destination. However, at the most crucial moment, these devices can be leaked, and there are often mistakes. Therefore, for a successful journey, maps are still important. All these smart systems would not work if there were not basically maps that someone had drawn up.

Red atlas

A unique event took place in Riga's map store "Jana Seta" - John Davis and Alexander J. Kent's Special opening of the book *The Red Atlas: How the Soviet Union Secretly Mapped the World*. Especially because after the collapse of the Soviet Union military topographic maps had to be destroyed, but the founder of Janis Seta, Aivars Zvirbulis, also known as Chiris, bought them from Soviet officers for small money as waste paper in 1992, and this cartographic material served as an inspiration and the basis of the British authors' newly published research. By the way, this book was not an easy way for readers, as there was no publisher in the UK, and it was finally printed in Canada.

I believe that the "Red Atlas" will not become a bit of a bibliography, as the specific cartography topic is set out in English, and the price of the book is also decent - almost 30 euros, but we also lack collectors and historians who would be interested in exploring the Soviet-era secret military maps, detailing not only the entire territory of the former USSR (including Latvia) but also territories of other countries and cities in order to compare these maps with the current situation.

Map is an unmistakable historical record?

"Maps are cross borders and languages, and people who speak only their native language are also read around the world. The "Red Atlas" book is by far the most in-depth study of the Soviet Army General Staff military maps that were not available to any civilian at the time of its creation, and only a limited number of high-ranking military personnel could use them. The authors of the book are not professional cartographers, but map collectors who have begun exploring our maps have noticed how unique they are. For example, when comparing their native British territory, they noticed that there is much more information on Soviet maps than domestic originals at the time, which suggests that the USSR did not copy existing maps, but carried out independent mapping. It could have been done with satellites from outer space, starting in 1957, and through the embassies of the Soviet Union, involving officials from different ranking embassies who gathered all the information available, later approving it, "Aivars Beldavs, director of the map store Jana Seta, reveals.

The "Jana Seta" map shop could be the only place in the world where the original Soviet military maps can be bought in such a wide choice. The parts of Latvia's territory, depending on the particular place, can be obtained from a couple of euros, but for example, about the maps of that time in the center of London will have to break together even from one and a half hundred euros, as some maps in the store are left in one copy only.

"Until the end of the 1990s, there were no other topographical maps in Latvia, so people had a huge interest in both the pre-war Latvian military's military maps and post-Soviet Soviet military maps that were used by all individuals who had regained their land assets to the state and Municipal servicemen, who helped them fulfill their direct job responsibilities,

"remembers A. Beldav.

Peculiarities of the secret

"Currently, the importance of these maps in the Latvian economy has diminished, as the latest Soviet military maps date back to 1990. They are more useful for comparison and have become an unusual and original souvenir for foreigners. However, for intellectual travelers, it will definitely be exciting to find the places where once found houses, railways or some other long-lost attractions. Interestingly, in these secret military charts, almost no Soviet military base in Latvia has been shown as it was in reality. For example, instead of the Irbene radar, there is only a path leading through the forest, and not the mines from the war city, at least elsewhere would be labeled as a pioneer camp, "Beldav laughs. This sort of cartography probably existed to deceive the enemies.