

thing in solidarity that is beyond political and economic order, not aiming at a new shape but attempting to keep the ontological, political, existential space open. There is no common good, but there is perhaps a common experience, an experience of groundlessness and unrootedness. Counterintuitively, the phenomenon of political and existential groundlessness described is not something that isolates, but, paradoxically, that might enable a true understanding of community. Patočka's quoted "solidarity of the shaken" expresses precisely this: a solidarity of those who have lost their trust in all positive political values such as pacifism, socialism, democracy, etc. which might serve as common goods for reshaping the society. Perhaps the outcome of solidarity counts less than the atmosphere that it creates and in which it unfolds its explosive message. ✘

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Note: All texts on solidarity were collected by Ludger Hagedorn in the realm of the research project *Loss of grounds as Common Ground* directed by Marcia Sá Cavalcante Schuback.

references

- 1 In 2010, Leonardo Boff characteristically held: "Without the solidarity of all towards all and also for Mother Earth, there will be no future for anyone. (...) Che Guevara put it well: *Solidarity is the tenderness of the people*. It is the tenderness that we must give to our suffering brothers and sisters..."
- 2 The word "solidarity" might show up a few times in his huge oeuvre, but it is not connected to any idea, nor does he even come close to developing any systematic approach to the topic.
- 3 The French political philosopher Chantal Millon-Delsol emphasizes precisely this personal involvement in the act of solidarity. She criticizes a widespread tendency, characteristic of the political left, to identify solidarity with equal distribution and to create what she calls "an improbable dream of solidarity free of all human additions" (cf. Chantal Millon-Delsol, "Solidarity and Barbarity", *Thinking in Values*, no. 1/2007, Craców, 79).

review

A missing air force plane. The secret of the Cold War

On Friday June 13, 1952, the Swedish Defense Staff issued the following statement (here in translation):

An aircraft from the Air Force, ordered to carry out a navigation flight above the Baltic Sea in connection with radio operators training, has been missing since around 12 o'clock this Friday.

This statement, partly false, marks the beginning of one of the most significant traumas resulting from Sweden's difficult geo-political position during the Cold War. It implied the loss of eight servicemen and two aircraft, and strained relations with the trans-Baltic neighbor, the Soviet Union.

For a long time, Sweden had maintained a foreign policy of non-alignment with explicit neutrality in the event of war. The Soviet occupation and annexation of the three Baltic states made the Soviet Union a territorial neighbor across the Baltic Sea. With the beginning of the Cold War, Sweden had an interest in being prepared for a possible attack from the East, whereas the possibility of Western intrusion seemed less likely and also less dangerous.

IN ORDER TO UNDERSTAND the organization of the Soviet military in the Baltic area, different methods were used. One was signals intelligence collection (SIGINT) of radio and radar signals, both indicating communication from and to the location of installations. Given developments in technology, it was deemed necessary to use surveillance aircraft to patrol the Baltic Sea with equipment that could listen to and detect radio communication and radar signals. In 1948, the Air Force Materiel Administration purchased two Douglas DC-3s and had them converted into flying laboratories, one for research and development, the other one for signals intelligence collection. The operations started in 1951, usually one flight a week, suggesting a route in the south-north direction over international waters in the Baltic between the island of Gotland and the Baltic coast at an altitude of 4500 meters. The planes were slow and unarmed, with a staff of 8



Christer Lokind: DC-3:an. Kalla krigets hemlighet [The DC-3: the secret of the Cold War].

Stockholm: Medströms bokförlag, 2014.

Continued. A missing air force plane

persons, 3 of whom were Air Force employees, the others belonging to the Swedish signals intelligence organization Radio Institute of the Armed Forces, FRA.

During the flight of June 13, the aircraft was attacked and shot down by a single Soviet MiG-15 jet fighter in international airspace, disappearing into the Baltic Sea with its eight men. For a long time, only one rubber lifeboat, unused but containing air-to-air munition fragments, was found. A rescue operation was started, involving two Catalina amphibious rescue aircraft. The search included areas much closer to Soviet territorial waters than the route of the DC-3, as estimated currents would have moved life boats in that direction. In the morning of June 16, one of the search planes was attacked by two Soviet jet fighters and had to make an emergency water landing; before it sank, the whole crew was saved by a West German merchant vessel.

While the “Catalina” affair was much publicized, the fate of the DC-3 was hidden for a long time for security reasons. Swedish notes to the USSR about the DC-3 were met with allegations of transgression of two foreign aircraft which had been chased away by Soviet airplanes.

Much of the reality was uncovered during the time of the Soviet Union and, after 1991, during the period of Russian openness in the early 1990s, and, finally, as a result of the localization of the wreck in 2003, and salvage in 2004.

THE HISTORY AND DETAILS of Swedish SIGINT operations and the DC-3 incident are portrayed and explained in the book by Christer Lokind, a retired Swedish lieutenant colonel and an expert on military intelligence. It is full of maps and photos of the situation and organization of the Cold War in the part of the Baltic Sea between Gotland and the Soviet mainland, Riga Bay, and the Estonian islands.

The book also gives an explanation of mistakes and faults on both sides that led to the disaster. On the Swedish side, the slow, unarmed aircraft equipped with surplus receivers and other material was perhaps seen as a peaceful “listener” to Soviet communications, shuttling over international waters. However, in order to improve its measurement of the characteristics to the Soviet radar stations, the aircraft had to make short, head-on “attacks” towards the

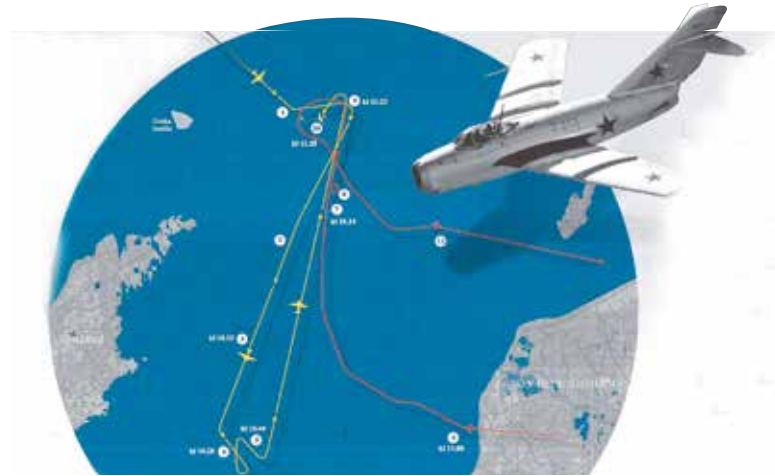


Illustration from the reviewed book by Christer Lokind.

“target” for a few minutes, then return to its northerly route. This was done twice, and intercepted by Soviet radar. In Soviet eyes, it was a provocation. Other facts indicate a certain naiveté on the Swedish side. At the time, there was no radar air surveillance coverage from Swedish mainland radars, and the aircraft only had occasional radio contact with its home base. A Morse call to the home base was made but suddenly interrupted when the plane was attacked.

THE SOVIET MILITARY was worried because of its obvious lack of a modern air defense. Just a few months before, a number of US/British “penetration flights” had entered deep into Soviet territory. They were seen on radar, but were not intercepted because Soviet air defense fighters did not have any air intercept radar and thus could not intercept any targets in low visibility or darkness. But the Soviet air surveillance radar was effective, which makes it strange that the DC-3, appearing regularly in daylight on the same route, would be labeled as “foreign” and not Swedish. The Soviet explanations were partly contradictory. When the Swedish investigative team for the case visited the Soviet Union in November 1991, the information given by Moscow was that the order to down the aircraft was made by the chief of the Baltic Air Defense Region and not authorized from above. The decision to conceal the downing was then made at the highest political and military level.

The DC-3 affair was a thorn in the Cold War history of Sweden and the surviving families were long bereft of information on the fate of those lost. Christer Lokind’s book is a testimony of surveillance and its victims in the Baltic Sea area during the Cold War. Surveillance did not, however, end with the Cold War. It continues to this day, and lately there have been confrontations between Russian and “Western” aircraft. ✖

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