

Soldiering and the Making of Finnish Manhood

Conscription and Masculinity in Interwar Finland,
1918–1939

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I Introduction

1.1 *Images and experiences of conscripted soldiering*

Around 1930, two of the most brilliantly talented Finnish male novelists of their generation went into the army to do their military service. Both of them returned from their military training replete with stories to be told and both quickly wrote one book each about what they had experienced. Yet these two accounts of the conscript army and compulsory military training in interwar Finland were as different as day and night.

Pentti Haanpää, an autodidact and a farmer's son from rural Northern Finland, presented his readers with a bitter critique of the nationalistic rhetoric surrounding the conscript army. He depicted life in the army as a grey, barren and anguished world of physical hardship, meaningless drill, humiliating treatment and unfair punishment. The conscripts in his fictional short stories are men of little education; farm hands and lumberjacks used to hard work and plain living. Nevertheless, these men think of the barracks and training fields as “gruesome and abominable torture devices”. For them, the year spent in military service is simply time wasted. Haanpää described Finnish working men as brave soldiers in war but extremely recalcitrant conscripts in peacetime. Military service offended two basic elements of their self-esteem as men: personal autonomy and honest work. If they could not be in civilian “real” work, they saw more adult male dignity in fighting the system by deceiving their officers and dodging service than in submitting to fooling around in the training fields playing pointless war games.¹

Mika Waltari, the other author, was two years older than Pentti Haanpää and had already attained a Bachelor of Arts before joining up. Yet his diary-like documentary of life as a conscript is marked by an unreserved boyish eagerness, depicting military training as almost like a Boy Scout camp with an atmosphere of sporty playfulness and merry comradeship. He is carried away by the “magical unity of the troop, its collective affinity”, depicting his army comrades as playful youngsters, always acting as a closely knit group, helping, supporting and encouraging each other. To Waltari, his

¹ Pentti Haanpää, *Kenttä ja kasarmi. Kertomuksia tasavallan armeijasta* (Helsinki, 1928), quotes pp. 12–23.

fellow soldiers were like a family; the officers admirable father figures, and the barracks a warm and secure home. He pictured military service as the last safe haven of adolescence before an adult life of demands, responsibilities and duties. At the same time, the army was the place where boys, according to Waltari, learned to submit themselves to a higher cause and thereby matured into the responsibilities of adult manhood.²

Haanpää and Waltari represented different ways of being men and different ways of ascribing military training with gendered meaning. From the perspective of the Finnish military and political establishment, Haanpää's heroes displayed problematic masculinities that had to be reformed, whereas Waltari and his comrades demonstrated the kind of wished-for masculinity upon which the independence, prosperity and stability of the new Finnish national state would be built. Haanpää strongly identified with the perspective of the lower-class, uneducated men he served with. He shared their suspicion of all "masters" with their fancy rhetoric about the nation and its protection. Waltari came from a middle class background and was trained in elite schools to a self-discipline not unlike the one that the army demanded. Together with other educated young men pre-destined for prestigious positions in society, Waltari was trained for military leadership. He understood his military service from a perspective informed by bourgeois nationalist ideology and modernist ideas about the future of Finnish society.

As illustrated by Pentti Haanpää's and Mika Waltari's diverging portraits of military service, the Finnish conscript army was created and developed within a field of social and political conflicts and ambivalence. After independence from Russia had been gained in 1917, everybody seemed to hope or fear that soldiering and military training carried great significance for the meanings attached to Finnish manhood. Yet in the aftermath of a short, but bloody civil war in 1918, there was no consensus on the outcome. As described in this work, optimistic notions of military training as a "school for men" and a training ground for modern citizenship blended with negative notions of army life as a morally and physically pernicious place for impressionable young men.

Although some historians have claimed that national defence, the military profession, and military virtues were held in high esteem in Finnish society throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, this study demonstrates that the possibly widespread "deep-seated will to defend the country"³ did not translate into popular enthusiasm over military service in

² Mika Waltari, *Siellä missä miehiä tehdään* (Porvoo, 1931), quotes pp. 36, 96, 167, 212.

³ Matti Lauerma, *Kuninkaallinen Preussin Jääkäripataljoona 27. Vaiheet ja vaikutus* (Porvoo, 1966), p. 10; Pekka Leimu, *Pennalismi ja initiaatio suomalaisessa sotilaselämässä* (Helsinki, 1985), pp. 11–12.

the period between the two world wars of the twentieth century. The Finnish regular army had been created mainly to fight an inner enemy and restore the social order in the Civil War. In the peacetime period that followed, the army had to struggle through a political minefield in its endeavour to make conscripted men from all layers of society identify with the particular citizen-soldier masculinity it had to offer. Military propaganda depicted universal conscription and the conscript army as central instruments for national integration and civic education. The shared experience of military service would allegedly unite young men into a closely-knit national community through the tough but shared experience of military service. However, the new conscription institution and its incarnation in the standing conscript army were the objects of intense suspicion and public criticism, particularly in the first decade of national independence. The criticism ranged from concerns over the undemocratic spirit in the officer corps to outrage over poor sanitary conditions in the garrisons. There was a great reluctance within civilian society, not so much against the general principle of male conscription, as against the particular forms that the military system had adopted.

Nonetheless, the year in military training was a strong experience at the end of a young man's formative years, shared by almost all men, but exclusive of women and those men too old, too young or too "weak" to serve. Some men returning from military service retold experiences of a dreary, prison-like existence marked by violence and conflict. Others would later recall it as a happy time of youth, of warm and close comradeship – as the best time of their lives. In spite of widespread recalcitrance in the 1920's, military service soon achieved a semi-mythic status, not only in pro-defence rhetoric, but in Finnish popular culture as well. A narrative tradition developed, depicting the military service as an experience both utterly horrible and magnificent that made real men out of immature boys.

This work studies military conscription as an arena for the "making of manhood" in Finnish society between 1918 and 1939. This means investigating the cultural and gender history of conscription as a social institution around which knowledge was produced and reproduced, about what it meant to be a man and what capabilities, duties and rights were attached to manhood. Cultural history today can be broadly described as the history of systems of meaning and modes of thought – world views, mentalities, moral and religious ideas, etcetera.⁴ To put it simply, the cultural historical perspective in this study involves asking what people in

⁴ Anne Lipp, 'Diskurs und Praxis. Militärgeschichte als Kulturgeschichte', in Kühne & Ziemann, eds., *Was ist Militärgeschichte* 2000, pp. 211–228, at pp. 211–214; Peter Burke, *What is Cultural History?* (Cambridge, 2004).

interwar Finland *thought* and *claimed* conscription was. The chapters of this work examine a number of cultural contexts where conscription and military service were depicted and debated; parliamentary debates, war hero myths, texts concerned with the military and civic education of conscripts, as well as fiction and reminiscences about military training as a personal experience. It poses the question of how notions of masculinity were expressed and used when politicians, military educators and “ordinary” conscripted soldiers criticised or legitimated different military systems, when they explained what conscripted soldiering meant for the country and its young men, or described what it had meant in their own lives.

Finland fast-forwarding into military modernity

Against the backdrop of broad and interrelated changes in military systems and notions of masculinity and male citizenship sweeping across the European continent in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, Finland in the interwar period represents an interesting borderland both in place and in time. Almost 150 years earlier, the American revolution had introduced the modern notion of a “people in arms” and displayed the military potential of civic enthusiasm against the well-drilled, machine-like obedience of professional soldiers who were either fighting for money or enlisted by force. The Republic of Revolutionary France introduced universal forced conscription for males and amazed Europe by the striking power of mass armies of “citizen-soldiers”. In spite of its radical and democratic associations, authoritarian monarchies such as Prussia, Austria and Russia were one after the other forced to introduce conscription in a kind of chain reaction stretching over the course of the nineteenth century. Conscription not only enabled the raising of larger than ever armies. The new “citizens’ armies” were also thought to be marked by a higher degree of soldier motivation than in previous centuries, because they were accompanied by notions of patriotism and civic participation, of free men fighting for their own republic or nation. Moreover, universal conscription allowed for the mobilisation of entire societies for increasingly violent “total” wars, as the fact that almost every family had a member fighting in the army meant that each thus became directly engaged in the war effort. Universal conscription linked together soldiering, nationalism, citizenship and masculinity into varying yet always very powerful ideological configurations.⁵

⁵ Ute Frevert, ‘Das Jakobinische Modell. Allgemeine Wehrpflicht und Nationsbildung in Preußen-Deutschland’, in idem, ed., *Militär und Gesellschaft im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert*, (Stuttgart, 1997), pp 17–47, at pp. 24–26; idem, *Die kasernierte Nation. Militärdienst und Zivilgesellschaft in Deutschland* (München, 2001), pp. 33–50; Karen Hagemann, “Männlicher Muth und Teutsche Ehre”. *Nation, Militär und Geschlecht zur Zeit der Antinapoleonischen Kriege Preussens* (Paderborn, 2002), pp. 516–517; Joshua S.

In the nineteenth century, up until the end of the First World War, Finland had been an autonomous Grand Duchy of the Russian Empire and essentially a pacified buffer zone protecting St Petersburg from the northwest. During this period, Finland's defence was mostly handled by Russian troops. During the two last decades of the nineteenth century, a limited form of universal conscription for male Finns was introduced as part of military reform in Russia, but only one tenth of each age cohort was actually drafted for active service. These "Finnish" troops gratified the rising nationalist sentiments among the Finnish elite, but were in effect designed to serve the Russian Empire's strategic objectives. Conscription in Finland was therefore abolished when Finnish nationalism and Russian imperial policies came into conflict around the turn of the century.⁶ When independence was declared in December 1917, there had been no conscription and no compulsory military training in Finland for almost two decades. However, domestic social tensions forced Finland into a short but nasty civil war in 1918. The victorious non-socialists had to face the military presence of a Bolshevik power consolidating on their Eastern border. Suddenly, military men were desperately needed in Finnish society. Finnish men had to be made into soldiers.

The situation that resulted could be described as a fast-forward into European military modernity. Within the new institutional framework of universal conscription and compulsory military training, influences from different places and different periods clashed with each other in an interwar Finland. Foreign military doctrines were imported by Finnish officers who had served or studied in Russia, Prussia, and other countries. International political ideologies and cultural currents brought along different images and notions of what conscription meant to the male individual and the society of which he was a member. Democratic-republican ideas of arming the people rubbed shoulders with authoritarian military traditions from monarchic empires. "Modern" European bourgeois ideologies of manliness met with "traditional" agrarian masculinities among young men used to hard work, but not to the mental and physical disciplining and re-education to be found within a modern educational or military system. A nineteenth century nationalistic agenda for the militarisation of masculinities stumbled upon twentieth century tensions between socialists and non-socialists who

Sanborn, *Drafting the Russian Nation, Military Conscription, Total War, and Mass Politics, 1905–1925* (DeKalb, 2003), pp. 3–14.

⁶ On the "old" Finnish conscript army, see J.E.O. Screen, *The Finnish Army 1881–1901. Training the Rifle Battalions* (Helsinki, 1996); O. Seitkari, *Vuoden 1878 asevelvollisuuslain syntyvaiheet. Suomen Sotilasorganisaatio- ja asevelvollisuuskysymys 1860- ja 1870-luvulla* (Helsinki, 1951). For an account in English of the conflict between Russian authorities and Finnish nationalists and officials, see David Kirby, *A Concise History of Finland* (Cambridge, 2006).

disagreed on what kind of Finnish nation they wanted to constitute. Patriotic euphoria over national independence collided with the post-war gloom of a nation trying to come to terms with a brutish civil war and a continent trying to cope with the shock of an industrial war that had killed millions and rocked the self-assurance of European civilisation.

In the period beginning with the Civil War of 1918 and continuing up to the outbreak of the Second World War in 1939, Finland underwent a sudden and rapid armament, both materially and mentally. Military, political and social elites saw the new national armed forces, consisting both of the regular army and voluntary civil guards, as the force at the core of national liberation and the guarantor of independence and social order against both internal and external Bolshevik threats. Universal male conscription was re-introduced in 1918, and from there on, for the first time in Finnish history, *every* young man declared able-bodied was not only expected to fight for his nation in wartime, but subjected to compulsory, prolonged military service in a peacetime standing army. For at least one year, the fit and healthy young male citizen would enter a military social world of men, effectively cut-off from the normal society of civilians, women and children, to experience various attempts at his physical and mental re-education into the “right” kind of patriotic, valorous citizen-soldier and manly citizen.

Not only were the lives of men militarised but those of women were as well. Women served in various voluntary defence organisations, performing a range of auxiliary tasks for the armed forces thought befitting for their sex. As their sons, brothers, fiancés or husbands were called up for military training, they had to cope with an everyday life without them. Women were supposed to encourage and support the men and prepare also for making their own sacrifices for the nation. The civil guards and the adjacent organisation for women, *Lotta Svärd*, grew into the largest civic movement in interwar Finland, with their own branch organisations for boys and girls.⁷ A “nation in arms” was thus evoked, amidst intense nationalist and anti-Bolshevik mobilisation.

This study, however, concentrates on contemporary understandings of male conscription and compulsory military service in the regular army. Unlike the civic guards, the conscript army encompassed the majority of men of the younger generations. The army actually claimed to bring together *all* men, without regard to social standing or class background, on the sole

⁷ Annika Latva-Äijö, *Lotta Svärdin synty. Järjestö, Armeija, Naiseus 1918–1928* (Helsinki, 2004); Seija-Leena Nevala, 'Kansakunta pienoiskoossa - Lotta- ja Suojeluskuntaperhe', in Tuula Gordon & Kirsti Lempiäinen, eds., *Suomineitonen hei! Kansallisuuden sukupuoli* (Tampere 2002), pp. 93–117; Kari Selén, *Sarkatakien maa. Suojeluskuntajärjestö ja yhteiskunta 1918–1944* (Helsinki, 2001); Seija-Leena Nevala, *Lottatyöt ja sotilaspojat* (Helsinki & Jyväskylä, 2009).

basis of their gender and fitness. Conscription laid the greatest claims on men's bodies and minds and was the most intense part of what might be called the militarisation of Finnish manhood in the interwar period.

Cultural and gender perspectives on army and society

Combining a cultural history of conscription with perspectives from the history of masculinity brings into view levels of interaction between the military sphere and larger society that have often been overlooked in military and political history,⁸ not least the history of soldiering in interwar Finland. In this work, conscription, military service and the conscript army are treated as institutions integral to “normal”, peacetime society. In comparison to the vast body of research on cultural, social and gender issues of wartime societies, peacetime military systems are still relatively neglected.⁹ However, we cannot properly understand the relationships between the military sphere and the civilian society if we only look at the extreme circumstances of war and not at the relative normalcy of peacetime.¹⁰

Military conscription was actually seldom discussed in terms of relations between women or men in the interwar period. Explicit references to manhood or manliness occurred more rarely than one might expect. Nevertheless, since military service was compulsory for *all* able-bodied men and categorically excluded *all* women, universal male conscription was based on a particular understanding of gender differences. In relation to conscription, not only differences between men and women became significant to the people of the time, but also differences between different groups of men. Conscription made a drastic differentiation between physically fit and unfit men. Images of conscripted soldiering expressed different notions of what Finnish men from different layers of society were like, what they should be like, what was admirable and problematic about them, and what effect different forms of soldiering would and should have on them. Finnish manhood was made and remade in images and experiences

⁸ Cf Karen Hagemann, ‘Venus und Mars. Reflexionen zu einer Geschlechtergeschichte von Militär und Krieg’ in Karen Hagemann & Ralf Pröve, eds., *Landsknechte, Soldatenfrauen und Nationalkrieger. Militär, Krieg und Geschlechterordnung im historischen Wandel* (Frankfurt a.M. & New York, 1998), pp. 13–48, at p. 15.

⁹ Joanna Bourke, ‘New military history’, in Matthew Hughes & William J. Philpott, eds., *Palgrave Advances in Modern Military History* (Houndmills & New York, 2006), pp. 258–280, at pp. 275.

¹⁰ Ute Frevert, ‘Gesellschaft und Militär im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert: Sozial- kultur- und geschlechtergeschichtliche Annäherungen’, in idem, ed., *Militär und Gesellschaft* 1997, pp. 7–14, at p. 10; Thomas Kühne & Benjamin Ziemann, ‘Militärgeschichte in der Erweiterung. Konjunkturen, Interpretationen, Konzepte’, in idem, eds., *Was ist Militärgeschichte* (Paderborn, 2000), pp. 9–46, at pp. 37–40.

of conscripted soldiering – if manhood is understood as something that constantly has to be actively reconstructed by women and men articulating and relating to its shifting meanings.

Studying conscription with a focus on masculinity brings to the fore notions of difference along the class divisions between working-class men and educated middle-class men in interwar Finnish society. It directs attention to the processes where men define, fashion and present themselves through identification with particular cultural images and social groups. It provokes questions not only about how different images of soldiering and male citizenship were offered to groups and individuals through the culture they lived in, but also about how people used and developed, embraced or rejected these notions, according to their own political purposes or personal needs. By investigating the cultural notions of masculinity asserted, challenged and constructed through contesting images of soldiering, a new picture of conscription thus emerges, offering deeper understandings of why military service was resisted or supported, criticised or defended, dreaded or celebrated in Finnish interwar society.

1.2 Topics in earlier research: The militarisation of modern masculinity

Previous research into the cultural and gender history of modern conscription in the Western world has suggested that the introduction of universal male conscription led to a masculinisation of citizenship and a militarisation of masculinity. Soldiering rose from having been a disdained occupation for the dregs of society into becoming a prerequisite for respectable male citizenship and virtuous manliness. Conscription can be seen as part of a process that disseminated a “modern” gender order – a new pattern of gender relationships in society¹¹ – originating among and articulated by the rising middle classes. Previous research has mainly focussed on the “long nineteenth century”, from the French Revolution up until the First World War. However, precedents in other countries – especially Prussia, which provided military and ideological models for interwar conscription in Finland – and the interpretations made in earlier research provide an essential background to many of the issues investigated in this work.

¹¹ On the concept of “gender order“, see R.W. Connell, *Gender* (Cambridge, Oxford & Malden 2002), pp. 53–54.

The French and American Revolutions at the end of the eighteenth century, which invented conscription made men – at least symbolically – members of a civic community and a sovereign people. This was a new kind of citizenship, very different from being an early modern subject of a sovereign monarch with particular duties and privileges defined by one's estate and which territory one inhabited within the realm. As universal conscription, at least in principle, treated all men equally, it supported new notions of equal and participatory male citizenship and provided a central venue where this citizenship was put into practice. According to historian Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, the central figure of American republicanism was the manly citizen-soldier, characterised by virility, self-control and courage in battle, fighting for the protection of his property and political rights and freedoms. This banished women from the world of politics, because of their alleged lack of physical strength, rational self-control and independent landed wealth.¹² Modern state citizenship was a gendered and exclusionary category.

The armies of the French Revolution were cast as citizens' armies, reflecting the interests, the ideology and social composition of the people at large. French citizenship therefore became associated with manly duty and a willingness to serve in the military and sacrifice oneself in battle for the cause of the community. At the same time, according to historian Alan Forrest, the ideal of citizenship merged with traditional notions of military virtues such as virility, strength of body and mind, courage, heroism, and manly comradeship.¹³ Historians Stefan Dudink and Karen Hagemann draw attention to the important fact that French male citizens received political and civic rights *before* they were called to arms to defend the republic, first as voluntary and soon as conscripted citizen-soldiers. This enabled the powerful idea of a male citizen prepared to fight and sacrifice, of his own free will, for the political community of which he was a full member. If all men were equal citizens, all had an equal interest *and* an equal duty to defend the republic and revolution that had given them these rights.¹⁴

¹² Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, 'The republican gentleman: the race to rhetorical stability in the new United States', in Stefan Dudink, Karen Hagemann & John Tosh, eds., *Masculinities in Politics and War. Gendering Modern History* (Manchester & New York, 2004), pp. 61–76, at pp. 61–67; Stefan Dudink & Karen Hagemann, 'Masculinities in politics and war in the age of democratic revolutions, 1750–1850', in Dudink et al., eds., *Masculinities in Politics and War* 2004, pp. 3–21, at pp. 7–9.

¹³ Alan Forrest, 'Citizenship and masculinity. The revolutionary citizen-soldier and his Legacy', in Stefan Dudink, Karen Hagemann & Anna Clark, eds., *Representing Masculinity. Male Citizenship in Modern Western Culture* (New York, 2007), pp. 111–130, at pp. 111–117.

¹⁴ Dudink & Hagemann, 'Masculinities in politics and war' 2004, pp. 11–13; Forrest, 'Citizenship and masculinity' 2007, pp. 111–117.

Conscription was introduced in Prussia in 1813, after catastrophic defeats against Napoleon's conscription-based armies. According to historian Ute Frevert, Prussian military reformers wanted to achieve the fervour associated with the French citizen-soldiers in their own conscripted troops, yet the Prussian regime was unwilling to grant any new political rights in exchange for military service. The solution was a political rhetoric elevating the state and the nation to higher ends that the individual had to serve, without asking for his own personal gain or interest. In the visions of military reformers, military service in itself would make the individual aware of his duties towards the fatherland and infuse him with a patriotic spirit.¹⁵ In nineteenth century Europe, conscription could thus be regarded both as a consequence of citizenship and a prerequisite for citizenship and manliness. If the French soldier – in principle – defended his country *because* he was a free citizen and a true patriot, the Prussian soldier *became* a citizen and a patriot through soldiering.

The age of conscription, at least up until the Second World War, has also been described in terms of a polarisation of the gender order and a militarisation of notions of ideal masculinity. From the late eighteenth century onwards, women were no longer allowed to follow the armies in the field to cook, wash, take care of the wounded and live with officers and soldiers in camp, as in previous centuries. The military became all-male, or rather; its male, armed, fighting units in the field or in the barracks were strictly segregated and isolated from female (sometimes voluntary) personnel in “auxiliary” tasks such as nursing or providing food and clothing.¹⁶ As pointed out by historian Ida Blom, among others, these developments went hand in hand with the biologisation of gender since the late eighteenth century. The sameness among *all* members of one sex were increasingly stressed and taken as biological givens, and so were the perceived differences between *all* members of the opposite sex. Modern conscription, Blom writes, underpinned “the presupposition that *all women* were weak and needed protection, whereas to be strong and bellicose was a characteristic shared by *all men*.”¹⁷

Historian Karen Hagemann argues that the humiliating German defeats by Napoleon's armies caused a cultural crisis in Prussia that was also

¹⁵ Frevert, ‘Jakobinische Modell’ 1997, pp. 24–26; idem, *Kasernierte Nation* 2001, pp. 33–50.

¹⁶ ‘Von den Geschlechtern der Kriege und des Militärs’, in Kühne & Ziemann, eds., *Was ist Militärgeschichte* 2000, pp. 229–262, at pp. 231–237; Barton C. Hacker, ‘Women and military institutions in early modern Europe: A reconnaissance’, *Signs* 6:4 (1981), pp. 643–671.

¹⁷ Ida Blom, ‘Gender and nation in international comparison’, in Ida Blom, Karen Hagemann & Karen Hall, eds., *Gendered Nations. Nationalism and Gender Order in the Long Nineteenth Century* (Oxford & New York, 2000), pp. 3–26, at p. 15; Dudink & Hagemann, ‘Masculinities in politics and war’ 2004.

a crisis of middle-class masculinity. Middle-class publicists started an intense propaganda campaign for patriotic mobilization that disseminated new notions of “natural” gender characteristics. Only men capable of defending the nation and prepared to die “the hero’s death for the fatherland”, it was claimed, were truly manly and truly German. German women’s national character was described in terms of bourgeois notions of feminine virtues such as caring, domesticity and morality. Although women were assigned important tasks in the Prussian war effort, in the home as well as in patriotic women’s associations working in the public sphere, Hagemann finds that the image of the nation as a “valorous Volk family” was a gendered hierarchy of patriarchal dominance. Strong and valorous Prussian men were supposed to protect weak and defenceless women against Napoleon’s armies. Since military service was seen as incompatible with women’s gender character, women were considered incapable of full civic participation. They were granted membership of the nation, but not active participation in the state, the sphere of political power.¹⁸

In an age of war and revolutions, manliness became associated with discipline, heroism, death and sacrifice in battle. In his seminal work *The Image of Man* (1996), historian George L. Mosse argued that a new stereotype for masculinity emerged in the late eighteenth century, centred on strong character, self-restraint, will-power, moral purity, courage, patriotism and physical fitness – not least fitness for military service. Initially adapted to the need to educate the sons of the bourgeoisie into future elite positions, the image of self-restrained, strong-willed and valorous manliness, articulated by middle-class publicists, was soon co-opted by conservative nationalism as a means of strengthening the nation’s internal cohesion and military strength. Soldiering became a training in manliness and military service became an arena for the dissemination of middle-class manliness, alongside a range of other institutions for the socialisation of boys and young men, such as the educational system or the gymnastics and sports movement. In Mosse’s analysis, the modern image of manhood appealed to the middle classes, since it seemed to combine movement and order, strength and the ability to take action with discipline and self-control, in an age of progress and rising wealth, but also of widening social divisions and increasing societal conflicts. Mosse claims that the stereotype spread across all layers of society and remained amazingly stable over time. After a period of crisis at the end of the nineteenth century, due to the emerging women’s and workers

¹⁸ Karen Hagemann, “‘Heran, heran, zu Sieg oder Tod!’ Entwürfe patriotisch-wehrhafter Männlichkeit in der Zeit der Befreiungskriege”, in Thomas Kühne, ed., *Männergeschichte – Geschlechtergeschichte. Männlichkeit im Wandel der Moderne* (Frankfurt a. M., 1996), pp. 51–68; idem, ‘Valorous Volk family’ 2000; idem, “*Männlicher Muth*” 2002.

movements, it was strengthened by the militarisation of society during the First World War, and neared its climax as a national and political symbol in the rising fascism of the interwar period.¹⁹

Universal male conscription and a polarised gender ideology of “separate spheres”, for men and women have both been interpreted as parts of a modernisation process driven on by the rising middle classes. The Swedish ethnologists Jonas Frykman and Orvar Löfgren describe how the educated classes worked on disciplining and “civilising” the working classes in late nineteenth century Sweden. Inducing the workers to embrace middle-class ideals, channelling their social restlessness and ambitions into the home and the family, was meant to work as a moral cement, keeping the social structure intact. Frykman and Löfgren claim that the driving force behind this process was an anxiety and insecurity among the privileged as old forms of social control dissolved and social polarisation grew, due to urbanisation and industrialisation.²⁰ This model of explanation is similar to George L. Mosse’s theory of the masculine stereotype as a reassuring promise that progress and order could be combined. It is also related to interpretations of nineteenth-century nationalisms as inventions to ensure and express social cohesion in societies where traditional forms of legitimating the social and political order were becoming obsolete.²¹

Conscription has been seen as one of the institutions that pushed on the transition from a “traditional” agrarian society towards a “modern” industrial society. For the duration of their military service in a garrison town, men were removed from the traditional life of their local communities. In the army, they were taught a range of “modern” practices and ideas, ranging from personal hygiene to notions of national belonging and radical gender difference. Conscription therefore assisted in detaching men from their traditional places in the social order and introducing them to new ones.²²

Ute Frevert has shown how the relationship between military and civilian manliness slowly underwent a fundamental transformation in Germany during the century leading up to the First World War. In the early nineteenth century, soldiering had nothing to do with manliness in general. Among the educated classes, the peaceful habitus of the civilian burgher was

¹⁹ George L. Mosse, *The Image of Man. The Creation of Modern Masculinity* (New York & Oxford, 1996).

²⁰ Jonas Frykman & Orvar Löfgren, *Den kultiverade människan* (Lund, 1979), pp. 118–120.

²¹ Eric Hobsbawm, ‘Mass-producing traditions: Europe, 1870–1914’, in Eric Hobsbawm & Terence Ranger, eds., *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge, 1983), pp. 263–307, at pp. 263–268.

²² See e.g. Eugen Weber, *Peasants into Frenchmen. The Modernization of Rural France, 1870–1914* (Stanford, 1976), esp. pp. 292–302; Frevert, ed., *Militär und Gesellschaft* 1997; idem, *Kasernierte Nation* 2001; Sanborn, *Drafting the Russian Nation* 2003.

considered honourable and even superior to aristocratic military manliness. Rank-and-file soldiering was disdained as a slave-like existence. Military service, it was feared, would brutalise young men, making them stupid and uncivilised. In spite of a general euphoria over the patriotic mobilisation in the Napoleonic wars, the public remained very reluctant in regard to all forms of *peacetime* military service throughout the 1820's and 1830's. However, as ever more men were drafted for active service and the Prussian armies brought about the unification of Germany, the army gradually became popular. Military service gained a reputation for being the "school of the Nation" as well as a "school of manliness". Refusing peacetime military service and denouncing military values became increasingly socially unacceptable.²³

Frevert depicts the German conscript army towards the end of the nineteenth century as an institution where millions of men had an experience of belonging to a gendered national community, producing new national and gender identities that overrode social, confessional and regional differences among the soldiers. Conscription, she suggests, ushered in a new sense of affinity and solidarity among men, reinforcing new notions of a cohesive male gender character and identity that they all shared. Conscription militarised notions of this shared gender character and infused images of the nation with masculine and martial qualities, augmenting the polarisation of femininity and masculinity and excluding women from full state citizenship because they did not perform military service.²⁴

The rising appreciation of soldiering in the nineteenth century was not, however, limited to countries with conscription. It evidently had to do with a general *Zeitgeist* of increasing nationalism and imperialism. It was also significant that soldiering became a part of "normal" manhood, instead of a specialised occupation, even in countries without peacetime conscription. Sonya O. Rose has outlined the historical development of male citizenship in Great Britain during the nineteenth century as an ideological movement from citizenship based on property and being a male head of the household towards notions of citizenship placing ever greater emphasis on military service. In the mid-nineteenth century, British soldiers were mainly recruited through enlistment. Rank-and-file soldiering was disparaged as a disgraceful profession that mainly attracted social outcasts. However, the growing popularity of Britain's imperial endeavours made the Regular Army

²³ Ute Frevert, 'Soldaten, Staatsbürger. Überlegungen zur historischen Konstruktion von Männlichkeit', in Kühne, ed., *Männergeschichte* 1996, pp. 69-87; idem, 'Jakobinische Modell' 1997; idem, 'Militär als „Schule der Männlichkeit“' 1997; idem, *Kasernierte Nation* 2001.

²⁴ Ibid. On how former soldiers described their time in service as a coming of age as men, see also Thomas Rohkrämer, 'Das Militär als Männerbund? Kult der soldatischen Männlichkeit im Deutschen Kaiserreich', *Westfälische Forschungen* 45 (1995), pp. 169-187.

an increasingly honoured institution in late Victorian society and gave rise to a hero cult of victorious British generals. No conscription was introduced in Britain before the Great War. Nonetheless, the emergence of British volunteer forces, “respectable” men undergoing military training in their local communities while remaining in civilian work, had an effect of creating an aura of noble patriotism and civic virtue around soldiering.²⁵

Gender and modernisation in Finland

Both conscription and the “modern” gender order of separate spheres arrived late in Finland, a country that throughout the nineteenth century was an underdeveloped European peripheral area in relation to earlier industrialised nations. Around the turn of the century, the vast majority of Finns still lived in an agrarian world and a rural gender order where gender difference, according to the historian Irma Sulkunen, was not polarised in the modern sense. Modern western middle-class notions of gender difference had still only reached the limited educated classes and relatively small, urbanised areas of Finland.²⁶ Rural society was certainly patriarchal, but marked by a spirit of collaboration between men and women and relatively weak notions of gender difference.²⁷ According to Sulkunen’s influential interpretation, Finnish women’s early suffrage (1906) was in part due to the very old-fashionedness of the gender order. Women’s right to vote remained an integral part of the broader issue of universal suffrage and never became an issue primarily about gender.²⁸

Historical anthropologist Jan Löfström’s study of images of same-sex relationships in agrarian folklore also depicts Finnish pre-industrial rural culture as being marked by a low level of gender polarisation and notions of masculinity, which were less centred on sexual conquest and sexual dominance than in Mediterranean cultures. Since the country was sparsely populated and peasant households usually rather small, women often stepped in to help out with “male” tasks, or even took over running the

²⁵ Sonya O. Rose, ‘Fit to fight but not to vote? Masculinity and citizenship in Britain, 1832–1918’, in Dudink et al., eds., *Representing Masculinity* 2007, pp. 131–150. On the cult of soldier heroes, see Graham Dawson, *Soldier Heroes. British Adventure, Empire and the Imagining of Masculinities* (London, 1994).

²⁶ On how the Finnish bourgeoisie embraced the notion of an all-pervasive male–female polarity in the nineteenth century, see Kai Häggman, *Perheen vuosisata. Perheen ibanne ja sivistyneistön elämäntapa 1800-luvun Suomessa* (Helsinki, 1994), pp. 186–188.

²⁷ Irma Sulkunen, ‘The mobilisation of women and the birth of civil society’, in Merja Manninen & Päivi Setälä, eds., *The Lady with the Bow. The Story of Finnish Women* (Helsinki, 1990), pp. 42–53; idem, ‘Naisten järjestäytyminen ja kaksijakoinen kansalaisuus’, in Risto Alapuro et al., eds., *Kansa liikkeessä* [1987], 2nd ed., (Helsinki, 1989), pp. 157–175, at pp. 169–172.

²⁸ Sulkunen, ‘Mobilisation of women’ 1990; idem, ‘Naisten järjestäytyminen’ 1989.

entire farm when their husbands went away to distant town markets or for seasonal employment in forestry or fishing. Although there was a distinct hierarchy and a gendered division of labour between the sexes, ideal masculine and feminine characteristics did not differ much, but were both centred on working skill, physical strength, and endurance. Sexuality was important for manly prestige, but Löfström thinks that working capacity nonetheless was of much greater symbolic significance for rural masculinities.²⁹

The interwar period appears in previous research as a period in Finnish history when middle-class mores and a new emphasis on the allegedly all-encompassing polarity of masculinity and femininity increasingly spread to the lower classes. Irma Sulkunen has depicted the first half of the twentieth century as a time of “divergence of the genders” and the emergence of a “bipartite citizenship”.³⁰ Since the late nineteenth century new civic organisations based on middle-class mores and values, such as temperance associations, youth clubs and women’s societies, had begun to force the process of modernisation, individualisation, and the differentiation of men’s and women’s worlds. New organisations for women emphasised motherhood as a social and ethical characteristic of women’s “true” being and their “natural” ability for caring and rearing. Educated women wanted to “enlighten” women of the lower classes in order to awaken and strengthen the Finnish nation spiritually, morally and economically. Middle class ideal notions of women’s citizen identity were constructed around the idea of a feminine sector of society that was based in the home, but included all kinds of charitable, social and educational work in the public sphere, where women fulfilled themselves through energetic and active “housewifery”.³¹

One such new women’s society was the female voluntary defence organisation, *Lotta Svärd*. According to the historian Annika Latva-Äijö, *Lotta Svärd* originated in spontaneous activities undertaken by “white,” non-socialist women in local communities in order to support their local civil

²⁹ Jan Löfström, *Sukupuoliero agraarikulttuurissa. “Se nyt vaan on semmonen”* (Helsinki, 1999); idem, ‘Changing conceptions of gender polarity in Finland’, in Satu Apo et al, eds., *Gender and Folklore. Perspectives on Finnish and Karelian Culture* (Helsinki, 1998), pp. 239–259.

³⁰ Sulkunen, ‘Mobilisation of women’ 1990; idem, ‘Naisten järjestäytyminen’ 1989. Cf Löfström, ‘Changing conceptions of gender polarity’ 1998, pp. 250–253.

³¹ Anne Ollila, *Suomen kotien päivä valkenee. Marttajärjestö suomalaisessa yhteiskunnassa vuoteen 1939*, (Helsinki, 1993), pp. 9–41; Irma Sulkunen, *Retki naishistoriaan* (Helsinki, 1991), pp. 67–70; idem, ‘Naisten järjestäytyminen’ 1989, pp. 162–167; idem, ‘Mobilisation of women’ 1990, pp. 50–51. See also Pirjo Markkola, *Työläiskodin synty. Tamperelaiset työläisperheet ja yhteiskunnallinen kysymys 1870-luvulta 1910-luvulle* (Helsinki, 1994), pp. 22–38; Ritva Nätkin *Kamppailu suomalaisesta äitirydestä. Maternalismi, väestöpolitiikka ja naisten kertomukset* (Helsinki, 1997), pp. 34–43; Arja-Liisa Räisänen, *Omnellisen avioliiton ehdot. Sukupuolijärjestelmän muodostumisprosessi suomalaisissa avioliitto- ja seksuaalivalistusoppaissa 1865–1920* (Helsinki, 1995), pp. 113–120.

guards during the Civil War with food, clothing and medical services. These activities were based on a “weak gender difference” in the sense outlined by Irma Sulkunen; they were part of a collective reaction among both women and men to the outbreak of civil war and the perceived military threat from domestic and Russian Bolshevism. National defence was such an important matter to “white” Finland, writes Latva-Äijö, that *all* people had to contribute to it – women as well as men. However, as the *Lotta Svärd* movement was transformed into a centrally led organisation, led by middle-class women, it came to be increasingly based on a notion of a separate feminine sphere within national defence work, where women acted independently of the men of the civil guards. This led to a sense of conflict between the almost-military activities of *Lotta Svärd* and the “societal motherhood” at the heart of bourgeois notions of feminine citizenship.³²

What happened to Finnish masculinities in this transition period on the threshold of modernity has not been studied to any greater extent. There are some studies on how the school system was harnessed to prepare both boys and girls for the “modern” kind of gender-differentiated citizenship. In a study of secondary schools in the Nordic countries during the period 1880–1940, Henrik Meinander found a mix of nationalistic-militaristic motives and an objective to mould and strengthen manly “character” behind the physical education curriculum for boys.³³ In 1921, elementary school education was made compulsory in Finland. According to Saara Tuomaala, elementary schools educated children from the lower classes into polarised gender roles. For boys, this meant reading about fictional and historical manly heroes, inspiring patriotism and a spirit of sacrifice. The narrative world of central textbooks depicted Finland’s independence and the building of a Finnish nation as masculine endeavours, created and defended by manly men, writes Tuomaala. Gender roles in schoolbooks and physical education taught boys to be plucky, competitive, fearless, healthy and strong, preparing them for soldiering and useful male citizenship. Tuomaala points out that educationalists often associated urbanity and industrialisation with the corruption of a distinctive Finnish national character and the threat of socialism. Therefore, rural schoolboys were taught to value and preserve an agrarian way of life, building a “modern” masculine identity on being an independent agricultural producer and entrepreneur.³⁴

³² Latva-Äijö, *Lotta Svärdin synty* 2004, pp. 91–98, 272–281.

³³ Henrik Meinander, *Towards a Bourgeois Manhood: Boys’ Physical Education in Nordic Secondary Schools 1880–1940* (Helsinki, 1994).

³⁴ Saara Tuomaala, *Työtekeväistä käsistä puhtaiksi ja kirjoittaviksi. Suomalaisen oppivelvollisuuskoulun ja maalaislasten kohtaaminen 1921–1939* (Helsinki, 2004), especially pp. 207–216, 234–250; idem, ‘I sien jäljissä itsenäisessä Suomessa. Maamme kirjan maskuliininen narratiivi ja pohjalaispoikien

In 1920, 84 percent of the Finnish population still lived in the countryside. Seventy percent were employed in farming and forestry.³⁵ Finnish rural masculinities in the 1920's and 1930's seem to have been centred around the ideal of the freeholding farmer, his own master, whose masculinity was founded on his landownership, his productive and skilled labour, and being the head of his own household. The historian Ann-Catrin Östman has noted how working as a farmhand, subordinate to another man, grew less compatible with rural standards of masculinity in the early twentieth century. In the local community in Western Finland, which was studied by Östman, propertyless men favoured emigrating to the USA or Canada around the turn of the century, in the hope of being able to establish an independent existence. The traditional gamut of different acceptable masculinities for men of different ages and different social status was narrowing down. Controlling your own family farm and being a skilled, rational and progressive farmer gained importance as a hegemonic ideal for masculinity in an agrarian society.³⁶ In interwar Finland, the freeholder ideal was brought within the reach of over one hundred thousand new smallholders by a series of land reforms in 1918–1924. One objective of these reforms was indeed to bind previous tenant farmers to the propertied classes' ethos of responsible, patriotic masculinity and weaken their political identification with the working class.³⁷

Propertyless workers had to find another basis for their masculine prestige, but Swedish and Finnish research indicates that in the first half of the twentieth century, working capacity and a sense of personal autonomy were cornerstones of masculinity for rural working-class men as well. Modernisation brought new opportunities for the rural poor. For example, a man could now earn better wages working on logging sites as a lumberjack than as a farmhand, thus withdrawing from the patriarchal control of peasant households.³⁸ Among young, unmarried forestry workers in

kokemuskertomukset', *Historiallinen Aikakauskirja* 102:3 (2004), pp. 301–314. On gendered elementary education for girls in the interwar period, see also Mervi Kaarninen, *Nykyajan tytöt. Koulutus, luokka ja sukupuoli 1920- ja 1930-luvun Suomessa* (Helsinki, 1995).

³⁵ Viljo Rasila, 'Väestönkehitys ja sosiaaliset ongelmat', in Jorma Ahvenainen et al., eds., *Suomen Taloushistoria*, Vol 2, *Teollistuva Suomi* (Helsinki, 1982), pp. 132–153, at pp 139–140.

³⁶ Ann-Catrin Östman, *Mjök och jord. Om kvinnlighet, manlighet och arbete i ett österbottniskt jordbruks-sambälle ca 1870-1940* (Åbo, 2000), pp. 78–79, 172–174, 202–204, 315–316.

³⁷ According to Teppo Vihola, a total of 118 000 crofts were redeemed by their tenants in accordance with the redemption law of 1918. Vihola does not, however, give any statistics on the new possessors' distribution according to sex. Teppo Vihola, 'Maatalouden rakennemuutokset itsenäisessä Suomessa', in Matti Peltonen, ed., *Suomen maatalouden historia*, Vol. 2, *Kasvun ja kriisien aika 1870-luvulta 1950-luvulle* (Helsinki, 2004), pp. 330–418, at pp 356–367.

³⁸ Jyrki Pöysä, *Jätkän synty. Tutkimus sosiaalisen kategorian muotoutumisesta suomalaisessa kulttuurissa ja itäsuomalaisessa metsätyöperinteessä* (Helsinki, 1997), pp. 75–79.

Northern Sweden, studied by the ethnologist Ella Johansson, there was a substitute for the economic autonomy of landownership in the celebration of adolescent masculinities centred on the free and unrestrained life of bachelorhood in the all-male environment of logging camps. For many men, the rowdy bachelor masculinity of youth was in time transformed into a more responsible and stable adult masculinity brought about by marriage and acquisition of land.³⁹ In certain masculine subcultures, however, it was taken to an extreme. Kari Koskela has interpreted the “hooliganism” of young proletarian men in early twentieth century Helsinki as an expression of modern individualism for men who only possessed one resource for claiming masculine status: their physical ability to use force. The “hooligans” used seemingly irrational and unprovoked violence against strangers as a means of standing out from the crowd, of creating a masculine identity based on physical control of one’s own body and the ability to subdue and shame others.⁴⁰ Their subculture hints at interesting connections between physicality, violence, and working-class masculinities. Nonetheless, the hooligans were only a small urban group on the margins of Finnish society.

Research on Finnish interwar conscription

The introduction of universal male conscription in 1918–1919 transformed the meanings of manhood and citizenship for a whole generation. What happened when the men of this rural nation, intent on building their masculine prestige and self-understanding on working capacity and personal autonomy, were compelled to enter into a military hierarchy and told that soldiering would make them manlier than before? How did the broader society look upon this new divergence of the education of young men from that of young women? How the contemporaries understood this process has not previously been studied in a way that pays attention to gender.

Earlier research on gender and the military sphere in interwar Finland has mainly concerned the female voluntary defence organisation *Lotta Svärd*.⁴¹ Studies of peacetime conscription and the conscript army in Finland

³⁹ Ella Johansson, ‘Beautiful men, fine women and good workpeople’, *Gender and History*, 1:2 (1989), pp. 200–212; idem, *Skogarnas fria söner. Maskulinitet och modernitet i norrländskt skogsarbete* (Stockholm, 1994), pp. 157–161; idem, ‘Arbetare’, in Claes Ekenstam & Jørgen Lorentzen, eds., *Män i Norden. Manlighet och modernitet 1840–1940* (Möklinta, 2006), pp. 112–132, at pp. 115–122, 130–131. Cf. Jyrki Pöysä, ‘Jätkät ja suomalainen maskuliinisuus’, *Työväentutkimus* (2000), pp. 8–14.

⁴⁰ Kari Koskela, *Huligaanit. Katuelämää Sörkassa suurlakosta sisällissotaan* (Helsinki, 2002).

⁴¹ Kaarle Sulamaa, *Lotta Svärd: Uskonto ja isänmaa* (Helsinki, 1999); Nevala, ‘Kansakunta pienoiskoossa’ 2002; Pia Olsson, *Myytti ja kokemus. Lotta Svärd sodassa* (Helsinki, 2005); Latva-Äijö, *Lotta Svärdin synty* 2004; Tiina Kinnunen, *Kiitetyt ja parjatut. Lotat sotien jälkeen* (Helsinki, 2006), Nevala, *Lottatyöt ja sotilaspojat* 2009.

have predominantly stayed within the parameters of “classic” political and military history, with a focus on either party politics or the administrative development of military organisations.⁴² Jarl Kronlund’s standard work on the Finnish Armed Forces 1918–1939 made some efforts to outline civil-military relationships and public attitudes towards the army on the basis of Veli-Matti Syrjö’s unpublished preliminary study.⁴³ Kronlund took a broad approach to the history of the armed forces, but his perspectives were mainly determined by the official documents produced by the army organisation itself. The closest thing to a cultural history of interwar conscription up to date is actually literary historian Markku Envall’s analysis of how military service was depicted in Finnish literature.⁴⁴

Ethnologist Pentti Leimu’s book on bullying among Finnish conscripts and historian Juha Mälkki’s book on the interplay between military discipline and conscripts’ identities and motivations are the only historical monographs to date applying social and cultural perspectives to interwar military training. Both used a corpus of autobiographical reminiscences about military training collected in 1972–1973, which is also analysed in Chapter Five of this work. Leimu’s ethnological study (1985) conceptualises the bullying of younger soldiers by their elders as a matter of group socialisation into the military community. Since he bases his analysis on theories about universal group psychological mechanisms and sees army bullying strictly as a process of initiation into soldierhood, not manhood, he does not connect the phenomena he studies with the specific historical gender order of the surrounding society.⁴⁵

The point of departure in Mälkki’s book *Herrat, jätkät ja sotataito* (Gentlemen, Lumberjacks and the Art of War, 2008) is to explain why the Finnish Army organisation functioned so efficiently in the Winter War against the Soviet Union in 1939.⁴⁶ His perspective foregrounds the

⁴² Vilho Tervasmäki, *Eduskuntaryhmät ja maanpuolustus valtiopäivillä 1917–1939* (Helsinki, 1964); Martti V. Terä & Vilho Tervasmäki, *Puolustusministeriön historia. Vol 1, Puolustushallinnon perustamis- ja rakentamisvuodet 1918–1939* (Helsinki, 1973); Eero Elfvengren, *Suomen yleisesikunnan organisaation synty ja vakiintuminen vuosina 1918–1925* (Helsinki, 1997); Jorma Juottonen, *Millainen materiaallinen puolustuskyky? Materiaalisen puolustuskyvyn kehittämissuunnitelmat Suomessa 1920–1939: sotilasviranomaisten pyrkimykset: poliittisten päättäjien näkemykset* (Järvenpää, 1997); Veli-Matti Syrjö, *Itsenäisen Suomen kenraalikuunta 1918–1996* (Porvoo, 1998); Eero Elfvengren, *Laajasta johto-esikunnasta Mannerheimin yleisesikunnaksi: Yleisesikunnan organisaatio vuosina 1925–1939* (Helsinki, 2000).

⁴³ Jarl Kronlund et al., *Suomen puolustuslaitos 1918–1939. Puolustusvoimien rauhan ajan historia* (Porvoo, 1988); Veli-Matti Syrjö, *Puolustusvoimien asema yhteiskunnassa 1919–1939* [Unpublished manuscript, in possession of the author] (Sotatieteen laitos, 1986).

⁴⁴ Markku Envall, *Kirjalijoiden kentät ja kasarmit* (Helsinki, 1984).

⁴⁵ Pekka Leimu, *Pennalismi ja initiaatio suomalaisessa sotilaselämässä* (Helsinki, 1985).

⁴⁶ Juha Mälkki, *Herrat, jätkät ja sotataito. Kansalais- ja ammattisotilasarmeijan rakentuminen 1920- ja 1930-luvulla ”talvisodan ihmeeksi”* (Helsinki, 2008).

functionality of the military organisation and how the conscripted soldiers reacted to what Mälkki refers to as the “organisational logic” of the military system. Mälkki approaches the frictions between conscripts and officers as conflicts between civilian and military professional identities. He regards the officers as rational actors guided by “the art of war”, the military theory of the period. The tensions within the army organization are interpreted in terms of lower-class conscripts’ unfamiliarity with military operations and their suspicious attitude towards the officers who were regarded as masters and gentlefolk. According to Mälkki, the professional officers’ and the citizen-soldiers’ parallel army organisations, each with its own military culture and self-understandings, grew accustomed to each other over the course of the 1920’s and 1930’s. The tensions between them decreased as their internal relationship became established and stable. As a hypothetical explanation, Mälkki points to a younger generation of officers, taking charge as training officers in the 1930’s, as “linking pins” between professional soldiers and citizen-soldiers. Unlike their seniors, he argues, these officers had been through military training as conscripts in the Finnish Army and therefore understood attitudes and ways of action among their men better than their predecessors.⁴⁷

Mälkki’s study covered some of the same empirical terrain that is charted in this work. Mälkki, however, studied the social universe of the army organisation from the inside, within the military training environment. This work approaches conscription within a broader social and political context. It does not take its point of departure in what might be called the end result of interwar conscription, namely the Finnish field army of 1939 and a Finnish society mobilised for “total war”. On the contrary, it investigates the introduction of universal male conscription in a society where people were familiar with a recent past of very low levels of militarisation and took the legitimacy or expediency of no particular military system for granted.

New military history and the history of masculinities

The perspectives on the history of conscription adopted in this study represent a combination of new military history and the historical study of men and masculinities. This “new” military history emerged in the 1960’s and -70’s, as British and American historians, inspired by the anti-authoritarian mood of the time, wanted to write a military history “from below”, studying the conditions and experiences of “ordinary people” in

⁴⁷ On this point, see Mälkki, *Herrat, jätkät ja sotataito* 2008, pp. 248–249, 315–316, 327–328

wartime, not just high-ranking military and political decision-makers. They asked not only what had happened in the wars of the past, but how it had been experienced, interpreted and articulated; how people remembered and crafted personal narratives about wars. New military history has since then referred to a dispersed field of studies that has brought methods and theories from new trends in historical research to the study of war and militaries. In the 1970's this meant impulses from cultural anthropology (the study of collective symbols and cultural meanings), economics, demography and psychology; in the 1980's and 1990's women's and gender history, literary theory and the "linguistic turn" (the reinforced interest in investigating how language and discourse constitute people's perceptions of reality); and in the 2000's among other things, the "affective turn", the historical study of emotions.⁴⁸

The historical study of men and masculinities can be described as a sub-field within gender history, often using concepts and perspectives from the inter-disciplinary field of masculinity studies. With the exception of some rather isolated precursors,⁴⁹ it was only the mid-1990's that saw an increasing number of gender historical studies on men and masculinities. Historical studies of men and masculinities in the last ten to fifteen years have combined a perspective on the gender order as defining and restricting men's as well as women's lives and self-fulfilment with an effort to make visible and investigate the gendered character of male privileges and men's social power in the past. Notions, norms and ideals concerning men's gender character have been seen as enabling but also limiting manhood, empowering men in some respects yet also subordinating and oppressing large groups of men. Important topics of research have been the norms and ideals of middle-class masculinity, centred on self-restraint, "character" and competition,⁵⁰ as well as the institutions where boys and young men were

⁴⁸ Bourke, 'New military history' 2006; Kühne & Ziemann, 'Militärgeschichte in der Erweiterung' 2000, pp. 14–16. Some classic works representing "new" military history are Paul Fussell, *The Great War and Modern Memory* (London, 1975); John Keegan, *The Face of Battle. A Study of Agincourt, Waterloo and the Somme* (Harmondsworth, 1978); Eric J. Leed, *No Man's Land. Combat and Identity in World War I* (Cambridge, 1979); George L. Mosse, *Fallen Soldiers. Reshaping the Memory of the World Wars* (Oxford, 1990); Jay Winter, *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning: The Great War in European Cultural History* (Cambridge, 1995). Examples of the latest, 'affective turn' within new military history are Joanna Bourke, *An Intimate History of Killing. Face-to-face Killing in Twentieth-century Warfare* (London, 2000); Jens Ljunggren, *Känsloramas krig. Första världskriget och den tyska bildningselitens androgyna manlighet* (Stockholm, 2004); Thomas Kühne, *Kameradschaft. Die Soldaten des nationalsozialistischen Krieges und das 20. Jahrhundert* (Göttingen, 2006).

⁴⁹ Klaus Theweleit, *Männerphantasien*, Vol I–II (Frankfurt a.M. 1977–1978); Peter N. Stearns, *Be a Man! Males in Modern Society* (New York, 1979); J.A. Mangan & James Walvin, eds., *Manliness and Morality. Middle Class Masculinity in Britain and America* (New York, 1987); Michael Roper & John Tosh, eds., *Manful Assertions. Masculinities in Britain Since 1800* (London & New York, 1991).

⁵⁰ Mosse, *Image of Man* 1996; Michael Kimmel, *Manhood in America. A Cultural History* (New York, 1996); David Tjeder, *The Power of Character. Middle-class Masculinities, 1800–1900* (Stockholm, 2003).

socialised into these standards, such as boy schools,⁵¹ the boy scout movement,⁵² the sports movement,⁵³ etc. Men's places in the middle-class family⁵⁴ and the peasant household⁵⁵ have been other central themes. A burgeoning interest in the history of masculinities among Finnish historians has resulted in a growing number of articles since the late 1990's, but up to the present very few larger works.⁵⁶

On the one hand, the multiplicity of masculinities, especially their differentiation according to class divisions and different age groups have been emphasised in previous research, yet on the other hand studies of dominant cultural ideals have been in the foreground. As Swedish historian Claes Ekenstam points out, many studies have elucidated how masculinity is a phenomenon that changes through history, yet at the same time have made rather sweeping generalisations about dominant ideals and counter-images of unmanliness in different epochs. This often erases important nuances and differences, variations and dislocations between and within masculinities in history. Many studies have also fallen short of illuminating the complicated relationships between ideal notions and men's actual practices and personal experiences, Ekenstam argues.⁵⁷ The diversity and complexity of masculinities between and within groups and even individuals seem to be

⁵¹ Christine Heward, *Making a Man of Him: Parents and Their Sons' Education at an English Public School 1929-50* (London, 1988); Christina Florin & Ulla Johansson, "Där de bärliga lagrarna gro..." *Kultur, klass och kön i det svenska läroverket 1850-1914* (Stockholm, 1993); Meinander, *Towards a Bourgeois Manhood* 1994.

⁵² Allen Warren, 'Popular manliness. Baden Powell, scouting and the development of manly character', in Mangan & Walvin, eds., *Manliness and Morality* 1987, pp. 199-219; Bo Nilsson, *Maskulinitet. Representation, ideologi och retorik* (Umeå, 1999).

⁵³ Jens Ljunggren, *Kroppens bildning. Linggymnastikens manlighetsprojekt 1790-1914* (Stockholm & Stehag, 1999); Hans Bonde, *Mandigbed og sport* (Odense, 1991).

⁵⁴ Anthony E. Rotundo, *American Manhood. Transformations in Masculinity from the Revolution to the Modern Era* (New York, 1993); John Tosh, *A Man's Place. Masculinity and the Middle-class Home in Victorian England*, (New Haven, 1999).

⁵⁵ Ann-Catrin Östman, 'Bonden' in Ekenstam & Lorentzen, eds., *Män i Norden* 2006, pp. 77-111; idem, *Mjölök och jord* 2000; Andreas Marklund, *I hans hus. Svensk manlighet i historisk belysning* (Umeå, 2004).

⁵⁶ Some early articles are Ritva Hapuli, 'Kadonneen nykymiehen etsintä. 1920-luvun maskuliinisuksien kuvia' in P. Ahokas, M. Lahti & J. Sihvonen, eds., *Mieheyden tiellä. Maskuliinisuus ja kulttuuri* (Jyväskylä, 1993), p. 102-122; Pöysä, 'Jätkät ja suomalainen maskuliinisuus' 2000; Elina Katainen, "'Mut urokunto ei voittoa suonut, sorruitte kesken". Kommunistinen maskuliinisuus 1920-luvun Suomessa', *Ajankohta* (2003), pp. 140-168. The Finnish national historical journal *Historiallinen Aikakauskirja* had a special feature issue on the history of masculinities in 2004, volume 102:4. Further, see e.g. Marja Jalava, 'Kansakunnan miestä muokkaamassa' *Historiallinen Aikakauskirja* 104:1 (2006) pp. 5-17; Kati Katajisto, 'Isänmaan ja yleisen hyvän vuoksi. Suomen autonomian ajan alun johtomiesten uhrautuminen', *Historiallinen Aikakauskirja* 105:3 (2007), pp. 276-286.

⁵⁷ Claes Ekenstam, 'Män, manlighet och omanlighet' in Ekenstam & Lorentzen, eds., *Män i Norden* 2006, pp. 13-47, at pp. 22-28.

difficult to handle within single historical studies, whereas there is a tempting simplicity and narrative cogency in generalisations about “hegemonic masculinities” that marked societies and whole epochs.

A growing body of work has since the mid-1990’s combined social and cultural histories of war with an interest in the history of masculinities. Women’s historians had already started studying the reorganisation of work, family and welfare during the First World War in the 1980’s. Studies of the “home front” investigated how the total wars of the twentieth century transformed women and the gender order during and after war. However, as pointed out by Christa Hämmerle, it was only in the 1990’s, when women’s history increasingly developed into a gender history that included men, masculinity and all-male institutions in its scope of interest, and when military history expanded to include events beyond the battlefield, that these two historiographical traditions could truly meet.⁵⁸

George L. Mosse touched upon the importance of notions of masculinity in his books on nationalism and sexual norms (1985) and on how Western European countries dealt with the loss of millions of young men in the Great War (1990).⁵⁹ He returned to the subject in the aforementioned study of stereotypes of normative and despised masculinities circa 1750–1950, *The Image of Man* (1996). The historian Graham Dawson, however, actually preceded Mosse with an explicit analysis of the significance of masculinities in his cultural and psycho-historical study of the worship of military heroes in Great Britain. In *Soldier Heroes* (1994), Dawson approached masculinity and military heroism using concepts from psychology and literary studies, such as fantasy, myth and projection.⁶⁰ Joanna Bourke introduced the male body and male corporeality to the study of masculinity and war (1996).⁶¹ Mark Moss studied the cultural environment where boys and youngsters in Victorian Edwardian Canada grew up, focussing more on

⁵⁸ Kathleen Canning, *Gender History in Practice. Historical Perspectives on Bodies, Class, and Citizenship* (Ithaca & London, 2006), pp. 41–59; Hämmerle, ‘Geschlechtern der Kriege’ 2000, pp. 229–262; Hagemann, ‘Venus und Mars’ 1998, pp. 15–16. Some examples of important early works on women, gender and war are Margaret Randolph Higonnet, Jane Jenson, Sonya Michel & Margaret Collins Wietz, eds., *Behind the Lines: Gender and the Two World Wars* (New Haven & London, 1987); Gail Braybon & Penny Summerfield, *Out of the Cage. Women’s Experiences in Two World Wars* (London & New York, 1987); Ute Daniel, *Arbeiterfrauen in der Kriegsgesellschaft. Beruf, Familie und Politik im Ersten Weltkrieg* (Göttingen, 1989).

⁵⁹ George L. Mosse, *Nationalism and Sexuality. Middle-class Morality and Sexual Norms in Modern Europe* (Madison, 1985); Mosse, *Fallen Soldiers* 1990.

⁶⁰ Mosse, *Image of Man* 1996; Dawson, *Soldier Heroes* 1994. See also Graham Dawson, ‘The blond Bedouin: Lawrence of Arabia, imperial adventure and the imagining of English-British masculinity’, in Tosh & Roper, eds., *Manful Assertions* 1991, pp. 113–144.

⁶¹ Joanna Bourke, *Dismembering the Male. Men’s Bodies, Britain and the Great War* (London, 1996).

the different channels of dissemination of martial values such as boy's magazines, books, sports, parades, and the cult of military heroes (2001).⁶²

Much of the most important research on the intertwining of universal conscription and masculinities in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries has been done in the German language. The catastrophic culmination of a long process of militarisation in Nazism and the Second World War has made German, Swiss and Austrian historians interrogate the process of this militarisation concerning its connections with the German gender order and notions of masculinity. Ute Frevert's work on the Prussian conscript army, developed in several articles and the monograph *A Nation in Barracks* (German original 2001) put the relationships between the military and civil society centre-stage and followed the changing relationship of military values and civilian ideals of manliness throughout the "long nineteenth century" until the Great War.⁶³ Karen Hagemann studied the origins of this militarisation process in the patriotic mobilisation in the age of the Napoleonic Wars in a number of works.⁶⁴ Christof Dejung's study of gender order and military service in Switzerland during the Second World War (2006) brought in oral sources and topics of war commemoration and collective memory, propounding a connection between the mythologisation of Swiss men in military service protecting their country during the war years and the congealment of gender polarisation and women's political disenfranchisement in post-war Switzerland.⁶⁵

⁶² Mark Moss, *Manliness and Militarism. Educating Young Boys in Ontario for War* (Ontario, 2001).

⁶³ Frevert, 'Soldaten, Staatsbürger' 1996; idem, 'Jakobinische Modell' 1997; idem, 'Das Militär als Schule der Männlichkeit. Erwartungen, Angebote, Erfahrungen im 19. Jahrhundert' in idem, ed., *Militär und Gesellschaft* 1997, pp. 145–173; idem, *Kasernierte Nation* 2001. Frevert's major work on the cultural history of Prussian conscription (2001) has also been translated into English: *A Nation in Barracks: Modern Germany, Military Conscription and Civil Society* (Oxford, 2004).

⁶⁴ See e.g. Hagemann, "'Heran, heran'" 1996, pp. 51–68; idem, 'A Valorous Volk family: the Nation, the Military, and the Gender Order of Prussia in the Time of the Anti-Napoleonic Wars, 1806–15' in Blom et al., eds., *Gendered Nations* 2000, pp. 179–205; idem, "'Männlicher Muth'" 2002; idem, 'German heroes: the cult of the death for the fatherland in nineteenth-century Germany', in Dudink, et al, eds., *Masculinities in politics and war* 2004, pp. 116–134. Hagemann has also co-edited a number of important anthologies on issues of gender and sexuality in the combat zone, on the home front and in post-war societies, as well as on the significance of masculinity for articulations of nationalism and citizenship since the age of the French Revolution. See Hagemann & Prüve, eds., *Landsknechte, Soldatenfrauen und Nationalkrieger* 1998; Karen Hagemann & Stefanie Schüler-Springorum, *Home/Front. The Military, War and Gender in Twentieth-Century Germany* (Oxford & New York, 2002); Dudink et al., eds., *Masculinities in politics and war* 2004; Dudink et al., eds., *Representing masculinity* 2007.

⁶⁵ Christof Dejung, *Aktivdienst und Geschlechterordnung. Eine Kultur- und Alltagsgeschichte des Militärdienstes in der Schweiz 1939–1945* (Zürich, 2007). Some further works in the German language in this area are Thomas Kühne, "'Kameradschaft – das Beste im Leben des Mannes". Die deutschen Soldaten des Zweiten Weltkrieges in erfahrungs- und geschlechtergeschichtlicher Perspektive', *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 22 (1996) pp. 504–529; Kathrin Däniker, 'Die Truppe – ein Weib? Geschlechtliche Zuschreibungen in der Schweizer Armee um die Jahrhundertwende' in Christine Eifler & Ruth Seifert, eds., *Soziale Konstruktionen – Militär und Geschlechterverhältnis* (Münster, 1999)

The gender history of conscription in Northern Europe has only been studied to a limited extent. The interwar period has also been rather neglected.⁶⁶ Thomas Sörensen's broad social history of a regiment of enlisted hussars in Sweden around 1900 (1997) included some gender perspectives, but concerned professional soldiers before the era of universal conscription and emphasised the local social context rather than national imagery.⁶⁷ Joshua S. Sanborn's book about conscription in Russia in 1905–1925 (2003) uses masculinity as one among a number of categories of analysis for a study of the mass politics of citizenship; the relationship between conscription, political belonging and the massive acts of violence that defined the national political form in late imperial and early Soviet Russia.

The openings towards a “new” military history in Finland have largely concentrated on the dramatic events of the Civil War in 1918 and, above all, the Winter and Continuation Wars against the Soviet Union during the Second World War.⁶⁸ Gender perspectives have mainly been applied to the study of women's war experiences and images of femininity in wartime.⁶⁹ Notable exceptions are Arto Jokinen's and Tuomas Tepora's work on masculinity in Finnish war novels⁷⁰ and Ville Kivimäki's work on Finnish

s. 110–134; René Schilling, *“Kriegsbelden“. Deutungsmuster heroischer Männlichkeit in Deutschland 1813–1945* (Paderborn, 2002); Christa Hämmerle, ‘Zur Relevanz des Connell'schen Konzepts hegemonialer Männlichkeit für “Militär und Männlichkeit/en in der Habsburgermonarchie (1868–1914/1918)“ in Martin Dinges, ed., *Männer – Macht – Körper. Hegemoniale Männlichkeiten vom Mittelalter bis heute* (Frankfurt a. M., 2005) pp. 103–121; Sonja Levens, *Elite, Männlichkeit und Krieg*, Tübinger und Cambridger Studenten 1900–1929 (Göttingen 2006); Sabine Kienitz, *Beschädigte Helden. Kriegsinvalidität und Körperbilder 1914–1923* (Paderborn, 2008).

⁶⁶ Exceptions to this trend include the Swiss anthology edited by Christof Dejung & Regina Stämpfli, *Armee, Staat und Geschlecht: die Schweiz im internationalen Vergleich 1918–1945* (Zürich, 2003) and some articles in Hagemann & Schüler-Springorum, eds., *Home/Front* 2002, as well as in Dudink et al., eds., *Masculinities in Politics and War* 2004.

⁶⁷ Sanborn, *Drafting the Russian Nation* 2003; Thomas Sörensen, *Det blänkande eländet. En bok om kronprinsens busarer i sekelskiftets Malmö* (Malmö, 1997).

⁶⁸ See e.g. Marianne Junila, *Kotirintaman aseveljeyttä. Suomalaisen siviiliväestöön ja saksalaisen sotaväen rinnakkäimelo Pohjois-Suomessa 1941–1944* (Helsinki, 2000); Ilona Kempainen, *Isänmaan ubrit. Sankarikuolema Suomessa toisen maailmansodan aikana*, (Helsinki, 2006); Kinnunen & Kivimäki, eds., *Ihminen sodassa* 2006; Sari Näre & Jenni Kirves, eds., *Ruma sota. Talvi- ja jatkosodan vaiettu historia* (Helsinki, 2008). There are certainly exceptions from the focus on wartime, such as Ulla-Maija Peltonen's book on how the memories of 1918 lived on in Finnish working class culture, or a 2006 anthology on how Finnish society readjusted to peacetime in the post-war eras both after the First and the Second World Wars. Ulla-Maija Peltonen, *Punakapinen muistot. Tutkimus työväen muistelukerronnan muotoutumisesta vuoden 1918 jälkeen* (Helsinki, 1996); Petri Karonen & Kerttu Tarjamo, eds., *Kun sota on obi. Sodista selviytymisen ongelmia ja niiden ratkaisumalleja 1900-luvulla* (Helsinki, 2006).

⁶⁹ E.g. Riitta Raitis & Elina Haavio-Mannila, eds., *Naisten aseet. Suomalaisena naisena talvi- ja jatkosodassa* (Porvoo, Helsinki & Juva 1993); Anu Koivunen, *Isänmaan moninaiset äidinkasvot. Sotavuosien suomalainen naisten elokuva sukupuoliteknologiana* (Turku, 1995); Maria Lähteenmäki, *Jänkäjäkääreitä ja parakkipiikoja. Lappilaisten sotakokemuksia 1939–1945* (Helsinki, 1999).

⁷⁰ Arto Jokinen, 'Myytti sodan palveluksessa. Suomalainen mies, soturius ja talvisota', in Tiina Kinnunen & Ville Kivimäki, eds., *Ihminen sodassa. Suomalaisten kokemuksia talvi- ja jatkosodasta*

men's experiences at the front and war traumas that problematise issues of masculinity and soldiering.⁷¹ Previous works on Finnish peacetime conscription that theorise masculinity, however, only concern the 1980's and 1990's.⁷²

1.3 *Theory and method: Conscription as a contested arena of masculinity*

My research for this book germinated from a fascination with a set of “grand theories” in previous research, concerning the relationships between masculinity, class, nationalism and modernisation. These theories seemed to form a hypothetical model for understanding conscription-based military service in interwar Finland as an instrument used by the educated classes for disciplining and “modernising” young men from the lower classes; not only training them in military matters, but educating them into embracing middle-class manliness, nationalist ideologies and a “modern” male citizenship.

Yet over the course of my research, I have become ever more captivated with the open conflicts surrounding conscription and the active resistance against what on the surface might appear as a militarisation of Finnish society, led by a bourgeoisie brandishing nationalism as an integrative ideology. Upon closer examination, George L. Mosse's image of a relatively unchanging bourgeois ideal masculinity dominating society and spreading to all social classes is over-simplifying as a model of historical explanation.⁷³ The *contested* nature of conscription in interwar Finland serves to relativise the importance and internal coherence of discourses on

(Helsinki & Jyväskylä, 2006), pp. 141–158; Tuomas Tepora, 'Poikien sota. Toisen maailmansodan aikaiset poikien sotakirjat siirtymän kuvauksina', *Historiallinen aikakauskirja* 105:3 (2007), pp. 287–301.

⁷¹ Ville Kivimäki, 'Mies, armeija ja vastarinta. Arndt Pekurisen kohtalo kriittisen mieshistorian valossa', *Historiallinen aikakauskirja* 102:3 (2004), pp. 347–357. Further, e.g. idem, 'Ryvetetty enkeli: Suomalaisotilaiden neuvostoliittolaisiin naissotilaisiin kohdistama seksuaalinen väkivalta ja sodan sukupuolitunut mielenmaisema', *Naistutkimus – Kvinnoforskning* 20:3 (2007), pp. 19–32; idem, 'Rintamaväkivalta ja makaaberit ruumis – nuorten miesten matka puhtaudesta traumaan' in Näre & Kirves, eds., *Ruma sota* 2008, pp. 135–180.

⁷² Teemu Tallberg, *Miesten koulu? Mieskuva varusmieskoulutuksessa käytettävissä opetuslokuissa* (Helsinki, 2003); Arto Jokinen, *Panssaroitu maskuliinisuus. Mies, väkivalta ja kulttuuri* (Tampere, 2000).

⁷³ Cf Stefan Dudink, 'The trouble with men. Problems in the history of “masculinity”', *European Journal of Cultural Studies* 1:3 (1998), pp. 419–431, at pp. 421–425; Tjeder, *Power of Character* 2003, p. 22; Ekenstam, 'Män, manlighet och omanlighet' 2006, p. 26.

soldiering that at first glance appear monolithic and culturally dominant. It directs historical attention to the multiplicity of discourses and to the agency of individuals and groups as they tried to use images of soldiering and masculinity for political purposes, or for the construction of personal identities and life-histories. I have found it fruitful to approach conscripted soldiering as a cultural arena, where different notions of masculinity, male citizenship and military rationality blended with political and economic power struggles, and where ideological projects confronted each other and entered a kind of open-ended negotiation. My interest in conscription as a contested arena has led me to put emphasis on the beginning of the period, when these divisions were most marked.

Finland in the 1920's and 1930's was certainly influenced by European ideas about masculinity and military values, stretching for a considerable time back into the nineteenth century. However, after the Civil War of 1918, Finland was a politically and socially highly divided country that nevertheless had universal suffrage and a working parliamentary democracy where different forces, relatively equal in strength, struggled for power and entered political compromises. Different groups in Finnish society held different notions of masculinity, including military masculinity. The educated urban middle classes largely dominated the printed public media. However, the rural majority population did not necessarily share their values. In the countryside, the manly ideal of the patriarchal freeholder still loomed large.⁷⁴

Military propaganda produced by officers, educationalists and theologians used masculine images of virility, heroism and manly prestige to convince and persuade the conscripts into ways of thinking and acting that were shaped by bourgeois mentality, nationalist ideology and religious morality. Yet these efforts were actively resisted on many fronts, ranging from rural working class masculinities among the conscripts to ideological critiques of the standing army system in parliament. The conscripts, in my analysis, were often unsusceptible to middle-class morality, yet still attracted by promises of masculine status in exchange for military service. They selectively adopted elements in the images of soldiering on offer, adjusting them to their own needs for self-confirmation and their claims for social prestige. Neither educationalists nor conscripts were, for that matter, homogenous groups. All sides brought complex and internally contradictory ideas and attitudes to their meetings, often only articulating their images of soldiering in relation, reaction and response to each other.

⁷⁴ On the freeholding peasant as manly ideal, see Johansson, *Skogarnas fria söner* 1994, pp. 160–161; Östman, *Mjök och jord* 2000, pp. 75–79; Östman, 'Bonden' 2006, pp. 91–92.

Defining 'masculinity'

This study uses masculinity as a conceptual tool for exploring the cultural understandings of conscription in interwar Finland. Like many other powerful analytical concepts, 'masculinity' is used in various meanings in everyday language as well as in different areas of research. It defies attempts at unambiguous and exhaustive definition, but has proven to be a highly fruitful research tool for studying different dimensions of men's gendered being. Within the social sciences, masculinity is often understood in terms of patterns and regularities in people's gendered practices and social relationships. The central theorician in the field of masculinity studies, R.W. Connell, calls masculinities "configurations of gender practice", yet he underlines the complexity of how masculinity is "simultaneously a place in gender relationships, the practices through which men and women engage that place in gender, and the effects of these practices in bodily experience, personality and culture."⁷⁵

For the purposes of this study, however, I have chosen to primarily work with an understanding of masculinity that gives priority to *the cultural and social meanings* that society attaches to bodies categorised as 'male' and to the social category of 'men'. In other words, by 'masculinity', I refer to what people "know" about a human being because they position him as a 'man' or as 'manly'/masculine'; what his body can and cannot do and endure, what his personal characteristics are, what they might be, should be or must not be, what rights and duties in society are his due.⁷⁶

If gender is the over-all process that organises human beings into different gender groups and produces knowledge about the perceived differences between them,⁷⁷ then masculinity is knowledge about a particular category in the gender order. It ranges from what people think is 'typical' and 'normal' for men to what they think characterises the ideal man and what they find problematic and undesirable in a man. It can be attached to persons perceived as 'masculine' women as well, when certain traits in a woman's physique and/or behaviour is understood as expressions of a larger

⁷⁵ R.W. Connell, *Masculinities* (Cambridge, 1995), pp. 71–72. See also Connell, *Gender* 2002, pp. 7–10. For a critical discussion of the concept as used in the social sciences, see Jeff Hearn, 'Is masculinity dead? A critique of the concept of masculinity/masculinities', in Martin Mac an Ghaill, ed., *Understanding Masculinities. Social Relations and Cultural Arenas* (Buckingham & Philadelphia, 1996), 202–217, at p. 208; Jeff Hearn, 'From hegemonic masculinity to the hegemony of men', *Feminist Theory* 5:1 (2004), pp. 49–72, at pp. 58–59.

⁷⁶ Cf Gail Bederman, *Manliness & Civilization. A Cultural History of Gender and Race in the United States, 1880–1917* (Chicago, 1995), p. 7.

⁷⁷ Joan W. Scott, *Gender and the Politics of History* [1988], second revised edition (New York, 1999).

pattern of her being “like a man”.⁷⁸ By *manliness*, I refer only to notions of *ideal* manhood, of what is admirable in a man.⁷⁹ A third closely related term is *manhood*, which I use in its basic meaning of the state or condition of being an adult man, rather than a woman or a child.

In concrete historical situations, masculinity seldom occurs as notions about what *all* men or even all “Finnish” men have in common. At any given time and place, a multitude of different sets of knowledge about men, contradicting each other, are in circulation. Gender intersects and interacts with a wide range of other social categorisations, in the process producing an almost infinite range of masculinities, in the sense of specific historic configurations of notions about men, gendered practices and gender relationships.⁸⁰ In interwar Finland, class, age, and ethnicity were the most important categories that specified masculinities. Working men were perceived as, or claimed to be, different from middle-class men, as were the educated from the uneducated, young men from older men, “Finnish” men from men of other nationalities and ethnicities, and so on. Furthermore, men could identify with different groups and value-systems in different situations, thus shifting between different masculine self-understandings. The Danish historian Hans Bonde has pointed out how Victorian middle-class masculinities in around 1900 contained a tension between on the one hand an extreme emphasis on self-control, “civilised” manners and industrious competitiveness in the workplace, and on the other hand noisy,

⁷⁸ Judith Halberstam has argued that since masculinity is a cultural construct and not based on any essential traits in biological males, it has no necessary connection with men but can be performed and produced by women as well. According to Halberstam, it is a misconception that masculine women are only ‘imitating’ men; they are equal participants in the cultural process where masculinity is produced. As a utopian vision of an unprejudiced society, I agree that ‘masculinity without men’ is perfectly conceivable. In most historical settings, however, including the one I investigate, I would claim that contemporaries understood what we would call female masculinity as traits typical of *a man* occurring in a woman – which is demonstrated e.g. by the words used in these contexts, such as ‘mannish’, in German and Swedish ‘mannhaft’ and ‘manhaftig’, in Finnish ‘miesmäinen’ (=like a man). Moreover, these words were normally used as a criticism. See Judith Halberstam, *Female Masculinity* (Durham, 1998).

⁷⁹ In British and American historiography, manliness has strong connotations to elite or middle-class Victorian notions. In order to uphold a distinction between ‘manliness’ as ideal manhood and ‘masculinity’ as a broader complex of knowledge about men, I will nevertheless use the former to designate normative ideals within *any* social group in Finnish society. Cf John Tosh, ‘What Should Historians do with Masculinity? Reflections on Nineteenth-century Britain’, *History Workshop Journal*, 38 (1994), pp. 179–202, at pp. 180–184; Bederman, *Manliness & Civilization* 1995, pp. 17–18.

⁸⁰ See Connell, *Masculinities*, pp. 75–76. On masculinity as an abstract category versus specific historic configurations of masculinities, see Jonas Liliequist, ‘Manlighetens flytande gränser – om manlighet som analytisk kategori i historiska analyser’ *Scandia* 74:1 (2008), pp. 83–103, at pp. 96. The concept of *intersectionality* was originally introduced into gender research by American legal scholar Kimberlé W. Crenshaw in her article ‘Demarginalizing the intersection of race and sex: A black feminist critique of antidiscrimination doctrine, feminist theory and antiracist politics’, *University of Chicago Legal Forum* (1989), pp. 139–167.

hedonistic leisure activities, including hard drinking, swearing, belching, farting and fighting, especially among younger men and bachelors.⁸¹ In the same way, young Finnish conscripts could draw on very different notions and expressions of masculinity, for example when they were on evening leave dating their girlfriends, or when they spent evenings in the barracks with their comrades.

Masculinity as knowledge, identity and experience

Although masculinity is primarily approached here as a form of cultural knowledge, this work will pay attention to the multiple dimensions of masculinity, ranging from gender ideologies to social practice and relationships, corporeality, and subjective experience. Some explanation is therefore required on how these dimensions connect with each other.

My usage of the concept 'masculinity' builds on Joan W. Scott's definition of gender as "knowledge about sexual difference". In her classic work *Gender and the Politics of History* (1988), Scott described gender as a way of ordering the world, of establishing meanings for bodily differences and connecting them with social relationships of power and hierarchy. According to her poststructuralist understanding, difference is always something that is actively made, as the concepts of language establish meaning through differentiation.⁸² Without the concept 'woman' there would be no 'men'. Since the meanings of such concepts are constructed through language they are not fixed, but unstable, contestable and open to redefinition. They are always challenged by people who want to redefine them and have to be constantly reasserted to stay in place. "Their study" Scott writes, "therefore calls attention to the conflictual processes that establish meanings, to the ways in which such concepts as gender acquire the appearance of fixity, to the challenges posed for normative social definitions, and to the ways these challenges are met – in other words, to the play of force involved in any society's construction and implementation of meanings: to politics."⁸³

Scott's perspective is useful for making gender visible in the public discourses of politics and culture. Yet ever since the field of historical studies on men and masculinities emerged in the 1990's, there have been calls for more attention to be paid to the complex interplay between

⁸¹ Bonde, *Mandighed og sport* 1991, pp. 45–47.

⁸² Scott, *Gender and the Politics of History* 1999, pp. 2–5.

⁸³ Scott, *Gender and the politics* 1999, pp. 4–6, 42–43.

normative ideals and men's practices, identities and self-understandings.⁸⁴ In his often-cited article 'What Should Historians do with Masculinity?' (1994), John Tosh stated that masculinity is more than a social construction or a social identity to be demonstrated in public. It is also a subjective or psychic identity that begins to form in the private and intimate family setting of early childhood and has great significance for men's emotional lives, desires and fantasies.⁸⁵ In the first German anthology on the history of masculinity, Thomas Kühne asked what happens when individual and collective experiences, desires, hopes and expectations come into conflict with traditional ideals of masculinity. He called for historians of masculinities to – ideally – work by means of simultaneous studies of the three levels of cultural norms, social practice, and subjective experience and identity.⁸⁶

Understanding masculinity as knowledge, however, is not to say that its study only concerns norms and ideals. The gender historian Gail Bederman points out that gender is an *ideological* process that nonetheless works through a variety of institutions, ideas, and daily practices. Combined, these different processes (for example, in this study, the political institution of conscription, ideas about male citizenship, and the daily routines of military training) produce a set of truths about who an individual is and what he or she can do, based upon his or her body.⁸⁷ The perspective on masculinity as a form of knowledge therefore incorporates the notion that social structures and our everyday practices of “doing gender” shape, confirm and reinforce people's conceptions of gender differences.⁸⁸

A scholarly tradition influenced by the work of historian and philosopher Michel Foucault underlines that subjective experiences and identities are constructed through language and culture. The identity categories that seemingly arise from the shared material experiences of different groups of people, such as “men”, “women” or “homosexuals”, are based on notions of difference. The poststructuralist tradition refuses to accept these differences as “natural” or inevitable. Joan W. Scott requires instead that historians explore *how* such difference is established. In the foucauldian view, language, cultural norms, social practices and societal institutions give rise to the notions of difference that enables the individual

⁸⁴ Michael Roper & John Tosh, 'Introduction', in idem, eds., *Manful Assertions* 1991, pp. 1–24, at pp. 14–15.

⁸⁵ Tosh, 'What Should Historians do with Masculinity' 1994, pp. 192–198.

⁸⁶ Thomas Kühne, 'Männergeschichte als Geschlechtergeschichte', in idem, ed., *Männergeschichte* 1996, pp. 7–30, at p. 23.

⁸⁷ Bederman, *Manliness and Civilization* 1995, p. 7; cf Scott, *Gender and the Politics of History* 1999, pp. 43–44.

⁸⁸ Cf Candace West & Don H. Zimmerman, 'Doing gender', *Gender & Society* 1:2 (1987), pp. 125–151, at pp. 137–140, 146.

to construct particular self-understandings and identify himself with particular categories of people; “men”, “women”, “homosexuals” or “heterosexuals”.⁸⁹ In an opaque but provocative formulation, Foucault used the term “power” to denote how knowledge of such categories is circulated through the web of social relationships. This power of knowledge is at the same time repressive and productive – it limits but also enables us as individuals, by providing a means of naming and articulating who and what we are. According to Foucault, this formative power of discourse should not be imagined as centrally possessed by the state or a ruling class. It is a force at work in any unequal relationship anywhere in the social web. Yet in the same way, there is resistance to power everywhere, inherent in any power relationship.⁹⁰

This notion of power opens for new understandings of the military sphere. In her study of the history of Turkish militarism, the anthropologist Ayşe Gül Altınay points out that within a foucauldian perspective, the military and military conscription are not only coercive institutions limiting the personal freedom of male citizens; “the military is as much a site of (masculine) national desire and production, as it is a force of coercion.”⁹¹ In the same vein, Thomas Kühne notes that the military does not only exert compulsion and force over groups and individuals but also offers its soldiers attractive models for “successful” socialisation and social harmony, such as notions of military comradeship or stern officers “fatherly” caring for their troop.⁹² It is important to observe how this productive or discursive power within the military sphere is not only exercised on the soldiers from above, whether by their officers or by impersonal cultural discourses, but that the soldiers themselves exercise this power over each other to the extent that they pick up and use cultural notions and articulations of what they are going through. For example, they might articulate the same incident as “sadism” on part of the officer or as yet another “hardening” experience in “the place where men are made”.

⁸⁹ Joan W. Scott ‘The Evidence of Experience’, *Critical Inquiry* 17:4 (1991), pp. 773–797, at pp. 777, 792–793. Within masculinity studies, similar ideas have been developed by, among others, Alan Petersen, in *Unmasking the Masculine. ‘Men’ and ‘Identity’ in a Sceptical Age* (London, Thousand Oaks & New Delhi, 1998); and by Stephen Whitehead in his *Men and Masculinities. Key Themes and New Directions* (Cambridge, Oxford & Malden, 2002).

⁹⁰ See Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge* (New York 1980), pp. 92–102; idem, *The Will to Knowledge. The History of Sexuality: Vol I*, [1976] (Harmondsworth, 1998), pp. 81–102; idem *Discipline and Punish* [1975] (New York, 1977), pp. 67–72; Tuija Pulkkinen, *The Postmodern and Political Agency* (Helsinki, 1996), pp. 89–111.

⁹¹ Ayşe Gül Altınay, *The Myth of the Military-Nation. Militarism, Gender, and Education in Turkey* (New York & Houndmills, 2004), p. 3.

⁹² Thomas Kühne, ‘Kameradschaft’ 1996.

Poststructuralist approaches have been criticised for reducing individual subjects, especially members of oppressed social groups, to mere objects of cultural discourse and denying their ability to reflect on and challenge the culture they live in.⁹³ Michael Roper, for example, has criticised the legacy of Joan W. Scott for a ‘top down’ approach to gender, reducing individual subjectivity to “a simple mirror of social constructions” or “an after-effect of political discourse”. According to Roper, the study of gender discourses within the public sphere has largely displaced the study of how individual men and women understand and appropriate these discourses and the study of subjectivity understood in terms of emotional states and experience.⁹⁴

I think Roper is right to point out the importance of earlier personal experiences and emotional motives in the processes where experiences and subjectivities are shaped. In the German tradition of *Erfahrungsgeschichte* (the history of experience) ‘Experience’ (*Erfahrung*) denotes how something lived through by somebody is articulated into a meaningful experience through a process of interpretation. *Erfahrungsgeschichte* is useful for conceptualising how the individual not only has to use pre-understandings provided by language and culture to interpret, articulate and make sense of what he has experienced, but also has to fit his new experiences together with his personal experiences and notions of the world, of human beings, of reality. Reinhart Koselleck points out that all of an individual’s previous experiences, as well as all his expectations, based on those experiences, of what will and conceivably could happen to him in the future, influence what meanings and significances he will ascribe to a new experience. Old experiences are constantly re-articulated and re-interpreted within the individual’s evolving “space of experience” and experiences therefore *change* during the course of an individual’s life.⁹⁵ Klaus Latzel makes the important addition that the failure to accommodate e.g. violent war experiences within previous understandings can on the other hand also result in psychic trauma. In a commentary to the German tradition, the Finnish historian Ville Kivimäki calls for *Erfahrungsgeschichte* to pay more attention to how new

⁹³ Linda Alcoff, ‘Cultural feminism versus poststructuralism: The identity crisis in feminist theory’, *Signs* (1988), pp. 405–436, at p. 417; Laura Downs, ‘If “woman” is just an empty category, then why am I afraid to walk alone at night? Identity politics meets the postmodern subject’, *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 35:2 (1993), pp. 414–437; Kathleen Canning, ‘Feminist history after the linguistic turn: Historicizing discourse and experience’, *Signs*, 19:2 (1994), pp. 368–404.

⁹⁴ Michael Roper, ‘Slipping out of view: Subjectivity and emotion in gender history’, *History Workshop Journal* 59 (2005), pp. 57–72.

⁹⁵ See Reinhart Koselleck, “Erfahrungsraum” und “Erwartungshorizont” – zwei historische Kategorien’, in idem, *Vergangene Zukunft. Zur Semantik geschichtlicher Zeiten* (Frankfurt a.M., 1979), pp. 349–375.

experiences that do not fit with previous cultural understandings can result in self-reflective and innovative thinking, changing the cultural meanings of concepts and creating new ones.⁹⁶

However, to insist on the productive quality of discourse and refuse a separation between experience and language is not to rob subjects of agency or choice. Nor does it mean denying the influence of desire and emotion on people's actions. It is rather about investigating how choice is *enabled* and how options for action are offered to the feeling and wanting individual. Human beings are neither passive receivers of cultural knowledge nor helpless victims of social structures, but actively participate in reproducing, maintaining and changing cultural notions and social structures. As Michael Roper points out, people assimilate cultural codes through a *selective* process.⁹⁷

As Finnish men from different backgrounds – such as Pentti Haanpää and Mika Waltari – arrived to do their military service, their backgrounds and life histories mattered for how they experienced military service. Yet the narratives of “ordinary” Finnish men and their recollections of their subjective experiences of military training – a world with its own social relationships and patterns of gender practice – also bring to light how Finnish men were, to borrow Joan W. Scott's words, “subjects whose agency [was] created through situations and statuses conferred on them”.⁹⁸ These men were forced into military service and exposed to a range of images and practices of soldiering, whether they wanted to or not. They were *subjected* to soldiering – but the compulsion they experienced was also *productive* of their self-understandings as men, as soldiers, as Finns, sometimes as working men, or as members of the national elite. They had to act upon the cultural meanings of soldiering and manhood – but the multiplicity of these meanings and the contradictions among them allowed the soldiers a wide choice of different understandings, attitudes and courses of action. As Gail Bederman points out, knowledge about gender is always full of inconsistencies, ambiguities and contradictions. People can therefore bend

⁹⁶ Klaus Latzel, 'Vom Kriegserlebnis zur Kriegserfahrung. Theoretische und methodische Überlegungen zur erfahrungsgeschichtlichen Untersuchung von Feldpostbriefen', *Militärgeschichtliche Mitteilungen* 56 (1997), pp. 1–30, at pp. 13–17; Nicolaus Buschmann & Horst Carl, 'Zugänge zur Erfahrungsgeschichte des Krieges. Forschung, Theorie, Fragestellung', in idem, eds., *Die Erfahrung des Krieges. Erfahrungsgeschichtliche Perspektiven von der Französischen Revolution bis zum Zweiten Weltkrieg* (Paderborn, 2001), pp. 11–26; Ville Kivimäki, 'Sodan kokemushistoria. Uusi saksalainen sotahistoria ja kokemushistorian sovellusmahdollisuudet Suomessa', in Kinnunen & Kivimäki, eds., *Ihminen sodassa* 2006, pp. 69–86.

⁹⁷ Roper, 'Slipping out of view' 2005, p. 67.

⁹⁸ Cf Scott, 'Evidence of experience' 1991, p. 793.

it to their own purposes and always find possibilities for dissent and resistance.⁹⁹

Selecting and reading sources

The methodology for this study consists in approaching conscription through a range of different types of source materials and analysing the images of soldiering they contain with the help of analytical concepts from gender history and masculinity studies. I scrutinize how different people described conscription from their own particular point of view and how they used language to construct an image or representation of reality. My reading constitutes a qualitative analysis of not only what is described in the texts, but also *how* it is described and how meaning is created.

The Swedish historian Jonas Liliequist suggests that historians of masculinity should study how masculinities, as a cultural repertoire of available notions and ideals, are actively used, adapted, reinforced or modified by groups and individuals, in different ways in different situations, according to their shifting needs and desires in everyday life or in political struggles. Liliequist thinks that references to masculinity in concrete historical situations should be studied as *rhetoric*, as ‘speech acts’, meant to make an impression on or produce a reaction from the audience. This means examining how men in different historical contexts and situations pick up and manipulate notions of manliness and unmanliness in order to maintain or increase their own social prestige and authority.¹⁰⁰

This perspective can be applied to all the different contexts I study, from political debates about conscription to educational efforts directed at young men and men’s own narratives about their personal experiences of military training. I largely approach my sources as rhetoric, as attempts by groups and individuals to persuade others to accept their description of the state of things, their political agenda, or their interpretation of what they have experienced and who they have become. Thus, I do not regard my sources as merely traces left by “real”, “factual” events that the historian should reconstruct through critical examination of the trustworthiness of

⁹⁹ Bederman, *Manliness and Civilization* 1995, pp. 7–8, 24; Scott, *Gender and the Politics of History* 1999, p. 42; Scott, ‘Evidence of experience’ 1991, pp. 792–793.

¹⁰⁰ Jonas Liliequist, ‘Ära, dygd och manlighet. Strategier för social prestige i 1600- och 1700-talets Sverige’, *Lychnos* 2009, pp. 117–147; idem, ‘Manlighetens flytande gränser’ 2008, pp. 97–101. On masculinities as a cultural repertoire, see also Whitehead, *Men and Masculinities* 2002, p. 209.

different testimonies. Rather, I understand the source texts in themselves as modes of action taken by their authors.¹⁰¹

There are vast amounts of archival material and published texts containing information on some aspect of conscription and its meanings to people in interwar Finland. My particular selection of sources has been made based on my theoretical understanding of conscription as a contested arena for the making of manhood. I have naturally tried to find sources that make implicit or explicit connections between soldiering and masculinity. I have preferred sources that express images of soldiering that were in one way or another circulated through a shared collective culture. Above all, I have attempted to find a *combination* of sources that would convey a nuanced picture of the differences and conflicts between social groups and span from normative notions to practices and experiences of soldiering. Taken together, the sources should display how notions of soldiering and masculinity were actively used in political and ideological endeavours as well as in the articulation of personal experiences and self-images.

These criteria have led me to examine a range of different arenas where conscription and military service were publicly depicted and debated: political debate, war hero myths, texts on military pedagogy, civic education for conscripts, literary depictions of the conscript army, as well as personal narratives about military training. However, my approach has caused me to leave aside the mass of official documentation produced by the military bureaucracy. These documents would certainly provide valuable additional information, but their contents were not part of the culturally shared public discourse on soldiering. They were concerned with the internal communication and operations of the military organisation and tend to be highly technical in nature.

The different types of sources I have chosen to work with all come with their own particular problems of source criticism. In this context, source criticism usually does not mean asking whether we can trust the sources to be accurate statements of historical facts, but rather asking what exactly they can provide us with reliable knowledge about – what questions they can answer and which they cannot. Since each chapter of this thesis is based on specific groups of sources and the issues at stake vary from arena to arena, I will discuss and problematise the most important materials in more detail further on. They are only presented briefly here, within the framework of the chapter layout, in order to show how they all provide important yet different angles on the same subject matter. The analysis of these multiple

¹⁰¹ Cf Kenneth Burke, *A Grammar of Motives and A Rhetoric of Motives* [1945, 1950] (Cleveland, 1962), p. xxiv; Jens Elmelund Kjeldsen, *Retorik idag. Introduktion till modern retorikteori* (Lund, 2008), pp. 245–255.

perspectives will hopefully do some justice to the true complexity of the historical past.

Sources and chapter layout

Chapter Two studies the politics of conscription, in other words the public political debate over the Finnish conscription system. The conflicting views within Finnish society on conscription, military service and the impact of different military systems on Finnish society, I argue, acquired their most clear-cut expressions in the parliamentary debates over the conscription system. In part, they even originated there, as politicians at the political centre and left presented the public with a critical discourse on the existing military system. I have therefore primarily used the parliamentary debates as sources to the societal controversies surrounding conscripted soldiering. As a reference to what the daily press wrote about the politics of conscription, I have used the Brage Press Archive in Helsinki, which since 1910 has collected thematically organised press cuttings from the Swedish-language, mainly non-socialist, press in Finland. The folders on “military issues” at the Archive have been useful in spite of being limited to the perspective of middle-class representatives of the Swedish-speaking minority, as the cuttings contain rather generous summaries and quotations of “what our Finnish colleagues are writing”. This material has mainly served to confirm that the trends of opinion relevant to my research are indeed manifested in the parliamentary debates, but also added some valuable information on the extent of public dissatisfaction with the material circumstances and treatment of conscripts in the 1920’s.

The third chapter studies war heroism in what I call the *Jäger* myth. The *Jägers* were militant independence activists who became heroes of “white” Finland in the Civil War. They soon constituted the majority of training and staff officers in the new armed forces. The *Jägers*, I argue, form a crucial connecting link between the commemoration of the Civil War of 1918 and the conscription system that was regularised after the war. A combination of sources is used to capture how the *Jägers* were cast as masculine and martial icons of nationalism, as a new species of officer, and as models for the post-war generations of conscripted young men. The materials include histories of the Civil War and the *Jäger* movement, published in the interwar period, and periodical military magazines aimed at both conscripts and the general public. An analysis of army regulations and texts on military pedagogy written by *Jäger* officers and their associates demonstrates that there was a significant link between the *Jägers’* war experiences and heroic self-image on the one hand, and the way they

presented their agenda for training a “new” kind of Finnish soldier on the other.

These educational objectives were put into practice in the so-called civic education of conscripts. The reason to give this rather marginal part of military training special attention is that this seems to have been where the officers and military educators most explicitly articulated their ambitions, expectations, hopes and concerns in relation to the impact of military training on the conscripts. In Chapter Four, I study this military civic education agenda, mainly through the interwar volumes of *Suomen Sotilas*, a weekly magazine for conscripts written and edited largely by people deeply involved with military education, military pedagogy, and the *Jäger* movement. I understand the images of soldiering in this magazine as attempts to offer the conscripts gendered objects of identification. Yet they also convey a sense of how military educators saw military education obstructed by attitudes and behaviours derived from the conscripts’ young age, social background and notions of masculine prestige. A significant part of the “civic education” can therefore be read as attempts to define and re-define manliness.

The last arena for images of soldiering, studied in Chapter Five, is the narrative field of stories told by conscripted men about their personal experiences of military service. These are images laying claims to the particular authenticity of personal experience: *I was there. Let me tell you what happened, what it was really like*. Chapter Five analyses narratives about the experience of military training as to how they depict the all-male social world of military training, with its tensions between comradeship and hierarchy, between official ideology and everyday practice, between the army’s expectations and demands on the conscripts and their own values, attitudes and behaviours. The chapter investigates how men used and produced notions of masculinity and constructed themselves as masculine subjects through particular ways of interpreting and articulating what they had experienced; how they negotiated between interpretations offered to them through culture and their own individual understandings and wishes for self-portrayal.

Through Pentti Haanpää’s and Mika Waltari’s literary descriptions of the conscript army, based on the authors’ recent experiences of military training, I access how two intellectuals and artists used available narratives and images of soldiering, in the process producing new ones, for making sense of their army experiences, casting them in an artistic form, and conveying political messages. Through a large ethnological collection of autobiographical reminiscences about interwar military training, written down in the early 1970’s, I compare and contrast the literary accounts with the personal narratives of many other “ordinary” conscripts from the lower

layers of society. This collection of memories is a unique and valuable source because of its comprehensiveness and because it gives a voice to men who were not members of interwar social and cultural elites. However, using fiction and memories of distant events for the purposes of historical analysis is in many ways problematic. In Chapter Five, I will therefore at some length also discuss the possibilities and limitations of using fiction and memories from different periods as historical sources.

The informants in the 1972–1973 collection have been given fictitious names in this book in order to protect their anonymity and yet preserve a stronger sense of their individuality than a mere number or letter notation would produce. All quotes from sources in Finnish and Swedish are my translations into English, unless otherwise indicated.

1.4 *Demarcation: Soldiering and citizenship as homosocial enactments*

To conclude this introduction, a crucial demarcation must be made. This work approaches conscripted soldiering as a gendered and thus relational phenomenon, yet it does not study the impact of conscription on the Finnish gender order as a whole. The historical sources discussing conscripted soldiering in interwar Finland tend to be authored by men, have men as the object of discourse, and be directed towards a male audience. Women and the relationships between the sexes are seldom mentioned. The texts studied here mainly deal with soldiering as a matter of sameness, difference and hierarchies among men. By leaving women out as a matter of course, they all convey cultural knowledge about soldiering, conscription and military training as something obviously, naturally and eternally masculine – in spite of numerous disagreements on other matters. This study pays close attention to any references to women and femininity in the sources, but its scope must be limited to how citizenship and gender relationships appear in the materials I have chosen to work with – mainly as male citizenship and as a homosocial enactment.

In comparison to an earlier era when most Finnish men had little to do with military matters, modern military conscription certainly contributed to a polarisation of male and female citizenship, both symbolically and in practice. Yet whether conscription served to legitimise or strengthen patriarchal power in twentieth century Finland is no straightforward matter. Comparing the history of countries with universal conscription (e.g. France, Germany, Sweden and Finland) to countries with mainly enlisted militaries (e.g. Great Britain and U.S.A) does not point to any obvious congruence

between the range of military recruitment and the degree of gender polarization or the steepness of gender hierarchies.¹⁰² The impact of military systems on the gender order in society seems to be determined by factors specific to each country's cultural, societal and political circumstances.

Finland was rather unusual as a country where universal suffrage for both women and men (1906) preceded the (re)introduction of universal conscription in 1918. In spite of the subsequent movement towards European "modernity" in terms of a polarised gender order, "bipartite citizenship" and "separate spheres" for women and men, women's suffrage was never questioned in the interwar military discourse. No explicit claims were made that men deserved special political or social privileges in relation to women in exchange for their military service. Rather, different forms of military service were put in relation to different ways of being a *male* citizen; whether one was useful to society and fulfilled the proper, gender-specific tasks and duties of a *man* or not. The manly citizen-soldier's inferior counterpart in the texts I study was not, I would argue, a woman, but a man marred by the wrong kind of masculinity.

The construction of soldiering in interwar Finland excluded women from the male world of military service, but it did not necessarily denigrate their gender-specific citizenship in its own right. Ascribing women the role of being protected implicitly associated womanhood with passivity, weakness and defencelessness. On the other hand, there were strong contemporary notions of a division of labour in the defence sector, where Finnish women did their own share of work and sacrifice. The auxiliary activities of voluntary female defence organisations surely were often understood as inferior in importance and self-sacrifice to the military tasks of men. The anxiousness to demarcate pro-defence activities proper for women from the military activities of men underlined and exaggerated gender difference. According to the gender theory of, for example, Yvonne Hirdman, such demarcation legitimates and naturalises male power.¹⁰³ However, *Lotta Svärd* and other women's defence organisations provided an important element of female agency and participation in cultural understandings of national defence. Civic participation was not exclusively male, but "bipartite" and gender-specific. The relationships between men and women in interwar Finland were certainly hierarchical in most contexts,

¹⁰² Ute Frevert makes the same point concerning the relationship between universal conscription, on the one hand, and the cultural acceptance of military violence and military modes of action, on the other. Frevert, *Kasernierte Nation* 2001, p. 14.

¹⁰³ Yvonne Hirdman, 'Genussystemet – reflektioner kring kvinnors sociala underordning', *Kvinnovetenskaplig tidskrift* 9:3 (1988), pp. 49–63.

but it seems difficult to determine what specific significance male conscription had for reproducing or strengthening gender hierarchies.

However, the preoccupation with sameness and difference among men in these sources reveals other aspects of the Finnish gender order, namely notions and emotions of Finnish men's belonging to people, nation, and an imagined gendered community of manly soldiers. These categories were based on ideas of community, but also of boundaries; of inclusion and exclusion; of hierarchies and equality. There are always dynamics and tensions between ideas of masculinity as something that all men, or some particular men, have in common and unites them on the one hand, and struggles for power and prestige among men on the other hand. In modern conscript armies, notions of brotherhood-in-arms and equal duties based on equal citizenship were juxtaposed with sharp hierarchies and demands for subservience. Images of soldiering promised men the opportunity to prove their manhood and their right to belong to the national community, while at the same time threatening them with the stigma of cowardice, unmanliness and rejection from the community, should they refuse the call to arms.

Citizenship as masculine belonging

In the context of conscription, masculine belonging was often expressed in terms of citizenship, if we understand 'citizenship' in a broad sense, as a category of belonging and membership in any abstract political community, such as the Finnish state, the Finnish people or the Finnish nation. Citizenship, writes Sonya O. Rose, can be thought of as a multidimensional discursive framework, as a malleable language that people can use to make claims for rights within a political community and through which the community can demand duties from its members.¹⁰⁴ Pnina Werbner and Nira Yuval-Davis argue that we should differentiate between on the one hand ideas of democratic citizenship, stressing rationality, individuality, rule of law and the citizens' common future, and on the other hand nationalist notions of belonging, appealing to communal solidarity, primordial sentiments of soil and blood and a common history.¹⁰⁵ This is useful to keep in mind, although the distinction between these categories often became blurred in interwar images of Finnish citizen-soldiers. Cathleen Canning and Sonya O. Rose point out that citizenship sometimes seems virtually

¹⁰⁴ Rose, 'Fit to fight' 2007, pp. 132-135.

¹⁰⁵ Pnina Werbner & Nira Yuval-Davis, 'Women and the new discourse of citizenship', in idem, eds., *Women, Citizenship and Difference* (London & New York 1999), pp. 1-38, at pp. 1-5. Cf Nira Yuval-Davis, *Gender & Nation* (London, Thousand Oaks & New Delhi, 1997), pp. 68-92.

inextricable from nationality, in the sense of membership in national communities that privilege origin and culture.¹⁰⁶

In the famous formulation of Benedict Anderson, peoples and nations are “imagined communities” in the sense that the individual never meets or gets to know most of all the other people he feels, or is told to feel, connected to. Nations are *limited*, according to Anderson, since they are constituted through notions of inclusion, exclusion and boundaries between “us” and “them”.¹⁰⁷ Citizenship therefore has significant similarities with gender. Gender is often described as a logic of difference and hierarchy, yet, as aptly pointed out by the sociologist Teemu Tallberg, it is just as much a logic of sameness and social connection.¹⁰⁸ In every claim of difference between women and men, or between ‘real’ men and other men, is inherent a claim about some significant *sameness* within the categories in question. The same applies to nations. The nation, writes Anderson, is always conceived as “a deep, horizontal comradeship”, regardless of actual inequalities and social injustices within it. According to Anderson, it was this feeling of affinity and “fraternity” that made it possible for millions of people in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries “not so much to kill, as willingly to die for such limited imaginings.”¹⁰⁹

The Finnish word for citizen, *kansalainen*, actually translates literally as ‘member of the people’. The term was created in an agrarian Finnish society in the mid-nineteenth century. According to historian Max Engman, it derived its political content from a Nordic concept of freeholding peasants’ rights and virtues.¹¹⁰ According to Henrik Stenius, the Finnish state, nation and society were often used as interchangeable terms around 1918. By this time, however, the concept *kansalainen* had in many contexts taken on more exclusionary connotations of being a member of the “true” Finnish people – as opposed to the “traitorous” socialists who were railed at as *punaryssät*, “red Russians”.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁶ Kathleen Canning & Sonya O. Rose, ‘Gender, citizenship and subjectivity: Some historical and theoretical considerations’, *Gender & History* 13:3 (2001), 427–443, at pp. 427–428.

¹⁰⁷ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities. Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, [1983] revised edition (London & New York, 2006), pp. 6–7.

¹⁰⁸ Teemu Tallberg, *The Gendered Social Organisation of Defence. Two Ethnographic Case Studies in the Finnish Defence Forces* (Helsinki, 2009), p. 54. In the same vein, R.W. Connell describes gender arrangements as the ways in which people, groups and organisations are both connected and divided. Connell, *Gender* 2002, p. 54.

¹⁰⁹ Anderson, *Imagined Communities* 2006, p. 7.

¹¹⁰ Max Engman, ‘Folket – en inledning’, in Derek Fewster, ed., *Folket. Studier i olika vetenskapers syn på begreppet folk* (Helsingfors, 2000), pp. 7–18, at pp. 8–9; Henrik Stenius, ‘Kansalainen’, in Matti Hyvärinen et al., eds., *Käsitteet liikkeessä. Suomen poliittisen historian käsitehistoria* (Tampere, 2003), pp. 309–362.

¹¹¹ Stenius, ‘Kansalainen’ 2003, pp. 322, 356–358.

In interwar Finland, belonging to the “true” Finnish people was often limited and contested in terms of language and ethnicity. In many contexts, relationships between the Finnish-speaking majority of circa ninety percent and the Swedish-speaking minority of circa ten percent were inflamed by bitter fights over the relative status of the two national languages.¹¹² This particular dynamic of national inclusion and exclusion is not, however, visible in my sources on conscripted soldiering. When the Finnish soldier was depicted and debated, his language does not appear to have been an issue. Reminiscences written by former conscripts from the Swedish minority would possibly bring the language issue to the fore, but the narratives I analyse were all written by men from the Finnish majority population. Within the officer corps, the predominance of Swedish-speakers among the higher-ranking officers was a potential source of friction. In the political debates over conscription and in interwar military propaganda, however, the language dispute was not raised. I will briefly discuss this issue in Chapter Two and return to the possible reasons for this silence in the concluding chapter, but language will not be a central topic of this work.

Masculinity as a homosocial enactment

The classic theorists of the history of nationalism have been criticised by feminist scholars for ignoring how nationalisms are gendered. Nationalisms usually involve specific notions of both manhood and womanhood, yet they have been articulated from a masculine point of view. They are implicated in gender power, since their metaphors and symbols, describing the nation as a family with a gendered division of tasks and duties, have contributed to polarised and hierarchical gender orders. Nationalism often linked women with the reproduction of timeless national culture through child rearing and housewifery, whereas men were associated with national progress, wealth and grandness through public activity in the sphere of economics, politics and war.¹¹³

What is considered masculine is certainly often defined in relation to an inferior or subordinated category. However, that other is not always

¹¹² Ari Uino, ‘Kielitaistelu ja “uusi suomalaisuusliike” 1918-1939’, in Päiviö Tommila & Maritta Pohls, eds., *Herää Suomi. Suomalaisuusliikkeen historia* (Kuopio, 1989), pp. 177–249.

¹¹³ See e.g. Yuval-Davis, *Gender and Nation* 1997; Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather. Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest* (New York & London, 1995), especially pp. 352–360; Cynthia Enloe, *Bananas, Beaches and Bases. Making Feminist Sense of International Politics* (Berkeley, 1989); Tuula Gordon, Katri Komulainen & Kirsti Lempiäinen, eds., *Suomineitonen bei! Kansallisuuden sukupuoli* (Tampere, 2002); Johanna Valenius, *Undressing the Maid. Gender, Sexuality and the Body in the Construction of the Finnish Nation* (Helsinki, 2004); Eira Juntti, *Gender and Nationalism in Finland in the Early Nineteenth Century*, [diss.] (Binghamton University, 2004).

women. Nationalist images of masculinity, indeed any references to manliness, go hand in hand with images of *countertypes* and *unmanliness*; immature boys, decrepit old men, “cowards”, “weaklings”, or men belonging to an “inferior” social class, race, people or nation. Negative stereotypes of social outsiders, foreigners or sexual deviants are used as a foil against which the ideal masculinity can define itself, strengthening the normative ideal and shoring up the self-esteem of the “normal” majority of men.¹¹⁴ Jonas Liliequist has recommended analysis of references to unmanliness as oftentimes more revealing of the implicit and tacit norms for masculinity than a vain search for articulated positive notions.¹¹⁵

Historians of masculinity have found that masculinity in the past was in many contexts what masculinity studies scholar Michael S. Kimmel has called a “homosocial enactment”.¹¹⁶ *Homosociality*, or how men seek the company of other men and spend much of their time in all-male environments where women might be actively denied access, is a characteristic part of men’s everyday life in many historical periods and cultures. Masculinity as a homosocial enactment means that men’s masculine status in other men’s eyes is what matters most to them. According to Kimmel, most men in modern American history have probably not felt particularly powerful in spite of their privileges in relation to women. On the contrary, they experienced themselves subordinated to parents, teachers, bosses, politicians or corporate power. Their demonstrations of masculine prowess was more about fear of failure and ridicule in other men’s eyes, of being dominated and controlled by other men, than about patriarchal self-assurance.¹¹⁷

All-male conscription armies were homosocial environments where masculinities were challenged and confirmed, albeit most men probably did not actively seek that kind of male company – at least not quite in the way that classic studies of homosocial associations have portrayed men as attracted to each other for mutual confirmation and exchange of resources.¹¹⁸ There is a strong connection between fear of being ridiculed,

¹¹⁴ Mosse, *Image of Man* 1996, pp. 6, 56–76.

¹¹⁵ Jonas Liliequist, ‘Från niding till sprätt. En studie i det svenska omanlighetsbegreppets historia från vikingatid till sent 1700-tal’, in Anne-Marie Berggren, ed., *Manligt och omanligt i ett historiskt perspektiv* (Stockholm, 1999), pp. 73–95.

¹¹⁶ Michael S. Kimmel, ‘Masculinity as homophobia. Fear, shame and silence in the construction of gender identity’, in Harry Brod & Michael Kaufman, eds., *Theorizing Masculinities* (Thousand Oaks, London & New Delhi, 1994), pp. 119–141, at pp. 128–129; idem, *Manhood in America. A Cultural History* [1996], 2nd ed., (New York & London, 2006), p. 5. Cf Ekenstam, ‘Män, manlighet och omanlighet’, 2006, pp. 33, 44–46.

¹¹⁷ Kimmel, *Manhood in America* 2006, pp. 4–7.

¹¹⁸ On the concept of homosociality, see Jean Lipman-Blumen, ‘Towards a homosocial theory of sex roles: An explanation of the sex segregation of social institutions’, *Signs* 1:33 (1976), pp. 15–31;

stigmatised with the label of unmanliness, and military recruitment. As pointed out by anthropologists and political scientists who have made comparative analyses of masculinity and soldiering in different societies, the cultural connections between the warrior role and masculine prestige work both as stick and carrot. They offer the male individual symbolic rewards in the form of honour and status as a “real man” in exchange for facing the hardships and dangers of soldiering, but they also threaten him with shaming and loss of identity, with a social denial of his manhood, in case he should refuse.¹¹⁹ In nineteenth and twentieth century Western societies, such social and cultural pressure on men to conform to soldiering was often exercised through nationalist ideologies. Naturally, not only other men, but women as well put pressure on men to conform to normative notions of “real” manhood and citizenship. Famous examples are the “white feather”, with which British women disgraced men who did not volunteer to fight in the Great War, and the condemnation of British conscientious objectors during the Second World War as “pacifists and pansies”.¹²⁰ In the formulation of Joane Nagel, “once a war is widely defined as a matter of ‘duty’, ‘honour’, ‘patriotism’, a defence of ‘freedom’ and the ‘American way of life’, etc., then resistance for many men (and women) becomes a matter of cowardice and dishonour.”¹²¹

The masculine norms that force reluctant men to go to war have often been conceptualised in terms of a “hegemonic masculinity” in society. R.W. Connell’s theory of hegemonic masculinity has been one of the most influential – and most criticised – theories within social scientific research on men and masculinities for the past 25 years. The theory posits a hierarchical social structure of domination and subordination among different masculinities. Connell defines “hegemonic masculinity” as the most “culturally exalted” form of masculinity, the ideal and yardstick that other forms of masculinities are measured against. Yet the fundamental purpose and function of hegemonic masculinity is to justify men’s domination over women. By drawing on the Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci’s concept of

Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosexual Desire* (New York, 1985); Sharon R. Bird, ‘Welcome to the men’s club. Homosexuality and the maintenance of hegemonic masculinity’, *Gender and Society* 10:2 (1996), pp. 120–132; Michael Meuser, ‘Serious games: Competition and the homosocial construction of masculinity’, *Norma* 2:1, (2007), p. 38–51.

¹¹⁹ David Gilmore, *Manhood in the Making. Cultural Concepts of Masculinity* (New Haven & London, 1990), p. 221–226; Joshua S. Goldstein, *War and Gender. How Gender Shapes the War System and Vice Versa* (Cambridge, 2001), pp. 128–252.

¹²⁰ Sonya O. Rose, ‘Temperate Heroes: concepts of masculinity in Second World War Britain’, in Dudink et al (eds.), *Masculinities in Politics and War* 2004, pp. 177–195; Lee Jones, ‘The Others’: Gender and Conscientious Objection in the First World War’, *Norma* 2:3 (2008), pp. 99–113.

¹²¹ Joane Nagel, ‘Masculinity and nationalism: gender and sexuality in the making of nations’, *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 21: 2 (1998), pp. 242–269, at p. 259.

hegemony, Connell describes the dominance of one certain form of masculinity in terms parallel to the political hegemony of a ruling class when it has managed to persuade subordinate groups to accept its own ideology. Hegemony in this sense is based on persuasion, consent and the marginalisation and ridicule of alternatives, not primarily on coercion and physical force.¹²²

As John Tosh has pointed out, Connell's notion that the dominance of certain forms of masculinity would always be based on what ideas serve best to legitimate women's subordination is too narrow. Even if one accepts the profoundly hierarchical nature of masculinities, and the investment of men in power and dominance, it does not follow that maintaining power over women is always the issue at stake. Instead, Tosh argues, it can be to uphold the power of one class or religion over another, and in these cases the power over men may be more significant than power over women. Within the dialectic of comradeship and competition among men, "masculine" attributes are celebrated in ways that have as much to do with peer-group standing as with sexual dominance.¹²³

Stephen Whitehead has criticised hegemonic masculinity for invoking the image of a static patriarchal structure. Connell is anxious to emphasise that the hegemonic position is always contestable as new groups challenge old solutions and construct a new hegemony. Yet the structure of dominance and subordination still appears fixed, Whitehead argues, even if the contents of its different levels are seen as open to contest and change.¹²⁴ In 2005, Connell and James W. Messerschmidt presented an elaboration of the theory that accommodated for different hegemonies on the local, national and transnational levels.¹²⁵ As pointed out by Jonas Liliequist, the model nonetheless runs the risk of directing analysis towards trying to identify which forms of masculinity in a given historic setting should be assigned which positions in the power structure, instead of empirically investigating

¹²² Connell, *Masculinities* 1995, pp. 76–86, quote p. 77. The theory was originally formulated by Tim Carrigan, R. W. Connell and James Lee in the article 'Towards a New Sociology of Masculinity', *Theory and Society* 14:5 (1985), pp. 551–604. See also R. W. Connell & James W. Messerschmidt, 'Hegemonic Masculinity. Rethinking the Concept', *Gender & Society* 19:6 (2005), pp. 829–859; Hearn, 'From hegemonic masculinity' 2004, pp. 53–59.

¹²³ John Tosh, 'Hegemonic masculinity and the history of gender', in Dudink et al., eds., *Masculinities in Politics and War* 2004, pp. 41–58, at p. 53. Cf Scott, *Gender and the Politics of History* 1999, pp. xi–xii (preface to the second revised edition).

¹²⁴ Whitehead, *Men and Masculinities* 2002, pp. 93–94.

¹²⁵ R. W. Connell & James W. Messerschmidt, 'Hegemonic masculinity. Rethinking the concept', *Gender & Society* 19:6 (2005), pp. 829–859.

open questions about *how* gender functions as an organising principle in specific historic settings.¹²⁶

For these reasons, the concept of hegemonic masculinity is not used as such in this work. Some of the valuable elements in Connell's theory are retained; the notions that different masculinities often are in hierarchical relationships to each other, that some masculinities are more associated with social power and prestige than others, and that different definitions of masculinity contest with each other for dominance and the marginalisation of alternatives. Whether some group in interwar Finland actually managed to persuade others to acknowledge its own standards as legitimate and superior to others must, however, be an open question to be investigated, not a theory to be postulated.

¹²⁶ Liliequist, 'Ära, dygd och manlighet' 2009, p. 118. Cf Scott, *Gender and the Politics of History* 1999, pp. xi-xii.

2 The politics of conscription

Eero Tuominen was called up to do his military service in April 1919. At the time, he was a student at a folk high school in a country parish in South-western Finland. Similar to all other Finnish young men turning 21 that year, he had to leave his civilian life to spend 18 months in the brand new national armed forces. His recollections of the departure, written down half a century after the event, accentuate the mixed emotions and anxiety that this event aroused in both him and those around him. The school arranged a farewell party for those called up, an “impressive event” that Tuominen remembered as “solemn and melancholic.” Some participants wept with emotion. “The director, a refined and educated theologian, spoke beautifully about how our own army now protects our young realm. About how it is great and noble to be allowed into the ranks of our young and glorious army. I gave a little speech on behalf of those leaving. I was moved myself”, Tuominen wrote.

Later that night, Tuominen and his girlfriend, who was studying at the same folk high school, stole outside to have a moment of privacy. They were standing under a tall fir tree and the rain was pouring down around them. “It all felt so dreary and hopeless as we had no idea when we would meet again. The times were grim and uncertain.” The two lovers parted in a mood “as dark and gloomy as the night itself.” The scenes at the train station the next morning did not lift Tuominen’s spirits. A large crowd had come to see the recruits off on their journey to the garrison town of Turku, but the atmosphere on the platform was depressed. “People cried as if they were seeing us off on our final journey”, Tuominen wrote.¹

There were good reasons for the bleak mood at the train station. Less than a year had passed since the end of the Civil War of 1918. Tens of thousands had died in the fighting, been executed or died through famine and disease in the internment camps. The call-up was thoroughly repulsive for conscripts who sympathised with the socialist insurgents. In many cases, their fathers, uncles or brothers had been killed in combat, executed or

¹ The detailed descriptions in Tuominen’s recollections, as well as quotes from allegedly authentic letters between him and his girlfriend at the time, give the impression that this account is based on preserved diaries and letters. In this respect, it is rather unusual in the collection of memories of military training in the former Archives of the Turku University Ethnology Department (TYKL), nowadays Archives of the Turku University School of Cultural Research. TYKL enquiry number 45, informant number 27.

starved to death by that very army now summoning their whole male age class. Even for non-socialist young men such as Eero Tuominen, who embraced the “white” kind of patriotism that the folk high school director expressed in his speech, entering the army gave reasons for anxiety. The press printed reports of dismal sanitary conditions, food shortages and poor clothing in the garrisons.² There was also an imminent danger that Tuominen and his comrades would soon see real military action. Russia was in the turmoil of revolution and civil war. Finnish voluntary forces were engaged in fighting against Bolshevik troops in Eastern Karelia, the region north of St Petersburg and Lake Ladoga, and in Estonia. In the spring and summer of 1919, Tuominen’s garrison town was buzzing with rumours about the Finnish general Mannerheim planning an attack on St Petersburg. Just as the threat of war in the East seemed to diminish, Tuominen’s battalion was sent to the south-western Åland islands to fend off an anticipated attempt by Sweden to occupy and annex the islands.

Military service and the conscript army were new and strange phenomena for Eero Tuominen and his contemporaries. Until 1918, there had been no Finnish military for almost twenty years. Cultural and institutional military traditions in Finnish society had faded away, although they had not been forgotten. Finland had been spared from major military conflicts ever since the war of 1808–09, when Russia conquered Finland from the Swedish realm. For most of the nineteenth century, there had only been a few Finnish military units, consisting of two or three thousand enlisted, professional soldiers. Universal male conscription was introduced in the Russian empire in the 1860’s–1870’s and the diet of the autonomous Grand Duchy of Finland enacted a conscription bill of its own in 1878. For the elite of Finland, the eight conscripted rifle battalions and one cavalry regiment created around 1880, consisting of Finnish youngsters, led by Finnish officers and stationed in Finland, symbolised a significant step towards Finnish nationhood. A “Finnish Army” was added to the old Swedish legislation, the provincial diet, and the Finnish central bank, currency and stamps introduced in the 1860’s. All these institutions marked Finland’s cultural and political autonomy from the Russian motherland.³ However, the

² Some examples from Swedish-language non-socialist newspapers: ‘Huru förhåller det sig med vår ungdoms fosterlandskärlek?’, *Åbo Underrättelser* 21.9.1918; ‘Värnplikten’, *Borgåbladet* 17.09.1918; ‘Flykten undan värnplikten’ *Hufvudstadsbladet* 5.9.1918; ‘Arméns förplägnad’, *Dagens Press* 26.10.1918; ‘Vår armé och dess organisation’ *Svenska Tidningen* 14.3.1919; ‘Vår armé’ *Hufvudstadsbladet* 25.3.1919; ‘Militära förhållanden’ *Hufvudstadsbladet* 4.7.1919; ‘Förhållandena inom militären’ *Åbo Underrättelser* 23.1.1920; ‘Missförhållandena inom militären’ *Östra Nyland* 28.1.1920; ‘Missförhållandena inom militären’ *Vasabladet* 25.1.1920; ‘Deserteringarna’ *Hufvudstadsbladet* 27.7.1919; ‘Deserteringarna’ *Svenska tidningen* 23.8.1919.

³ Cf Pekka Visuri, *Puolustusvoimat itsenäisyyden turvana* (Helsinki, 1998), pp. 12–14.

Finnish state simply could not afford to feed, house and clothe whole age classes of Finnish men. Less than one young man in ten was therefore called up for three years of active military service in the 1880's and 1890's. Another 30% were placed in the reserve and given a mere 90 days of military training, spread out over three years. The majority of men were completely excused on an array of different exemption clauses, such as a weak constitution, bad health or being their family's sole provider.⁴

Through the latter half of the 1800's, Finnish political thinkers had been building a notion of Finland as a separate state in personal union with the Russian Empire, contrary to Russian views. Starting in 1899, the Russian central authorities took measures to counteract what they interpreted as an increasing threat of Finnish separatism and manifest the authority of nationwide legislation in Finland. Finnish nationalists perceived of this as perjury and an oppression of Finnish political autonomy and national culture. A matter at the core of Russian concerns was actually a reform of conscription in Finland. The Russian government wanted to homogenise it with military service in Russia and integrate the Finnish troops into the imperial army. The Finnish troops were therefore dismantled in 1901–1902.

The new military service law of 1901 resulted in nationalist mobilisation and widespread “conscription strikes” in Finland. Fewer than half of those who received call-up papers were present at the draft in the spring of 1902, although the number of Finns who would actually have to perform military service under the new law was tiny; 500 of those eligible for the draft in 1902 and 190 in the next two years would be selected by lot. Eventually, the Russian authorities deemed it was better to have the Finns pay a hefty sum towards the defence of the empire than to have continued unrest in a strategic borderland and have Finnish soldiers as disloyal troublemakers in the ranks of the Russian army. The military service law was suspended in 1904 – and with it all conscription for the inhabitants of Finland.⁵ The Finns did not even have to send their sons into the Great War of 1914–1918, where almost two million conscripted young men from most other parts of the vast Russian Empire perished.⁶

The Russian Revolution, Finland's declaration of independence in December 1917 and the Finnish Civil War of January–May 1918 brought military matters back to the fore in Finnish politics and society. An ample illustration of how soldierhood suddenly rushed into the lives of young men

⁴ Screen, *Finnish Army* 1996, pp. 11–36; Seitkari, *Vuoden 1878 asevelvollisuuslain* 1951, pp. 200–206, 253–255; Kronlund et al., *Suomen puolustuslaitos* 1988, pp. 15–22.

⁵ Kirby, *Concise History of Finland* 2006, pp. 140–142; Matti Klinge, *Finlands historia*, Vol. 3, *Kejsartiden* (Helsingfors, 1996), pp. 341–344, 375, 397.

⁶ Kronlund et al., *Suomen puolustuslaitos* 1988, pp. 15–22.

is an episode in Eero Tuominen's recollections. On his way to reporting for duty in the Turku garrison in April 1919, he stopped at his home village. There, he met with three good friends from the local sports association. As was the habit on festive occasions, the four youngsters went to the local photographer's shop to have their group-picture taken. In this picture there was Tuominen, on his way to do his military service, Juha who had just been disbanded from doing his, Matti who had recently returned from participating as a volunteer in the military expedition to Eastern Karelia, and Jussi who was just about to leave for fighting in the Estonian war of independence. The four comrades in this picture belonged to a generation who experienced a dramatic shift in the relationship between manhood and being a soldier. Theirs was a generation of Finnish men the vast majority of which underwent intensive military training and participated in either the wars of 1918-1920 or those of 1939-1944.

However, at the time this group picture was taken, a political struggle was still raging over what the manly duty to fight for your country would actually mean in the new Finnish national state. The main argument of this chapter is that the militarisation of masculinities in interwar Finland was no matter of course, but the result of a political and ideological process and initially subject of intense controversies. Even the fundamental axiom of interwar nationalism, the manly duty to fight for the nation, was contested at Finland's moment of birth. A majority soon accepted this duty, but a heated debate continued for years over exactly what this duty should entail in peacetime society. This was a struggle over a significant part of the meaning of Finnish manhood for decades to come.

This is shown by an analysis of the parliamentary debates over conscription, which are used as a prism of the attitudes to the conscript army and the relation of soldierhood to manliness in society. Admittedly, what is said in parliament is always a mixture of sincere opinions and political tactics. Many things that all agree upon are never voiced, whereas some minor detail upon which opinions differ can be object of much argument. These debates must therefore be read with care and caution. In a democracy, with an extensive freedom of speech such as Finland experienced in the interwar period, parliamentary debates possibly give an exaggerated impression of the *resistance* within society to government policies. Yet they also display how those in power try to publicly legitimate their course of action. Moreover, these debates were not "just rhetoric", but had a direct impact on the institutional arrangements of conscription and military training, and thus on the social, experiential and physical places Finnish men had to enter by sole virtue of their gender. To the extent that the politics of conscription constructed new meanings of male citizenship, they differentiated it from female citizenship, and excluded both women and

men who were considered physically unfit or politically “untrustworthy” from an important arena of civic participation.

Two different models of the citizen-soldier, associated with different underlying notions of Finnish masculinities and their relationship to soldiering, were competing with each other in the political arena: the militiaman and the cadre army soldier. In the militia system, there would be universal conscription but no standing peacetime army. All those liable for military service would gather at regular intervals for a few days or weeks of military training, and only a small number of officers would be full-time military professionals. In the cadre army system, used e.g. in the German, Russian and Austrian empires before the world war, the conscripts lived full-time in a standing conscripted army for a few years and were given intensive military training by a relatively large corps of professional officers. In case of war and mobilisation, this standing army would form the “cadre” and organisational framework to be supplemented with reservists.⁷

As for Eero Tuominen and his friends meeting in April 1919, Matti and Jussi could be seen as representing voluntary nationalist “freedom fighters” closely akin to the militiaman ideal; valorous and autonomous, spontaneously going to war to fight with their like-minded brothers-in-arms for what they themselves believed in. Juha, on the other hand, fresh out of the Prussian-style cadre-army military training of the time, would represent the disciplined and well-drilled conscripted soldier ideal, out of sheer patriotism submitting to a superior military collective and the leadership of professional officers. It can be assumed that both notions of soldierhood were tumbling and turning around in Tuominen’s young mind as he bid his family and his three comrades farewell and boarded the train to the garrison town of Turku, his new regiment and a new military life.

2.1 *Military debate on the verge of a revolution*

The day after Finland had declared independence on December 6th, 1917, the Finnish parliament started debating a bill that proposed the establishment of national armed forces. Fundamental questions were raised

⁷ After the mobilisation system was reformed in 1932, Finland did not technically speaking have a cadre army any more. I will mainly use the term “cadre army” when discussing the debates in the 1920’s, instead of the perhaps more descriptive “standing army”, since it was the term used by contemporaries. For the contemporary understandings of the militia system vs the cadre army system, see the parliamentary committee report on conscription in 1920, *Asevelvollisuuslakikomitean mietintö*, Komiteamietintö N:o 23, 1920, pp. 48–50, 77.

for debate, from the basic ethical justification of armed forces to their intended purpose, whose interests they would serve, whom they would actually be directed against, as well as what kind of educational and moral impact army life would have on young men. Almost the only thing actually *not* actually discussed was that the eventual military duty would only concern men. In the prolonged and heated debate, which both proponents and opponents understood as concerning a crucial political decision, a vast array of different arguments were put forward, displaying the scope of conflicts and disagreements over military, security and foreign policy – and, although the parliamentarians hardly thought in those terms, over an important part of Finland’s future gender order.

After the February 1917 revolution in Russia, Finnish society had entered a state of disorder and uncertainty. The political system of the Grand Duchy regained its autonomy, which had been circumscribed by the Russian war administration, but large Russian military detachments remained stationed in Finland. Russian officers had been murdered by their men at the beginning of the revolution and the remaining officers had difficulties controlling their men. There were instances of Russian soldiers committing crimes, causing disorder and frightening Finnish civilians. More importantly, there were strikes and demonstrations as the workers’ movement tried to seize the opportunities offered by the general upheaval. Food shortages caused by the international situation provoked riots and strikes by farm workers in July and August resulted in outbursts of political violence. The gendarmerie had been closed down by the change of regime and the maintenance of order in towns taken over by local committees and militias. Starting in the spring of 1917, citizens’ guards were springing up to fill the void left by the paralysed state authorities. At first these were mainly “red guards” formed by socialists and workers, but as a reaction, ever more non-socialist civil guards, also known as “White Guards” or “Protective Corps”⁸, followed suit. In July, the provisional Russian government dissolved the Finnish provincial parliament, which had a social democratic majority. The new parliament, elected in October, had a non-socialist majority, which only rendered legal reforms to appease the worker’s unrest more difficult. The Social Democrats still obtained 45% of the popular vote, only 2% less than in 1916. Following the October Revolution in Russia, the Social Democrats arranged a general strike in Finland, which in places

⁸ These organisations have usually been termed ‘the civil guards’ or ‘the civil guards’ movement’ in English language historiography. However, the name that this movement used for itself, both in Finnish and Swedish (*Suojeluskunnat/Skyddskårerna*), actually translates as “The Protective Corps”. Since the Red Guards in 1917–1918 were also, in a sense, civil guards, the prevalent English terminology is debatable. However, in order to avoid confusion, I will follow the established practice in referring to *Suojeluskunnat* as ‘the civil guards’.

disintegrated into violent crime and clashes between red guards and civil guards. Over 30 people were killed. Hopes of a socialist revolution in Finland and fears of a civil war were very much in evidence, as political polarisation only deepened.⁹

In this situation, the liberal representative Antti Mikkola (1869–1918) submitted a motion to parliament, supported by MPs from all non-socialist parties, demanding that a national military be created and that the Russian troops leave the country immediately. The stated purpose was to avoid a civil war by providing the lawful government with firmly organised regular armed forces. Mikkola described this new army as a “people’s squad”, temporarily based on the old conscription law of 1878, until a “people’s militia based on universal conscription” could be developed along the lines of the Swiss militia system.¹⁰ This was an obvious attempt to win the support of the Agrarian Party and the Social Democrats. These popular parties of the political centre and left both harboured a deep mistrust of cadre armies of the Russian and Prussian type, which they associated with the monarchism and aristocratic authoritarianism of nineteenth century society.¹¹ This should not be understood as a resistance against the idea of the citizen-soldier as such, and the manly duty to take up arms to defend one’s social class, country, republic or nation. Rather, it expressed an aspiration towards a more democratic, republican, even anti-authoritarian vision a military system where the citizen-soldier could retain more of his autonomy as a free citizen.

The Agrarians and Social Democrats between them actually had a majority in parliament for most of the period 1917–1922, but they were unable to unite around this issue. Due to the inflamed domestic situation in 1917, the debate on Mikkola’s motion became a power-struggle between socialists and non-socialists over whether parliament should grant the government any kind of armed forces to restore order. The Social Democrats believed that the proposed army would primarily be used against

⁹ For an overview of the events in Finland during the Russian revolution and the Finnish civil war in English language, see Anthony F. Upton, *The Finnish Revolution 1917–1918* (Minneapolis, 1980); in Swedish language, see Pertti Luntinen & Turo Manninen, *Finland 1917–1920*, Vol. 1, *Ett land blir fritt* (Helsingfors, 1993). See also Selén, *Sarkatakien maa* 2001, pp. 14–20.

¹⁰ Parliamentary records of the second diet of Finland 1917 [Vp II 1917], Anom. Ehd. N:o 4, Liitteet I:2; Vp II 1917, pöytäkirjat I, p. 406 (7.12.1917). Cf. Tervasmäki, *Eduskuntaryhmit ja maanpuolustus* 1964, p. 46; V.-P. Somerkari, *Kansanmiliisi Suomen itsenäisyyden ajan alkuvuosien poliittis-sotilaallisena ongelmana* [Unpublished master’s thesis in political history] (Helsinki University, 1953), pp. 17–19.

¹¹ Juhani Mylly, *Maalaisliitto ja turvallisuuspolitiikka. Suomen ulkopoliittika ja turvallisuuskeskymykset agraari puolueiden politiikassa maan itsenäistymisestä talvisotaan*. Vol. I *Aktiivisesta heimopoliitikasta passiiviseen isolatioon 1918–1933* (Turku, 1978), pp. 138–143; Osmo Hyytiä, *Puolueettomuuden ja rauban linja. SDP:n subtautuminen Suomen ulkopoliittikaan ja turvallisuuskeskymyksiin toukokuu 1918 – toukokuu 1922* (Helsinki, 1986), pp. 235–246.

the red guards and filibustered the bill. The first reading dragged out into January 1918, as more than a hundred addresses were made. Parallel to the endless debate, the Social Democrats actively campaigned against the bill among their voters. Their critique of a national conscript army in parliament thus became wide spread. It can be assumed that the arguments they used were well remembered during and after the Civil War of 1918, when a military system bearing a strong semblance to the kind they had criticised was indeed established.¹²

An armed force against the working class

The main thrust of the social democratic representatives' critique of the proposal was the assertion that the planned armed forces were not really intended to protect the country from external threats, since any military defence that Finland could establish was negligible in comparison to the resources of the surrounding great powers. Its real purpose, they claimed, was to defend an economic system of capitalist exploitation against the just demands of the working class. They referred to examples from Russia, Germany, France, England and America, where capitalists had allegedly used the military to crush the workers' legitimate struggle for better conditions. They also dismissed the Swiss militia model, which they claimed had proven fit to be a tool for the class interest of the Swiss bourgeoisie and condemned by the Swiss workers. If the bourgeoisie tried to enforce conscription according to the old law of 1878, the workers would not obey. "The conscious youth of Finland will not sacrifice its time, health, life and limb for the spoils of the bourgeoisie and to support its oligarchy", stated MP Yrjö Sirola.¹³

In addition to their tactical reasons for opposing the bill, the Social Democrats were drawing on a long tradition. In the second half of the nineteenth century, German social democrats co-opted liberal ideas from half a century earlier, about standing armies as instruments of absolutist power and a hindrance for liberal democracy. Drawing on republican notions of free men and citizen defending their liberty and their people, liberals in many European countries had envisioned some form of civic militias, "arming the people" as an alternative way of protecting both the national borders and civic freedoms. From the 1860's onwards, the emerging social democratic movement continued both the critique of standing armies and

¹² Ohto Manninen, *Kansannoususta armeijaksi. Asevelvollisuuden toimeenpano ja siihen subtautuminen valkoisessa Suomessa kevättakvella 1918* (Helsinki, 1974), pp. 28–31; Tervasmäki, *Eduskuntaryhmät ja maanpuolustus* 1964, pp. 47–51.

¹³ Vp II 1917, protocols I, pp. 406–409, 411, 416–417, 419, 421, 439, 716–717, 727; quote p. 416.

the enthusiasm for the militia system of democratic liberalism. The German social democrats regarded the Prussian cadre army as a political and moral threat to the working classes. They claimed that it served only the interests of the ruling classes, both domestically and abroad, and pointed out that its leading positions were reserved for members of the social elites although its costs were born by the working classes. Social democrats thought that military training in the conscript army stifled young working class men's potential for intellectual development. They regarded military education in its existing form as an education in coarseness, brutality, stupidity and slavishness. Unable to essentially change the military system, the German social democrats carried on a continuous criticism of the cadre army in parliament, for example exposing case upon case of scandalous maltreatment of conscripted soldiers.¹⁴

Reputations of capitalist "militarism" and "imperialism", especially the standing armies of the colonial powers, became an important part of international socialist ideology after the founding of the Second International in Paris 1889.¹⁵ The influential German social democratic Erfurt Programme of 1891 included demands for replacing the standing cadre army in Germany with a *Volkswehr*, a militia army. It also called for international conflicts being settled peacefully in arbitration courts.¹⁶ The analogous Forssa Programme, adopted by the Finnish Social Democrats in 1903, demanded decreased military burdens, a militia to replace the standing army, and "the idea of peace realised in practice".¹⁷ An important pamphlet in this tradition was Karl Liebknecht's *Militarismus und Anti-Militarismus* (1907), which promptly had been translated and published in Swedish in 1908 and in Finnish in 1910. Many of the arguments used by the Finnish Social Democrats in 1917 can be found in this work.¹⁸

¹⁴ Reinhard Höhn, *Sozialismus und Heer*, Vol I, *Heer und Krieg im Bild des Sozialismus*, [2nd edition] (Bad Harzburg, 1961), pp. 5–30, 278–281; idem, *Sozialismus und Heer*, Vol II, *Die Auseinandersetzung der Sozialdemokratie mit dem Moltkeschen Heer*, [2nd edition] (Bad Homburg v.d.H., Berlin & Zürich 1961), pp. 137–142, 166–173, 287–303, 338–355; Frevert, *Kasernierte Nation* 2001, pp. 67–69, 186–187, 264–269.

¹⁵ Yvonne Hirdman, *Vi bygger landet. Den svenska arbetarrörelsens historia från Per Götrek till Olof Palme* (Stockholm, 1979), pp. 126–137.

¹⁶ Das Erfurter Programm (1891), http://www.germanhistorydocs.ghi-dc.org/sub_document.cfm?document_id=766, retrieved September 19th, 2008. For its influence on the Finnish Social Democratic Party, see Hannu Soikkanen, *Kobti Kansanvaltaa. Suomen Sosialidemokraattinen Puolue 75 vuotta, Vol I, 1899–1937* (Helsinki, 1975), pp. 39–44, 51–58. On the broader history of socialist anti-militarism in Germany, see Reinhard Höhn, *Sozialismus und Heer*, Vol I–3, (1961–1969).

¹⁷ *Sosiaalidemokraattisen puolueen ohjelma. Hyväksytty Forssan puoluekokouksessa 17–20.8.1903*, POHTIVA Database of political programmes, Finnish Social Science Data Archive, University of Tampere. <<http://www.fsd.uta.fi/pohtiva/ohjelma?tunniste=sdpohjelma1903>>, retrieved September 19th, 2008.

¹⁸ Karl Liebknecht, *Militarismi ja anti-militarismi. Erikoisesti kansainvälistä nuorisoliikettä silmälläpitäen* [1907] (Tampere, 1910), especially pp. 15–16, 22–27, 97–100. Vp II 1917, protocols I, pp. 726–727.

The moral consequences of military education

The Social Democrats claimed that Mikkola's motion would revive the old Finnish conscript army, "that compromise between Russian and Finnish militarism of the 1870's, a perfect copy of Russian militarism", with an aristocratic officer corps that formed a "closed and insular caste". The Finnish people, they said, always detested that institution, and young men had done all they could to evade being drafted. It was socially unfair, since the sons of the wealthy could use various exemption rules to dodge conscription. Worst of all, it was a place where young men of the working classes were brutalized by the officers' teachings and the immorality of life among soldiers.¹⁹

Anni Huotari and Hilja Pärssinen, the two female socialist MPs who participated in the debate, both opposed any kind of militarisation of Finnish men. Huotari stated that Finland's women regardless of political colour "needed their husbands, brothers and sons to take care of and protect their homes". They would not allow their men to be "packed into the morally corrupting atmosphere of military barracks."²⁰ MP Antti Mäkelin recollected serving in the old conscripted army himself in 1894, at a time when food riots had occurred in Helsinki, shops been plundered, and the military was put in a state of alert. According to Mäkelin, the officers lecturing to the soldiers drummed into them that they must fire on command, no matter what – even if their own parents or siblings were in the targeted mob. "Is that not a horrible education?" exclaimed Mäkelin:

There a father who has done everything to make his boy a man, there a mother, who has suffered good and bad times with her child, trying to make him a decent man. And when he has become a decent man, a brisk youth, a strong man, he has to kill his own mother and father, if the interests of capitalism demand it and the capitalist orders him to. This is what it is like, my good friends, the spiritual education you get there!²¹

Reference was also made to a similar book published in Sweden in 1913, "The Fortified Poorhouse", which combined an anti-militarist agenda with a scathing critique of the unjust social order in Sweden. Zeth Höglund, Hannes Sköld & Fredrik Ström, eds., *Det befästa fattighuset. Antimilitaristisk och socialistisk handbok* (Stockholm, 1913); see Vp II 1917, protocols I, p. 420. A comparison with Höhn's account of socialist army critique in late nineteenth-century Germany also shows how the Finnish socialists largely drew on an imported discourse of anti-militarism; see Höhn, *Sozialismus und Heer*, Vol 2, 1961.

¹⁹ Vp II 1917, pöytäkirja I, p. 406, 414, 439, 447, 720, 726–727

²⁰ Vp II 1917, protocols I, pp. 410–411, 438–439.

²¹ Vp II 1917, pöytäkirja I, pp. 719–720. Soldiers being trained to shoot down their mothers and fathers was a recurrent image in socialist anti-militarist rhetoric. Images of barracks life as morally corruptive and marked by brutality were another staple in this tradition. Cf Liebknecht, *Militarismi* 1910, pp. 26, 62–70; Höglund, Sköld & Ström, eds., *Befästa fattighuset* 1913, pp. 21, 120–122.

Non-socialist MPs countered this description of the old conscript army with recollections of their own, pointing out how the physical, civic and military education received there had all been excellent, as proven by the fact that former soldiers could be seen in many responsible occupations in society, often enjoying great esteem in their local communities. “Thus our conscription law did not produce depravity, but on the contrary, it lifted many a depraved youth to a new life”, said Vilhelm Joukahainen of the Agrarian Party.²² Others stated that it did not matter what the old army had been like, since now the Finns for the first time had an opportunity to create a truly national military. Agrarian Juho Kokko envisioned that the new national form of conscription would infringe as little as possible on individual freedoms, “there will be quite another relationship between the men and the teachers, it will be as democratic as only possible”. Thus, he indirectly subscribed to the criticism of the old cadre army, although he claimed that many who had served there were now highly respected men in their local societies. He thought many of the trouble-makers “robbing and arsoning” in the recent riots could be educated into proper, orderly, real men through military training.²³

Most articulate in his visions of the positive moral qualities of the army-to-be was the Rev. Paavo Virkkunen (1874–1959) of the conservative Finnish party, future speaker of parliament and Minister of Education. According to Virkkunen, Finland needed armed forces to preserve and represent its authority as a *civilised* state, to enforce domestic order, and “for the advancement of national backbone and manly conduct in our life as a people.” He found it very disheartening that the recent violence in many occasions had been led by “mised youths run riot, even mere boys.”

As far as I can understand, a favour would be done to these youths and their likes, not the best, but a good favour, if they were brought under the discipline and guidance that a national conscription, implemented along modern principles, might offer them. (...) I have also thought about how a national army might be one important means to strengthen the feeling of solidarity in our sundry people. If our young men would have to stand side by side in the ranks, then they might better than otherwise come closer to each other, across the divisions created by class conflicts and social life, recognise each other as men of the same Finnish people, as men, who in spite of all antagonisms do have the greatest of all in common.²⁴

²² Vp II 1917, protocols I, p. 743

²³ Vp II 1917, protocols I, pp. 746–748.

²⁴ Vp II 1917, protocols I, pp. 736–738.

Most representatives of the non-socialist parties, however, confined themselves to present national armed forces as a natural and inevitable institution in an independent and sovereign state. They drew on world history and Finnish history to show that it had been the right and duty of free men to carry arms throughout the ages.²⁵

Socialist and non-socialist anti-militarism

International socialist anti-militarism contained different currents. Some opposed “bourgeois” armies, but accepted the violence of socialist revolutionaries, while others were pacifists.²⁶ This was demonstrated by the ambiguity of the Finnish social democratic MPs in 1917. Some social democratic MPs made understood that they were ready to support a national militia-based army, but only “when true democracy with real civic liberties has been realised here and reforms carried out which are worthwhile to defend by armed struggle.” MPs Yrjö Sirola and K.H. Wiik explicitly underlined that they were not “tolstoyans”, i.e. pacifists but believed in the right of citizens to arm themselves in order to defend their lives and civic rights.²⁷ Others declared that ordinary people increasingly opposed any form of armed forces and that Finland had no need of an army. The country could not afford the requisition and maintenance of “modern murder tools” nor keeping “thousands of men languishing in barracks instead of doing something useful”. The Christian commandment to love one’s neighbour was also cited. There were calls for Finland to be “a pioneer in the cause of peace” and expressions of amazement and disgust over how the bourgeoisie wanted to enforce the “capitalist curse” of militarism in Finland at the very moment when the exhausted peoples of Europe were crying out against the raging war-madness.²⁸

The resistance against a militarisation of Finnish society was not limited to the socialist movement. During the fall of 1917, certain bourgeois circles, especially women’s organisations, had issued pacifist manifestations objecting to the establishment of Finnish armed forces.²⁹ Ever since the mid-nineteenth century, there had been notable pacifists among Finnish clergymen, scientists and politicians. Pacifism had been an available and respectable discourse in Finnish society for a long time, especially among

²⁵ Vp II 1917, protocols I, pp. 405, 722–723, 735, 741–742.

²⁶ Jens Petter Kollhøj, ‘Socialist Antimilitarist Manlinesses. Visual representations and normativity in Norway cirka 1914’, *Peace & Change* 34:2 (2009), pp. 208–231.

²⁷ Vp II 1917, protocols I, pp. 415, 421, 729.

²⁸ Vp II 1917, protocols I, pp. 406–408, 410–411, 417, 438–439, 717, 728–730.

²⁹ Manninen, *Kansannoususta armeijaksi* 1974, p. 27.

idealistic proponents of popular enlightenment.³⁰ Historian Vesa Vares has even characterised the *Zeitgeist* in Finland in 1917 as “very pacifistic” and the mood among moderate conservatives on the eve of the Civil War as anything but belligerent. He points out that the only heavyweight politician to publicly take a stand for the proposed armed forces in the contemporary press was K.N. Rantakari of the conservative Finnish Party. Sabre-rattling was definitely not the order of the day among the non-socialist mainstream.³¹

Yet in the parliamentary debate only two non-socialist MPs, Gustaf Arokallio of the Young Finnish party and Antti Rentola of the Agrarian Party – both clergymen – resisted the proposed new Finnish Army. They argued that conscription sustained a warlike spirit even in small nations and dragged down young men, especially those from the bottom layers of society. They agreed with the socialists that the old conscription system of 1878 was repugnant to the majority of the people. Therefore, the re-enforcement of conscription would only accelerate the country’s slide towards civil war. The proposed army would do more harm than good, they thought, since Finland’s independence could neither be achieved nor preserved by armed forces, but only by national unity and international acknowledgement of Finland’s neutrality.³²

These pacifist voices were hailed with cries of approval from the left, but found no support among their party colleagues. Under the impression of the escalating political violence in the country, all other non-socialist speakers stressed that a military institution was needed to maintain law and order and to protect all citizens’ property and personal security. Some of the proponents of the bill gave assurances that they completely supported international disarmament and peace efforts, but said that as a small nation, Finland could not be a forerunner or take another route than the surrounding nations. As long as other countries were heavily armed, Finland had to gather all its strength to secure its independence. It was, in summary, every Finnish man’s regrettable, but inescapable duty to submit to these realities.³³

Several non-socialist MPs dismissed the social democratic anti-militarist rhetoric as a grotesque farce, pointing out that as they spoke, the red guards were acting in an increasingly threatening fashion and taking on

³⁰ Vesa Vares, ‘Kulttuurin vai sotilaan aseinen? Porvarillisen pasifismin tausta ja sisältö vuosisadan vaihteessa sekä murtuminen vuoden 1918 sisällissotaan’, in Jari Niemelä, ed., *Niin tuli sota maahan! Sotien ja sotalaitoksen vaikutus suomalaisen yhteiskuntaan* (Turku, 1995), pp. 279–304.

³¹ Vares, ‘Kulttuurin vai sotilaan aseinen?’ 1995, pp. 291–293; Vesa Vares, ‘Kaarle Nestor Rantakari’, *Suomen Kansallisbiografia-verkkojulkaisu*, <<http://artikkelihaku.kansallisbiografia.fi/artikkeli/1654/>>, published 1.11.2000, retrieved 19.09.2008.

³² Vp II 1917, protocols I, pp. 440–442, 713–714.

³³ Vp II 1917, protocols I, pp. 445, 730.

an ever closer resemblance to a full-scale army organisation.³⁴ MP Santeri Alkio (1862–1930), the central ideologue of the Agrarian Party and a one-time peace idealist,³⁵ stated that neither did he believe that the proposed armed forces would be able to fend off an external enemy. However, as the red guards had become a threat to the democratic system and Finland's independence, he said he had been forced to abandon his earlier idealistic notion that Finland could do without “a bloody sword to secure the government's authority”.³⁶

Common denominators

In midst of all the controversy, some things were taken for granted by both socialist and non-socialist speakers in this debate. In their rhetoric, they all assumed that a conscription-based military service would have a significant impact on the morals and ideology of young men. The non-socialists envisioned military service as a place where unruly uneducated men of the lower classes could be given basic education and be cultivated into decent honourable citizens – hooligans into pillars of society. A common feeling of patriotism would be induced in men from different classes and divert their attention from inner divisions towards common challenges.³⁷ Thus, the army would support the prevailing social order, both by the physical enforcement of law and order and by an ideological influence.

This was roughly what the socialists thought too – only to them this represented the dystopian preservation of an unjust society and the disciplining of the exploited workers by their induction with a false consciousness. In their view, the proposed army would produce ideologically blinded lackeys of capitalism, “hired murderers”, corrupted beings with no moral principles who would shoot at their own parents on command; men whose manpower was wasted for no useful purpose as they lazed away in the garrison, prevented from doing honest work and debauched by the vices of barracks life. Opposed to this counter-image of military masculinity and democratic citizenship, a very different socialist citizen-soldier was implicitly outlined. This erect and courageous class-conscious worker would thwart capitalist militarism by refusing conscription and take up arms only at his own will. He would never merely obey orders from above, but only

³⁴ Vp II 1917, protocols I, pp. 444, 731–735, 742.

³⁵ Vares, ‘Kulttuurin vai sotilaan aseinen?’ 1995, p. 291

³⁶ Vp II 1917, protocols, pp. 796–797 (9.1.1918).

³⁷ Pauli Arola, who has analysed this same debate from the point of view of the development of the politics of civic education, has made a similar observation. See Pauli Arola, *Tavoitteena kunnan. Koulun kansalaiskasvatuksen päämäärät eduskunnan keskusteluissa 1917–1924* (Helsinki, 2003), p. 64.

fight for the just causes of emancipating the working class or warding off an external aggressor.

All parties thought that the proposed army was primarily intended for the restoration of a certain *domestic* order, although they differed in their appreciation of this order. There was a prevailing notion across the party lines, although by no means unanimous, that a Finnish national army would not stand any chances against the armed forces of any of the surrounding greater powers. These sceptical notions of the meaningfulness of armed struggle against foreign foes would soon take a sharp turn, whereas the various notions of the moral impact of military training would prove very tenacious throughout the interwar era. A decision on Antti Mikkola's bill, however, was never reached, as the outbreak of civil war in January 1918 interrupted the work of parliament. Mikkola himself was imprisoned and shot by red guards in Helsinki on February 1st, three weeks after the end of the debate.

2.2 *The Civil War and the creation of the "White Army"*

The Finnish national armed forces of the interwar "first republic" grew out of the military mobilisation against the socialist insurgency of January-May 1918. The winning non-socialist side referred to this armed conflict as "the Liberation War", since they understood forcing the Russian troops out of the country and securing Finland's political independence as the central objectives of their own troops. Yet the Bolshevik government had officially recognised Finland's sovereignty in December 1917 and the Russian troops in Finland did not appreciably interfere in the fighting. The socialist leadership had declared no wish to rejoin Finland with Russia. The term "liberation war" thus carried a politically charged claim that the essential meaning of the war had not been an internal struggle among Finns over the future political and economic system, but a national struggle for Finnish independence from Russia. It was a way of insisting that the war had not been a tragic war between kith and kin, but indeed the valiant war of liberation planned and prepared for by Finnish nationalist activists long before 1918.³⁸ "The Liberation War" also signalled that Finnish independence was the result of the deeds of Finnish freedom fighters, not the haphazard outcome of the internal collapse of the Russian Empire. According to this particular

³⁸ Cf Osmo Jussila, *Suomen historian suuret myytit* (Helsinki, 2007), pp. 183-196, 200-202, 276-291; Risto Alapuro: *Suomen synty paikallisena ilmiönä 1890-1933* (Helsinki, 1994), pp. 210-213; Oiva Ketonen, *Kansakunta murroksessa. Kesää 1918 ja sen taustaa*, (Porvoo, 1983), pp. 17-34.

nationalist narrative, the military struggle of the White Army was key to Finland's national rebirth into an independent state. Thus, the founding of the national state became intimately connected to the military and national manly valour, just as it had been in other noteworthy model cases of national liberation such as the United States, revolutionary France, and Prussia at the time of the Napoleonic wars or the Franco-German war of 1870–1871.

The “whites” afterwards liked to describe this “Liberation war” in terms of a spontaneous rising of the freedom-loving, patriotic and law-abiding Finnish peasantry.³⁹ Finland, still being a predominantly agrarian country, where rural life was often idealised by conservative nationalists – themselves often belonging to groups of urban elite – the free-holding male peasant was crafted into the archetype of the valorous Finnish citizen-soldier. One version of this story was offered to the Finnish and foreign visitors at the first Finnish Fair held in Helsinki 1920 through a special multilingual issue of the army magazine *Suomen Sotilas*:

The Finnish Army was created in an hour of peril, when the hearts of the people were kindled by patriotism. – It rose into existence from the imperative necessity of homes and hearths having to be defended against the onslaught of native and foreign rebels, whose villainy had brought the old culture of the nation to the verge of destruction through rebellion. Then the peasants of Finland rose voluntarily to fight for their lawful Government. They left their homes hidden in the snow-wreaths of winter and gathered round their great Commander to expel the enemy from the borders of the land, fighting hard battles nearly unarmed and enduring want and hardship. And finally they carried off the victory. This glorious host of volunteers in the Battle for freedom formed the basis of the present standing army of Finland.⁴⁰

The “glorious host of volunteers” here refers to the civil guards, who formed the initial fighting units on the non-socialist side, as the political tensions exploded into open civil war at the end of January 1918. Most of southern Finland, with larger industrial centres, soon came under the control of the red guards, who received arms and some military advisors from the Russian troops in Finland, whereas the civil guards took control of most of Central and Northern Finland, where they disarmed the remaining Russian troops. A fragmentary frontline formed, running East-West across the country.⁴¹

³⁹ See e.g. 'Kansannousu Pohjanmaalla. Eestä vapauden ja isänmaan' in Erkki Kivijärvi, ed., *Suomen Vapaussota 1918*, Vol. 2, *Kansannousu Pohjanmaalla* (Helsinki, 1918), pp. 3–39, at pp. 3–6.

⁴⁰ Major [Viljo] Tuompo, 'The Finnish Army', *Suomen Sotilas* 24–26/1920, p. 421.

⁴¹ Luntinen & Manninen, *Finland 1917–1920* 1993, pp. 398–431.

Motivation for soldiering in 1918

After the war, both socialists and non-socialists mostly depicted the men on their own side as going to war out of patriotism or class-consciousness, idealism and manly valorousness, whereas the opponents were driven by economic self-interest, bloodthirstiness or sheer villainy. In reality, most Finnish men who fought the Civil War probably joined because they were forced to – for economic, social or legal reasons. There was no general male belligerence or enthusiasm for war in Finland 1918. The “patriotic” male citizens on the ‘white’ side who volunteered to fight against the socialists in 1918 scarcely constituted sufficient numbers to actually win the war.

The Civil Guards were volunteer corps based in local communities. They sent some detachments to the front, but as it transpired, the majority of the guardsmen were reluctant to leave their home districts. They thought it was their duty only to defend their own village or municipality. This soon provoked demands for the introduction of universal conscription by activists trying to mobilise the “white” population. In mid-February, an editorial in the *Ilkka* newspaper, mouthpiece of the Agrarian Party, complained that some regions in the government-controlled territory were filled with “cowards and layabouts”. *Ilkka* demanded that the old conscription laws should be enforced. “He who has no manliness and sense of honour must be forced – forced to protect his home, his family, his kin and his property”, *Ilkka* wrote. In some districts, citizen’s meetings had already voted for introducing municipal conscription. This, however, should not be understood as evidence of a general atmosphere of war enthusiasm, but rather as indications of a perceived *lack* of a proper manly readiness to fight voluntarily.⁴²

The “White” Guards who actually fought at the front included members from all layers of agrarian society, including workers, although half of them were from freeholder families. The voluntary guardsmen at the front were highly motivated, but had received little or no military training before the war. Their notions of discipline were often different from those of the White Army command, which mainly consisted of Finnish military professionals who had made a career in the Russian army. These professional officers were often Swedish-speaking members of the old social and economic elite. The rank-and-file guardsmen could have strong notions of their autonomy as voluntary troops, and often took a suspicious attitude towards professional officers and authoritarian leadership. There were incidents where civil guards would disregard orders from the headquarters or

⁴² Manninen, *Kansannoususta armeijaksi* 1974, pp. 32–43; *Ilkka* 13.2.1918, quoted by Manninen.

refused to accept commanding officers they disliked. Stories were later told of whole units that simply decided to leave the front for the weekend to go home to their village and go to the *sauna*, whereupon they would return to the front, clean and rested.⁴³

The Red Guards were in principle also voluntary troops. At the outset, there was even a formal demand that red guardsmen must be members of some organisation within the workers' movement. According to historian Jussi T. Lappalainen, those who joined the red guards before the Civil War or in its early stages did so for idealistic reasons. The strong solidarity within the workers' movement made even previously anti-militarist groups join the fight once the war broke out, for example the social democratic Youth League in Helsinki. However, due to continued food shortages and the shutting-down of many civilian working sites, many red guardsmen probably joined the guards mainly to support themselves and their families. There was most likely also a strong group pressure within many workers' organisations. Just as on the white side, the local red guards were often reluctant to leave their home district and go to the front. However, conscription was never introduced in the areas controlled by the socialist revolutionaries. Not counting several instances of compulsory enlistment on the local level, the leadership of the insurgency adhered to the principle of revolutionary voluntariness, even in the face of pressure from their own district commanders and impending military catastrophe.⁴⁴

There were obvious similarities between the anti-authoritarian notions of military discipline among the Civil Guards and the Red Guards, but the phenomenon was extreme among the socialists. Many detachments elected and dismissed their own commanding officers. There were attempts at transferring the democratic meeting procedures from workers' associations to military decision-making. According to Lappalainen, by March 1918 the spread of absenteeism, desertion and refusal to obey orders was making purposeful leadership almost impossible. Harsh punishments seem to have been incompatible with socialist ideology – capital punishment had expressly been abolished at the beginning of the revolution in Finland.⁴⁵

The government troops at the front were in dire need of reinforcements for an offensive to end the war. In a declaration on February

⁴³ Selén, *Sarkatakkien maa* 2001, pp. 24–26, Manninen, *Kansannoususta armeijaksi* 1974, p. 44; Ohto Manninen, 'Kansa nousi kahdella armeijalla', *Sotilasaikakauslehti* 63:3 (1988), pp. 172–176, at p. 174.

⁴⁴ Jussi T. Lappalainen's largely descriptive study does not further investigate this interesting ideological standpoint. The socialist 'government' decided to introduce an obligation to work towards the end of the war, which in places was in practice realised as the basis for universal male conscription. However, this does not seem to have been the intended purpose. Jussi T. Lappalainen, *Punakaartin sota*, Vol 1 (Helsinki, 1981), pp. 157–166.

⁴⁵ Lappalainen, *Punakaartin sota* 1981, pp. 215–218.

18th 1918, the senate called all male citizens liable for military service to arms, supporting the call-up on the legal authority of the conscription law of 1878 that was now declared never to have been formally abrogated. Historian Ohto Manninen has assessed that the population in the territories controlled by the government generally accepted this decision, with only scattered and isolated expressions of opposition. The preamble to the 1878 law stated that every male Finnish citizen was liable for military service “for the defence of the throne and the fatherland”. Some who refused the call-up disputed the applicability of this law in an internal conflict. As objectors pointed out, there was no throne any more. Some propertyless workers scornfully stated they had no fatherland either since they had no land. Some questioned the legal authority of the senate to decide on such a matter. However, according to Manninen’s calculations, a mere 3–10% of those liable dodged the call-up. The motive for avoidance varied, from socialist sympathies to a desire to remain neutral or because of a conscientious objection. An important further motive was naturally fear – not only fear for one’s own life, but often for the livelihood of those one provided for.⁴⁶

The introduction of universal conscription changed the nature of the White Army, and moved it away from a voluntary citizen’s movement towards a compulsory state institution. As the White Army’s numbers peaked towards the end of April 1918, conscripted soldiers made up about 55% of the White Army or about 39 000 troops. The remaining 45% consisted of volunteers in the civil guards and enlisted troops, and some of these had probably volunteered or enlisted already knowing that they would otherwise be conscripted. In general, Ohto Manninen characterises the conscripted troops as better disciplined and organised than the voluntary guards. Yet they occasionally posed problems of another kind for their commanding officers, providing some forebodings of the problems of the post-war conscript army: recalcitrance, shirking and malingering due to either leftist leanings among the soldiers or general indifference to the government’s war aims.⁴⁷

Women’s participation in the Civil War

Women on both sides wanted to take part in the struggle, some of them in active combat. Throughout the areas controlled by socialists, women’s guards sprang up, comprising in all about 2000 armed fighters.⁴⁸ On the

⁴⁶ Manninen, *Kansannoususta armeijaksi* 1974, pp. 48–55, 59–66, 135–145, 244.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 62, 220–230, 237–240.

⁴⁸ Marja Piironen-Honkanen, *Punakaartin aseelliset naiskomppaniat sisällissodassa 1918* [Unpublished master’s thesis] (Helsinki University, 1995).

“white” side there were evidently also some women who desired to partake in the fighting. An incipient debate on the matter in the agrarian *Ilkka* newspaper in March was cut short by a prohibition against female fighting units issued by the white commander-in-chief general C.G. Mannerheim (1867–1951). Mannerheim was born in Finland, but was also a former high-ranking officer of the imperial Russian army. In an open letter, he wrote: “I expect help from Finland’s women in meeting the many urgent needs of the army, such as caring for the sick and wounded, manufacturing clothing, caring for the home and comforting those who have lost their loved ones. Fighting the war on the front, meanwhile, I hold to be the exclusive right and duty of the male.”⁴⁹

Annika Latva-Äijö has noted that since the socialist leaders also tried to prevent women from joining armed units, the main difference between the white and red leadership in this regard was that the latter could not control what happened on the ground in their local communities.⁵⁰ For example, in the city of Tampere, the local social democratic Women’s Association had nothing to do with the formation of local women’s Red Guards in March–April 1918 and probably even opposed them. According to historian Tuomas Hoppu, the women’s Red Guard in Tampere was not the result of any desire on part of the male Red Guards to recruit women as reinforcements. The women’s guards were formed by independently acting women enthused by the revolution and inspired by the examples of women’s guards in revolutionary Russia as well as their own male relatives’ activities as guardsmen. Women were also attracted to the women’s guard by the relatively good pay in a time of high unemployment and scarcity.⁵¹

There was a strong cultural taboo against women taking up arms, expressed in executions and intense vilification of the female red guardsmen as “bitch wolves” by the victorious whites in 1918.⁵² In face of this taboo, it is remarkable how many women in the working classes evidently found the idea of female soldiering perfectly intelligible. On the white side, however, women obediently stayed within the sphere of action assigned to them by the gender order – although it is significant that the General felt he had to command them to do so. The spontaneity and scope of white women’s auxiliary activities in the combat zones show that neither the “white” women regarded the war as men’s business, in which they had no part and share, but

⁴⁹ Quoted in Latva-Äijö, *Lotta Svärdin synty* 2004, p. 54.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 57.

⁵¹ Tuomas Hoppu, *Tampereen naiskaarti. Myytit ja todellisuus* (Jyväskylä, 2008), pp. 53–56, 61, 69–82.

⁵² Tiina Lintunen, ‘Susinarttuja ja pahuuden lähteitä – stereotyyppioita punaisista naisista’, in Vesa Vares, ed., *Vuorovaikutuksia. Timo Soikkasen jublakirja* (Turku, 2007), pp. 146–156.

as a joint venture where men and women just had different particular tasks to fulfil.⁵³

Militarised nationalism and the civil guards in post-war society

In relation to earlier periods, the mainstream of Finnish nationalism was arguably militarised after the Civil War. A new current of nationalism forcefully stressed the importance of military strength, national armament and constant vigilance. It saw the nation threatened by Bolsheviks both in the East and within Finland's own borders. This current had strong connections to the political Right, but also ran through large parts of the political centre.⁵⁴ One expression of this militarisation of nationalism was the continued presence of the "Protective Corps", or civil guards movement, in Finnish society.

Finland thus maintained two parallel national armed forces throughout the interwar period; the regular army and the Civil Guards. Although older professional officers initially disliked this state of affairs, the civil guards were considered indispensable for the political control over the country in the early years of independence. They also initially constituted the only reserve with even as much as an elementary military training for the country's protection towards the various unpredictable armed forces in Russia. They were given an official status in 1918–1919 by government decrees stating that they should give military education to its members, promote physical education, sports and civil merit, support the regular army when needed and provide executive assistance to the law enforcement authorities. Historian Kari Selén has concluded that as leading positions were successively filled by professional army officers throughout the 1920's, the civil guards as a national organisation was tightly bound into and controlled by the state military apparatus. On the local level, however, the individual guardsman was a volunteer who participated in military exercises of his own free will and probably experienced that he and his comrades had a great deal of independence on the level of their own activities. In their own minds the guardsmen were autonomous, writes Selén.⁵⁵

The guardsmen were mainly freeholders, members of the local educated and economic elites, civil servants and small businessmen, and

⁵³ Cf Hoppu, *Tampereen naiskaarti* 2008, pp. 179–192; Latva-Äijö, *Lotta Svärdin synty* 2004, pp. 48–58.

⁵⁴ Cf Juhani Mylly, *Maalaisliitto-Keskustapuolueen historia*, Vol 2, *Maalaisliitto 1918–1939* (Helsinki, 1989), p. 39.

⁵⁵ Jarl Kronlund, 'Puolustuslaitos ja suojeluskunnat 1917–1944', in Risto Alapuro, ed., *Raja Railona. Näkökulmia suojeluskuntiin* (Porvoo, Helsinki & Juva, 1998), pp. 83–104, at pp. 85–89; Kari Selén, 'Suojeluskuntien Suomi', in Alapuro, ed., *Raja railona* 1998, pp. 197–220, at pp. 201–204.

strongly anti-socialist. Swearing by religion, home and fatherland, they thought of themselves as protectors of the country from both internal and external threats, exerting political control in their local communities and organising military exercises for the membership. The Guards' membership numbers peaked at 107 000 in 1919, and then remained at around 80 000 throughout the 1920's, making the civil guards the largest popular movement in interwar Finland.⁵⁶ Together with the 30-40 000 members of the affiliated women's organisation *Lotta Svärd* and the special youth organisations soon established for boys and girls separately, they formed what Seija-Leena Nevala has aptly called "a national defence family", where every member did his or her share in securing the continuity of the nation. The girls and women were assigned auxiliary tasks, assisting the boys and men who were preparing for the actual fighting.⁵⁷ Nonetheless, the Civil Guards remained a socially and politically exclusive organisation with a relationship of mutual loathing to the workers' movement and much of the working class. Actually, only 11% of all Finnish men aged 17-44 were members. Even of those men who voted for non-socialist parties, merely 17% belonged to the Civil Guards.⁵⁸ The vast majority of Finnish men thus chose *not* to actively participate in voluntary military activities.

A "national" army in a divided nation

As the Civil War ended in May 1918, the government's "white" army was never dismantled. When the fighting ceased, army detachments were used to secure the country's borders and guard the internment camps for the red guards, where over 80 000 people were detained awaiting trial. The voluntary civil guards soon returned home. Most of the conscripted troops were also demobilised, but the youngest conscripts were kept on duty and the army stayed in a state of alert. There were thousands of deserters, red guardsmen and other "politically untrustworthy citizens" still in hiding. Until and beyond the signing of a peace treaty with Soviet Russia in October 1920, the immediate threat of a war with Russia only gradually diminished. In the wake of a German military invention in the Civil War, requested by the senate in Vaasa, there were also 15 000 German soldiers in the country.⁵⁹ By

⁵⁶ Selén, *Sarkatakkien maa* 2001, p. 235; cf. Alapuro, *Suomen synty* 1994, p. 225.

⁵⁷ Seija-Leena Nevala, 'Girls and Boys in the Finnish Voluntary Defence Movement', *Ennen ja nyt* 3-4/2006, <http://www.ennenjanyt.net/2006_3/nevala.html> retrieved January 9, 2008.

⁵⁸ Selén, 'Suojeluskuntien Suomi?' 1998, p. 216.

⁵⁹ Terä & Tervasmäki, *Puolustusballinnon perustamis- ja rakentamisvuodet* 1973, pp. 30-31, 52-53; Marko Tikka, *Valkoisen hämärän maa. Suojeluskunnat, virkavalta ja kansa 1918-1921* (Helsinki, 2006), p. 30; Kronlund et al., *Suomen Puolustuslaitos* 1988, p. 126-136.

resorting to German arms deliveries and military support in the Civil War, the Finnish government had made Finland a close ally, if not a vassal state of the German empire.⁶⁰ During the summer and fall of 1918, as the Great War on the European continent still raged on, German military advisors supervised the reorganisation of the national armed forces and the military training of conscripts in Finland, naturally with a keen eye for German military interests. However, they had to leave abruptly in December 1918 following Germany's military collapse on the Western Front.⁶¹

Immediately after the Civil War, there were highly conflicting attitudes towards the national armed forces among the population. The socialists associated both the Civil Guards and the conscripted army with their military defeat and the maltreatment and summary executions of red prisoners in the prison camps. It has been calculated that circa 5 200 Reds were killed in action, but another 7 200 were executed, shot or murdered in the so-called "white terror" towards the end of the war. An even greater number, 11 600 men, women and children on the losing side died from starvation or disease in the prison camps.⁶² The wanton executions and atrocities in the internment camps surrounded the defeated with a horror that soon turned into deep bitterness, as the winners meticulously investigated any crimes committed by the insurgents, but protected the white terror with a pact of silence and oblivion. These experiences and stories also fed the hatred of the 'white' army, which in the losers' eyes fitted only too well into the descriptions articulated by social democratic politicians before the war; a murder tool in the hands of capitalists to break the backbone of the working class.⁶³

However, the bitterness and suspicion was certainly mutual. More than 1 400 non-socialist "class enemies" had been executed or murdered by the red guards during the revolution, and 3 400 Whites killed in action by the red guards. Finnish conservatives were deeply shocked, hurt and traumatised by the attempted revolution and the rancorousness of the proletarians, so far removed from nineteenth and early twentieth century images of a humble and hard-working Finnish people, struggling peacefully

⁶⁰ Matti Lackman, *Suomen vai Saksan puolesta? Jääkäriliikkeen ja jääkäripataljoona 27:n (1915–1918) synty, luonne, mielialojen vaihteluja ja sisäisiä kriisejä sekä heijastuksia itsenäisen Suomen ensi vuosiin saakka* (Helsinki, 2000), pp. 614–634.

⁶¹ Vilho & Tervasmäki, *Puolustushallinnon perustamis- ja rakentamisvuodet 1973*, pp. 33–34, 40, 45; Kronlund et al., *Suomen Puolustuslaitos 1988*, 87–89, 136–137, 231–232.

⁶² War Victims of Finland 1914–1922 Project database, <http://vesta.narc.fi/cgi-bin/db2www/sotasurmaetusivu/stat2>, retrieved 6.8.2008.

⁶³ Aapo Roselius, *I bödlarnas fotspår. Massavrättningar och terror i finska inbördeskriget 1918* (Stockholm, 2009), pp. 8–11, 41, 47; Hyytiä, *Puolueettomuuden ja rauban linja 1986*, p. 236; Syrjö, *Puolustusvoimien asema 1986*, p.1. On the commemoration of the Civil War on the losing side, see Peltonen, *Puna-kapinan muistot 1996*.

cultural and moral advancement under the leadership of the educated classes.⁶⁴ Those non-socialists who had expressed pacifist leanings before the war were in many cases “converted” by the shock to ardent support of the new armed forces. Vesa Vares illustrates this by many examples, e.g. that of the agrarian MP, Rev. Antti Rentola who had resisted the creation of armed forces in December 1917. In February 1918, he wrote of the war in the *Ilkka* newspaper as a “holy war” since it was “no militarist war”, but “the use of the sword of authority belonging to the divine order to punish the evil. (...) This is God’s war against the Devil.”⁶⁵ There had been a shift in mentalities. Most of the non-socialists thought the “white” army was a heroic host of liberators who had given the red “hooligans” what they deserved, restored law and order, and secured Finland’s independence from Russia. History seemed to have vindicated the activists who had tried to mobilise the nation into military action.

As the initial excitement over victory ebbed, an unfavourable attitude towards the army spread beyond the working classes towards the fall of 1918. This had to do with reports of food scarcity, epidemics, deficient lodgings and bad treatment of conscripts. In the wake of the war, there was a general food shortage in the country and the brand new army was underfed, underfunded, understaffed and poorly quartered in old Russian barracks that often were in a state of disrepair. The officer corps was mixed and ridden with internal tensions, as former Russian imperial officers who had loyally fought in the tsar’s army until 1917 and the so-called Jäger officers, militant nationalist activists who had been trained in the German army during the Great War, did not always get on well together. There was widespread dodging of the call-ups in 1918, desertions and incidents of mutiny in some detachments that the military authorities blamed mainly on the men’s undernourishment.⁶⁶ The material circumstances slowly ameliorated and dodging and desertions soon decreased. Yet the build-up of the regular army was for many long years obstructed by heavy ballast from the Civil War.

⁶⁴ Alapuro, *Suomen synty* 1994, pp. 210–213, 306–308; Sten Högnäs, *Kustens och skogarnas folk. Om synen på svenskt och finskt lynne* (Stockholm, 1995), pp. 125–135, 141–148; Vesa Vares, *Kuninkaan tekijät. Suomalainen monarkia 1917–1919* (Porvoo, Helsinki & Juva, 1998), pp. 56–69.

⁶⁵ Vares, ‘Kulttuurin vai sotilaan aseinen?’ 1995, p. 293; cf ‘Pyhä sota’, *Ilkka* 27.2.1918, quoted by Vares.

⁶⁶ ‘Flykten undan värnplikten’, *Hufvudstadsbladet* 5.9.1918; ‘Huru förhåller det sig med vår ungdoms fosterlandskärllek?’, *Åbo Underrättelser* 21.9.1918; ‘Arméns förplägnad’, *Dagens Press* 26.10.1918; ‘Vår armé och dess organisation’, *Svenska Tidningen* 14.3.1919; ‘Deserteringarna’, *Hufvudstadsbladet* 27.7.1919; ‘Deserteringarna’, *Svenska Tidningen* 23.8.1919. See also Terä & Tervasmäki, *Puolustusballinon perustamis- ja rakentamisvuodet* 1973, pp. 55–59; Leimu, *Pennalismi* 1985, p. 149–151; Kronlund et al., *Suomen Puolustusvoimat* 1988, pp. 241–242, 254; Syrjö, *Puolustusvoimien asema* 1986, pp. 1–2; Mälkki, *Herrat, jätkät ja sotataito* 2008, pp. 286–293.

2.3 *The militiaman challenging the cadre army soldier*

The conscript army that had emerged from the confusion of the Civil War was regularised through conscription laws passed in 1919 and 1922. Yet it did not go unchallenged. First the Agrarians and then the Social Democrats presented their own visions of national defence and Finnish soldierhood, based on different configurations of democratic, republican and socialist idealism, and highly critical of the system at hand. Different images of Finnish masculinity – what it was, what it could be and what it should be – and its relationship to military matters were not explicitly debated, but can in a closer examination be found implied and embedded in the rhetoric used.

As the Finnish parliament resumed its work in the summer of 1918, its members had been reduced almost by half. All but one of the social democratic MPs were absent. Some were dead; others had fled to the Soviet Union or were imprisoned facing charges for participation in the red rebellion. As the government in November 1918 presented this rump parliament with a bill for adjusting the old conscription law to the new circumstances, the political frontlines were therefore quite different than in 1917. On the threshold of a civil war, the agrarian agenda for a people's militia had drowned in the escalating ideological quarrel. In the new circumstances after the war, however, the Agrarians suddenly found themselves in opposition to the other non-socialists parties. Their alternative to a "conventional" conscript army was highlighted for a short while, as they demanded that the cadre army born out of the Civil War should be replaced by a people's militia as soon as possible.

Historian Juhani Mylly has located the origins of the people's militia idea within the Agrarian Party to its main ideologue Santeri Alkio's political thinking at the time of the party's founding in 1906: "In the style of an idealistic leader of a youth association, Alkio at that time argued for the superiority of the militia system in relation to the cadre system, by referring, among other things, to those moral dangers he thought the youngsters would be exposed to far from their homes". Mylly also points out that the Finnish Agrarians shared their distrust of standing armies and their interest in the alternative people's militia model with agrarian parties in many countries, especially in Eastern Europe. The people's militia model was well suited to the democratic and republican ideology of the Finnish Agrarian Party, where it was seen as a kind of people's army that brought the issue of national defence concretely into the everyday life of ordinary citizens. To this peasant's party, always economical with the taxpayer's money, the relative inexpensiveness of the militia system was also of great importance.⁶⁷

⁶⁷ Mylly, *Maalaisliitto ja turvallisuuspolitiikka* 1978, pp. 138–139.

Republican and authoritarian military traditions

There are interesting historic parallels between the Finnish Agrarians' vision of a people's militia and the republicanism of the American and French revolutions. The American colonists took care of their own defence and rebelled against the British by means of self-mobilisation and a people's militia. Largely descendants of English libertarian dissidents, they harboured a deep suspicion of standing armies as the compliant tools of tyrannical monarchs. Due to the colonists' distrust of strong government, no principle of universal conscription was introduced. Classic republicanism provided the colonists with a rhetoric tradition suitable to fashion themselves as different from, indeed superior to, their old British masters; as free and brave men who had by their own means protected their liberty against tyranny and corruption. In reality, however, the American and French revolutionary wars were not fought only by free and brave volunteers and people's militias – just as the Finnish civil war was not in reality won by the voluntary civil guards alone. There were significant elements of economic incitements and state coercion in the recruitment of the mass armies of the “democratic” revolutions. The military leaders of the American Revolution had to resort to enlistment, compulsory drafts and assistance from French troops. The introduction of forced male conscription in France during the 1790's led to widespread draft dodging and desertion. National myth-making, however, was to be dominated by the manly image of the citizen-soldier, who more or less spontaneously and of his own free will took to arms, to defend his liberty and his country – a pattern that recurred in the commemoration of Finland's “Liberation War”.⁶⁸

The Finnish Agrarians admired and supported the civil guards. In 1918–1919, they regarded them as a model and inspiration for how the national defence system should be organised. They resisted the dismantling of the guards in 1918 and wanted to integrate them into the national armed forces. In accordance with European liberal democratic traditions, they associated the standing cadre army with the upper class life-style of aristocratic officers, pointless drilling, ostentatious display and parading, as well as moral corruption of conscripts, especially through drinking. According to Mylly, the Agrarians thought the cadre army was an anti-democratic tool for the unsound ambitions of warlike monarchs.⁶⁹ This

⁶⁸ Stig Förster, 'Ein alternatives Modell? Landstreitkräfte und Gesellschaft in den USA 1775–1865' in Frevert, ed., *Militär und Gesellschaft* 1997, pp. 94–118; Meyer Kestnbaum, 'Citizenship and Compulsory Military Service: The Revolutionary Origins of Conscription in the United States', *Armed Forces & Society* 27:1 (2000), p. 7–36; Alan Forrest, *Conscripts and deserters. The Army and French Society during the Revolution and Empire* (New York, 1989).

⁶⁹ Mylly, *Maalaisliitto ja turvallisuuspolitiikka* 1978, pp. 138–139.

notion must have been strengthened by the fact that the conservative government proposing a conscription bill in November 1918, based on the cadre army system, had for months been busy trying to make Finland a monarchy closely aligned to the German empire. The sovereign was even mentioned in the wording of the bill, although the parliament of 1917 had declared Finland an independent republic.⁷⁰

Having recently experienced the rebelliousness and “political immaturity” of the working classes, the right-wing parties were anxious to shape a new form of government that would ensure political stability and guarantee the educated elites a certain measure of control.⁷¹ The plans for a monarchy were wrecked in November-December by the German defeat in the Great War. Due to pressure from the Western victorious powers and the Scandinavian countries a centrist republicanism gained the upper hand, including a policy of unification towards the workers’ movement: broad amnesties for “red” prisoners and permission for reformist Social Democrats to re-enter parliamentary politics.⁷² Nevertheless, the solid establishment of the cadre army system can be seen as one part of the larger political project of securing social status quo.

The origins of the Prussian cadre army system, which in its 1918 German *Reich* version served as a model for the build-up of the Finnish Army, can actually be found in a very similar need to control the explosive force of arming the lower classes. Military historian Stig Förster has described the development of conscription in nineteenth century Prussia, and eventually in the German *Kaiserreich*, as the integration of the new, explosive forces of “a people in arms” into the traditional standing army organisation with its strict discipline and hierarchical command structure. Early nineteenth-century professional officers and military experts regarded the various forms of self-mobilised people’s militias that sprung up in the era of the democratic revolutions as inefficient in the long run and, above all, very difficult to control. In order to ensure the Prussian monarchy’s absolute control of the conscript army, even as an instrument of power in domestic affairs, conscripts drafted for active service in peacetime were subjected to an intense military training lasting three years, during which the conscripts

⁷⁰ *Hallituksen esitys Suomen Eduskunnalle uudesta Suomen valtakunnan asevelvollisuuslaista*. Valtiopäivät 1918, Asiakirjat I:6.

⁷¹ Vares, *Kuninkaan tekijät* 1998, pp. 62–69, 86–90.

⁷² Jorma Kalela, ‘Suomi ja eurooppalainen vallankumousvaihe’, in V. Pernaa & M.K. Niemi, eds., *Suomalaisen Yhteiskunnan Poliittinen Historia* (Helsinki, 2005), pp. 95–109, at pp. 103–106; Vesa Saarikoski, ‘Yhteiskunnan modernisoituminen’, in Pernaa & Niemi, eds., *Suomalaisen Yhteiskunnan Poliittinen Historia* 2005, pp. 115–131, at p.124.

lived in garrisons relatively isolated from civilian society.⁷³ In the same way, the cadre army system in Finland should ensure that the conscripts were disciplined into a military force controllable by the government. Although the militia model resembled the organisational principles of the cherished civil guards, it might also have born a resemblance to the red guards too close for bourgeois sensibilities.⁷⁴

The Agrarians' case for a people's militia

Since the Agrarians could not find support for their militia model in the 1918 rump parliament they first tried to get the whole conscription bill rejected, and then concentrated on arguing that two years of military service for 20 year-olds as the government was proposing was far too much. Agrarian MPs Santeri Alkio and Antti Juutilainen both depicted the cadre army system as a relict of yesterday's world and the military experts propagating it as "adepts of the old Russian school who cannot grasp that armies in today's world can be trained and put together more rapidly than before". Alkio argued that interrupting young men's working lives and plans for several years would only provoke discontent and thus weaken the army. He held up the people's militia model as the future goal to strive for. "Finland's experience during [1918] shows that on this basis, as the people rises to defend its fatherland and its freedom and to create new conditions, a shorter training will suffice. All that is needed is patriotic enthusiasm".⁷⁵ In another flush of nationalist self-congratulation, agrarian MP Mikko Luopajarvi claimed that due to the Finns' fighting spirit, the arrival of small and rapidly trained Finnish voluntary troops on the battle scene had been a turning point in the Estonian war of independence. Asserting that the Finns accomplished more with merely a brief military training than the Estonians, who had served for four or five years in the tsar's army, Luopajarvi tried to prove that it was more important to ascertain that Finnish soldiers had the right motivation to fight than to give them a very thorough military education.⁷⁶ His party fellow Juho Niukkanen agreed and quoted German military experts who had praised the Finnish soldier material as better than in many other countries. Not only was an overly heavy military service thus unnecessary, Niukkanen claimed, it was irreconcilable with national character itself:

⁷³ Stig Förster, 'Militär und Staatsbürgerliche Partizipation. Die allgemeine Wehrpflicht im Deutschen Kaiserreich 1871-1914', in Roland G. Foerster, ed., *Die Wehrpflicht. Entstehung, Erscheinungsformen und politisch-militärische Wirkung* (München, 1994), pp. 55-70, at pp. 55-61.

⁷⁴ Cf. Somerkari, *Kansanmilitisi* 1953, p. 29.

⁷⁵ Vp 1918, protocols, p. 347 (14.1.1919).

⁷⁶ Vp 1918, protocols, p. 349.

It has also been said of the Finns, that whereas they are good soldiers, they are also stubborn and persistent. They cannot wantonly be hassled or against their will commanded to tasks that are obviously repulsive to them or to pointless military expeditions. (...) To my understanding, a Finnish soldier properly fulfils his assignment only if he feels the purpose he has to fight for, to shed his blood for, to be worth fighting for. For this reason, the Finnish soldier should not without cause be vexed with a too long duration of military service (...).⁷⁷

Niukkanen was skilfully harnessing a certain image of Finnish masculinity to his political objective of gaining support for a military service of just 12 months' duration. Between the lines in Niukkanen's depiction of 'the Finn', here obviously male Finns, one can also read an acid critique of the upper-class military establishment, with its "foreign" traditions for military training, and the rumoured plans for a Finnish military expedition against St Petersburg led by General Mannerheim to topple the Bolshevik revolution. An image of straightforward valiant soldiers of the people, excellent fighters but only for a just and necessary cause, is juxtaposed with an implied image of irresponsible, possibly too cosmopolitan and aristocratic officers who do not understand these men.

In spite of the controversy over military systems, there was a new consensus and optimism among the non-socialist parties in the fall of 1918, regarding what Finnish men at arms could achieve. Although the Minister of War, colonel Rudolf Walden, and others spoke warningly about the Bolshevik's growing military strength, it was now generally accepted that Finland could and should defend itself militarily in case of a Russian attack. The events of 1917 and 1918 – the Russian revolution, the partial dismantling of the empire, the Russian civil war and the nationalist interpretation of the Finnish civil war as a war of independence from Russia – had evidently given Finnish decision-makers an image of Russia as a weak military power. The Russian military might was by no means considered harmless, but the pre-war conceptions in Finland of its absolute military advantage had been swept away – at least from political rhetoric. The Agrarians especially, claimed that the Finns could beat the Russians superiority in numbers by superior fighting spirit and patriotic fervour.⁷⁸

⁷⁷ Vp 1918, protocols, pp. 322–324.

⁷⁸ Vp 1918, protocols, pp. 318–323, 340, 345, 347, 349, 352–353.

The temporary law of 1919 – introducing “universal” conscription?

As it transpired, there was cross-party support in parliament for cutting the length of military training from 24 to 18 months, against the advice of military experts. In a still deeply divided society, an overly heavy military burden was evidently seen as a greater security risk by the MPs than a possibly insufficient number of troops in active service. Many members of parliament were anxious about the possibility that conscription might not produce docile patriotic citizens, but the opposite – rebellious sentiments in young men.⁷⁹ The parliamentary committee for military matters stated, “during almost two decades, our people has lacked a military establishment, wherefore the conscripts would think it exceedingly burdensome being compelled to leave their proper activities for two years. A duty that feels overly heavy, could again give reason for discontent with the national defence and the whole legal form of government.” The committee found it was “more important that the army is completely trustworthy than that it excels in technical skills”.⁸⁰ Concerns were expressed that passing the law in a parliament where the workers had almost no representation risked undermining the legitimacy of both the conscription law and the conscript army. This problem of legitimacy was solved by passing the bill as a “temporary” conscription law. The government was requested to present parliament with a new conscription bill “as soon as circumstances permit”. Parliament expressly instructed the government that the new bill should reduce both the financial burden of the armed forces and the time of service “as much as possible”.⁸¹

The 1919 Temporary Conscription Act regularised truly universal conscription for the first time in Finnish history. Parliament repealed the lottery procedure of the 1878 law as unequal and unjust. In practice, however, only about half of each age cohort was actually given military training around 1919–1920, due to medical reasons and large-spread dodging of conscription.⁸² As the internal situation in Finland stabilised, dodging became increasingly difficult, but the percentage of men never given military

⁷⁹ Vp 1918, protocols, pp. 40–46.

⁸⁰ *Utskottets för militära angelägenheter betänkande n:o 1 med anledning av Regeringens proposition till Lantdagen angående ny värnpliktslag*. 1918 års Lantdag – Utskottsbetänkanden – Prop. Nr 6.

⁸¹ *Eduskunnan vastaus esitys No 6:een*, Vp 1918, Asiakirjat I, p. 28. This request by parliament was repeated in May 1920 because the committee appointed to draft a new permanent conscription law had not even commenced this work, pleading as an excuse the insecure international situation. Vp 1920, Asiakirjat V:2, *Eduskunnan Anomusmietintö N:o 5*.

⁸² *Asevelvollisuuslakikomitean mietintö 1920*, liite 6. The parliamentary committee drafting a new conscription law in 1920 optimistically envisioned that it would be possible to raise the percentage of those actually drafted to 75 % by simply easing the medical standards, since the Finnish people “probably is among the physically healthiest” in the world. *Ibid.*, p. 54.

training for medical reasons remained high. In 1926–1930, a yearly average of 36% was still rejected at the call-ups. In 1932–1936 the share of rejected was 24%. About a third of those rejected were “sent home to grow up” and taken into service a year or two later, when their health or physical strength had improved. The number of Finnish men that did not receive military training slowly decreased, as living conditions improved through economic growth, from roughly a third of each age cohort in the mid-1920’s to one sixth in the mid-1930’s.⁸³ Thus, even in the interwar era of “universal” conscription, a significant share of younger men as well as most older men never did perform military service nor undergo military training.

Socialist fears of “undemocratic” armed forces

As part of the policy of national re-integration pursued by centrist political forces – including broad amnesties for the socialist insurgents and social and land reforms to appease social tension – the Social Democrats could return to parliament in the spring of 1919 in almost their pre-war strength. They received 38% of the popular vote and 80 seats out of 200. Their representatives immediately started pushing for military reform, claiming that Finland through the events in 1918 had found itself with an “old, imperial-style army” that not even the burghers were happy with.⁸⁴ Having changed their mind since 1917, they now wanted a people’s militia similar to the militia in Switzerland, which they asserted would be more affordable and more democratic than the cadre army. A militia, they claimed, would not threaten neighbouring countries the way a standing army always did, and would thus promote peace. Since most of its officers would be civilians, “for example folk school teachers”, there would be no breeding ground for a dangerous caste spirit among them.⁸⁵ The suggestions of different social democratic MPs varied, from a basic military training of four months to the militia exercising every Sunday and one or two weeks each summer. Based on self-discipline, they explained, the militia system would be more

⁸³ Lauri Lehmus, ‘Asevelvollisen nuorison ruumiillinen kunto ja terveydentila kutsuntatilaston valossa’, *Sosiaalinen aikakauskirja* 1/1937, pp. 1–21, at pp. 5, 10; Tapio Nurminen, ‘Muuttuva armeija’, in Jukka Kulomaa & Jarmo Nieminen, eds., *Teloitettu totuus – kesä 1944* (Helsinki, 2008), pp. 47–75, at pp. 49–54. Historian Juha Mälkki claims that one reason to why only roughly 60% of each age cohort was taken into active service in the mid-1920’s, and why the percentage never rose above three quarters during the period, was that the wartime military organisation simply was not dimensioned for more troops. Medical standards would thus have been adjusted not only to the physical demands of military training but to the limited manpower needs of the armed forces as well. Mälkki, *Herrat, jätkät ja sotataito* 2008, pp. 77–78.

⁸⁴ Vp 1920, protocols, p. 698.

⁸⁵ Vp 1920, Asiakirjat V:2, *Sotilasvaliokunnan mietintö N:o 2* [Vastalause]; Vp 1920, protocols, pp. 698, 704; Vp 1921, protocols, pp. 1755–1760.

motivating and meaningful for the conscripts, and better at arousing their patriotism than the cadre army system, which was based on external compulsion.⁸⁶

On the surface, this suggested militia bore remarkable resemblance to the civil guards organisation cherished by the political right and centre. Yet the Social Democrats were highly critical of the Civil Guards. They regarded them as a state within the state, an armed organisation with leanings to the extreme right and not necessarily controllable by the legal government. They disputed the civil guards' claim to political neutrality and accused them of meddling in domestic politics, forming a threat to democracy.⁸⁷ Debating conscription in parliament in 1922, social democratic MP Jaakko Keto criticised both the civil guards and the cadre army for being armed organisations threatening the republican form of government. A militia system was necessary for the preservation of the republic, he stated.⁸⁸

The Social Democrats repeated much of their 1917 critique of standing armies in the early 1920's. The long months of incarceration in the barracks resulted in loathing and reluctance towards military service, as well as moral corruption of the conscripts; "innocent boys are led astray into immorality, drinking, pilfering, theft and forgery".⁸⁹ Abuses of power and bullying of soldiers were well-known from cadre armies around the world, claimed MP Oskari Reinikainen, and they could never be checked because they were inherent to the system.⁹⁰ The cadre system was not only a heavy economic burden for the citizens and incompatible with practical life – leading to loss of employment and difficulties to provide for one's family – but also a danger to democracy. Since it was built on training the soldiers into unconditional obedience, there were no guarantees that these soldiers could not be used for reactionary purposes domestically and abroad – in other words, to put down strikes by Finnish workers or to attack Bolshevik Russia. Referring to the Russian and Prussian origins of the Finnish cadre system, the Social Democrats feared a military coup of some sort and frequently warned of the "undemocratic spirit" in the officer corps.⁹¹

⁸⁶ Vp 1921, Asiakirjat I, *Sotilasasiainvaliokunnan mietintö No 2* [Vastalause]; Vp 1921 protocols p. 1753–1755; Vp 1922 *Sotilasasiainvaliokunnan mietintö No 1* [Vastalause].

⁸⁷ Hyytiä, *Puolueettomuuden ja rauhan linja* 1986, pp. 246–251; Tervasmäki, *Eduskuntaryhmät ja maanpuolustus* 1964, pp. 64–66.

⁸⁸ Vp 1921, protocols, pp. 1755–1760. Cf Vp 1922, protocols, pp. 460–462.

⁸⁹ Vp 1921, protocols, pp. 1987–1988.

⁹⁰ Vp 1921, protocols, pp. 2004–2006.

⁹¹ Vp 1921, Asiakirjat I, *Sotilasasiainvaliokunnan mietintö No 2* [Vastalause]; Vp 1920, protocols, pp. 692, 698, 704; Vp 1921, protocols, pp. 1755–1760; Vp 1922, Asiakirjat, *Sotilasasiainvaliokunnan mietintö No 1* [Vastalause]; Vp 1922, protocols, pp. 472–474.

Yet in spite of their loathing of the existing army system, the Social Democrats did not want working class men to be excluded from the equal male civic duty of military service. They were enraged by a paragraph in the conscription bill of 1921 that allowed for the possibility of barring politically “untrustworthy” conscripts from military training and assigning them to labour service instead. These “Red paragraphs”, it was said, demonstrated how conscription was oppressive towards the working classes.⁹² Yet somewhat inconsistently they also urged the bourgeoisie not to delude itself into thinking that the modern youth could be indoctrinated into unconditional loyalty to the government through military training. Due to the close contacts between the soldiers and the public in modern society, even a very long military service could no longer uproot the soldiers’ principles and produce the ideal bourgeois soldier.⁹³

In 1924, the social democratic MPs exposed to parliament that an unofficial system for political classification of new recruits was being practiced in the armed forces. The “trustworthiness” of recruits was graded by the military authorities, in co-operation with the call-up boards and the local police and civil guards, according to whether they were active members of the civil guards and came from homes known to be “white” and patriotic, or whether they had affiliations with the worker’s movement. The Social Democrats called this system, practiced, a “caste system” that discriminated against soldiers from a working-class background and only produced “outmost bitterness among the soldiers and the whole working population”.⁹⁴ The minister of defence, Jäger colonel Lauri Malmberg, in his response admitted the existence of political classification without further ado. However, he claimed it only registered communist sympathies among the conscripts and that this was necessary and normal practice in many other countries as well.⁹⁵ According to historian Tapio Nurminen, mainly communists were actually classified as untrustworthy. The system was an attempt at ascertaining that the key military personnel given specialised education, ranging from machine gun shots and fire control men to non-commissioned and reserve officers, were completely “trustworthy personnel”; men who were active in or supportive of the civil guards, brought

⁹² Vp 1921, protocols, pp. 2111, 2151; Vp 1922, protocols, pp. 466–469, 472–474.

⁹³ Vp 1920, protocols, pp. 698–699; Vp 1921, protocols pp. 2015–2016; Vp 1922, protocols, pp. 472–474.

⁹⁴ Vp 1924, protocols, pp. 1479–1491, 1501–1502, 1518, quotes p. 1491.

⁹⁵ Vp 1924, protocols, p. 1538.

up in homes known to be “trustworthy”, or otherwise known as “patriotic and loyal to the legal order in society”.⁹⁶

Comparing the agrarian and social democratic militiaman

In spite of many similarities, the social democratic and agrarian versions of the militiaman differed in some important respects. The militiaman in his agrarian version can be interpreted as expressing a firm belief in an essential warlikeness in Finnish men. This actually seems to apply to much of their subsequent arguments for shortening the military training period as well. The Agrarians’ vision of a militia system implied a view on warfare and military matters where the mechanical discipline and absolute obedience associated with the cadre army system was considered positively detrimental to military efficiency, since it ate into the conscripts’ motivation and patriotic enthusiasm. Dismissing extensive military training as unaffordable, morally corruptive and unnecessary in view of “the experiences of 1918”, their support for a militia system seems to have entailed a view of Finnish men as “natural warriors” who by sheer force of will, patriotism or protective instinct would fight ferociously enough to stop any aggressor. Whether this was seen as an inborn aptitude or something brought about by growing to manhood in Finnish culture is not evident. This notion of soldiering could nevertheless be seen as congruent with the masculine standing of a freeholder, master of his own house, used to handling hunting weapons, disciplining his own household and joining with other men in the village to manage internal disturbances or fend off external threats.

The social democratic version of the militiaman did not so much imply a warlikeness of Finnish men, but rather revealed a concern over how easily young men could be manipulated and impressed upon; a fear that military training could make class traitors out of young working men. If we are to judge by the Social Democrats’ rhetoric in parliament, they preferred the militia because it rendered more difficult inducing the soldiers with a false consciousness and making them act against their own class interests. The militiaman was bound up in civil society and adhered to its democratic values, but the young conscript incarcerated in the garrisons of a cadre army and isolated from civilian influences could soon be turned against his own class. There was also a connection to the Social Democrats’ concern over the financial resources devoured by the military. As they repeatedly pointed out, the tax money spent on defence was always money taken away from other

⁹⁶ Nurminen, ‘Muuttuva armeija’ 2008, pp. 58–60. Cf Kronlund et al., *Suomen Puolustuslaitos* 1988, p. 351.

important purposes; the first neglected area they listed was nearly always “culture” – that is, one can assume, the education and uplifting of the working classes to a higher level of civilisation, self-consciousness and social influence. Hence, merely the financing of the cadre army system dragged not only young men’s but the whole working class’ civic development in the wrong direction.

It is interesting that neither the Social Democrats nor the Agrarians, who both took the rhetorical position of speaking on behalf of the common Finnish people, brought up the issue of the language spoken among those officers of “the old Russian school” who, it was claimed, nourished an “undemocratic spirit” amongst them. It was perhaps natural that the right-wing parties wanted to emphasise national unity within the sphere of national defence. One might still expect that at least the mass parties in the left and centre would have pointed out that many of the most prominent members of the body of officers they criticised were also members of the old Swedish-speaking upper class.⁹⁷ Yet for some reason, the frontlines in the politics of conscription never formed along the lines of language. One reason might have been that the Agrarians and especially the Social Democrats had imported much of their critical ideas about standing cadre armies from other countries, where the opposition between soldiers and officers was a class issue, not a language issue. Overall, the Social Democrats considered the language issue to be of minor importance for their political objectives in general. Another reason probably lay in the recent experiences of civil war, where Swedish-speaking civil guards as well as officers had played a prominent role on the white side, side by side with Finnish-speaking troops. It was difficult for the Agrarians to explicitly criticise military heroes of the “Liberation War”. With the civil war in fresh memory, the military sphere was probably a relatively unlikely terrain for raising language disputes, whereas the war experiences made the antagonism between social classes difficult to keep out.

Why the Agrarians abandoned the militiaman

In 1920, the militia model was obviously still considered a serious challenge to the cadre army system, due to its allure among the voters and the staunch support it had from the country’s largest party, the Social Democrats. However, the militiaman was by this time losing his fight against the cadre army soldier. Some perhaps decisive blows were delivered in the 1920 report of a parliamentary committee drafting a permanent conscription law. The

⁹⁷ Kronlund et al., *Suomen Puolustuslaitos* 1988, p. 137–167.

committee consisted of non-socialist parliamentarians and professional officers. Its findings were mainly based on hearings with a number of military experts.⁹⁸

In its report, the committee criticised the militia model at length, the main argument being that a militia army left the country unprotected in case of a sudden attack. In a sparsely populated country such as Finland, with a thin railroad network, it would be impossible to mobilise and transport such an army to the border fast enough to stop an aggressor. Another serious blow to the agrarian support for the militia system was the committee's claim that it could be even more expensive for taxpayers than a cadre army. Before the Great War, it was pointed out, Switzerland's military expenditure had actually been the third highest among the countries of Europe. The militia system was further criticised for its inefficiency as a training organisation. The military training of conscripts was allegedly superficial and fragmented. It was impossible to foster the "firm discipline and feeling of togetherness that is necessary for military success". The short and disconnected training periods impeded on "the personal relation and trust between the men and the officers that also is necessary for the effectiveness of the army in a war".⁹⁹

In the elections of 1919, the Agrarians had risen to become the largest non-socialist party with 20% of the popular vote. By the time the 1921 conscription bill was presented, however, they had already abandoned the militia model. Their party programme that year made no mention of it, but only demanded significant cuts in military spending and "conscription made as easy as possible for the citizens."¹⁰⁰ Historians have offered different explanations for this sudden change of heart; that the Agrarians had simply been convinced by military experts that the militia system was an unsuitable and expensive option for Finland;¹⁰¹ that shouldering the responsibilities of partaking in a series of government coalitions, starting in 1919, forced them to take a more realistic approach to security policy;¹⁰² or that the renewed tension on the Finnish-Russian borders made an overhaul of the defence

⁹⁸ According to historian V.P. Somerkari, the committee members were chosen among individuals who shared the view of the government and the protector, General Mannerheim, that the army must not be weakened or disturbed in its development by drastic reforms. One single social democrat was later allowed into the committee. He registered his dissent to its findings. Somerkari, *Kansanmiliisi* 1953, pp. 57–63.

⁹⁹ *Asevelvollisuuslakikomitean mietintö* 1920, pp. 48–50.

¹⁰⁰ *Maalaisliiton ohjelma. Hyväksytty puoluekokouksessa Helsingissä 14. 4. 1921*, Database of political programmes, Finnish Social Science Data Archive, University of Tampere. <<http://www.fsd.uta.fi/pohtiva/ohjelma?tunniste=maalohjelma1921>>, retrieved September 4th, 2008.

¹⁰¹ Somerkari, *Kansanmiliisi* 1953, pp. 62–63.

¹⁰² Tervasmäki, *Eduskuntaryhmät ja maanpuolustus* 1964, p. 264.

system seem untenable in the foreseeable future.¹⁰³ However, during the parliamentary debate on the new conscription bill in 1921–1922, Santeri Alkio himself stated only one reason as to why he had become convinced of the impossibility of the militia model in Finland. This was the untrustworthiness of the Social Democrats. According to Alkio, they had abandoned peaceful methods in 1917 and still could not control all the socialists who collaborated with the Bolsheviks terrorising Russia, “militarists of the worst kind”.¹⁰⁴ In other words, he did not any longer trust the whole mass of Finnish conscripts enough to arm them and train them in warfare - not without the institutional control apparatus of the cadre army.

Does an analysis of the images of masculinity implied in the different military system models shed any light on the turnaround in the politics of conscription of the Agrarians and the Social Democrats? If it is correct that a notion of an unyielding autonomous “natural warrior” inherent in Finnish agrarian masculinity was intrinsic to the Agrarians’ vision of a people’s militia, it does make sense that they would hesitate to distribute arms among militiamen of all political colours. As quoted above, Santeri Alkio expressed a fear that socialist militiamen would know only too well how to use them for their own purposes, not necessarily guided and commanded by the government or their officers. His statements convey a view of Finnish men as essential fighters who needed to be checked and disciplined since one could not be certain they would fight for the right cause. Although their martial spirit would only be stifled by prolonged military training, that was seen as necessary for the preservation of internal order. Yet then it remains unclear why the Agrarians continued to support the militia idea for a year after the end of the Civil War. The lobbying of professional officers in committee hearings and along unofficial channels, depicting the militia as miserably inadequate in military terms, was probably at least as important for the Agrarians’ changing tack.¹⁰⁵

Different groups of agrarian MPs, throughout the 1920’s, made various attempts at shortening the duration of military service. More than any other non-socialist party, the Agrarians also emphasised the need to practice strict economy in the defence sector. Yet in spite of reducing the grants for some large armament projects, the Agrarians assumed and adhered to a positive basic attitude to the standing conscript army after having made their choice around 1920.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰³ Mylly, *Maalaisliitto ja turvallisuuspolitiikka* 1978, p. 141.

¹⁰⁴ Vp 1922, protocols, pp. 2105–2106 (7.3.1922).

¹⁰⁵ Tervasmäki, *Eduskuntaryhmät ja maanpuolustus* 1964, pp. 239–243.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 161–163, 170–173, 180–183, 197–200, 219–222, 260–264.

Military necessity above all

The non-socialist coalition government consisting of conservatives, liberals and Agrarians used the arguments from the 1920 conscription committee report when presenting its bill for a permanent conscription law to parliament 1921. The main reason given for dismissing the militia model was that only a cadre army system secured a sufficient number of soldiers in the standing, peacetime army to hold back an aggressor until the reserve could be mobilised. The Minister of War, Major-General Bruno Jalander described the government bill as the best possible compromise between military and fiscal considerations. One year of military training was an absolute minimum. However, no attempts were made in the preamble to justify the cadre army system by referring to positive side effects of the cadre army system in terms of civic education, the strengthening of national manliness, national re-integration or such. The matter was simply presented as a question of iron military necessity.¹⁰⁷

After the Agrarians had relinquished their views on the need for a people's militia, the MPs from the non-socialist parties did not really bother to respond to the Social Democrats' critique of the cadre system. When the new conscription bill was debated in 1921–1922, they mainly argued among each other over the costs and length of military service. The Agrarians wanted it shortened to cut the crushing military expenses, but the conservatives and liberals replied that the duration of military service was a matter of brute military indispensability, not of what would be pleasant for the conscripts or taxpayers. It was, argued the parties on the right, an issue that military amateurs could not fully grasp but where parliament had to listen to the professional expertise.¹⁰⁸ As for the probability of a Finnish Army warding off a Russian invasion, the tone was more sober than in the patriotic exclamations of 1918 and 1919. The 1920 committee report had laid down a principle that would become a basic doctrine of Finnish security policy; although Finland could not necessarily maintain armed forces strong enough to hold back a Russian army in long run, Finland could make such robust resistance that an attack would not be worthwhile in terms of human lives and economic resources.¹⁰⁹

Only a few conservative MPs went beyond purely military considerations in arguing for the value of a full year of military training, claiming that the military service promoted “national self-consciousness”,

¹⁰⁷ Vp 1921, Asiakirjat I, *Hallituksen esitys No 1 Laiksi yleisestä asevelvollisuudesta*. Vp 1921, protocols, pp. 1739–1753.

¹⁰⁸ Vp 1921, protocols, pp. 1739–1753, 1775–1786, 1984–1985; Vp 1922 protocols p. 548–551.

¹⁰⁹ *Asevelvollisuuslakikomitean mietintö* 1920, p. 51.

“the education of the nation to a sense of duty and discipline” as well as solidarity among conscripts from different layers of society.¹¹⁰ Ilmi Hallsten of the National Coalition Party, one of the 22 female MPs in parliament 1919–1922, demanded that the youths “whose great and fateful duty is to risk their lives for defending Finland’s independence” must be given sufficient military training to feel prepared, secure, calm and full of confidence should that day come. Furthermore, “they must take that confidence with them back home” and spread it among the people. During a longer time of service there was also sufficient time to “take care of their civic education” in order to open their eyes to the larger whole which they were the guardians of, claimed Hallsten.¹¹¹

A central conservative argument for the cadre army system in general and for a minimum training of 12 months was that a prolonged and continuous training time was necessary to make the conscripts skilled enough fighters who could stand a chance of survival in a modern war. In contrast to the agrarian rhetoric in 1918–1919 of the Finns as “naturals” at warfare, this implied an image of youngsters who had to be extensively guided, disciplined, hardened and prepared in order to become capable soldiers. It thus conveyed a more cautious or even sceptical notion of young men’s natural aptitude for waging war. This image of the cadre army soldier could be read as containing a typically bourgeois concern about young men’s path towards a manhood adapted to the demands of modern life and modern warfare, where the outcome was by no means guaranteed or given by nature.¹¹²

In general, however, there was even less talk in the 1921–1922 debate about the positive moral effects on young men of military training and conscription than there had been in 1917. This could be taken as an expression of what were “politically correct” attitudes to military matters in a mental climate still shaped by a contest between pacifism and anti-militarism on the one hand and a militarised nationalism on the other. Alternately, it might indicate that universal conscription and the cadre army system were already becoming accepted – although not necessarily well-liked – institutions, whose existence did not have to be defended in front of the voters. The fact that the non-socialist parties more or less ignored the Social Democrats’ continued critique of the cadre system seems to point in this

¹¹⁰ Vp 1921 protocols p. 2002 (MP Procopé of the Swedish People’s Party); Vp 1922 protocols p. 469 (MP Aspelin of the Progressive Party).

¹¹¹ Vp 1921, protocols, pp. 1786–1787.

¹¹² Cf John Tosh, ‘Authority and nurture in middle-class fatherhood: the case of early and mid-Victorian England’, in idem, *Manliness and Masculinity in Nineteenth-Century Britain* (Harlow, 2005), pp. 129–147, at pp. 135–138; Tjeder, *Power of Character* 2003, pp. 39–96; Kimmel, *Manhood in America* 2006, pp. 105–124.

direction. MP Simson Pilkka of the Agrarian Party, one of the few who responded to this critique, made a brief but remarkable statement in parliament in March 1922, which actually combined these two explanations. He frankly admitted that barracks life really debauched youths from the countryside. However, he continued, “right now we cannot live here as an independent state if we do not have such barracks life”.¹¹³

2.4 From public indignation to closing ranks around the army

The permanent conscription law cementing the cadre system and fixing military service to 12 months was finally passed in 1922.¹¹⁴ Yet political tension surrounding the conscript army only eased very slowly. Up until the mid-1920's and beyond, the armed forces' public image was dominated by power-struggles within the very heterogeneous officer corps (see Chapter Three) and a series of scandals involving mismanagement and embezzlement of military equipment and funds.¹¹⁵ Even more crucial for the public images of conscripted soldiering were continued reports in the press on insanitary housing conditions, deficient medical services and abusive treatment of the conscripts by their superiors. This negative image of conscript soldiering only started changing towards the end of the 1920's. The 1930's were marked by a closing of ranks around the conscript army, in the midst of building international tensions.

Public images of military education in the early to mid-1920's were often far flung from notions of the army as a 'school for men' where youngsters became loyal, dutiful and patriotic citizens. Rather, it was often claimed even in the non-socialist press that the mistreatment of soldiers in the armed forces harmed national defence by undermining the soldiers' motivation and making them loath the military. This, incidentally, had been one of the key arguments against the cadre army and in favour of the militia system.

The Social Democrats often brought up critique of the moral and material conditions in the armed forces when the defence budget surfaced

¹¹³ Vp 1921, protocols, p. 2105.

¹¹⁴ The Agrarians shifted their position from 9 to 12 months when relations to the Soviet Union deteriorated, due to new outbreaks of violence across the Russian border in Eastern Karelia. Mylly, *Maalaisliitto ja turvallisuuspolitiikka* 1978, p. 142; Hyytiä, *Puolueettomuuden ja rauhan linja* 1986, pp. 244-245.

¹¹⁵ Syrjö, *Puolustusvoimien asema* 1986, p. 8.

for discussion in parliament. For example, in the budgetary debate in December 1921, MP E. Huttunen listed several cases of mismanagement within the military administration as well as a number of recent homicides and suicides within the armed forces. He complained about the widespread abuse of alcohol in spite of the prohibition law enacted in 1919, the use of prostitutes, and the spread of venereal diseases among both officers and soldiers. He read aloud a letter from a conscript in a Helsinki unit who had tried to stay sober, but been subjected to scorn and even battering by his comrades for lacking “spirit of comradeship”. Officers used soldiers as their personal servants, claimed Huttunen, sending them to buy smuggled liquor from bootleggers, making them collect their officers dead drunk from the officers’ casino at night, undress them and wipe up their vomits. “It is something so degrading and in addition there is always the risk of [the soldier] getting assaulted [by an officer], which often happens”, Huttunen thundered, eventually ending his oration by demanding some minor cuts in military funding.¹¹⁶

All this could perhaps have been attributed to ingrained socialist anti-militarism, had not the agrarian ideologue Santeri Alkio stated in the next address that he agreed with Huttunen’s description of the state of affairs in the army. The inebriation in the military was commonly known, said Alkio, who blamed “customs inherited from Russia” within the officers’ corps for these evils, only to be interrupted by an interjection from the left: “They are just as much from Germany!” Alkio told parliament that many mothers and fathers who had to leave their sons in the army’s charge trembled in their hearts, wondering in what shape they would get their children back. “Many have been in tears telling me that their sons who left home morally pure have returned from military service morally fallen, having lost their faith in life and cursing the system that have made them such poor creatures”, Alkio declared. If the “Russian order” in the army was not uprooted, Finland’s defence was at peril, he concluded.¹¹⁷

Public concerns running high

A high-water mark in the public discourse about the Finnish Army as a dangerous and degrading environment for young men was reached as late as December 9th, 1924. On that day, MPs of all political hues spent ten hours of the budget debate roundly denouncing on the army’s mistreatment of the

¹¹⁶ Vp 1921, protocols, pp. 1258–1267. Cf supporting addresses by other social democratic MPs; Vp 1921, protocols, pp. 1267–1271. On the armed forces’ bad reputation with regard to alcohol, see also Mälkki, *Herrat, jätkät ja sotataito* 2008, pp. 116–119.

¹¹⁷ Vp 1921, protocols, p. 1269.

conscripted soldiers.¹¹⁸ A recurrent notion in the debate, expressed across the political spectrum, was that the will to defend the nation was fundamentally threatened by the conscripts' negative experiences of military service.

MP Otto Jacobsson of the conservative Swedish People's Party talked about the "absolutely reprehensible way in which recruit training is conducted", the "groundless punishment drill", "exercises through which conscripts are meaninglessly subjected to the risk of life-threatening illness", and "punishments obviously aimed at disparaging the human dignity of recruits". He harshly criticised the military authorities for their impassiveness, lack of understanding and irresponsibility in this regard.¹¹⁹ Variations on these accusations were subsequently delivered by MPs from the other non-socialist parties. MP Kalle Lohi of the Agrarians saw a connection between the unjust collective punishments and why youngsters of good character resorted to "poisonous vices" in the barracks – they sought "some comfort in their miserable and desolate existence".¹²⁰

Even MP Juho Mannermaa of the conservative National Coalition Party, usually the most defence-friendly party in parliament, brought up the "ungodly barking", "obscene name-calling" and "punishments bordering on downright torture" on part of the soldiers' superiors. Mannermaa mainly blamed the bad conditions on insufficient funding and lack of competent personnel, but repeated Santeri Alkio's claim that there was a "deep concern among the people" and that "fathers and mothers rather generally fear sending their sons to the barracks". He proposed a statement that was passed in parliament, requesting the government to pay special attention to the disclosed shortcomings in the officers' attitude to the men and take action to correct them.¹²¹

The Social Democrats naturally piled fuel on the fire by continuing the catalogue of alleged malpractices and bad conditions; rotten food, soldiers freezing and falling ill in wet clothes and unheated barracks, soldiers commanded to crawl in muddy ditches or stand unprotected for hours in the burning sun, alcoholism and criminality among the officers, collective and humiliating punishments, and so on. In contrast to Alkio's anti-Russian rhetoric, the socialists unequivocally pointed to *Prussian* influences as the root of all evil.¹²²

¹¹⁸ *Svenska Pressen* 10.12.1924; *Hufvudstadsbladet* 11.12.1924.

¹¹⁹ Vp 1924, protocols, pp. 1511–1512.

¹²⁰ Vp 1924, protocols, pp. 1515–1516 (MP K.A. Lohi, Agrarians), pp. 1526–1527 (MP J.H. Vennola, Progressive Party)

¹²¹ Vp 1924, protocols, pp. 1477–1479.

¹²² Vp 1924, protocols, pp. 1485–1490, 1502–1510, 1518–1520.

The defence minister's response to all the critique heaped on the military service system was surprisingly docile; he admitted that there were many deficiencies and pointed to newly started courses in military pedagogy for officers as a remedy that would need time to show results. However, he added, a certain heavy-handedness was in the nature of military education. "The soldier would be much more offended if he was treated like a young lady, and with good reason too."¹²³

Young men as victims of military education

The argument that a bit of rough treatment was only salutary for young men, hardening them for both war and peace, was not, however, generally accepted in Finnish society as a sufficient explanation for the scandalous conditions in military training. As indicated by the press cuttings on military matters from Swedish-language newspapers in the Brage Press Archive, including summaries on major topics in the Finnish-language press, the poor sanitary conditions and reckless treatment of conscripts were labelled highly dangerous to the conscripts' health, detrimental to the will to defend the country, and thus absolutely unacceptable, throughout the 1920's. This was the case even in bourgeois layers of society that were at pains to emphasise their preparedness to make great sacrifices for the nation's defence. For example, the above-average mortality rates among conscripts were the subject of many articles in 1928–1929. The chief medical officer of the armed forces V.F. Lindén himself stated that one reason for the high mortality were the excessively hard exercises in the initial phase of military training.¹²⁴ The fearfulness of parents sending their sons to military service, the anti-militarist and embittered spirit of recently disbanded young men, the unpopularity of the conscript army, and disappointed amazement at the nonchalance of the army command in this respect were recurrent images in editorials on military matters.¹²⁵

¹²³ Vp 1924, protocols, pp. 1538.

¹²⁴ 'Skrämmande mortalitet i armén' *Hufvudstadsbladet* 25.11.1928; 'De sanitära förhållandena inom militären föremål för en grundlig utredning' *Hufvudstadsbladet* 4.12.1929; 'Hälsotillståndet i armén' *Svenska Pressen* 9.12.1929.

¹²⁵ Some examples: 'Förhållandena inom militären' *Åbo Underrättelser* 23.1.1920; 'Missförhållandena inom militären' *Östra Nyland* 28.1.1920; 'En skrämmande bild av våra militära bostadsförhållanden' *Hufvudstadsbladet* 21.12.1923; 'Militärens bostadsförhållanden' *Åbo Underrättelser* 25.1.1924; 'Våra värnpliktigas behandling' *Vasabladet* 3.7.1926; 'Skandal i armén' *Svenska Pressen* 23.9.1927; 'Militärtjänstens impopularitet' *Vasa Posten* 25.10.1927; 'De värnpliktigas rätt' *Västra Nyland* 9.2.1928; 'Det bör göras ett slut på skandaliserandet inom armén' *Åbo Underrättelser* 4.11.1928; 'Reservisten i sandöknen' *Hufvudstadsbladet* 14.7.1929; 'Republikens styvbarn' *Vasa Posten* 18.1.1930; 'Preusseri' *Vasabladet* 9.4.1930.

In this discourse, the portrayal of Finnish conscripts is far removed from the bold images of natural warriors of the Civil War. Here, young men are the defenceless victims of incompetence, moral corruption and sheer brutality among their superiors. They fall ill or even die in the military, but their deaths are not in the least heroic, only tragic and meaningless. The soldiers are often described as beloved sons, hardly more than children, and the press commentaries foreground the concerns and grief of their *parents* as their sons return home with a ruined health or morality. These conscripts are portrayed as boy soldiers, incapable of autonomous agency in the iron-cage of military discipline. They are beyond legal protection, given into the care and custody of officers who fail the responsibility entrusted with them.

The turn of the tide

The armed forces seem to have been very restrictive in its public information services in the 1920's, reluctant to accept the "meddling" of civilians – such as members of parliament – into the details of military matters. According to press reports, they were accordingly slow to react to the vehement criticism of military education. Yet in the years around the turn of the decade 1930, an inconspicuous but decisive shift in the negative public image of the conscript army took place. The press reports on disgraceful conditions in the army grew scarce. This evidently had several reasons. First and foremost, the material conditions in the army gradually improved with increased funding. Better equipment and food could be afforded, and barracks were built and repaired. The professional and educational competence among the officer corps rose as the officer training system developed and military pedagogy was introduced on the curriculum.¹²⁶ New efforts were also made at public relations work within the armed forces. The army finally reacted to its image problem by starting to arrange "Family days". In these events, the conscripts' relatives could visit the garrisons and training camp, observe the soldiers' living conditions, witness combat shows and listen to speeches by officers and politicians.¹²⁷ A press bureau was set up at the General Staff Headquarters in 1929, a post as liaison officer between the armed forces and the press was created in 1933, and in 1934 an office for active information services was established.¹²⁸ There was a

¹²⁶ Kronlund et al., *Suomen puolustuslaitos* 1988, p. 240–244, 328–329, 409–413, 508, 514–515.

¹²⁷ Syrjö, *Puolustusvoimien asema* 1986, pp. 42–43, 74–80; Kronlund et al., *Suomen puolustuslaitos* 1988, pp. 411–413, 514–515. Cf. "De anhörigas dagar" vid Tammerfors regemente.' *Hufvudstadsbladet* 28.6.1929; "Den anhörigas dagar" i Parola.' *Hufvudstadsbladet* 27.6.1930; "De egnas dagar" i armén.' *Hufvudstadsbladet* 21.6.1931.

¹²⁸ *Hufvudstadsbladet* 11.3.1933.

new bid to invite press representatives to observe large manoeuvres, which resulted in large, excited and positive reportages in the newspapers.¹²⁹ The armed forces even entered into a co-operation with the national film company *Suomi Filmi* to produce a series of motion pictures where a positive image of the conscript army provided the setting for humorous adventure.¹³⁰

In the political arena, the Social Democrats and their voters found an increasing number of things worth defending in the Finnish national state. Land reforms in 1918–1922 had made small farmers out of many former tenant farmers and farm workers. Labour market legislation as well as social reforms strengthened the burgeoning welfare state. The Finnish economy grew rapidly at an average annual pace of 4% through the 1920's and 1930's, bringing Finland from relative poverty to a level of prosperity on a par with the Netherlands and France. Although this wealth was unequally distributed, the living standards and real wages of Finnish workers rose considerably in the 1920's and after a slump during the Great Depression rose again in the latter half of the 1930's.¹³¹

Ever since their return to parliamentary politics after the Civil War, the moderate wing among the Social Democrats wanted the party to take a more positive attitude to national defence. The party press printed articles attesting that the workers were ready to fight alongside the other classes to defend independence. Complete disarmament was still said to be the socialist ideal, but this could not come about as long as the “danger in the east” remained – indeed not before socialism was realised in the whole world. A left-wing pacifist tradition within Finnish social democracy continued to compete with the more centrist and pragmatic approach to national defence throughout the 1920's, but the social democratic MPs acknowledged that Finland did need some kind of armed forces to protect its independence.¹³² The splitting of the Social Democratic party in 1920, and the subsequent entry of a new, far-left Socialist Workers' Party in

¹²⁹ Cf *Hufvudstadsbladet* 7.3, 8.3, 9.3, 10.3, 11.3 & 12.3.1937.

¹³⁰ Kenneth Lundin, 'Armén i rampluset. Finlands armé i mellankrigstidens spelfilmer', *Historisk Tidskrift för Finland* 77 (1992), pp. 369–401; Kronlund et al., *Suomen puolustuslaitos* 1988, p. 412.

¹³¹ Saarikoski, 'Yhteiskunnan modernisoituminen' 2005, pp. 118–122; Alapuro, *Suomen synty* 1994, pp. 271–276; Soikkanen, *Kohiti Kansanvaltaa* 1975, pp. 418–421; Tervasmäki, *Eduskuntaryhymät ja maanpuolustus* 1964, pp. 251–260; Pirjo Ala-Kapee & Marjaana Valkonen, *Yhdessä elämä turvallisiksi. SAK:laisen ammattiyhdistysliikkeen kehitys vuoteen 1930* (Helsinki, 1982), p. 564–596; Marjaana Valkonen, *Yhdessä elämä turvallisiksi. SAK:laisen ammattiyhdistysliikkeen kehitys 1930–1947* (Helsinki, 1987), pp. 205–209, 233–238.

¹³² *Sosialidemokraattisen puolueen ulkopolitiinen ja sotilasohjelma. Hyväksytyt puoluekokouksessa v. 1930*, POHTIVA Database of political programmes, Finnish Social Science Data Archive, University of Tampere. <http://www.fsd.uta.fi/pohtiva/ohjelma?tunniste=sdpulkopolitiikka1930>, retrieved September 22nd, 2008; Hyytiä, *Puolueettomuuden ja rauhan linja* 1986, pp. 237–240, 246; Soikkanen, *Kohiti Kansanvaltaa* 1975, pp. 345, 502–505.

parliament in 1922, worked as a catalyst pushing social democracy closer to the political centre in this issue. “It makes a great difference to the working classes whether a foreign power can place Finland under its yoke”, MP Jaakko Keto stated in parliament that same year. “The class struggle of the workers can only be successful in a democracy based on the right of national self-determination.” This right, Keto underlined, was neither self-evident nor unthreatened.¹³³ This patriotic outburst was a reaction to an MP Socialist Workers’ Party who had claimed it was not in the workers’ and peasants’ interest to give any kind of support to the bourgeois army. Instead, the army should be organised as in the Soviet Union, where soldiers from the working classes elect their officers among themselves.¹³⁴ This was an exceptional proposal, as the far-left socialists usually argued for diminishing or even dismantling the national armed forces and entering disarmament treaties with the Soviet Union and Baltic states. Since the far left was usually understood as purely “defence nihilist”, its influence on the politics of conscription was limited to keeping the image of a domestic revolutionary ‘red threat’ alive.¹³⁵

Historians have designated the first post-civil war social democratic government, appointed in December 1926, to be a decisive turning point in the Social Democratic Party’s relationship to the regular army. The parade especially commemorating the white victory in the Civil War on May 16th 1927 was highly charged with symbolic meaning. The President of the Republic Lauri Kristian Relander had fallen ill and the social democratic Prime Minister Väinö Tanner agreed to preside over the parade – a dumbfounding occurrence for many people both in the political right and left.¹³⁶ According to Historian Vesa Saarikoski, the reactions in the social democratic press expressed an acceptance of the regular army, but a bitter critique of the participation of General Mannerheim and the civil guards. The latter were associated with the “white” tradition, whereas the regular

¹³³ Vp 1922, protocols, pp. 544–548. Jaakko Keto is characterised by historian Hannu Soikkanen as the “leading theoretician” of the Social Democratic Party at this time. Keto had since 1919 worked to rebut the “defence nihilism” within his party. Soikkanen, *Kohti kansanvaltaa* 1975, p. 421; cf Hyytiä, *Puolueettomuuden ja rauhan linja* 1986 pp. 239–244.

¹³⁴ Vp 1922, protocols, pp. 464–466.

¹³⁵ The far-left obtained 10–15% of the popular vote in the parliamentary elections from 1922 until their political activities were completely forbidden in 1930. The far left voiced a radical version of the socialist critique of capitalist militarism, wanted to abolish the civil guards and voted against all government proposals and appropriations in military matters. However, there was no parliamentary representation left of the Social Democrats during most of the major debates over conscription and analysed here. Tervasmäki, *Eduskuntaryhmit ja maanpuolustus* 1964, pp. 62–64, 127–129, 251–254.

¹³⁶ Kronlund et al., *Suomen puolustuslaitos* 1988, p. 355; Syrjö, *Puolustusvoimien asema* 1986, pp. 12–13; Aarne Sihvo, *Muistelmani*, Vol. 2 (Helsinki, 1956), pp. 152–155.

army was slowly ever more accepted by the Social Democrats as the defender of the whole nation, including the working classes.¹³⁷

Political convergence and the conscription bill of 1932

The parliamentary debate over the last conscription law of the interwar period, passed in 1932, demonstrated how the ranks were closing around the regular conscript army in its existing condition. The new law concerned a reform of the mobilisation system, where the responsibility of mobilising the reserve was taken off the regular army troops and transferred to a new organisation of regional military authorities, co-operating closely with the local branches of the civil guards. The objective was to free all available active troops in order to fend off an aggressor during the time it took to mobilise the reserve.¹³⁸ As pointed out by Annika Latva-Äijö, this reform finally integrated the civic guards and female voluntary defence workers into the national armed forces to the full. It signalled an end to the condescending attitude of professional officers to the voluntary defence organisations and in a sense constituted a transition to a mixed form of a cadre army with militia elements.¹³⁹

The tone of the following debate was very different from that in 1921–22. There was no more debate over the basic principles of the military system. The bill was passed relatively rapidly. The Social Democrats criticised that the length of service was only nominally shortened and that military spending would increase in the midst of economic depression. However, this time around, the socialist MPs were keen to demonstrate that they were as patriotically concerned about national defence as anybody else. They embraced the core of the reform and did not bring up the militia system any more. Arguing for some alterations to the bill, providing for a shorter active service compensated by more refresher courses, they emphasised that their own proposals would not only make the military service system cheaper for the taxpayers, but actually *strengthen* national defence.¹⁴⁰

¹³⁷ Vesa Saarikoski, *Keskustajääkäri Aarne Sibvo. Näkökulma aseellisen voiman ja yhteiskunnan vuorovaikutukseen itsenäistymisen murroksesta paasikiviläiseen toiseen tasavaltaan* (Helsinki, 1997), pp. 194–206.

¹³⁸ Vp 1931, Asiakirjat III, *Hallituksen esitys n:o 92 Asevelvollisuuslaiksi ja laiksi sen voimaannemisesta*; Vp 1932, Asiakirjat III:2, *Puolustusvaliokunnan mietintö N:o 1 hallituksen esityksen johdosta asevelvollisuuslaiksi ja laiksi sen voimaannemisesta sekä Vastalause*.

¹³⁹ Latva-Äijö, *Lotta Svärdin synty* 2004, pp. 274–278.

¹⁴⁰ Vp 1932, Asiakirjat III:2, *Puolustusvaliokunnan mietintö N:o 1 hallituksen esityksen johdosta asevelvollisuuslaiksi ja laiksi sen voimaannemisesta*. Vp 1932, protocols, pp. 406–407, 477–478.

The most heatedly debated issue was, however, the role of the civil guards within the armed forces. The Social Democrats vehemently criticised the idea that the civil guards would be a central actor in the new mobilisation organisation. Their counter-proposal, they claimed, included recurrent military training for soldiers in their home districts after disbandment; training of the kind that the civil guards had only given to a part of the male population, excluding anybody associated with the workers' movement. The greatest benefit of the social democratic counterproposal, said MP Matti Puitinen, was that "in this way we think the Civil Guards can be gotten rid of. We cannot trust the Civil Guards."¹⁴¹

Historian Vesa Saarikoski sees the concerns over fascist sympathies among the Civil Guards as a decisive factor pushing the Social Democrats' to embrace the conscript army as a protector of democracy against fascism.¹⁴² Just before the reading of the 1932 conscription bill started, the popular extreme-right Lapua movement had culminated in the so-called Mäntsälä rebellion. The Lapua movement demanded that the Social Democratic Party should be forbidden, just as the communists had been in 1930. The Mäntsälä rebels declared their readiness to override the lawful form of government if necessary to reach this goal. Many local commanders of the civil guards sympathised with the rebellion and tried to mobilise their guardsmen. The result, however, was meagre. The attempted rising never grew beyond 6–8000 men gathering at rallying-points around the country – only a small percentage of the hundred thousand guardsmen. The President of the Republic Per Svinhufvud, the Commander in Chief Aarne Sihvo, and several central ministers resisted the rebels' demands. So did the centrist moderates in the local civil guards throughout the country, not least those affiliated with the Agrarian Party. In the end, the rebellion was wound up peacefully. Nonetheless, it raised many question marks around the loyalty of the guards to the democratic constitution.¹⁴³

In general, the non-socialist MPs did not find much to debate in the 1932 conscription bill. A handful of conservative and agrarian MPs responded with irritation to the Social Democrats and defended the civil guards. More importantly, all alterations proposed by the Social Democrats were voted down. Yet the comments of the agrarian Minister of Communications Juho Niukkanen, an active figure within parliamentary defence politics ever since 1915, were indicative of the emerging convergence

¹⁴¹ Vp 1932, protocols, p. 478.

¹⁴² Saarikoski, *Keskustajääkäri Aarne Sibvo* 1997, pp. 194–206; Hyytiä, *Puolueettomuuden ja rauhan linja* 1986, pp. 246–251; Tervasmäki, *Eduskuntaryhmit ja maanpuolustus* 1964, pp. 64–66.

¹⁴³ Juhani Mylly, 'Porvarilliset puolueet ja suojeluskunnat', in Alapuro, ed., *Raja Railona* 1998, pp. 37–58, at pp. 47–53.

around the national armed forces. He pointed out that the differences of opinion regarding the bill itself were actually relatively small. For the first time, Niukkanen stated, even the Social Democrats argued over national defence “on quite a relevant and no-nonsense basis”. He tried to woo them by arguing that the proposed bill would force the civil guards to concentrate on purely military work and “forget politicking”. Niukkanen thus expressed a widespread dislike, among centrist and conservative moderates, of those civil guards elements that were mixed up with rightist extremism. There had been a shift in favour of the regular army within both the left and the centre. The army had proven its democratic reliability in the interest of all layers in society during the rebellion.

The 1932 bill was passed unaltered and Finland acquired its final pre-war conscription law. As far as the legislation process was concerned, the politics of conscription had reached its interwar terminus. During the rest of the 1930's, military politics in parliament turned around the issue of how much money should be spent on military acquisitions. The Social Democrats still resisted a number of supplementary grants for national defence, but after they entered a large centre-left coalition government in 1937 and in face of the tightening international situation they relented.¹⁴⁴ In 1939, their final pre-war foreign policy and defence programme still drew attention to the need to secure the democratic trustworthiness of the officer corps and the opportunities for youngsters from the working class to advance within the armed forces. However, the programme essentially supported a strong defence based on the existing conscript army system.¹⁴⁵

2.5 *Conclusion: Reluctant militarisation*

When Eero Tuominen was leaving his school and his home village in April 1919, as described at the outset of this chapter, the conscription army system he entered was still very much in ferment and the object of intense social and political conflicts. Tuominen might not have had to go to Turku at all, if the social democratic MPs had been present in parliament when the conscription act was passed a few months earlier. Instead, he would have been summoned to militia exercises in his own district. Yet the cadre army

¹⁴⁴ Tervasmäki, *Eduskuntaryhmät ja maanpuolustus* 1964, pp. 166, 206–219.

¹⁴⁵ *Suomen Sosialidemokraattisen Puolueen ulkopoliittinen ja maanpuolustusohjelma. Esitys puoluekokoukselle v. 1939*. POHTIVA Database of political programmes, Finnish Social Science Data Archive, University of Tampere. <<http://www.fsd.uta.fi/pohtiva/ohjelma?tunniste=sdpulkopuolustus1939>>, retrieved 8.10.2008.

soldier defeated the militiaman in the minds of centrist politicians during the very 18 months that Eero Tuominen was wearing his conscript uniform, and continued gaining political ground throughout the interwar period.

A process of “normalisation” and growing national consensus came to characterise the politics of conscription. The standing conscript army, so new and strange to Eero Tuominen and his contemporaries, slowly became something increasingly normal to Finnish society. The demands conscription made on men gained strength, not only as an institutional but also as a political and civic norm. However, as this chapter has demonstrated, this particular militarisation of Finnish masculinities was no self-explanatory function of national independence or some inherent fighting spirit of Finnish men. Instead, it was the outcome of a historical process where alternative constructions of masculinity contested in a political struggle entangled with struggles over other arrangements of political power in the new Finnish state. To some extent, notions of Finnish masculinities were motivational forces, causing different political groups to advance certain visions of the future Finnish military system. Yet in many cases, images of Finnish men were probably invoked more as rhetorical devices – to support a position that was motivated by concerns over the distribution of political power or economic resources. These two functions of masculinities – as an underlying knowledge of gender guiding political decisions and as instrumental rhetorical tools serving other purposes – are difficult to disentangle from each other in historical analysis. They were probably interwoven with each other e.g. in the ambivalence of agrarian MPs in relation to the militia and the cadre army models.

It is remarkable that the debates over conscription in parliament and in the press seldom explicitly referred to citizenship. The fact that both men and women had been fully enfranchised for more than a decade when universal conscription was introduced might have kept at bay images of military service as a prerequisite for citizenship in general. The question of inclusion or exclusion in the political community only surfaced in connection with the issue of special treatment of “untrustworthy”, politically subversive conscripts. The Social Democrats’ enagement over unequal treatment of conscripts on political grounds showed that whatever their critique of society and the military system, they were anxious to be included and allowed full civic participation in the political community of state and nation – and the community of Finnish men at arms.

Implicitly, however, the political fight over a people’s militia versus a standing cadre army conveyed contesting images of male citizenship; of the power relationships involved in the duties and rights of a Finnish man towards the political community. The Agrarians initially could not accommodate a military system constructed according to models from

imperial Prussia and Russia with their idealised notions of Finnish men as unyielding strong men, jealous of their autonomy and suspicious of “lords and masters”. The militia alternative they offered had many elements strongly reminiscent of the civic-republican tradition with its notions of “free and brave” citizen-soldiers who voluntarily fought to protect their rights and their property. Nonetheless, in light of the threat from Bolshevik Russia, the Agrarians were receptive to arguments stressing the military efficiency of the cadre army. Concerns about the loyalties of domestic socialists made the promise held out by the cadre army, of discipline and control over young men given weapons, more tempting than repulsive. One crucial issue remained – the political inclinations and loyalties of those in immediate command of the cadre troops, i.e. the officer corps. As we shall see in the next chapter, this question was resolved to the Agrarians’ satisfaction by the mid-1920.

In the conscription debates, the Social Democrats were more intent on constructing the standing army soldier as a countertype than on detailing their positive ideal for the male citizen-soldier. Nevertheless, their image of barracks life as morally corrupting reflects the working-class movement’s moral agenda for a temperate, steady and conscientious worker manliness.¹⁴⁶ Their claim that military training turned men into blind lackeys of capitalism, “hired murderers” oppressing their own class, implicitly expressed the alternative vision of politically aware, strong-willed workers. These dimly outlined socialist male citizens were certainly fighters, although there were different views within the movement on the righteousness of armed violence. Yet their fight was manly and just only if they fought for their own class and their own true political and economic interests, out of their own autonomous free will and a clear political awareness – not as the mercenaries of their own oppressors.

The conservatives and liberals were less verbose in the conscription debates. Since they supported the status quo and backed the government proposals in the matter, they had less need to talk about conscription. Whether they consciously strove for the disciplining of the masses associated with the Prussian conscription system or not, at least they did not object to it. The notion of young men educated into patriotism and dutifulness, submitting their personal interests to the higher cause of the national state, suited conservative values; and the liberals were probably too concerned about external and internal security to make any objections on grounds of liberal principles. The relative silence on the right side of the

¹⁴⁶ On “steadiness” as the labour movement’s ideal for male workers, see Ronny Ambjörnsson, *Den skötsamme arbetaren. Idéer och ideal i ett norrländskt sågverksambälle 1880–1930* (Stockholm, 1988); for a gender perspective this issue, see Johansson, ‘Arbetare’ 2006, pp. 124–126.

parliamentary chamber also indicates that conservative and liberal MPs felt they had the support of their constituencies for the conscription policies enacted.

However, the most important conclusion from this exploration into the politics of conscription concerns the *reluctance* and *hesitance* of Finnish politicians in relation to the military solutions offered by the military establishment. Parliament had no control over the process as the national armed forces were created and was essentially faced with *fait accompli* as it reassembled in the summer of 1918. Over the years to come, a good deal of its members sought to curb the sudden militarisation of the Finnish state and young men's lives, trying to put limits on military expenditure and cut the length of active military service. Although a large parliamentary majority in the course of time came to accept a standing conscript army, this military system was seldom glorified or celebrated in parliament in the same way as the feats of the White Army in 1918. On the contrary, the parliamentary protocols abound with expressions of concern about the negative effects of this system on the nation's economy, on young men's career path and on the morals of conscripted men, as well as scepticism about the political loyalties of the officer corps. These concerns and doubts were mainly expressed by the popular mass parties of the political left and centre, but even the conservative and liberal MPs mostly described the regular army and the conscription system as a regrettable necessity, rather than utilising available discourses on soldiering as a school in manhood and nationhood or a vehicle of national re-integration. They also voiced public concerns over bad conditions in the conscripted troops when these concerns were running high among their voters.

The views expressed in parliament are indicative of a widespread scepticism and lack of enthusiasm among large segments of the civilian society; a scepticism about conscription in general and especially about the Russian- and/or Prussian-style cadre army, its officer corps and its impact on young men. However, as the parliamentary debates also indicate, this scepticism was neither monolithic nor static, but shifted over time and was relative to perceptions of alternative security solutions, threats to ordinary citizen's lives, and prospects of success in fighting these threats. Fundamental doubts as to the *moral* justification of the state expropriating one or two years of young men's lives were, however, not voiced any more after the Civil War. Agrarians and Social Democrats mainly used fiscal and military arguments for a shorter duration of military service. What was not really contested by anyone in the first republic was that young fit men were to be compelled to take upon themselves the burden and sacrifice of fighting and falling, killing and dying, for the nation's defence.

3 War heroes as war teachers

The interwar conscript army and concomitant notions of Finnish soldiering grew out of the long shadow cast by the Civil War. The people in charge of the emergence of the military system in interwar Finland were groups of nationalist activists and professional officers, who had prepared a war of independence from Russia, mobilised and organised the White Army in 1918, and led its development into modern national armed forces. There were different political and generational fractions among these men, yet one group in particular stands out as decisive for the cultural images of soldiering as a part of Finnish manhood and male citizenship. This group was the so-called *Jäger* officers, war heroes of the “Liberation War”, who became war teachers for the nation’s youth and icons of a specific conception of modern Finnish military manliness.

The *Jägers* incarnated a particular way of commemorating both the Great War in Europe and – above all – the Finnish civil war. The story usually told about the *Jägers* in interwar Finland described them as young militant activists for independence who had clandestinely left Finland for Germany during the First World War, defecting to the Russian Empire’s enemy by the hundreds. Seizing the unique opportunity provided by the Great War, they wanted military training in order to lead a planned popular insurgence to “liberate” Finland from Russia. The *Jägers* returned to Finland to fight in the Civil War, training the government’s new conscripted troops and leading them into battle. Contemporaries thought their thorough German military training, fresh combat experience of modern warfare, and patriotic zeal was crucial for the striking power and the final victory of the White Army in 1918.

The heroic narratives of the *Jägers’* adventures, I argue, conveyed exemplary images of national military manliness, of what a Finnish soldier *should* be like – and *could* be like. The living reality and presence of the *Jägers* throughout the army organisation made their example something more than a distant and lofty ideal. In the 1920’s, a good deal of the training officers as well as company and regiment commanders of the conscript army were *Jäger* veterans. They were flesh-and-blood training officers, leading much of the practical military education of Finnish conscripts at a company and regiment level and serving as real-life models for young men. *Jäger* officers led the institutions for officer training, from the Reserve Officer School to the Cadet School and the National War College. Towards the end of the 1920’s and especially in the 1930’s, they increasingly dominated the leading

positions in the armed forces and thus the authorities centrally planning and organising the military training of young males.¹

In the post-war flood of historical works, memoirs, novels and magazine articles about the events of the war and what meanings these carried, the story about the young men who risked everything to save their country was repeated actively told and retold, not least by their supporters and the Jägers themselves. It became part of the dominant public interpretation of the Civil War.² I read these stories as hero myths, told in order to convey moral messages, but also to meet psychological needs in post-war society. In their patriotic grandeur the accounts were probably far removed from the private war memories of many people, especially those on the “red” side. Forming a kind of master narrative, they obscured many other stories about Finnish war experiences in the interwar period. These accounts were not only the voices of the socialists and proletarians who lost the Civil War, but also those of the professional officers who had served the Russian Tsar, the Jägers disabled in the war, and the Jägers who found themselves unemployed and in misery in a post-war society.

Nevertheless, the Jäger story offered a perception of history that did not only serve the state’s purposes, but obviously appealed to many Finns – perhaps even more so to young people who had no personal experiences or only dim childhood memories of the war. As Timothy G. Ashplant, Graham Dawson and Michael Roper have pointed out in an essay on war commemoration, “the power of dominant memories depends not simply on their public visibility, but also on their capacity to connect with and articulate particular popular conceptions, whilst actively silencing or marginalising others.” They emphasise that individual war memories cannot easily be unscrambled from the effects of dominant historical discourses.³ To the extent that the Jäger stories as the “winners’ history” became publicly dominant, the stories also supplied particular terms through which both those who had experienced the war and the conscripted youth could think of the past and their national identity.

¹ Lauerma, *Jääkäripataljoona* 1966, pp 948–961; Ari Raunio, ‘Jääkärit Puolustusvoimien rakentajina’ in Markku Onttonen, ed., *Jääkärikirja* (Helsinki, 2002), pp. 166–192.

² Cf e.g. ‘Jääkärit tulevat’, in Erkki Kivijärvi, ed., *Suomen Vapaussota 1918* Vol 2 (Helsinki, 1919), pp. 35–47; Jaakko Suomalainen, Johannes Sundvall, Emerik Olsoni & Arno Jaatinen, eds., *Suomen jääkärit. Elämä ja toiminta sanoin ja kuvin*, Vo.1 1–20 (1918–1920); Yrjö Ruuth, *Itsenäisyyspolitiikan edellytykset ja alkuvaiheet* (Jyväskylä, 1918); Hannes Ignatius et al., eds., *Suomen vapaussota 1918*, Vol 1 (Helsinki, 1920); Kai Donner, Th. Svedlin & Heikki Nurmio, eds., *Suomen Vapaussota* Vol 1 & 4 (Jyväskylä, 1921, 1924).

³ Timothy G. Ashplant, Graham Dawson & Michael Roper, ‘The politics of war memory. Contexts, structures and dynamics’, in idem, eds., *Commemorating War. The Politics of Memory* (London & New York, 2000), pp. 3–85, at pp. 13–14.

This chapter is a study of how the Jägers' public image in interwar Finland and the narratives told about their deeds and characters constructed a new public image of soldierhood, an image of a modern national military manliness. This chapter is not an investigation into the history of the Jäger movement as such, as this has been extensively researched in previous studies.⁴ The nature and content of hero narratives about the Jägers will be analysed in the first part of the chapter. This analysis draws on a range of sources; histories of the Liberation War and the Jäger Movement published shortly after the war, memoir works by Jägers, the army's magazine for soldiers *Suomen Sotilas* and the yearly Christmas magazine *Jääkäri-invaliidi* (The Jäger Invalid), published by the Jäger association and sold for the benefit of Jäger veterans who were invalids. The second part of this chapter examines how the heroic Jäger image was used in a campaign to oust former officers of the imperial army and pave the way for the Jägers to obtain leading positions. Here, some exemplary newspaper and magazine articles are used as sources. However, as *Jääkäri-invaliidi* and the internal newsletter of the Jäger association *Parole* make visible, not all Jägers who survived the war became successful career officers. The public narratives about the experiences of less fortunate Jägers add interesting fissures in the imagery of these successful war heroes. In the third section, the military education agenda of the Jäger officers, as it was expressed in military regulations and handbooks of the late 1920's and 1930's, is investigated as regards the images created of the Finnish soldier and their connections to the Jägers' ideals and heroic self-image. In the concluding section, the functions and purposes of the Jägers as soldier heroes are discussed against the broader canvas of the cultural development of European military heroism.

3.1 *The narrative construction of the Jägers as war heroes*

A great number of historical and fictional works, articles and short stories in magazines and periodicals, memoirs and even stage plays and motion pictures were produced in the interwar era to commemorate the Jäger movement and the vicissitudes of the Jägers' journeys, military training and war experiences during the Great War and the Liberation War.⁵ All this

⁴ The standard historical work on the Jäger movement is Matti Lauerma, *Kuninkaallinen Preussin Jääkäripataljoona* (Porvoo, 1966). A more critical view of the Jägers' illegal activities and foreign policy gamble with the German *Reich* was offered by Matti Lackman in his book *Suomen vai Saksan puolesta?* (Helsinki, 2000).

⁵ Cf Lauerma, *Jääkäripataljoona* 1966, p. 1001.

commemoration can be seen to have served a number of different purposes. Perhaps the most immediate one was to vindicate these militant activists for independence against all those who had thought they were immature and foolhardy adventurers who had put the whole nation at risk, or even thought that their illegal violent actions constituted treason. Other purposes were to invest the horrific civil war with a positive meaning, turning a national tragedy into a national triumph, and to set an example of military manliness and heroism for all those men who were now required to defend the new Finnish state.

The different motives for the Jäger commemoration naturally intertwined and supported each other in the heroic narratives. In order to investigate how the Jägers were portrayed as soldiers, and what kind of masculinity their heroic images conveyed, it must first be taken into consideration how these narratives claimed the righteousness of the Jäger movement and ascribed the Civil War with particular meanings. This section will first provide the historical background for the Jäger movement. It will then highlight a set of typical characteristics by which the Jägers were portrayed as war heroes; their manly energy and ability to act, their youthfulness and passionate nature, their patriotic zeal and spirit of self-sacrifice, and their unflinching faith in the possibility of victory, beyond rationality or consideration.

The Jägers' war heroism should be seen against the backdrop of a process of transformation within Finnish nationalism during the two first decades of the twentieth century. Finnish nationalism in the nineteenth century had primarily celebrated Finnish language and culture and emphasised the peaceful advancement of national culture and prosperity through popular enlightenment, legal rule, and domestic autonomy. The heroes of the national pantheon had mainly been poets, philologists, composers and political philosophers. Due to Finland's position as a part of the autocratically ruled Russian Empire, expressions of Finnish patriotism had to be carefully tuned. The main military heroes of the era were the semi-fictional characters of Johan Ludvig Runeberg's poem *Tales of Ensign Stål* (1–2, 1848 and 1860) and Zacharias Topelius' serial story *Tales of an army surgeon* (1853–1867), both immensely popular works that certainly provided models for a violent military manliness. The masculinity studies scholar Arto Jokinen has pointed out that Runeberg glossed over the sufferings of war in his poems about the Finnish War of 1808–09. The poet ignored the fact that most soldiers died of disease, hunger or cold and exaggerated the significance and glory of the battles themselves. Jokinen finds that the *Tales of Ensign Stål* “easily offers material for a violent warrior cult.” It depicts

“violence in war as men’s way of displaying their patriotism and citizenship”.⁶ Historian Teuvo Laitila has summarised Topelius’s patriotic project as trying to teach the Finnish people to respect and be proud of the past, love their country, and distinguish themselves as bearers of the virtues derived from the heroes of the *Kalevala*, the Thirty Year’s War and the Finnish War. Yet according to Laitila, Topelius emphasised more unambiguously than Runeberg that this kind of Finnish identity was quite compatible with being a loyal subject of the Russian Tsar.⁷

A new militancy within Finnish nationalism came into existence around 1900, for the first time suggesting that military violence could be a purposeful way of promoting Finland’s national interest in relation to the Russian Empire. According to historian Nils-Erik Villstrand, this period constituted a turning point, where Finland suddenly diverged from a common Nordic political culture of non-violence, dialogue and mutual adjustment. Under the influence of Russian opposition groups, independence activists and socialists in Finland incorporated political violence into their political arsenal.⁸ A Finnish underground activist movement started to form in 1901, in order to resist the Russian suppression of Finnish autonomy. It co-operated with revolutionary movements in Russia, distributed illegal literature and press, opposed the draft under the new military service law of 1901 and organised political agitation among the population. In 1902–1903, parts of the resistance movement were radicalised and adopted terrorist methods, including political assassinations, for restoring “lawfulness” and full Finnish autonomy. The early activism of 1901–1905 was soon dissolved as a consequence of the Russian government’s political concessions in the wake of the Russian Revolution in 1905. The widening rift between Finnish socialist and non-socialist civic activists also dissipated the movement.

The so-called early activists organised shooting practices and aimed at arming “patriotic” citizens. Yet even they did not necessarily see independence as a viable option. One concern was that the military burdens of an independent state would be too heavy for Finland to carry. As long as the Russian monarchy was in place, opinions in Finland remained deeply divided over whether resistance should be active or passive and whether the

⁶ Jokinen, ‘Myytti sodan palveluksessa’ 2006, pp. 141–143.

⁷ Teuvo Laitila, *The Finnish Guard in the Balkans. Heroism, imperial loyalty and Finnishness in the Russo-Turkish war of 1877–1878 as recollected in the memoirs of Finnish guardsmen* (Helsinki, 2003), pp. 74–76.

⁸ Nils-Erik Villstrand, *Landet annorlunda. Uppsatser om Österbottens historia* (Vasa, 2002), p. 188.

Finns should seek confrontation or reconciliation with the Russian government.⁹

A majority of the Finns remained loyal to Russia at the outbreak of the Great War. Over one thousand young men volunteered to fight in the Russian army. Yet according to historian Tuomas Hoppu, no evidence can be found that these men volunteered for the cause of Russia or the empire. Rather, their motivation ranged from a poor social position and a desire to secure their own and their families' livelihood, to love of adventure and a wish to see the world and gain career opportunities. In spite of formal loyalty, Hoppu writes, the public opinion in Finland was negative to Finns serving in the Russian forces, and for this reason several hundred volunteers obviously changed their mind and stayed at home.¹⁰

The Jäger movement

Bourgeois Swedish-speaking "old activists", veterans of the activism around 1902–1905, immediately recognised a potential ally in Germany in 1914; an ally not only against the common Russian adversary, but also against the ever-strengthening socialist movement and the growing threat of social revolution in Finland. The Germans on their part had a strategic interest in inciting a rebellion against Russian rule in Finland. Contacts between Finnish exiled activists in Stockholm and the German military command were soon established. The older activists joined forces with a younger generation of leaders of both Swedish and Finnish-speaking nationalist student circles in Helsinki, who had also been scheming for Finnish independence with support from either Sweden or Germany.¹¹ These students were frustrated with what they thought of as the compliance and outmoded clinging to legality of the older generation of Finnish nationalists in the struggle to defend Finnish autonomy against Russian authorities. The educated youth in 1914 was "trembling with a vague desire to do something and was only looking for a form of action which would sufficiently satisfy its glowing hatred of the oppressors", wrote Pehr Herman Norrmén (1894–

⁹ Antti Kujala, 'Venäjän sosialistivallankumouksellinen puolue ja Suomen aktivismin synty', *Historiallinen Aikakauskirja* 85:2 (1987), pp. 83–95; Klinge, *Finlands historia* 1996, pp. 353–358, 380–389, 395–398, 428–429, 494; Lackman, *Suomen vai Saksan puolesta* 2000, pp. 20–45, 66; Jussila, *Suomen historian suuret myytit* 2007, p. 182.

¹⁰ Tuomas Hoppu, *Historian unohtamat. Suomalaiset vapaaehtoiset Venäjän armeijassa 1. Maailmansodassa 1914–1918* (Helsinki, 2005), pp. 61–136. Cf Klinge, *Finlands historia* 1996, pp. 353–358, 389, 487–488, 494; Lackman, *Suomen vai Saksan puolesta* 2000, pp. 66–67.

¹¹ Klinge, *Finlands historia* 1996, pp. 467, 489–497, 501–502.

1945), one of the earliest Jäger activists, in an early history of the movement in 1918.¹²

According to historian Matti Klinge, an admiration of the new German *Kaiserreich* and its science, economy and military strength had grown among Finland's educated elites during the decade before the Great War. A current of Germanism, starting primarily among young men of the largely Swedish-speaking upper classes, celebrated manliness, activism, sports, and racialist notions of "Germanic energy". Force, action and intuition were seen as superior to rationalism and empiricism.¹³ For young men attracted by this cult of manly action, the option of sitting out a world war in peaceful Helsinki, while other nations seemingly fought over the future of Western civilisation, must have seemed unmanly and shameful. By contrast, the alternative of joining forces with the admired Germans had an allure of manly adventure in spite of – or maybe indeed because of – the dangers involved and the foolhardiness of the whole venture. P.H. Norrmén described what happened as a forceful "emotional reaction" against the paralyzing sentiment of passivity in Finnish society. He remembered how "passionately" the young students longed for some action that would "wake up the sleepers, force the hesitant to act". The students decided it was time to ignite a national rebellion in Finland. To lead that rebellion, the students needed military education.¹⁴

In February 1915, the Germans agreed to give military training to a group of 200 Finnish activists. Whether the initiative was actually made by older Finnish activists in Sweden, German intelligence or university students in Helsinki is a matter of controversy – the Jägers themselves later claimed the latter.¹⁵ The leaders of the "passive" resistance against Russian imperial policies in Finland, i.e. the majority of older Finnish politicians, flatly opposed the plans, but the activists were not impressed by their objections.

¹² P[ehr] H[ermann] Norrmén, 'Itsenäisyysaatteen herääminen Suomen ylioppilasnuorison keskuudessa', in Suomalainen et. al., eds., *Suomen Jääkärit* Vol 1, 1918, pp. 28–51, at p. 44.

¹³ Matti Klinge, 'Ruotsinkielisten 1910-lukua: germanismia ja konservatiivisuutta', in idem, *Vihan veljistä valtiososialismiin* (Porvoo, 1972), pp. 45–56.

¹⁴ Norrmén, 'Itsenäisyysaatteen herääminen' 1918, pp. 45–46, 48–51; P[ehr] H[ermann] Norrmén, 'Itsenäisyysaatteen kypsyminen Jääkäriliikkeeksi', in Suomalainen et. al., eds., *Suomen Jääkärit* Vol. 2, 1919, pp. 76–89, at pp. 77–78, 84–85.

¹⁵ Matti Klinge, 'Itsenäisyys – jääkäriliike – sortokausi. Käsitteistä ja tapauksista', *Historiallinen Aikakauskirja* 67:4 (1969), pp. 309–319, at pp. 312–317; Timo Soikkanen, *Yrjö Ruutu. Näkijä ja tekijä* (Porvoo, 1991), pp. 47–49; Lackman, *Suomen vai Saksan puolesta?* 2000, pp. 53–64; Lauerma, *Jääkäripataljoona* 1966, pp. 52, 55–58, 62–73. For the Jäger's own accounts, see e.g. V.E. Tuompo, *Suomen Jääkärit. Muistelmia Harjoituskentältä ja rintamalta* (Jyväskylä, 1918), pp. 7–8; Eirik Hornborg, *Finlands hävder*, Vol 4 (Helsingfors, 1933), pp. 373–377; V.E. Tiiri, 'Kymenvuotismuisto itsenäisyysliikkeemme syntymäajoilta', *Suomen Sotilas* 48–52/1924, pp. 900–901; H[eikki] N[urmiol], "Me nousemme koston Kullervon..." Jääkäriliikkeen 20-vuotismuisto', *Suomen Sotilas* 4/1935, pp.

Volunteers travelled to Sweden under different pretexts and then continued to Germany and a training camp of the German army at Lockstedt in the Hamburg region. During 1915 and 1916, the original training unit of 189 men, consisting mainly of Swedish-speaking university students or graduates from Helsinki, was slowly enlarged through secret recruitment in Finland to a battalion comprising almost 1900 men. Students and workers eventually constituted the two main groups of the Finnish Jäger battalion at the *Lockstedter Lager*. The majority of the enlarged battalion were Finnish-speaking men from lower social strata; 34% were farmer's sons and 26% sons of workers. Nonetheless, those with a father in an academic profession were over-represented at 8%.¹⁶

The battalion underwent austere Prussian military training at the Lockstedter Lager, suffering from prolonged uncertainty over their future and the German military command's intentions as well as hunger due to the general food shortage in the belligerent *Reich*. As the envisioned German landing operation in Finland was postponed indefinitely, the Finnish battalion was deployed on the German Eastern Front in Latvia and Lithuania to get battlefield experience. There, the Jägers endured trench warfare and Russian shelling, but only a few instances of actual combat. In the Jäger histories, the Jägers' growing despair as to whether they would ever be able to return home was usually depicted as much harder to bear than the hardships of life at the front. Only in February 1918, after Russia had been shaken by two revolutions, and after Finland had declared independence in December 1917 and with the interior situation in Finland deteriorating into civil war, did the German military command finally decide to send the Jägers back to join the Finnish government forces.

The Jägers gave elementary military training to tens of thousands of volunteers and conscripts and led these troops into battle. The victory of the government troops in May 1918 was much hastened by the German intervention in April. Nevertheless, the military expertise and leadership of the Jägers was often identified in contemporary accounts as a decisive advantage of the "white" forces over the well equipped but poorly trained "red" troops.¹⁷ According to the historian and politician Eirik Hornborg (1879–1965) – himself a Jäger – the most important thing about the Jägers was not their numbers, 400 officers and 700 non-commissioned officers, but their heroic standing as seasoned warriors in a country hitherto untouched by the Great War. "[A] Jäger was a legendary figure who enjoyed the blind

¹⁶ A total number of 1897 Jägers were enrolled at the training camp in Lockstedt outside Hamburg, but some men soon left the battalion. Lackman, *Suomen vai Saksan puolesta* 2000, pp. 199–205.

¹⁷ See e.g. W.A. Douglas, 'Armeijan syntä ja järjestäminen', in Donner et al., eds., *Suomen Vapausota* Vol 4, 1924, pp. 99–301, at pp. 261–262, 276–284.

confidence of his men, whether he actually deserved it or not”.¹⁸ Sievi Holmberg, who worked as a nurse for the whites, described Jäger officer Veikko Läheniemi, commanding the white forces in her sector, as a man who “despite his modest appearance arouses horror in the enemy, unlimited admiration and respect in his own boys, and with his personal courage shows his boys that ‘a real man can only fall, not yield to danger’”.¹⁹

A manly and heroic story of national liberation

The predominant public interpretations of recent history in the newly independent state vindicated the activists who for years had plotted and agitated for armed resistance against the Russian Empire. Yet how to construct a heroic national self-image in the wake of 1918 was not unproblematic. Finland never really participated in the Great War, but could not identify with the self-image of a peace-loving neutral nation either, since it had the memories of its own short but cruel civil war to deal with. Finland’s independence had above all been made possible by Russian military defeats against Germany and the subsequent Russian revolutions. Only after power in Russia had fallen into the hands of socialist revolutionaries did the Finnish bourgeoisie unanimously rally around the idea of national independence. The bitter class conflicts within the Finnish population itself almost undid independence just as it had been declared. German weapons deliveries and a German military intervention to support the Finnish government in the Civil War had a major impact on the outcome of the Civil War. Historian Matti Lackman has pointed out that the activists and politicians inviting German troops to Finland took a great risk. The country would probably have become a vassal state of the *Reich*, had not Germany been defeated by the *Entente* soon after.²⁰

The Jägers, however, provided ample material for anybody who wanted to tell a heroic and edifying story about how Finland gained its independence. Their story had all the elements of a good adventure tale about soldier heroes; Finland’s desperate situation at the hands of the Russian oppressors, the passivity and resignation of the older generations, the insuppressible longing for deeds and action among a young male elite,

¹⁸ Hornborg, *Finlands hävder* 1933, p. 415. The Swedish colonel W.A. Douglas who participated in the Finnish civil war later remembered, “the Jägers enjoyed an almost supernatural trust among the nationally minded public in Finland”. W.A. Douglas, ‘Mitt möte med de finska jägarna 1918’, *Jääkäri-invaliidi* 1938, pp. 32–36.

¹⁹ Sievi Holmberg, ‘Rajaseudun taisteluissa 1918’, *Jääkäri-invaliidi* 1934, pp. 81–84.

²⁰ Lackman, *Suomen vai Saksan puolesta* 2000, pp. 604–610, 614–634. For a nuanced description of how Finnish politicians related to Germany, see Vares, *Kuninkaan tekijät* 1998, pp. 106–151.

the dangerous journey into the unknown, the hardships and privations of draconian Prussian military training, the baptism of fire at the Eastern Front, the nerve-racking waiting for a decisive turn, and eventually the triumphant return to the native country and the final victorious battle against Finland's enemies.

In 1933, Yrjö Ruutu (1887–1956) published an article in the *Jääkäri-invaliidi* magazine, commemorating the 15th anniversary of the “Liberation War”, which is an interesting example of how the Jägers could be used to make claims about the war and the entire Finnish nation. Ruutu was the president of the students' union in 1914 and one of the earliest organisers of the Jäger movement. He acquired a standing as a kind of theorist and ideologue of the movement.²¹ Among the different means for achieving independence, Ruutu wrote, the Jäger movement had been the most important. “The Finns' own influence on their country's future hang on its success more than on anything else.” Behind this movement stood members of all social classes and parties and thus it represented the whole Finnish society, claimed Ruutu. “Its existence was proof that the will for independence of the Finnish people had gone from words and wishes to actions.” The Jäger movement had demonstrated that the Finnish people did not want to “sit around arms crossed” in the middle of a World War, waiting for others to act and to help, but that the people of this nation wanted to take responsibility for its own destiny. In Ruutu's mind, the Jäger movement was proof of Finland's coming of age as a state.²²

Similar portrayals of the Jäger movement could be found in the conservative and right-wing press on the anniversary of the Jägers' return to Finland that same year, February 25th, 1933. *Ajan suunta*, the daily newspaper of the far-right *Isänmaallinen kansanliike* (Patriotic people's movement) wrote about the young men who had been “the avengers of their people”; who wielded “a sword hardened in fire and blood in strong hands”. The open armed struggle of Finnish youth against the oppressor in the Great War was a beacon for the people, stated *Ajan Suunta*. “The shining example of a thousand young men was the igniting spark that lit into enormous flames the eternal fire of patriotism”.²³ The conservative daily *Uusi Suomi* was not quite as carried away, but wrote:

²¹ Soikkanen, *Yrjö Ruutu* 1991, pp. 40, 42.

²² Yrjö Ruutu in 1927 changed his Swedish family name into the Finnish form Ruutu. Y. Ruutu, 'Jääkäriliikkeen valtiollinen merkitys', *Jääkäri-invaliidi* 1933, p. 10. Cf Heikki Nurmio, 'Suomen Sotilas ja suojeluskuntamies! Sinä puolustat isänmaatasi!', *Suomen Sotilas* 6/1925, pp. 87–81, 7/1925, pp. 101–103.

²³ 'Ikuinen tuli', *Ajan Suunta* 25.2.1933.

Many peoples could envy us for the hero story of the Jägers. ... They roused the spirit of the liberation war, years before its hour had come, and maintained it during years of seeming hopelessness, in spite of the warnings and accusations of old people and although “the people and the country hung their heads” ... The Jäger story is a national treasure. It is an inspiring model and source of faith for Finnish youth for all times to come. It is one of the most durable keystones of our future.²⁴

Thus, a small group of young idealistic men mounting illegal military action against the old regime were offered as the evidence of national maturity. The strength of *their* passion and valour was seen by Ruutu and other non-socialist commentators as an indicator of how the “Finnish people” had developed a patriotism strong enough to sustain an independent state.²⁵ The Jägers springing into action, doing something manly, daring and magnificent, made it possible for nationalist rhetoric to gloss over the threateningly emasculated image of a nation passively awaiting its destiny at the hands of foreign armies with the much preferable image of the Finnish nation as strong, energetic and masculine. Similar to how they had appeared on the battlefields as armed and trained soldiers, Finland had now emerged on the world-scene as a sovereign state, armed, ready and able to manly defend itself. The nation had finally reached the threshold of full manhood and passed the necessary trial of manhood in war. “The new free state was born with the manly attitude of the freedom fight”, wrote the prominent Jäger officer, publicist, military historian and military educator Heikki Nurmio (1887–1947) in 1923, thus triumphantly concluding a lyrical description of the Jägers’ journey over dangerous waters to return home to Finland in February 1918.²⁶ True independence can only be attained through struggle and fight, maintained the chairman of the Jäger Association Verner Gustafsson in 1938.²⁷

Another frequent variation on this theme was that the Jägers had rekindled “the spirit of the forefathers” and thus renewed a centuries-old alleged tradition in which “the Finnish man has fought for his country or valiantly marched for faith, freedom and fatherland”, especially against “the evil East”. In this version, then, the strong, bold and manly Jägers evoked the

²⁴ ‘Jääkärien päivä’, *Uusi Suomi* 25.2.1933.

²⁵ See also Yrjö Ruutu, *Itsenäisyyspolitiikan edellytykset* 1918, pp. 165–168. In this work, published in december 1918, Ruutu is anxious to prove that the Jäger movement was not only an expression of courage and ability to take action among a new, young elite, but also founded on careful, rational deliberation – an obvious defence against contemporary accusations that the Jägers had put Finland at great risk in a foolhardy military adventure. *Ibid.*, pp. 115–144.

²⁶ Heikki Nurmio, ‘Jääkäripataljoonan matka Suomeen helmikuussa 1918’, *Suomen Sotilas* 7–8/1923. Cf Tahvo, ‘Kaartin jääkäripataljoonan alkuvaiheet’, *Suomen Sotilas* 8/1920, pp. 123–126.

²⁷ Cf Verner Gustafsson, ‘Jääkärien ajatusvälähdyksiä 20 vuoden takaa’, *Jääkäri-invaliidi* 1938, pp. 6–7.

memories of the Finnish forefathers, linking the modern nation to a mythical past. The Jägers' role had been to *re-masculinise* a nation that had lost its manly vigour and valour through Russian oppression, the lack of national armed forces and the anxiousness of old men clutching on to law-books instead of taking up the sword.²⁸ This rhetoric probably corresponded to how the Jägers had personally experienced the situation in 1914–1915; the suffocating cautiousness and passivity of the older generations and their own youthful urge for action. P.H. Norrmén wrote in 1918 of his “lively recollection” of a night in October 1914 as students in a nightly gathering in Helsinki burst out singing *Die Wacht am Rhein* “seized with a crazy enthusiasm ... without damping and without precaution, just for the joy of defying the prevailing sentiment of old men’s wariness.”²⁹ These angry young men longed for armed action and were “embittered by the know-all attitude of voices trying to subdue the rising fighting spirit in our people”.³⁰ They were thus confronted with a widespread reluctance against military violence among the Finnish educated classes that only deepened as the Great War raged on. However, as we have seen, the Civil War brought a decisive shift towards the new kind of militarised nationalism represented by the Jägers.

Youthfulness and young passion in the Jäger story

The *youthfulness* and youthful *passion* of the Jägers was often emphasised. In his documentary book *Diary of a Jäger* (1918), published soon after the Civil War, Heikki Nurmio described how three adolescent boys came to see him in 1915, eager to leave for Germany. As their high school teacher at the time, Nurmio tried to talk them out of it, but failed. He commented: “Who can still a storm with rebukes. The storms of spring take their own course; they crush the chains of nature, as if for fun, with their irresistible force. In those youths, under their seemingly tranquil surface, the storms of spring were raging and already doing their irresistible work.”³¹

This passionate desire for action and deeds among the young generation was juxtaposed with the cautiousness and passivity of the older generation in the stage play *Jääkärit* [The Jägers, 1933], written by Jäger major Leonard Grandell (1894–1967) and bestselling author Kersti Bergroth (1886–1975). In the play, young Arvo who is secretly preparing to travel to the Jäger training camp in Germany bursts out angrily at his father, who

²⁸ Jääkäri [pseudonym], ‘Viel’ elää isäin henki’, *Suomen Sotilas* 15–16/1935, pp. 347–348.

²⁹ Norrmén, ‘Itsenäisyysaateen herääminen’ 1918, pp. 46–47.

³⁰ Herman Gummerus, ‘Landsförrådarna’, *Jääkäri-invaliidi* 1935, pp. 30–32.

³¹ Heikki Nurmio, *Jääkärien Päiväkirja* (Helsinki, 1918), p. 22. Cf Aarne Sihvo, ‘Miten minusta tuli jääkäri’, in Suomalainen et. al., eds., *Suomen Jääkärit* Vol. 1, 1918, pp. 73–75.

adamantly abides by legality in the face of the Russian imperial authorities' suppression of Finland's autonomy: "A young person will do foolish things if he is not allowed to fight. (...) A young person cannot control himself – but maybe he can control the world. Let us fight outwards, that suits us. And let us fight in our way." At the end of the play, as Arvo returns as a Jäger officer and the liberator of his own village from the socialist revolutionaries, his father admits: "I say, it was a great idea, this strange deed of the boys. Where did they get it, immature children? It took us old people years to even *understand* it. To them it just came ready-made – out of somewhere!"³²

The Jäger youth was thus associated with energy and action and contrasted to the passivity of the older men of compliance. The foolhardiness, adventurousness and even recklessness of their enterprise, characteristics that would have been scorned by middle-aged moralists in most other contexts, were celebrated as admirable manly virtues. Youth and strong passions were closely connected to each other in nineteenth and early twentieth century bourgeois discourses on manliness and morality. However, in the "self-help books" for young men of the era, as studied by historian David Tjeder, the passions were seen as a threat and a problem, something that a young man had to learn to master, control and suppress, lest they bring his downfall into a life of vice. Self-discipline, self-restraint and building a "strong character" were emphasised.³³ However, this was not the case in the Jäger narratives. There, the passion of youth became a historic force as it was channelled into flaming patriotism. The demands of warfare in an era of national states transformed the bourgeois ideals of manliness. The national warrior of the Liberation War certainly had to know how to master his desires and his fear. However, according to the Jäger narratives, even more than that he must be able to devote himself, give himself up to great and noble emotions, push vapid circumspection aside and just passionately believe in his own and his nation's ability to fight and to triumph.

In some stories, individual Jägers could be portrayed as reckless adolescents rather than real men upon leaving home for the great adventure. The journalist and former student of theology Eino Salmelainen (1893–1975) depicted the fictional main character of his 1922 short story 'How Rudolf Borg became a Jäger' as an unusual and precocious adolescent who was ill-adjusted to his school environment, did not care for schoolwork and made his parents very concerned. Borg leaves for Jäger training in Germany and

³² Kersti Bergroth & [leonard] Grandell, *Jääkärit. Kolme kuvaelmaa jääkäriilikkeestä* (Helsinki, 1933), pp. 25–26, 126.

³³ Tjeder, *Power of Character* 2003. The Finnish political philosopher J.V. Snellman expressed similar thoughts; see Jalava, 'Kansakunnan miestä muokkaamassa' 2006, pp. 13–14.

returns transformed. He “fights like a man” in 1918, but the narrator of the short story asks whatever would have become of the boy if he had not found his calling in soldiering and the Jäger movement. “The manly and gallant officer’s dress still hid within it more of a daredevil boy than a manly man. After the war, life here once more began to feel too plain and ordinary. Then the battlefields of Estonia and [Eastern Karelia] could for their part bring his restless mind gratification.” The story nevertheless ends with a depiction of how Rudolf Borg visits his home town as a stately officer. His previous schoolmates who had made fun of him are now shy of him, not knowing what to say in their awe of him. His father, however, is proud to walk beside him out on town: “He felt that his boy had now become a man.”³⁴

In narratives such as the stage play *Jääkärit* or the short story about Rudolf Borg, military training, war experience and the duties of an officer channelled the foolhardiness and passion of youth and gave them forms respected and appreciated by society. Both stories implicitly states that when the nation was in danger and deeds were needed, the passionate nature of young masculinity was transformed from a problem in normal peacetime society into a rescuing resource in times of crises. At the same time, war and noble action gave the passions of youth the possibility of being discharged in order to benefit of society. Drawing on a conceptual pair introduced by the Norwegian masculinity studies scholar Knut Kolnar, one could say that within the context of the fight for independence, the youngsters’ eagerness for action and their willingness to fight produced *centripetal violence*, carrying them towards the centre of society and giving them high social status. In another context, it is implied, without a cause to fight for and without the military organisation controlling their direction, the same eagerness and willingness might have produced *centrifugal violence* and taken them on an outward trajectory towards the margins of society and social condemnation.³⁵

Most of the Jägers were between 20 and 25 years old when they enlisted. There were some teenage boys among them, who more or less ran away from home to join the battalion, but there were also older men in their 30’s. However, the people actually taking the real decisions within the Jäger movement – apart from the German military command – were the older generation of middle-age, upper-class activists in Helsinki, Stockholm and Berlin.³⁶ – Interestingly, *their* significance was later played down in the

³⁴ Eino Salmelainen, ‘Kuinka Rudolf Borgista tuli jääkäri’, *Suomen Sotilas* 13/1922, pp. 207–208, 15/1922, p. 242.

³⁵ Knut Kolnar, ‘Volden’, in Ekenstam & Lorentzen, eds., *Män i Norden* 2006, pp. 208–228, at p. 222–227.

³⁶ Lackman, *Suomen vai Saksan puolesta* 2000, pp. 91–95.

heroic story-telling, perhaps because it did not fit into the dramaturgy of the youthful hero myth.

The heroic virtue of self-sacrifice

Despite all their daredevilry, adventurousness and passionateness, the Jägers were also depicted as models of the supreme nationalist virtue, the *spirit of self-sacrifice*.³⁷ Although most of the Jägers survived the war and many became distinguished figures in post-war society, over 10% of the 1300 Jägers who returned to fight in the Civil War were killed or mortally wounded in action. The Jägers who died and “gave more than all others” were thus an important though not a dominant part of the Jäger story, however, it was once again their youth that was especially emphasised. In the poem “The young Jäger” by Aarne Mustasalo (a nom de plume used by Heikki Nurmio) published in 1924, the “young hero” is lying mortally wounded on a stretcher, “his pale face noble and beautiful”, feeling the burning pain in his wound and death calling him. Through the treetops sound “songs of heroes immortal ... over Finland, sounding in every young and brave heart, raising the troops with shining eyes. – From heart to heart, the song is one, the faith is one: the fatherland calls!” This poem was dedicated to the memory of Jäger second lieutenant Ahti Karppinen who was killed when the city of Viipuri was captured in one of the very last battles of the Civil War.³⁸

Another poem published in 1921, written by Artturi Leinonen, who himself had tried to join the Jägers in Germany, but been intercepted by Russian police, also gave expression to the cult of the youthful, passionate and self-sacrificing national warrior. This cult was not limited to the Jägers, but included all the allegedly voluntary and self-sacrificial soldiers of the White Army – yet as the leaders of other soldiers, the Jägers were fallen heroes on a higher level. Leinonen’s poem “The young hero” describes an unspecified white soldier hit by a bullet in the head, lying in the snow and feeling death approaching:

(...) Like a child, exhausted and fallen asleep
 he lies on the glistening snow.
 What moment loveliest in life?
 That, which ignites the heart
 brings it to an intense glow, to a holy fire.
 When a man, forgetting himself
 Only directs his strength to what is great and noble.

³⁷ See e.g. a theme issue of *Suomen Sotilas* on the Jägers, nr. 8–9/1919.

³⁸ Aarne Mustasalo, ‘Nuori jääkäri. Jääkärivärnrikki Karppisen muistolle omistettu’, *Suomen Sotilas* 48–52/1924.

When he gives everything he can give.
 Who brought a young life as a sacrifice
 he gave more than all others.
 As long as the stars and moons wander
 As long as new days break to dawn
 The word *hero* will honour his memory³⁹

The Jäger hero demonstrated to Finnish men how national freedom and prosperity had to be built on the power of arms and readiness for military violence. The Jäger narratives underlined and repeated the claims that Finland's independence had been achieved by force of Finnish arms and that manly armed forces were a vital necessity for the nation. "Finland's independence was reached by arms. *The creation of Finnish armed forces was the act that gave birth to Finnish independence*", wrote Yrjö Ruuth (Ruutu) in the army magazine *Suomen Sotilas* in 1919, for an intended readership of conscript soldiers and civil guardsmen. He continued, "We must go on building our country's future on this same firm ground. Finland's future rests on the powerful arms of Finnish soldiers."⁴⁰ Resembling the Jägers, the national warrior should be ready to sacrifice his career, his family life, his health and his life for a higher purpose, namely the fatherland. Yet the Jäger myth was not only about sacrifice, but also about optimism and self-reliance. It demonstrated the allegedly historical force of young military manliness; how patriotism, courage, willpower, ability to take action and the willingness to fight constituted a moral and physical force that could achieve victories deemed impossible by rational calculation. This message was meant to encourage and reassure the soldiers of a small and young nation, preparing for a future war against the great power on its eastern border.

The historians of the Jäger movement Matti Lauerma and Matti Lackman have both estimated that roughly a third of the Finnish Jägers actually joined for other reasons than nationalist idealism. For some it was the only way to be released from the wartime internment camps for aliens in Germany, others had evidently been misled by vague promises of well-paid employment in Germany after completing military training.⁴¹ Heroic narratives thus produced a rather stereotypical Jäger image out of what was in reality a very heterogeneous group of individual men.

³⁹ The Finnish words here translated with 'man', 'himself' and 'he' are gender neutral. Only the context, not grammar, shows that the hero of this poem is a male. Artturi Leinonen, 'Nuori sankari', *Suomen Sotilas* 49-51/1921.

⁴⁰ Y.O. Ruuth, 'Suomen armeijan syntysanat', *Suomen Sotilas* 8-9/1919, pp. 90-91 [emphasis in original].

⁴¹ Lauerma, *Jääkäripataljoona* 1966, pp. 269-273; Lackman, *Suomen vai Saksan puolesta* 2000, p. 184-192; cf. Leo Mäkelin, 'Jääkärit' [1928] in Matti Lackman, ed., *Jääkärimuistelmia* (Helsinki, 1994), p. 211-217, at p. 212.

3.2 *Absent women and distant domesticity*

The archetypal hero's quest must take him away from home into the dangers of foreign lands, a perilous journey culminating in some kind of crucial struggle before he can return triumphant, bringing home some life-transmuting trophy to renew the community or the nation.⁴² There is much resemblance to classical hero myths and adventure stories in the way the Jägers' departure and their journey away from their home communities—their dangerous path through northern Finland and Sweden, playing hide-and-seek with the Russian gendarmerie, and stepping into the great unknown⁴³ — was highlighted in interwar Jäger narratives. According to cultural historian Graham Dawson, British adventure stories since the 16th century usually involved a soldier hero and a movement away from domesticity, but a new characteristic of nineteenth century adventure novels was that the plot did not finally bring the hero back home. In this period, adventure novels diverged sharply from the romantic novel into a genre of its own, “exclusively concerned with adventure scenarios of male camaraderie, rivalry and contest in an imagined world quite distinct from that of ‘domestic femininity’”. Domesticity, femininity, heterosociality and heterosexual love was left aside from the subject matter of adventure tales.⁴⁴

Not only the genre conventions of adventure stories, but also those of history-writing demanded that the deeds of men in the public sphere of politics and war should be separated from their private life and their relationships to women and children. E.g. the first major history of the Jäger movement, *Suomen Jääkärit* (Finland's Jägers), a large anthology of articles by different authors published in 18 paper-bound volumes in 1918–1920, contains 16 different descriptions of how the Jägers managed to get from Finland to Germany. Yet only one of these mentions in passing the parting with one's family; treating the family's reaction as a mere drag on the heroes' quest: “The greatest difficulty for those about to leave was getting their relatives' permission. Often, they had to negotiate with some older politician in order to calm their closest ones. Then we usually knew there would be no journey for that young man unless he had enough strength of will not to give in.”⁴⁵ In the same way, most of the Jäger narratives did not refer to what it was like to be reunited with parents, family and friends after the war. The

⁴² Joseph Campbell, *The hero with a thousand faces* [1949] (Princeton, 1973).

⁴³ See e.g. Jalmari Kara, 'Jouluaatto', *Suomen Sotilas* 50–52/1919, pp. 17–19; [Veikko] Heikinheimo, 'Hiihtoretkiä Merenkurkulla', *Suomen Sotilas* 5–6/1922, pp. 73–75.

⁴⁴ Dawson, *Soldier heroes* 1994, pp. 58, 63–64.

⁴⁵ Bertel Appelberg, 'Värväys pfafinderkurssille', in Suomalainen et al., eds., *Suomen Jääkärit* Vol. 3, 1919, pp 132–136, at p. 133. Cf El[rich] H[leinrichs], 'Miten minusta tuli jääkäri', *Suomen Sotilas* 5/1935, pp. 132–135.

1 100 pages of *Suomen Jääkärit* end with the sea voyage back to Finland and the official parade in the market square of the city of Vaasa. In the same fashion, “homecoming” in most Jäger narratives meant returning to Finnish soil – not family reunion.

An interesting case in this respect is a two-volume collection of semi-fictional short stories about the Jägers by Jäger Captain V.E. Tuompo (1893–1957). The atmosphere in the depiction of the departure from Helsinki for Germany in the first volume is charged but also filled with youthful excitement and the thrill of a great journey. This was written in Germany in the summer of 1917.⁴⁶ The mood in the last chapter of the second volume, written after the Civil War, and describing a Jäger’s homecoming at Midsummer’s day 1918 is quite different. In this pensive and melancholic finale, the anonymous, third-person protagonist feels the welcome of all the familiar things and furniture, but “the home was empty”; his father and his mother have both died during his years of absence. He has paid dearly for his journey as he has lost the home that was its purpose and destination. The presence of his brothers and sisters and their joy upon his return are only mentioned in half a sentence. The last chapter and the whole close of book is a scene laden with symbolism, as the Jäger sits by the smouldering ashes of the midsummer bonfire of the previous night. In an allegorical dialogue with a lily of the valley – obviously representing young womanhood – he first rejects the flower who is calling out to him to be picked. “You would die at my breast! I cannot any more give the tenderness that you need. (...) I am a restless wanderer! I have after all lost something. I am leaving again.”⁴⁷ Tuompo leaves open for interpretation what decision the Jäger finally reaches, but he can be read as saying that a true warrior cannot necessarily ever return home to the comforts of domesticity and womanly love. He has irrevocably changed and now belongs to another world.

Was there any room at all, therefore, for women or femininity within the heroic Jäger narratives? Yes – but practically none within the context of relationships of love and intimacy. Women as mothers, wives, girlfriends or sisters, as the women that the Jägers left and returned to, are definitely not part of the story. Women really only appear in Jäger narratives in the role of the Jägers’ assistants in the military effort: as nurses or organisers of lodging, feeding and clothing. Their work for the common cause could certainly be described as adventurous, yet they always appear more as the heroes’ courageous helpers than heroines in their own right.⁴⁸ However, it seems to

⁴⁶ Tuompo, *Suomen Jääkärit* Vol 1, 1918, pp. 9–16.

⁴⁷ V.E. Tuompo, *Suomen Jääkärit*, Vol 2, *Kotiin* (Jyväskylä, 1918), pp. 201–207.

⁴⁸ See e.g. E. I., ‘Naiset ja jääkäriliike’, *Suomen Sotilas* 8–9/1919, pp. 104–107.

have been easier to let women into the world of military heroism, on certain conditions, than to include domesticity and intimacy with women in the heroic narrative.

Ruth Munck and Saara Rampanen, two Finnish nurses who joined the Jäger battalion in Latvia during the war to nurse their wounded countrymen, were often remembered in Jäger narratives as the closest thing to female heroines these stories could accommodate. They had, it was said, left their homes and put everything at risk, just like the Jägers themselves, to join them in Germany and follow them back to Finland and through the struggle of the “Liberation War”.⁴⁹ A writer in *Jääkäri-invaliidi* in 1933 commented on a passage in the stage-play *The Jägers*, where the sister of a Jäger bitterly deplores being a woman and therefore unable to join the fight and pay tribute at the altar of the fatherland. Taking “sister Ruth and sister Saara” as well as the women who volunteered in auxiliary tasks during the “Liberation War” as his evidence, the author of this piece stated that events had shown that both women and men could work for their country; “indeed, that national defence today positively and absolutely needs the work and support of both sexes, i.e. the whole people”. To the author’s mind, this outcome of the Great War in all countries of Central Europe was “an enormous step forward for the women’s question, the victorious advancement of women into spheres of society that previously had been closed to them.”⁵⁰ Women could thus be part of the military action and be of service to the nation, yet the self-sacrifice of women in war was not about risking their lives among the men at the front. In marked contrast to the manly tasks of fighting, it was about nursing the soldiers behind the lines and providing the comfort and security of womanly care to the wounded and the sick.

3.3 *Heroic officers and their counter-images*

The idealised image of the Jägers as war heroes was mainly built around their actions during the war years. However, as many Jägers after the war went on to professional military careers, their heroic image could also be used to

⁴⁹ Yrjö Salminen, ‘Terveysoloista Jääkäripataljoonassa’, in Suomalainen et al., eds., *Suomen Jääkärit* Vol. 16–17, 1920, pp. 998–1000; Ruth Ausfeld, ‘Jääkärit sairaaloissa’, in Suomalainen et al., eds., *Suomen Jääkärit* Vol. 16–17, 1920, pp. 1001–1003; Tuompo, *Suomen Jääkärit* Vol 1, 1918, pp. 258–259; Matti Lackman, ‘Ruth Munck’, *Suomen Kansallisbiografia-verkkojulkaisu*, <<http://artikkelihaku.kansallisbiografia.fi/artikkeli/7822/>>, published 11.10.2005, retrieved 19.03.2009; Kaarle Sulamaa, ‘Sara Rampanen’, *Suomen Kansallisbiografia-verkkojulkaisu*, <<http://artikkelihaku.kansallisbiografia.fi/artikkeli/7835/>>, published 4.5.2001, retrieved 19.03.2009.

⁵⁰ H[eikki] N[urmiol], ‘27. Jääkäripataljoonan ”sisaret”’, *Jääkäri-invaliidi* 1933, pp. 34–35.

further their own careers, especially when contrasted with counter-images of other officers.

As peace returned after the Civil War and Finnish independence seemed secured, roughly half of the 1300 Jägers who had returned to Finland to fight left the army and went on to continue their interrupted civilian lives. By 1921, nearly seven hundred still remained in service, ranging in rank from sergeants to colonels.⁵¹ Some stayed because of promising career opportunities, some because they did not know what else to do. For many, however, organising and training strong Finnish armed forces to meet the perceived Russian threat was also the logical continuation of their mission as freedom fighters. The Jägers, however, were not the only soldiers returning to Finland in 1918. The Russian imperial army had, ever since the early nineteenth century, offered career opportunities to Finnish officers from aristocratic families. As the Russian empire and its army crumbled in 1917–1918, most of these officers returned to Finland. Whereas the Jägers were only young men, students with elementary officer training at best, some of the “Russian officers” had reached high positions in the Russian army. They had higher military education and experience of planning wars and leading whole armies. The highest command in the White Army in 1918 and in the regular armed forces after the war was as a matter of course given to these senior officers, above all Kustaa Wilkama who was made Commander of the armed forces after the war and Oscar Enckell who became Chief of the General Staff in 1919. Although Jägers were also appointed to high offices, such as division commanders, the former imperial officers formed a very powerful military group.⁵²

Many Jäger officers did not stay content with this state of affairs for too long. With a few exceptions, the first and foremost being the white supreme commander in the Civil War C.G. Mannerheim, they regarded most of the “Tsar’s officers” as traitors to Finland’s cause and considered that these men had mismanaged the build-up phase of defence planning. As they saw it, these officers had unscrupulously served the oppressor for the sake of their own careers whereas they, the Jägers, had sacrificed everything and suffered hardships in the German trenches only for the hope of liberating their fatherland. Together with some of the old activists behind the Jäger movement such as Kai Donner and Elmo Kaila, experienced propagandists and intrigue-makers, a group of the highest-ranking Jägers started a campaign in 1920 to oust all “Russianness” from the army, accusing the “Russian’s officers” of general incompetence and corruptness. They

⁵¹ Lauerma, *Jääkäripataljoona* 1966, pp. 871, 938.

⁵² Kronlund et al., *Suomen puolustuslaitos* 1988, pp. 137–160, 268–274.

claimed that these older officers in high positions were preventing the Jägers from obtaining continued military education and were favouring other officers who had served in Russia.⁵³

The campaign culminated in 1924, as the Jäger officers in effect blackmailed the government to dismiss eight of the highest ranking officers, including the commander-in-chief, by threatening their own mass resignations.⁵⁴ The politicians resisted at first, but the Jägers eventually triumphed. Whether this should be understood as a case of the military overruling parliamentary democracy, or as a skilful move on part of the politicians to purchase the Jägers' loyalty to the centrist republic, i.e. a kind of "appeasement" policy to prevent the Jägers from allying themselves with authoritarian radical movements, is a matter of perspective.⁵⁵ The "purge" of the army command was stretched out over a two-year period and carried out under various false pretexts. The Jägers involved repeatedly denied that the 'officers strike' was aimed at making their own advancement possible, but the end result was that by 1926 most of the top positions in the army – chief of the general staff, commander-in-chief, two out of three division commanders, and so forth – were filled with Jäger officers. Historian Max Engman has compared the Jäger officers to similar voluntary nationalist warriors of the same period in Poland and Czechoslovakia and noticed with all of them, that men who once had taken up arms against the legal authorities had a low threshold for political intrigue-making to reach other objectives. Because they were driven by idealism and high expectations, they were, according to Engman, likely to be disappointed with developments in peacetime society – especially with regard to their own career prospects.⁵⁶

Defaming the countertype officer

Within the context of images of soldiering in the new Finnish republic, it is interesting to note how the public rhetoric used in the campaign against the officers who had served in Russia cast them as *counter-types* of the Jägers. Although explicitly gendered language was not used and the manliness of the "Russian's officers" was rarely questioned as such, it was implicitly claimed

⁵³ Martti Ahti, *Ryssävõivassa. Elmo Kaila 1888-1935* (Porvoo, 1999), pp. 259–352; Saarikoski, *Keskustajääkäri Aarne Siboo* 1997, pp. 141–152; Hugo Österman, *Fribet och försvar* (Helsingfors, 1967), pp. 34–40; Kronlund et al., *Suomen puolustuslaitos* 1988, pp. 274–275.

⁵⁴ Woldemar Hägglund, 'P.M. puolustuslaitoksessamme nykyään vallitsevasta tilanteesta'. Finnish National Archive, K.J. Ståhlberg's collection, folder 83.

⁵⁵ Cf Vesa Saarikoski, 'Yhteiskunnan modernisoituminen' 2005, pp. 124–126.

⁵⁶ Max Engman, 'Legionärer och jägare. Skapandet av en nationell officerskår i mellankrigstidens nya stater', in J. Kuusanmäki & K. Rumpunen, eds., *Snellmanin ja Mannerheimin välissä. Kirjoituksia sodasta, raubasta ja isänmaan historiasta* (Helsinki, 2000), pp. 29–55.

that the “Russians” did not display the *proper* military masculinity to educate, inspire and lead the new Finnish citizen-soldiers. The central accusation was that having served for so long in Russia, they lacked “national spirit” and had become Russian in mindset. They did not cherish Finnish independence and they derided Finnish nationalism. Elmo Kaila (1888–1935), probably the most active and venomous writer of the campaign, claimed that the “Russian” officers had no contact with their soldiers and left their training completely to the non-commissioned officers. To Kaila, they represented an old oppressive military culture, alien to an army of free citizens. “A soldier in the Russian view is a brutish machine, only good enough for taking orders and being cannon-food”. He claimed that they thought their task as officers was “to ‘represent’ the army, in elegant dress and with sophisticated manners” instead of standing in the mud of the training-fields. It is not clear from the text whether this was a devious way of throwing the suspicion of effeminacy over the “Tsar’s officers” or rather a way of demonstrating their aristocratic lack of solidarity with the rank and file. The soldier, Kaila wrote, will start to hate the army where he is not treated like a human being. The people will be alienated from the armed forces and Bolshevik agitators will find rich soils for their secret seeding.⁵⁷

In a very similar article in the *Suunta* (Direction) political weekly, run by Kai Donner and other members of the old nationalist activist circles of 1915–1918, the pseudonym “Defender of the country” (*Maanpuolustaja*) accused the officers who had served in Russia for not understanding the specific circumstances in Finland. They resisted reforms and new military technology out of sheer ignorance and fear that their incompetence would be revealed. The text went on to claim that officers who did not share the soldier’s nationality simply could not be good military leaders:

It stands clear, that an officer of another nationality or belonging to the other language group [i.e. Swedish-speaking] lacks all prerequisites for understanding the spiritual life and basic nature of the men. Neither has he the will to the kind of closer contact [with the men] that would produce the necessary feeling of sympathy and trust. Their narrowness also becomes apparent as an ignorance of national, societal and political circumstances, yet knowledge about these matters are of utmost importance, especially to the higher command. This causes a mercenary-like inclination to isolation, superficial judgement of circumstances, selfishness and prejudice as well as political adulation. This kind of officers lacks the steely trust in the country’s and the people’s future and the ardent attachment to the men which alone

⁵⁷ ‘Armeijamme upseeristo’, *Ilkka* 23.7, 24.7, 26.7 & 29.7 1920. Cf ‘Armeijamme puhdistaminen’, *Suunta* 21.10.1922; ‘Armeijan puhdistamiskysymyksestä’, *Suunta* 28.10.1922; ‘Armeija-kysymys. Lisävalaistusta’, *Suunta* 11.11.1922.

could infuse them with a common, strong and enduring patriotic mind.⁵⁸

All these negative descriptions of the “Russian” officers worked as *counter-types*, providing a foil against which the ideal officer could stand out. By pointing out all the deficiencies of these inferior leaders, they stroke by stroke also painted an image of officers who *would* meet these requirements. In the words of “Defender of the country” the officers needed are “accomplished, far-sighted men who have the courage to face all the demands of the future and endure the worst ordeals head up high, trusting in victory”. Who would fit this description better than the Jägers who had faced hopelessness and despair yet never lost faith? In *Ilkka*, E.E. Kaila explicitly brought up the Jägers as a positive contrast to the “Russian” officers:

Everybody knows what kind of men the Jägers are: to a large extent their origin is among the ordinary people, they are close to the people, they have dedicated themselves to the military profession enlivened by patriotic ideals and thus they understand the needs of the rank-and-file; they are of young age, but they have gathered life-experience in a hard school.⁵⁹

In the campaign by Kaila and others, an opposition was constructed between “old-school” officers depicted as high-level mercenaries, military professionals with allegiance only to their own self-interest, and the new kind of nationalist officers who supposedly had chosen the military profession for purely patriotic and idealistic reasons. The former were portrayed as alienated from the people, steeped in foreign aristocratic traditions, whereas only the latter had the required qualifications to induce the necessary patriotism and spirit of sacrifice in the soldiers by the power of their own heroic example.

The rhetoric repeatedly stressed how the Jägers had emerged from the masses of the Finnish people and therefore had a deeper bond with the people. Although they themselves represented heroic superiority, they understood and took care of the lumberjacks and farmhands they commanded. For example, in an obituary for the fallen Jäger lieutenant Yrjö Koivisto in *Suomen Sotilas* in 1920, it was mentioned how Koivisto “to an unusual degree was respected by his comrades and his men”. He sang with his men, he refused to ride on his horse when his men had to march along muddy roads, he ate the food they ate, slept where they slept, and stood at their side in the heat of battle, “always calm and encouraging where needed”.

⁵⁸ Maanpuolustaja, ‘Puolustuslaitoksemme terveelle pohjalle’, *Suunta* 6.12.1922.

⁵⁹ ‘Armeijamme upseeristo’, *Ilkka* 23.7.1920.

His men followed him with pride. Under the "boyishly nonchalant surface was the mind of a real man, apt, glowing and deep, who did not shun even great sacrifices if the cause was just and noble."⁶⁰

In the public discourses on whether the Jägers' future careers were being obstructed by the old imperial officers, the theme of their *self-sacrifice* re-emerged. It was pointed out by their supporters how the Jägers ever since 1918, due to the lack of trained officers, had been working extremely hard, trying to give adequate military training to the thousands of soldiers needed to protect Finland's young independence. Poorly paid, with no possibilities to take leave for further military education, they were portrayed as having continued to sacrifice themselves for the nation after the war. Instead of receiving the gratefulness of the people and the material rewards they deserved, they had been side-stepped in their career path by "Russians" and inexperienced lieutenants fresh from the new cadet school.⁶¹

Apart from underplaying the fact that many Jägers by the early 1920's had been promoted to ranks normally far beyond their formal military education, this rhetoric ignored some other problematic issues. The notion that the Jägers were close to and representative of the people disregarded the fact that most of the higher-ranking Jägers actually originated within the educated upper and middle classes, a great number of them also being Swedish-speaking. This was in part because the Jäger movement in its earliest stages had found its recruits mainly among the students of Helsinki University. Those first to arrive at the Lockstedt training camp acquired a lead in relation to later arrivals. "Men of the people" were consciously promoted to the ranks of non-commissioned officers in the Jäger battalion in order to boost motivation, yet most of these never advanced beyond the rank of sergeant majors. There was a strong contemporary notion among both the German trainers and the Finnish leadership that a solid general education was a prerequisite for being an officer. In the 1920's, this became a problem even for many Jägers from a middle-class background, who had by this point advanced to the ranks of lieutenants or captains, but had never finished their schooling because of their departure for Germany.⁶²

⁶⁰ [Ilmari] H[eikinheimo], 'Eräs vapaussotamme raskaimpia tappioita', *Suomen Sotilas* 8-9/1919. Cf 'Tampereen valloitus' in Kivijärvi, ed., *Suomen Vapaussota*, Vol 2, 1919, pp. 87-99, at pp. 87-90; Sam. Sihvo, 'Sankarin muisto', *Suomen Sotilas* 20-21/1926, pp. 339-339.

⁶¹ Paul von Gerich, 'Upseerikoulutuksemme', *Suunta* 6.12. 1922; Lasse Leander, 'Eivätkö nämäkin jääkärit ole invaliideja?', *Jääkäri-invaliidi* 1932, pp. 16-19. In parliament, agrarian MP Juho Niukkanen already in the summer of 1918 complained about the fact that the Jägers were being sidestepped and discriminated against as "Swedish gentlefolk's boys" given brief officer training by the Jägers were promoted to officers whereas many Jägers were still only non-commissioned officers; Vp II 1917, protocols, p. 1775.

⁶² Lauerma, *Jääkäripataljoona* 1966, pp. 107, 255-257, 664-665, 941, 986.

3.4 *Forgetfulness in the hero myth*

A great deal of the pain and trauma left behind by the Civil War of 1918 was silenced in “white” post-war Finland. Not only the suffering and defeat of the losing socialist workers, but also the losses and anguish of those on the non-socialist side was difficult to process in the atmosphere of mutual bitterness and mistrust left behind by the war. The exponents of the Jäger movement did not want the Finns to remember the war only as a bitter internal conflict, but rather as a triumphant Liberation War, and so the Jägers were made the living symbols of this triumph. In this context, it becomes particularly evident how a war hero narrative must be crafted by both commemoration and forgetfulness; how the story is determined as much by what is retold as by what is left out.

By emphasising the self-sacrificial and unselfish nature of the Jägers’ fervour, some other traits of their activities in the Civil War were given less attention. Although the lyrics of the Jägers’ own marching tune proclaimed the “invincible wrath” of the Jägers and how they “rise to seek vengeance”, too much bloodthirstiness did not fit into the Jäger post-war image, which was supposed to be a model of exemplary national warriors to the country’s youth. Historian Matti Lackman has written an extensive history of the Jäger movement deeply critical of the nationalist tradition in Jäger historiography. He has described the Jägers returning from Germany in terms of their burning hatred of many Jägers for the Russians and their “henchmen”, the self-righteousness with which they saw themselves as avengers of their comrades and even of their forefathers, and their role in the so-called “white terror”; the atrocities and summary executions of socialist revolutionaries towards the end of the war. He characterises the Jägers as nationalistic revolutionaries who would not let superior officers prevent them from rather arbitrarily executing Russians, including prisoners and civilians, and anybody else suspected of collaboration with the Russians or the socialists.⁶³ Although the precise extent of the Jägers’ complicity in the white terror is not known, they were certainly included in the socialist workers’ suppressed commemoration of the White Army as “the butchers”.

Stereotyped Jäger narratives ended with their surviving the war and entering a successful career as professional officers. To some extent, there were also obituaries and short biographies idealising the heroism of fallen Jägers published for many years after the war. There were, however, groups among the Jägers who were given far less attention. One group more or less eliminated from the Jäger story were those 451 Jägers who for some reason

⁶³ Lackman, *Suomen vai Saksan puolesta* 2000, pp. 583–588, 592–601.

or other only returned to Finland once the Civil War was over. According to Matti Lackman, a great number of these Jägers probably either refused to fight in the Civil War or were simply not allowed to return with the others since they were suspected of sympathising with the socialist revolutionaries.⁶⁴ These “lost” Jägers would have been difficult to fit into the story of the Civil War as a war of national liberation. However, since they had fought alongside their comrades against Russia on the German East front, it was difficult to question their valour or their patriotism. The mere thought that they either refused to fight for the government or possibly would have fought on the socialist side would too painfully have attracted attention to the fact that the war of 1918 was primarily an internal conflict; not a “pure” war for independence, but a bitter political fight over what national independence should mean.

A relatively large group of Jägers also not much mentioned were those who were mentally or physically disabled by their war experiences. A Jäger pension committee in 1935 reported that at least one fourth of those Jägers who were still alive were in need of economic assistance. Of those 900 Jägers the committee had information about, at least 68 had died from tuberculosis, eleven had committed suicide and four “died of mental disturbance”. In addition, 15 were “permanently insane”.⁶⁵ The attitude taken by the heroic narration to these unfortunate Jägers was complex. On the one hand they were mostly not mentioned when the feats of the Jägers were celebrated e.g. in the conscript magazine *Suomen Sotilas*. One can assume that military educators hesitated to refer to these examples of the national warrior’s possible fate – probably much scarier to young men than the fallen soldiers who in the nationalist imagery always suffered “a beautiful death” – as in the poem by Artturi Leinonen quoted above. On the other hand, the invalids could be said to have carried the heaviest burden and made the greatest sacrifice in the Liberation war, so that other citizens might enjoy their freedom. On the relatively rare occasions when *Suomen Sotilas* paid attention to the invalids of 1918, the texts mostly pointed out the disparity between the invalids’ heroic spirit of sacrifice and the thoughtless ingratitude and forgetfulness of society.⁶⁶ They were the most forceful living

⁶⁴ Lackman, *Suomen vai Saksan puolesta* 2000, pp. 54–548, 557–561; cf Klinge, *Finlands historia* 1996, p. 498.

⁶⁵ Veli-Matti Syrjö, ‘Jääkärikohtaloitten kirjoja’, *Sotahistoriallinen Aikakauskirja* 7 (1988), pp. 85–108, at pp. 97–100. Cf Reino E. Rimala, ‘Jääkärien eläkekysymys. Selostusta n.s. jääkärieläkekomitean mietinnöstä ja tekemistä ehdotuksista’, *Jääkäri-invaliidi* 1936, pp. 105–112. On the suicidality among Jäger veterans, see Jussi Jalonen, ‘War neuroses and Politics of Trauma among the Finnish jägers, 1915–1939’, *Lähde* (2009), pp. 75–91.

⁶⁶ See e.g. *Suomen Sotilas* 19–20/1924, a theme issue dedicated to the invalids of the Liberation War on the fifth anniversary of the white victory; Relatius, ‘Vakavarainen sotatoverusten yhdistys’, *Suomen Sotilas* 6/1935, p. 159.

evidence of the Jägers' heroic spirit of self-sacrifice. Yet they were strange heroes, since they had lost their heroic strength and manly autonomy and were now in need of society to return the favour.

Sabine Kienitz has suggested that the “reconstruction of aggressive masculinity” among the far right in Germany in the 1920's and 1930's should be understood as a way of concealing men's lack of orientation and loss of meaning after the cultural experiences of psychic and physical destruction of the male body in the Great War. The German war invalids studied by Kiewit constituted an unpleasant reminder. The war dead could be forgotten or made mythical as fallen heroes, but the war cripples could not; their materiality was difficult to explain away and punctuated the myth of war as somehow being edifying for masculinity. The invalid's dismembered male body was a “site of the collective memory of destructive military power”. Having lost the use of his body and his scope of action, the invalid has lost essential parts of his male entitlements; his body was no longer considered completely masculine but infantilised and feminised. The cripples were encouraged to make the destruction invisible, overcome their physical damage through willpower and prostheses. Recognition was given not for the bodily sacrifice in war, but for invalids who regained their masculine work-capacity, became breadwinners and taxpayers instead of financial burdens to other, adapted and melted into the mass “as if nothing had happened”.⁶⁷

In the public depictions of the Jägers I have studied, there is a tendency to pay more attention to heroes that lived or died than to those mutilated and crippled. Even in the yearly magazine *Jääkäri-invalidi* [The Jäger Invalid], sold around Christmas time to collect means for charity among disabled and impoverished Jägers, the invalids themselves were the subject of few articles. Mostly, *Jääkäri-invalidi* was filled with the usual exciting or edifying adventure stories about the Jägers' fortunes during the war. However, there were one or two texts in every issue where officials of the Jäger association depicted the heart-rending destinies of many Jägers who wrote letters to the association begging for financial support. In these texts, interesting nuances and cracks were added to the public image of the Jägers. Returning home from a war can be harder than winning the war, noted the association's secretary, Jäger colonel Paavo Talvela (1897–1973) in 1933: “The trials and strains of the wars we passed through excited the nervous system of each one of us, made the blood move restlessly.”⁶⁸ Toiling as a training officer in the understaffed armed forces after the war was seen

⁶⁷ Sabine Kienitz, ‘Body damage. War disability and constructions of masculinity in Weimar Germany’, in Hagemann & Schüler-Springorum, eds., *Home/Front* 2002, pp. 181–204.

⁶⁸ Paavo Talvela, ‘Jääkäriliiton toiminnasta’, *Jääkäri-invalidi* 1933, pp. 7–8.

as a cause of mental burn out. Unemployment and problems in making a living among the Jägers were depicted as results of war experiences, but also as indications of the lack of gratitude in society.⁶⁹

In these public depictions of the invalids' misery, the authors were always careful to point out that the veterans themselves were stoically and heroically carrying their suffering without complaint. It was always underlined that they did not want to be given flowers or handouts, only a fair chance to earn their living within the confines of their physical abilities.⁷⁰ Testimonies of more outspoken bitterness can be found in the Jäger association's internal newsletter *Parole*, for example harsh words about the "flowery language" of the state authorities, which did nothing to save a Jäger in economic difficulty from "ending up derided by communists in the poorhouse".⁷¹ In 1934, the newsletter even expressed concerns over the high number of Jägers who committed suicide; "May no Jäger get too distressed in the struggle of living. It may well be that the fatherland once more needs all of us. Keep your chin up and face resistance with manly courage! Resistance is there for us to prevail over, not for succumbing to! The Jäger spirit must stay alive!"⁷² Thus, even the Jägers themselves were eventually challenged to identify with and live up to the example set by their own heroic narrative.

3.5 *The Jäger officers as military educators*

What did the Jägers want to do with the military power they had seized in the mid-1920's? More precisely, what was their vision for military training in the conscript army? What kind of soldiers should it produce and how should they be educated? There is no simple answer to these questions, since the Jägers, as we have seen, were a very heterogeneous group of men. There were at least two different public images of the Jägers as military educators, in

⁶⁹ See e.g. A. F. Leppänen, 'Sihteerin salkusta', *Jääkäri-Invaliidi* 1930 [unpaginated]; Hannes Anttila, 'Sihteerin silmään sattunut', *Jääkäri-invaliidi* 1932, pp. 50–51; Hannes Anttila, 'Jääkäriliiton avustustoiminta sihteerin näkökulmasta tarkasteltuna', *Jääkäri-invaliidi* 1933, pp. 105–106; Hannes Anttila, 'Jääkäriliiton avustustoiminnasta vuonna 1933', *Jääkäri-Invaliidi* 1934, pp. 23–24; V[äinö] Valve, 'Jääkäri-invaliidit', *Jääkäri-invaliidi* 1935, p. 20; E. Mäkinen, 'Mitalin toinen puoli', *Jääkäri-invaliidi* 1939, pp. 16–18.

⁷⁰ 'Vapaussodan invaliidit' [editorial], *Suomen Sotilas* 9/1924; Hanna Lehtinen, 'Invalidien parissa', *Suomen Sotilas* 19–20/1924, pp. 353–355.

⁷¹ *Parole* 10.10.1934.

⁷² *Parole* 10.10.1934. On instances of suicidal mental disturbances among Jäger officers, see also Jussi Jalonen, *Haavoitettu ritari. Jääkäreiversti, Mannerheim-ristin ritari Berndt Eino Edvard Polónin elämä* (Tampere, 2008), p. 73.

part contradicting each other: on the one hand there were the trailblazers of a new, national and “modern” military education, different from the old Russian one, and on the other hand the harsh and merciless practitioners of “Prussian discipline” in Finnish military training. Both images had their correspondence in real groups among the Jäger officers, although neither probably represented the majority.

Some Jägers were put in charge of educating conscripted troops in the middle of the Civil War, although they had not even finished elementary school and only been trained as common soldiers in Germany. Without much further education, they continued to train conscripts in the rather undeveloped army organisation of the first post-war years, marked by lack of officers and material scarcity. A good deal of the conscripts who arrived to do their military service in the years immediately after the Civil War sympathised with the socialists and resented the regular “white” army and the Jäger “butchers”. Others instinctively rebelled against being forced into subservience. How should an officer deal with these men? According to the large body of reminiscences of military training, which will be analysed in depth in Chapter Five, many Jäger officers took recourse to the Prussian tradition and the way they themselves had been trained in Germany. “The Prussian discipline” soon became a swearword in the Finnish military vernacular and commonly associated with the Jägers. In memories of interwar military training, it usually denoted a stereotyped image of a marked hierarchy and distance between superiors and subordinates, a ridiculous over-emphasis on saluting superiors, on close-order drill and indoor duty; stiffness and pompousness in staging the military hierarchy, and extremely formal and distanced relations between officers and the rank-and-file.

One informant who did his military service in 1920 recollected that their Jäger officer claimed he had himself been to a tough school in Germany and been taught that “you have rip the spunk out of a man, only then can he become a good soldier.”⁷³ Although this might be an element from a collective narrative, it does seem to reflect the reverse side of the half-mythic popular notions of the Jägers in interwar society. A certain dangerousness and a potential for violence was not infrequently included in images of the Jägers. An essential part of their narrative heroic manliness contained something hard, ruthless and sometimes even merciless. They

⁷³ TYKL 45, nr 50. Reading descriptions of the Jägers training in Germany and descriptions of conscript training in Finland after the war (discussed in chapter five), some similarities in this respect are striking. Cf. Juho Kemppainen, ‘Muistelmä’, in Lackman, ed., *Jääkärimuistelmia*, pp. 219–220; W[iljo] E. Tuompo, ‘Jääkäriaajan muistoja’, *Jääkäri-invaliidi* 1929; Lauerma, *Jääkäripataljoona* 1966, pp. 882–883, 936, 946.

were no blue-eyed Boy Scouts, but war professionals who had experienced unimaginable horrors and hardships; men not to be joked with. Using humour to gloss over this scariness in the presence of the Heroic, a causerie in *Suomen Sotilas* in 1924 depicted how an ordinary, rank-and-file soldier in the Civil War viewed the Jägers. "Us, we were just ordinary fat-faced country bumpkins and them Jägers, they were such skinny and angry-looking boys, like pitch oil merchants, cursin' and makin' such a racket that blue smoke was puffin' from their nostrils."⁷⁴

In many instances, the Jägers themselves actively contributed to this narrative tradition. Writing about their training in the Lockstedt camp or their experiences on the German Eastern Front, they usually emphasised the extremely harsh conditions, the severity of discipline, the lack of food, the oftentimes depressed and sometimes despairing mood among the men – but also how these experiences transformed them. The Jägers G.F. Helsingius and Ture Eriksson, writing about their time in Lockstedt for *Jääkäri-invaliidi* in 1933, remembered arriving at the training camp as a "moment of creation" when they were "met with a blast from a new world, a stronger and more austere one". Eriksson depicted the recruit training in Lockstedt as absolutely hellish, as "pure white death":

Yet we did not die, but the soul did. Our old soul that we had dragged along all the way from home, inherited, foisted upon us, struggled for, respected and cherished. Needless ballast! Enough to have a rifle, a belt, a bayonet, a food bag, water bottle, iron-shod boots. – And around this denuded, skinned, naked self something new, sprouting, vigorous and hard started forming, layer by layer: a new soul. (...) I think it was largely the simple grip of life which we learnt [in the Lockstedt training camp] that gave the new soul its vital force.⁷⁵

One consequence of such stories about the Jägers' hard training and hardships was the legitimisation of any excessive harshness or toughness in contemporary Finnish military training. If these experiences had eventually produced the hardened military manliness of exemplary military heroes, a bit of rough play certainly would not hurt the present conscripts either – on the contrary, it would toughen them and make them warriors.

Although the Jägers as military educators were often stereotyped and associated with the extreme harshness of "Prussian discipline", they were not a homogenous group in this respect either. Whereas some Jäger officers and sergeant majors were remembered as ruthless tyrants, more feared than

⁷⁴ Vaasan Jaakkoo, 'Kun m'olin kans jääkäri' *Suomen Sotilas* 48–52/1924, pp. 904–905, reprinted in nr 9–11/1937, p. 239–240; cf. Urho Kekkonen, 'Kun jääkäri karkasi', *Suomen Sotilas* 52/1921, pp. 806–807.

⁷⁵ Ture Erikson, 'Den nya själen', *Jääkäri-invaliidi* 1933, pp. 102–104; G.F. Helsingius, 'När soldatbaracken tog emot oss', *Jääkäri-invaliidi* 1933; Tuompo, 'Jääkäriaajan muistoja' 1929. Cf J.K. 'Kalle Kopfhoch', *Suomen Sotilas* 17/1924, pp. 913–915.

respected by the soldiers, others were described admiringly as calm, sensible, self-confident professionals that were respected and esteemed by their men. In some narratives they appear as models of masculinity; either as young, athletic and handsome lieutenants, or as company commanders stern but caring, like father figures. In some troops led by the Jägers, the 'Prussian discipline' was remembered as efficient and fair although very tough and demanding rapid and precise execution of orders.⁷⁶

Nevertheless, the popular association of the Jägers with the 'Prussian discipline' and its extreme emphasis on subservience did not fit very comfortably within the nationalist image of an army where the officers understood their soldiers' needs and inspired them to self-sacrificing patriotism. One solution was trying to externalise the phenomenon. The term itself, *Prussian* discipline, was one way of claiming that this military culture was foreign to Finnish culture and incompatible with the national character of Finnish men. Only through their stay in foreign Prussia, a foreign country, could the Jägers have adopted such outlandish nonsense. Juha Mälkki makes a similar interpretation of the concept of 'Prussian discipline', which he finds expressive of the estrangement civilians unfamiliar with modern conscript armies experienced in their early contacts with a military system of the German type.⁷⁷

Already in 1918, Finnish-speaking Jäger Heikki Nurmio had publicly criticised how the Germans had taught Jägers picked out for officer training to distance and isolate themselves from their rank-and-file countrymen – and how these, mostly Swedish-speaking, upper-class members of the original training group, had only all-too-eagerly complied and adopted the German hierarchical ideal. Analogous to how the conscripts tried to project the nastier sides of military hierarchy and Finnish officers' abuse of power onto a foreign "Prussian" military culture, Nurmio threw at least part of the blame on the upper-class, Swedish-speaking (and thus not quite Finnish) leading Jägers, whom he found wanting in the right kind of solidarity with their brothers-in-arms and compatriots. Nurmio's critique implies that nationalist warriors should be spiritually united by their common purpose, not divided by military or social hierarchy.⁷⁸

⁷⁶ TYKL 45, nr 1, pp. 2–3; nr 35, pp. 87–88; nr 50, pp. 11–13; nr 65, pp. 37; nr 90, p. 36, 40; nr 114, p. 28; nr 132, p. 15; nr 195, pp. 108–109; nr 244, pp. 28–29.

⁷⁷ Mälkki, *Herrat, jätkät ja sotataito* 2008, pp. 96–100.

⁷⁸ Nurmio, *Jääkärien päiväkirja* 1918, pp. 87–88; cf. Lauerma, *Jääkäripataljoona* 1966, pp. 322–326.

Training a new kind of national warrior

Some prominent Jägers took the lead in actually trying to change the culture of military education in interwar Finland. They wanted to move away from the “Prussian style” they had experienced in Lockstedt and which a number of their comrades evidently were practicing in the exercise fields of Finnish garrisons. Notable figures in this connection were Heikki Nurmio, Director of the Cadet School in 1925–1927; Aarne Sihvo (1889–1963), Director of the Military Academy in 1924–1926 and Commander of the Armed Forces in 1926–1933; Regiment and Division Commander Hugo Österman (1892–1975), Sihvo’s successor as Commander of the Armed Forces in 1933–1939, and Hannes Anttila (1893–1968), who instigated the formal teaching of military pedagogy in the Finnish armed forces.

In writings in the military press as well as in the new army regulations of the mid-1920’s onwards, these and other writers – including young officers who were not themselves Jägers– claimed that the “old methods” of military education had to be abandoned. Interestingly, their main argument had a connection with the Jägers’ heroic self-image as a new kind of national-warrior and a new kind of officer close to the people. The traditional methods of scaring or drilling the conscripts into mechanical obedience, they claimed, were insufficient to produce the spirit of sacrifice and individual initiative needed in modern warfare. Thus, in effect, they called for a new military training, which would produce soldiers with the same kind of mindset with which the Jägers and other volunteers of the “Liberation War” had fought for their people, nation and state. It is, however, noteworthy that they motivated a change in the way conscripts were treated and trained by developments in tactics and the dictates of modern military rationality – not by arguments based on democratic or moral principles.

Heikki Nurmio, who had worked as a secondary school teacher before joining the Jäger movement, published a number of writings in *Suunta* and *Suomen Sotilas* during the 1920’s, where he called upon training officers to leave behind the drilling of recruits into absolute submission and instead strive towards infusing the soldiers with patriotism, a sense of duty and a spirit of sacrifice. Today’s armies are different from those in the past, he wrote in 1922, in that the men must feel they are fighting for the continued existence of their people, for freedom and independence. They must believe they are fighting for a just cause and must be ready to sacrifice themselves for this idea. Otherwise, they yield when they look death in the eye. “We must not chain up men’s freedom with slavish demands for submission, because then they will be afraid to fight”, wrote Nurmio. In the past, he claimed, there had only been discipline achieved through drill and harsh

punishments. Now, the demands were much greater. “The recruit must be educated into a new human being.”⁷⁹

Nurmio claimed that many of those arriving to do their military service had grown up in “red environments” and went through military training with the sole motivation of preparing for a future revolution. Anybody who thought it was enough to give these men purely military education for a few months would only “educate skilled soldiers for the Bolshevik army”. Obviously referring to the contemporary debate over the length of military service, Nurmio stated that only if the training was of sufficient length did the army stand a chance of “rousing those soldier virtues sprouting from patriotism and nationalism” in the conscripts. The officers must not only be teachers, but also know and understand their soldiers and their background, in order to be able to rouse the “dormant forces” of patriotism and sense of justice within them and “remove bitterness and hurtful memories”. Military training must not inflict new insults upon the soldiers, but encourage them. A precondition for true military discipline, he stated, is that the officers have such an authority, maturity and knowledge of human nature that the soldiers feel absolute trust in them.⁸⁰

Whereas Nurmio connected the military rational in developing military pedagogy with political considerations in 1922, Captain Niilo Sigell (1895–1979) argued for a similar pedagogical agenda in more purely military terms in his three-volume handbook on the training of infantry soldiers, published in 1927–1929. Sigell was at the time Director of the Civil Guards’ Officer School. He intended this handbook primarily for a readership of young training officers, both in the regular army and the civil guards. Sigell was not a Jäger himself, but had been active in mobilising the white guards in his home region of Lahti in 1917–1918 and served as commander of voluntary government troops in the Civil War.⁸¹

In his handbook on “The art of infantry fighting” (*Jalkaväen taistelutaito*), Sigell explicated the consequences of modern tactics for military training at length. In an historical overview of the development of infantry tactics, he explained how the new co-operation between artillery, machine guns, rapid-fire guns and individual riflemen had forced a development away from chains of riflemen spread out abreast, towards an

⁷⁹ Heikki Nurmio, ‘Kurin merkitys armeijassamme’, *Suunta* 6.12.1922.

⁸⁰ Nurmio, ‘Kurin merkitys’ 1922; Cf Heikki Nurmio, ‘Sananen sotilaspedagogiikkaa’, *Suomen Sotilas* 35–36/1924, pp. 656–657, & 38/1924, pp. 708–709. See also Jääk. kapteeni Ahonius, ‘Sotakuntoisuus’, *Suomen Sotilas* 23/1921, p. 370.

⁸¹ Sigell fennicised his surname into Hersalo in 1935. See Urho Myllyniemi, ‘Niilo Viktor Hersalo’, *Suomen Kansallis-biografia verkkojulkaisu*, <<http://artikkelihaku.kansallisbiografia.fi/artikkeli/7670/>>, updated version published 05.03.2008, retrieved 10.02.2009.

irregular distribution of soldiers in the terrain. Spreading the troops both sideways and in depth decreased the risk of the whole unit being annihilated, but also impaired the officers' ability to lead their troops. In older times, when the private soldier fought tightly surrounded by his whole company, he executed mechanically practiced movements and was constantly under the watchful eyes of his officers, Sigell explained. Only in close quarters was he forced to independent action that was directed by the instinct of self-preservation: to kill or get killed. Now, however, as most soldiers in a combat situation were out of reach of platoon and company commanders, the squad leaders had to take charge. Even the individual private soldiers had to know and understand their own tasks in a new manner.⁸² Sigell vividly described the situation of the private in modern combat:

He moves further and further away from his officers in whom he is used to place his trust in a tight spot, until at last he finds himself together with only a few comrades in the midst of the desolation of the battlefield, surrounded by the deafening roar, crackle and explosions. He is like in a rocking boat in the midst of a stormy sea, the thunder rumbling and lightning tearing away between sky and earth. Loneliness fills him with dread and makes him feel helpless; the uproar of battle, a comrade falling, the wailing of the wounded try his nerves. An apparent shelter attracts him. The temptation to leave unfulfilled the task given him, or delay in its fulfillment, is very near; maybe his superior will not see! Neither the hope of acknowledgements or rewards nor the fear of punishment is particularly great.⁸³

Much depended on the actions and independent decisions of the individual private soldier. Where no officer could spur or force him forward, he had to be motivated by inner forces. These forces, according to Sigell, were based on moral values as well as in military skills and lines of action acquired by long practice and made half-instinctual by thorough military training. Sigell emphasised how the external coercion of the past, when soldiers were under the immediate control and leadership of the officers, had now to be replaced with an *internal* compulsion, "a sense of honour and duty which push the individual to fulfill his duties and tasks, usually consciously, but in oppressive situations often also instinctively."⁸⁴

To Sigell, obedience meant something else in modern warfare than it had in the past. "Blind obedience" was not enough in modern wars where the squad leader or private had often to determine for himself *how* the officer's

⁸² N.V. Sigell, *Jalkaväen taistelutaito*, Vol 3 (Helsinki, 1929), pp. 7–17.

⁸³ Sigell, *Jalkaväen taistelutaito*, Vol 3, 1929, p. 20.

⁸⁴ Sigell, *Jalkaväen taistelutaito*, Vol 3, 1929, pp. 21–23.

orders could best be carried out in the situation at hand. Thus, *willpower*, *power of initiative*, *inventiveness*, *independent action* and *mutual trust* between the men in the fighting groups were central virtues of military manliness in Sigell's work, but they had to be guided by *self-discipline* and a *sense of responsibility* in order to serve the larger whole.⁸⁵

The opposition between military tradition and modern pedagogy

A third example of this younger generation of officers pushing for a "new" understanding of the citizen-soldier and "modern" training methods is a textbook on military pedagogy by Jäger Captain Hannes Anttila, published in 1929. According to the author's introduction, it was the first book on this topic in the Finnish language. As a young student of theology, Anttila had dealt with pastoral tasks in the Jäger battalion in Germany and served as company commander in the Civil War of 1918. He thus had first-hand experience of both German military training and actual warfare. After the war, he had taken Master's degrees both in theology and pedagogy and worked as military priest and teacher of military pedagogy. As an official on the training department of the General Staff 1928–1930 he laid the foundations for military pedagogy as a part of the curriculum for officer training.⁸⁶

Anttila's 1929 textbook argued strongly for bringing methods and insights from contemporary pedagogy into military training. His point of departure was that a training officer is also a teacher and an educator. He appears to have been keen on presenting his work as based on modern scientific knowledge, as opposed to military tradition. He devoted much space to explaining contemporary psychological understandings of instincts, emotions and volition, all of which he thought were important for the officer to have some knowledge about. For example, he wrote that an essentially biological "fighting instinct" had always been strong in the Finnish people, unfortunately often expressed as brawling and unruliness, but also being the reason why Finnish "soldier material" was in a class of its own. "This same instinct occurs in pupils who take to resisting their teacher. This desire to protest is often born out of exaggerated strictness, constant prohibitions, exaggerated punishments etc., which therefore should be avoided by the military educator."⁸⁷

⁸⁵ Sigell, *Jalkaväen taistelutaito*, Vol 1, 1927, pp. 5–6.

⁸⁶ Urho Myllyniemi: 'Hannes Anttila', *Suomen Kansallis-biografia verkkojulkaisu*, <<http://artikkelihaku.kansallisbiografia.fi/artikkeli/7736/>>, published 30.11.2001, retrieved 11.02.2009.

⁸⁷ Hannes Anttila, *Upseeri ja aliupseeri opettajana* (Helsinki, 1929), pp. 85–86, 91.

Yet interestingly enough, Anttila's book seems impregnated with concerns that many Finnish officers did not meet the challenges of modern military requirements, but were unprofessional and inefficient as educators. In his book he consistently argued against an image of a psychologically insensitive, angry and shouting officer:

Let us imagine ourselves as pupils of an irritated teacher. We have given the wrong answer. He might take to shouting and acting in such a way as to agitate the whole class. In that state of excitement the teacher cannot lead the class to the right answer with auxiliary questions, nor can the class follow his train of thought.⁸⁸

A good training officer must foster a suitable amount of self-esteem and sense of honour in the soldier, stated Anttila. He must recognise how shyness and lack of self-confidence in a recruit can hinder his military performance and cause failure, e.g. in the first shooting exercises with live ammunition. In such a situation, the officer leading the shootings must know how to act in the proper manner:

Anybody understands that loud noise and scoffing will be of no help in this case, but on the contrary only cause further damage. The recruit who has failed must with all available means be encouraged and spurred on to new attempts and efforts. ... May never words of ridicule be heard from the trainer's own mouth, directed at the clumsy [soldier]! An impatient exclamation: 'You're simply good for nothing!' will do a disservice to the whole educational work. Beware of that!⁸⁹

Anttila also warned of the perniciousness of "the so called corporal spirit". A "barking and bawling" teacher will only make the recruits nervous, cloud their rational thinking and in the worst case make them susceptible to nervous fits and mass panic in battle. Therefore, Anttila urged all military educators to fight their own nerves and irritability and to train their recruits in a "spirit of good nature". In this respect, he seemed to view war veterans among the training officers as a risk category, pointing out that soldiers whose nerves had been exposed to the strains of war often ended up as irascible individuals. Yet he stated that these officers should be viewed as a particular kind of war invalid and forgiven for their behaviour. They had lost their health as a sacrifice for the fatherland and its people. They could be cured, yet "who, for example here in Finland and in our young army, has had time to take time off to have his nerves set right. Most of the officers, commissioned and non-commissioned, still work with all guns blazing for safeguarding the fatherland."⁹⁰ Here we recognise the voice of Anttila as

⁸⁸ Anttila, *Upseeri ja aliupseeri opettajana* 1929, p.11.

⁸⁹ Anttila, *Upseeri ja aliupseeri opettajana* 1929, p. 80.

⁹⁰ Anttila, *Upseeri ja aliupseeri opettajana* 1929, pp. 76–78.

secretary of the Jäger Association, concerned with the plight of Jäger invalids.

In spite of these difficulties, an officer must master himself and always stay calm in order to make the right impression on his men. The example set by his personality, professionalism and personal conviction is of utmost importance to all military training, wrote Anttila. Here the notion recurs that E.E. Kaila used against the “Russian” officers, that an officer with a detached “mercenary” attitude could not raise the kind of national warriors Finland needed to protect its independence. Similar to Nurmio and Sigell, Anttila too stressed that the purpose of the training must be to “educate the recruit into a patriotic and fit soldier with a strong character and moral”. He repeatedly emphasised that the officers must train the soldiers’ will and ability to act on their own initiative.⁹¹ This was achieved by teaching methods that forced the pupils to reflect, consider and act independently. If they were taught through orders and instructions they did not understand, they would start acting like automated beings. Such soldiers were able to function according to a certain scheme, but were completely lost when circumstances abruptly changed. “Modern armed forces have no use for such automatic machines”, Anttila forcefully lay down.⁹²

The Jägers casting themselves as modernisers

Guidelines similar to Nurmio’s, Sigell’s and Anttila’s thinking can be found in the new army regulations, which were published from the mid-1920’s onwards, with Jäger officers having a central position in the editing process. In 1929, new official instructions for infantry training were published, edited mainly by Colonel Hugo Österman⁹³ and approved by the Commander-in-Chief Aarne Sihvo and the Head of the General Staff’s Education Department Paavo Talvela – all three Jäger officers. According to these instructions, the main objective of military training was to “create and develop a fighting spirit and fighting skills based on unflinching discipline, a sense of duty and love of the fatherland, together creating a troop that acts in accordance with the will and in the spirit of its leader even in the shocking circumstances of combat.” The trainers were instructed to minimise close-order drill and indoor duties, explaining that these were mostly a waste of the short and valuable military training time. Hard field exercise was in itself a more efficient training in military discipline. Those

⁹¹ Anttila, *Upseeri ja aliupseeri opettajana* 1929, pp. 10–12, 77–78, 105, 112.

⁹² Anttila, *Upseeri ja aliupseeri opettajana* 1929, p. 115.

⁹³ Österman, *Frihet och försvar* 1967, pp. 52–54.

formulating the new regulations found it necessary to impress on their readers, i.e. the training officers, that “military discipline is not just the individual’s passive submission to his commander’s will, but submitting to energetically take action in accordance with this will”. The training, therefore, should educate the soldier’s *willpower* and his “moral military virtues”.⁹⁴

In spite of the numerous references to the new tactics of the Great War, these notions of the soldier and the purposes of military training were actually not very new or original in the 1920’s. They were a consequence of the “fire-power revolution” which had already taken place in the last quarter of the nineteenth century with the advent of the breech-loading magazine-fed rifle, the machine gun and quick-firing artillery. According to military historian Hew Strachan, military theorists, long before the First World War, understood that morale was of increasing importance in the fire-swept battle zone. The First World War itself would only deepen that insight.⁹⁵ In Russia, M.I. Dragomirov (1830–1905), recognised as the country’s preeminent expert on military training, wrote as early as in the 1860’s about how the new rifled weapons made it necessary to pay new attention to the moral strength and individuality of soldiers.⁹⁶ Georg Fraser, a Finn who made a career as an officer in the Russian army, explained these matters to a Finnish audience in a book on the training of conscript soldiers published in 1880. Fraser stressed the importance of independent thinking, judgement and inner conviction in the soldier. The major difference between Fraser and opinions voiced in the 1920’s was in the precise nature of what constituted the soldier’s inner motivation. To Fraser it consisted of a sense of duty, enthusiasm, a spirit of sacrifice, love of the fatherland and love of the Emperor. The military authors of the 1920’s only replaced the Emperor with the nation and its freedom.⁹⁷

Then why did regulations, handbooks and articles in military periodicals during the 1920’s convey an image of the need to move on from an ‘old’ tradition, dismissed as the drilling of soldiers into blind, machine-

⁹⁴ *Jalkaväen koulutus* (Helsinki, 1929), pp. 1–9.

⁹⁵ Hew Strachan, ‘Training, Morale and Modern War’, *Journal of Contemporary History* 41:2 (2006), pp. 211–227, at pp. 217–218. Ute Frevert quotes German military theorists writing in 1888 and 1906 on the same matter. Frevert, ‘Militär als Schule der Männlichkeit’ 1997, pp. 159–160.

⁹⁶ Sanborn, *Drafting the Russian Nation* 2003, p. 10. This was naturally an international trend. For example, a similar debate on what measure of responsibility, proactivity and individuality should be granted common soldiers in view of changing war tactics and liberal considerations of “human dignity” went on about the same time among Austrian officers. Christa Hämmerle, ‘Back to the monarchy’s glorified past? Military discourses on male citizenship and universal conscription in the Austrian Empire, 1868–1914’, in Dudink et al., eds., *Representing Masculinity* 2007, pp. 151–168, at pp. 161–162.

⁹⁷ Georg Fraser, *Om den finska värnepligtiga ungdomens krigiska uppfostran* (St Petersburg, 1880), pp. 25–26, 36–48.

like obedience, towards educating a new kind of soldier who had the skills, patriotism and sense of duty to keep on fighting and risking his life even when an officer was nowhere in sight? One possible answer is that the Jägers simply did not see enough “modern” military thinking when they looked around in the Finnish Army. A recurring topic was the implied problem with Finnish officers and NCOs adhering to old-fashioned and unprofessional methods. Yet in spite of the popular association of this kind of officer with the “Prussian discipline”, the reformers did not explicitly criticise their Jäger comrades. In a 1924 article on military pedagogy in *Suomen Sotilas*, Heikki Nurmio identified the NCOs as the people responsible for whether the soldiers start hating the armed forces, depressed by “constant insults and indecent treatment”, or whether they became manly soldiers with a strong will and motivation.⁹⁸ Although many sergeant majors around this time were Jägers, Nurmio’s implication here is directed more towards their subordinates, preserving the Jägers’ status as models for other men.

Another possible answer is that this way of writing fitted very well into the Jäger tradition of seeing themselves as modernisers of Finnish military institutions, as a new generation of young men combining idealism and action, in opposition to both the passivity of older civilian politicians and the aristocratic condescendence of older officers who had served in Russia. The reforms suggested were in line with the rhetoric used to elucidate the Jägers’ superiority over the “Russian officers”. The ideal modern officer, these texts seem to say, should be cast in the form of the idealised Jäger officer, with his understanding and sympathy for the character of ordinary Finnish men, his patriotic zeal and his spirit of sacrifice. Furthermore, the Finnish conscript should be educated into the same kind of heroic, militarised, national-warrior-like masculinity that was the Jägers self-image.

One of the concrete actions that a loose network of intellectual Jägers, among them Hannes Anttila, Heikki Nurmio and Aarne Sihvo, took to bring about this new kind of citizen-soldier was collaborating on the magazine for soldiers *Suomen Sotilas*. Writing on themes such as military history, patriotism, moral issues and religion, they propagated a certain ideology for military masculinity. They also engaged some of their Jäger comrades to write articles on the latest developments in military technologies and tactics.⁹⁹ Niilo Sigell was a regular collaborator on the magazine in the early 1920’s, writing on sports and athletics, and thus closely

⁹⁸ Nurmio, ‘Sananen sotilaspedagogiikka’ 1924, pp. 656–657.

⁹⁹ See chapter 4, footnote 12.

networked with Jägers interested in educational matters.¹⁰⁰ Together with occasional texts on the adventures of the Jägers, their role in the Freedom War, and obituaries for fallen Jäger heroes, these writings contributed to the establishment of an image of the Jägers as both moral and military-professional authorities for young men seeking their path through military service and towards adult patriotic manhood. Yet the ideology offered conscripts in *Suomen Sotilas* extended much further than just extolling the Jägers as heroic examples, and will therefore be the subject of the next chapter.

3.6 Conclusion: The uses of war heroes

The heroic status of the Jäger officers was deeply embedded in a larger historical process: the merging of the historical forces of nationalism and universal male conscription since the French revolution, producing mass armies, “total” wars, a democratisation of war heroism, and militarised versions of “normal” masculinities.

George L. Mosse has pointed out that death in battle took on new cultural meanings when the fallen soldiers in the Revolutionary and Napoleonic wars no longer were the “mercenaries, criminals, vagabonds and destitutes” which had constituted the armies of earlier ages. Instead, they were volunteers or conscripted citizen-soldiers, respectable citizens of their local or national communities. Their dying in war mattered to these communities in quite another manner than had the deaths of soldiers drawn from the margins of society during the *ancien régime*. As entire nations had to be mobilised for war in the new era of mass armies, Mosse argues, death on the battlefield had to be given a higher meaning as a sacrifice for the fatherland.¹⁰¹ Karen Hagemann has studied the birth of this “modern” war heroism in Prussia, where a large propaganda campaign glorified the “death for the fatherland” in order to make the broad masses and above all the opinion leaders of the bourgeois male elites accept universal conscription. Previously, the title of “warrior hero” had only been bestowed upon aristocratic men and military leaders, but now it was declared by the Prussian king that *all* men who fell in war could die a “hero’s death”. In the commemoration of the German “Wars of Liberation” a cult of the sacrificial

¹⁰⁰ In 1920, the editors of *Suomen Sotilas* informed their readers that Sigell would be the magazine’s new sports editor. They commended him as an important and well-known actor in the Civil Guards movement. See ‘Toimituksen pöydän takaa’, *Suomen Sotilas* 47/1920, p. 776.

¹⁰¹ Mosse, *Fallen soldiers* 1990, pp. 15–19.

death for the fatherland was developed in lyric poetry, religious sermons, print media, commemorative rituals and festivals. Hagemann sees this cult fulfilling three functions; mobilising the patriotic and national readiness to fight and sacrifice; helping society deal with the grief of the dead soldiers' families by bestowing 'immortality' on the dead heroes; and constructing a national self-image of Prussia and Germany as a "manly nation".¹⁰²

Mosse describes how both French and German educated, articulate middle class volunteers of the revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars fashioned and perpetuated an image of war through war poetry and songs that masked its horrors and suffering. The reality of the war experience was transformed into what Mosse calls "the Myth of the War Experience", which looked back upon war as a meaningful and even sacred event that made life worthwhile for young men and liberated them from the boredom and routine of bourgeois life. Mosse sees this mythical notion of war, which grew and developed throughout the nineteenth century, as a key factor behind the war enthusiasm that swept over Europe in August 1914. Young men were seduced by its image of war as providing an escape from loneliness into a feeling of national unity and into a communal experience with other men. They were fascinated with the manliness, energy and unsophisticated strength that the myth associated with war. Even the mass slaughter in the Great War did not extinguish the myth. There was an urge both on the home front and among the veterans to find a higher meaning in the losses and suffering. The Myth of the War Experience provided this, by casting death in war as a sacrifice analogous to the passion and resurrection of Christ. Through the eternal commemoration of the dead by the whole nation after the war, the fallen would be made "immortal." Yet Mosse points out that those who were active in the construction of the myth were a rather small number of articulate middle-class men who had often volunteered for the war. "The aim was to make an inherently unpalatable past acceptable, important not just for the purpose of consolation, but above all for the justification of the nation in whose name the war had been fought."¹⁰³

The heroic narratives about the Finnish Jägers can be read against this cultural background, as an attempt to construct a purposeful story about manliness and youth, national warriors, national struggle and ultimate victory out of the events of the Civil War of 1918, which largely could have been experienced as frightening, shameful, humiliating and traumatising.

¹⁰² Hagemann, 'German heroes' 2004, pp. 116–134; cf Ute Frevert, 'Herren und Helden. Vom Aufstieg und Niedergang des Heroismus im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert', in R. van Dülmen, ed., *Erfindung des Menschen. Schöpfungsträume und Körperbilder 1500 – 2000* (Wien, 1998), pp. 323–344, at pp. 337–340.

¹⁰³ Mosse, *Fallen Soldiers* 1990, pp. 6–7, 22, 53–69, quote p. 7.

The Jägers' hero myth can be seen as serving all the three functions Karen Hagemann ascribes to the cult of the fallen soldiers: helping society deal with the grief of the dead soldiers' families; constructing a national self-image of Finland as a "manly nation"; and mobilising a patriotic readiness to fight and sacrifice anew. As the Jägers and their supporters immediately started preparing the country's defence for another war against Russia, there was a great need for continued patriotic mobilisation and a gender order where soldiering was central to manhood. As the narrators of the Jäger myth were anxious that the nation should recover from one war and prepare for the next war, there was a need for something similar to what Mosse calls the Myth of the War Experience. In the Finnish case, it was an image of the Finnish "Liberation War" as a noble and meaningful fight and the patriotic sacrifices made there as models for the coming war against Russia. This myth largely masked the horrors and suffering of war, in order to prevent bitterness and internal division and to prevent young men from panicking at the thought of what soldiering might mean in their own lives. The Jäger narrative could also be used to powerfully direct public attention away from the internal conflict towards the perceived conflict between Finland and Russia. According to the Jäger story, the Jägers' "invincible wrath" had been directed against Russia all along and continued to be so in their work as military leaders of a nation that was now independent, but in the nationalist world-view constantly threatened by the East.

The need presented by military educational thinkers to educate a "new" kind of Finnish citizen-soldier and transform young men into "new human beings" through military training can be read as an extension of the Jäger hero narrative. The Jägers were exceptional men, but in order to fight a modern war against Russia, every Finnish man had to be trained to be a hero driven by the same zealous patriotism and spirit of self-sacrifice that drove the Jägers. This was a difficult undertaking for the conscript army, and a daring promise to make. It meant enormous demands on the training officers supposed to succeed in this task, but also implied that the men fit for that task – the Jägers themselves – were national heroes not only in wartime, but in peacetime as well.

The Jäger heroic narrative was a way of directing the commemoration of war towards heroes who survived and invest the war with meanings such as rebirth and liberation, rather than death and sacrifice. This gives the Jäger stories another undertone than war hero myths in many nations who had actually fought in the Great War, especially Germany, which is Mosse's focus. Germany had to deal not only with its millions of dead, but also with defeat and the "stab-in-the-back" legend. White Finland could construct a victorious, even triumphant, self-image after the war: the country had been "liberated" and achieved independence and was now confidently heading for

a prosperous future of national self-fulfilment. This triumph required silencing and denial as well as glorification of death in war.

Although many dead heroes were commemorated and honoured, living heroes making splendid military careers in the brand-new national armed forces probably catered better to the need to optimistically look towards a rosy national future rather than back at the painful war between brothers. The Jäger heroism was about spirit of self-sacrifice, a journey to the unknown, hardships and ordeals, but also about home-coming, victory, and success and prestige in post-war society. For young men who were to be educated into citizen-soldiers in interwar Finland, this perhaps made the Jägers more attractive models of military masculinity than the fallen heroes of the war, no matter how gloriously they had died.

Two studies concerning the hold that soldier heroes and military adventure had on their audiences in the history of the British Empire have sought to find explanations for the intense fascination and excitement these narratives usually evoked, especially among men and boys. They both mainly focus on “heroes who lived” and enjoyed success and rewards and who thus are in some regards more similar to the Jäger heroes than the noble, but tragical figures of the German fallen soldiers.

In his study of how young boys in Ontario were educated for war in the Edwardian period leading up to the Great War, Canadian historian Mark Moss depicts a pervasive cult of “great men” in Canadian society. These great men were typically manly, aggressive, and militaristic in their exploits; military heroes such as President Teddy Roosevelt, Admiral Nelson, the Duke of Wellington, General Gordon and General Kitchener. The narratives these soldier heroes inspired took on the stature of myths, writes Moss, and became “coherent and tangible ideals around which the nation, and particularly young boys, could rally.” Young people, he points out, respond to heroes with intense enthusiasm and almost addictive interest. In Canada, the worship of these heroes was a “virtual industry” in the years leading up to the Great War engaging the attention of the young through monuments, ceremonies and parades, literature and magazines for boys, the sports movement and the educational system. Moss sees a connection between this cult of heroes and the fact that Canada was a young nation caught up in a rapid modernisation process. New devices were needed to ensure and express social cohesion and identity as traditional society waned. According to Moss, military heroes were embodiments of *traditional* notions of masculinity in a time of great flux. They stepped in to fill a void left by the spiritual and religious aspects of traditional society, which had been swept away by modernisation. For the ordinary man, constrained in the mundane prosaic factory or office and caught up in an age

that glorified materialism, the soldier hero came to embody daring, strength, and a life filled with a spiritual meaning.¹⁰⁴

Finland was also a young nation in terms of statehood, but had strong imaginings about an ancient national cultural heritage that Europeans in Canada lacked. Most Finnish men still worked in agriculture or forestry. It is questionable whether the 1920's and 1930's represented such a forceful period of modernisation in Finland that the loss of traditional values would have brought forward a need even among the middle classes for heroes representing *traditional* masculine values. Yet in a way there was a need in "white" Finland to reinforce what was conceived of as traditional values: as a reaction to the attempted upheaval of social order through socialist revolution.

From that perspective, cultural historian Graham Dawson's study of non-fictional soldier heroes in British nineteenth and twentieth century literature has interesting bearings on the Finnish case. Leaning on Kleinian psychoanalysis, Dawson reads the enjoyment of adventure stories about military heroes as expressive of a psychic split where one's own aggressive impulses and the destruction they cause are projected onto an 'evil' adversary, whereas the adventure hero himself expresses fantasies about idealised, wish-fulfilling forms of masculinity. "Powerful, superior and triumphant, the soldier heroes of adventure move through the fields of battle without incurring serious harm, becoming the figure of an exceptionally potent and pleasurable form of identity that corresponds closely to the promptings of desire."¹⁰⁵

The soldier heroes composed in adventure narratives are ideally powerful and free from contradictions, writes Dawson. They serve a psychic function as positive fantasies to set against the fragmenting and undermining effects of anxiety.

They offer the psychic reassurance of triumph over the sources of the threat, promising the defeat of enemies and the recovery of that which is valued and feared lost. Having accomplished their quest, they win recognition and bask in the affirmation of their public, for whom they become idealised vessels preserving all that is valued and worthwhile. Identification with these heroes meets the wish to fix one's own place within the social world, to feel oneself to be coherent and powerful (...) It offers the assurance of a clearly recognisable gender identity and, through this, the security of belonging to a gendered national

¹⁰⁴ Mark Moss, *Manliness and Militarism* 2001, pp. 51-56.

¹⁰⁵ Dawson, *Soldier Heroes* 1994, p. 55.

collectivity that imagines itself to be superior in strength and virtue to others.¹⁰⁶

Dawson interprets the narratives about British nineteenth and twentieth century soldier heroes as products of fantasies in which the values of Britishness were felt to be under threat of loss and destruction. This threat was posed by the waning of the British Empire, the anti-colonialist movement and the questioning of imperialist forms of authority and moral certainty. A heroic masculinity was required to counter this threat.¹⁰⁷

In the case of Finland after the war of 1918, the threat was not the loss of empire, but the loss of a traditional social order, legality and autonomy at the hands of Russian imperialists, Finnish socialists or Russian Bolsheviks. The Jäger hero myth executed a split where the cruelty and evil of the Civil War was projected onto the socialists, Bolsheviks and Russians, whereas the Jägers and the white soldiers they led were cast as idealised vessels of Finnish masculinity. Yet the problem with the triumphalist excitement of adventure hero stories, according to Dawson, is that in their late nineteenth century and twentieth century forms they are connected with a split between the world of the soldier hero and the concerns and values of the domestic sphere, intimacy and femininity. In this division, concern and compassion for the suffering of others is given no place in the masculine world of adventure and heroism. Suffering, fear and loss are not only disavowed with regard to others, but one's capacity to recognise one's own pain is also denied or itself recast in a heroic light.¹⁰⁸ Thus, as convenient as the narrative forms of the Jäger hero myth might have been for muting the pain and loss of those who lost their loved ones in the Finnish civil war, it also made it difficult for the winning side to deal with their own inner wounds. The concerns within the Jägers' association over the high rate of suicides among the Jäger veterans are an indication of how a heroic self-image might have been dysfunctional even for the Jägers themselves.

Yet as we have seen, the Jägers' public image was not completely free from shadows and contradictions. This chapter has mainly looked at the crafting of the Jäger myth, not its reception. The fraught political situation meant that the Jägers were "impossible heroes" for a large part of the population. Their militancy, harshness and at times ruthless self-righteousness also made for a frightening or even repulsive edge to the Jäger image. However, in spite of these cracks in the idealised image, and the differences among the Jägers as real-life military educators, the Jägers' story

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., p. 282.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., p. 283.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., p. 286.

communicated an enormous faith in the military and moral power of idealistic patriotism and self-sacrifice. This applies to all the three aspects of the Jäger image analysed in this chapter – the heroic war narrative, the image of the Jägers as post-war officers with a “national spirit”, as well as the Jägers’ patriotic spirit of self-sacrifice as a guiding-star for the conception of a “modern” national citizen-soldier.

When they set out for their journey, the future Jägers had oftentimes been confronted with a strong scepticism against their venture and a solid reluctance to gain political solutions based on military violence. In post-war society, there was, as we have seen, still a strong resistance against the militarisation of society. Through the Jäger myth, the Jägers and their supporters asserted an image of the male citizen-as-soldier as the foundation of civic society and national independence, an image much resisted in Finnish society, yet also very influential. Within the context of interwar nationalism and the gendered division of labour in the defence of the nation – men and boys training for combat in the army and civil guards, women and girls working with auxiliary tasks in *Lotta Svärd* – the Jäger story as fantasy offered both men and women security of the kind Graham Dawson outlines: the security of belonging to an imagined national collective superior in strength and virtue to others.

4 Educating the citizen-soldier

The Finnish Army faced enormous challenges in the interwar years. It was supposed to organise and prepare for defending the country against vastly superior Russian forces. It had to train whole generations of young Finnish men into skilled soldiers and equip them for combat. Furthermore, it was expected to turn these men into the kind of highly motivated, patriotic, self-propelled and self-sacrificing modern national warriors envisioned by the Jägers and other officers in the younger generation. The starting point was none too promising, due to the criticism and scepticism in the political arena towards protracted military service within the cadre army system. Many conscripts from a working class background probably had seized on at least some of the socialists' anti-militaristic or even pacifistic agitation against armies in general and bourgeois cadre armies in particular. Neither could conscripts from layers of society supporting the Agrarian Party be expected to arrive at the barracks unprejudiced and open-minded. Although peasants who were freeholders usually supported the civil guards, they were not necessarily positive to military service within the cadre army, especially during the first years of its existence. In consequence, a majority of the conscripted soldiers could be feared to have an "attitude problem".¹ Some of the greatest challenges facing the conscript army were therefore to prove its efficiency as a military training organisation, convince suspicious conscripts and doubtful voters of its democratic spirit, and demonstrate its *positive* educational impact on young men.

Although it was often claimed that military training as such would foster mature and responsible citizens – making the young men used to discipline, obedience, punctuality, swiftness and a consideration for the collective's interest – officers and pro-defence nationalists with educationalist inclinations did not place their trust in close-order drill and field exercises alone. More had to be done. From the point of view of army

¹ Although the conscripts had not yet reached the voting age of 24, the popular support in general elections for the political left, centre and right, serves as a very rough indicator of the relative strengths of different political outlooks among the soldiers. The socialist parties (Social Democrats and various suppressed communist parties) obtained circa 40% of the popular vote in every general election between 1919 and 1939. Support for the agrarians in the same period varied around 20-25%. *Statistical Yearbook of Finland 2001* – table 552, Parliamentary elections 1919–1999, <http://pxweb2.stat.fi/sahkoiset_julkaisut/vuosikirja2001/excel/vaali_03.xls>, retrieved 26.02.2009.

authorities and other circles supportive of the regular army, there was an urgent need to “enlighten” the conscript soldiers. They had to be “educated” into adopting a positive attitude towards not only military service and the cadre army system, but also their other civic duties within the new “white” national state.

This chapter examines the attempts of officers, military priests and educationalists to offer the conscripts images of soldiering that would not only make young men disciplined, motivated and efficient soldiers, but also help the conscript army overcome its “image problems” and help the nation overcome its internal divisions. The chapter’s focus is therefore not on the methods or practices of the educational efforts directed at the conscripts in military training, but on the ideological contents of these efforts, mainly as manifested in the intertwined representations of soldiering, citizenship and manhood in the army’s magazine for soldiers *Suomen Sotilas* (Finland’s Soldier).

4.1 Civic education and the Suomen Sotilas magazine

The 1919 report produced by a committee appointed by the Commander of the Armed Forces to organise the “spiritual care” of the conscripted soldiers expressed both the concerns felt over the soldiers’ attitude towards their military service and the solutions envisioned. The report stressed the importance in modern war of “the civil merit of an army, its spiritual strength”. In the light of “recent events” the committee pointed to the risks of arming men without making sure that they had those civil merits – a reference to the Civil War, perhaps, or to the participation of conscripted soldiers in the recent communist revolutions in Russia, Germany and other Central European countries. The report stated, “the stronger the armed forces are technically, the greater the danger they can form to their own country in case of unrest, unless they are inspired by high patriotic and moral principles that prevent them from surrendering to support unhealthy movements within the people”.²

The committee members – two military priests, two Jäger officers and one elementary school inspector – saw the remedy in teaching the conscripts basic knowledge about the fatherland and its history, giving those who lacked elementary education basic skills in reading, writing and

² *Henkisen hoidon järjestämiseksi sotaväessä asetetun komitean mietintö* 30.6.1919. Puolustusministeriö/Komiteoiden ja toimikuntien mietintöjä no 1-14, v. 1917-26, Finnish National Archives, Sörnäinen Branch, Eg 1, p. 3.

mathematics, and providing the soldiers with other “spiritual pursuits”, which mainly meant various religious services. Quoting the commander of the armed forces, General K.F. Wilkama, the committee supported the notion that the army should be a “true institution of civic education”. Its optimistic report expressed a remarkably strong faith in the educational potential of military service:

The military service occurs in that phase of a man’s life when he has completed his schooling, had his first experiences of practical life, and steps forward as an empowered citizen to fulfil his duties in society. His mind is still open to influences. He looks around, searching for direction for his life. No better point in life can be found for giving him a last anointing in civic education, to stake out the way for him.³

These educational aspirations should be seen within the framework of not only the military system, but also the rising concerns among the Finnish educated classes over the civic education and political loyalties of the lower classes ever since the end of the nineteenth century. Urbanisation, industrialisation and democratisation made the perceived “irrationality” and “uncivilised” state of the masses seem ever more threatening to the elite. In face of the pressure towards “Russification” during the last decades of Russian rule, and the subsequent perceived threat from Soviet Russia, this anxiety over social upheaval was translated into an anxiety over national survival.

Historian Pauli Arola has argued that the attempt by Finnish politicians to introduce compulsory elementary education in 1907 – after decades of political debate, but only one year after universal franchise was introduced – should be seen within the context of these feelings of threat. Once common people had the vote, educating them to loyalty with the upper classes’ notions of the “nation” and its existing social order became a priority. Resistance from imperial authorities stopped the undertaking in 1907, but Finnish educationalists continued to propagate for increased civic education throughout the school system.⁴ The civil war only intensified the urgency of the educated elite’s agenda of educating the rebellious elements among the Finnish people. The intellectuals of “white” Finland described these as primitive, brutal, even bestial, hooligans who for lack of discipline and culture had become susceptible to Russian influences and given free rein to the worst traits in the Finnish national character.⁵ There was a special

³ *Henkisen hoidon järjestämiseksi sotaväessä asetetun komitean mietintö* 1919, p. 4.

⁴ Arola, *Tavoitteena kunnon kansalainen* 2003, pp. 8–22, 205–210.

⁵ Högnäs, *Kustens och skogarnas folk* 1995, pp. 165–174.

concern over children from socialist environments and the orphan children of red guardsmen who had died in the war or perished in the prison camps.⁶

The educationalist S.S. Salmensaari published a book about the “Boy question” in 1921, in which he claimed that adolescent boys in contemporary society ran greater moral risks than ever before to be ruined by criminality or personality disorders, ending up unfit for work or mentally deranged in institutions or prisons. He saw threats to a sound boyhood in city life and the lack of social control, too little rest, bad air, lack of healthy activities, broad but superficial book learning, a vicious moral environment, absent and irresponsible fathers, the weakening of family life, and the dissolution of the home as mothers entered working life and abandoned their children to the bad influences of life in the street. As Salmensaari included the malnourishment of both mothers and children in his list, he was obviously mainly concerned about the degeneration of boys in urban proletarian families. He offered no radical solution, only proper rearing and an education adjusted to the boys’ stage of development and social background.⁷

Pauli Arola finds that when compulsory education was finally introduced in 1921, the curriculum for schools in rural districts, where most Finns lived, was strongly intent on conserving the established social order. It idealised traditional country life in opposition to “unsound” urbanisation and emphasised the teaching of Christian religion and domestic history.⁸ In the same spirit, civic education was from the outset included in the training objectives of the conscript army. “Enlightenment lectures”, also called “citizen education”, were incorporated in the conscripts’ weekly programme. These lectures were sometimes given by officers, but mainly by military priests. In 1925, the Commander of the armed forces issued a detailed schedule for these lectures. The conscripts should be given 45 hours of lectures on the “history of the fatherland”, 25 hours on civics, 12 hours on Finnish literary history and 10 hours of lectures on “temperance and morality”. Taken together, roughly two working weeks during the one-year military service were consequently allocated for civic education. In addition, the pastoral care of the soldiers, in the form of evening prayers and divine service both in the garrisons and training camps, was seen as an important

⁶ Panu Pulma & Oiva Turpeinen, *Suomen Lastensuojelun historia* (Helsinki, 1987), pp. 123–126; Mervi Kaarninen, ‘Nuoren tasavallan nuorison ongelmat’, in Sinikka Aapola & Mervi Kaarninen, eds., *Nuoruuden vuosisata. Suomalaisen nuorison historia* (Helsinki, 2003), pp. 217–237.

⁷ S.S. Salmensaari, *Poikakysymys. Kokemuksia ja poimintoja kasvatusalalta* (Porvoo, 1921), pp. 16–25, 43, 62–63, 114–115, 119, 123, 127.

⁸ Arola, *Tavoitteena kunnon kansalainen* 2003, pp. 205–210.

part of “enlightening” soldiers.⁹ A consciousness of the nation’s past and religious piety were evidently seen as the two main pillars of patriotism, law-abidingness and loyalty to the existing social order.

The army’s magazine for soldiers

In most army garrisons and camps, local female volunteers provided a service club or “Soldiers’ home”.¹⁰ These establishments offered coffee, lemonade and bakeries, but also intellectual stimulus in the form of newspapers, magazines and small libraries. Any socialist or otherwise “unpatriotic” publications were unthinkable in these recreational areas where the conscripts spent much of their leisure hours. However, one of the publications the conscripts would most certainly find at the “Soldiers’ home”, if not even distributed to the barracks, was the weekly magazine *Suomen Sotilas* (Finland’s Soldier, 1919–). This illustrated magazine contained a mixture of editorials on morality, military virtues and the dangers of Bolshevism, entertaining military adventure stories, and articles on different Finnish military units, sports within the armed forces, military history, weaponry and military technology. There were reviews on recommendable novels and open letters from “concerned fathers” or “older soldiers”, exhorting the conscripts to exemplary behaviour, but also a dedicated page for cartoons and jokes about military life.

The interwar volumes of *Suomen Sotilas* serve as a good source to the “enlightenment” and “civic education” directed at the conscript soldiers within the military system. Through its collaborators, the magazine was intimately connected with the command of the armed forces, yet formally it was published by an independent private company.¹¹ Its long-term editors

⁹ The military priests were also assigned the duty of teaching illiterate conscripts to read and write. As elementary schooling was only made compulsory in 1921, the army throughout the interwar period received conscripts who had never attended elementary school. The share of illiterate conscripts was however only 1–2%, culminating in 1923 and thereafter rapidly declining. Nevertheless, in 1924 elementary teaching still took up ten times as many working hours for the military priests as their “enlightenment work”. Kronlund et al., *Suomen puolustuslaitos* 1988, pp. 256–258, 325–328. The dean of the military priests Artur Malin presented the ongoing civic education work in the army in an article in the *Suomen Sotilas* magazine in 1923. He listed the following subjects: reading, writing, mathematics, geography, history, civics, natural history, singing, handicraft and temperance education. Artur Malin, ‘Vähäsen sotilaitoksemme valistustyöstä’ *Suomen Sotilas* 48–51/1923, pp. 750–751. Cf Arola, *Tavoitteena kunnan kansalainen* 2003, pp. 102–105; Mälkki, *Herrat, jätkät ja sotataito* 2008, pp. 73–75.

¹⁰ Kronlund et al., *Suomen puolustuslaitos* 1988, pp. 347–350; ‘Helsingin sotilaskoti’, *Suomen Sotilas* 44/1924, p. 801–804; Katri Bergholm, ‘Sotilaskotityön 20-vuotistaipaleelta’, *Suomen Sotilas* 9–12/1938, pp. 261–268.

¹¹ The initiative for starting the magazine originally came from the war ministry and the contents of each number were initially examined before publication by ministry officials. In 1919–1921, the magazine was published by a small publishing house for popular enlightenment, *Edistysseurojen*

and regular collaborators were mostly nationalist officers of the younger generation, many of them either Jäger officers or military priests.¹² Civilians – professional authors, historians, educators and clergymen – also wrote for the magazine, but often more occasionally. In spite of partly different backgrounds and experiences, the contributors had a lot in common; they were educated and middle-class people who shared a particular, staunchly non-socialist and nationalist political outlook. Furthermore, they were almost all men, and older than the conscripts they wrote for. Contributions from female authors were not unheard of, but rarely occurred.

Although the magazine was meant to be published weekly, it was published fortnightly over several long periods. The support of private business was important for its economy, both through advertising revenue and gift subscriptions to the military units paid for by defence-friendly businessmen. The magazine started out with a circulation of 4 000 in 1919 that rose to over 12 000 by mid-1920. This caused the editors to proudly exclaim: “Now it can be said with certainty that *Suomen Sotilas* falls into the hands of every soldier and civil guardsman.”¹³ Originally aimed at a readership of both conscripts and civic guards, the magazine had to give in to the tough competition from other magazines over guardsmen readership after a few years. It then concentrated on being the army’s magazine for soldiers.

Kustannus Oy. As this publisher went bankrupt in 1923, the editors formed a public limited company, ‘Kustannus Oy Suomen Mies’ (*-Finland’s Man Publishing Company Ltd.*) which took over the magazine. On the tenth anniversary of the magazine’s founding, its chief accountant complained that the state had not subsidised the magazine at all in 1919–1925 and then only granted a minimal subsidy. ‘Toimituksen pöydän takaa’, *Suomen Sotilas* 20/1920; [editorial notice] *Suomen Sotilas* 7–8/1923, pp. 102–103; Arvo Sipilä, ‘Suomen Sotilas 10-vuotias’, *Suomen Sotilas* 52/1928, pp. 1090–1092; N.I. Helenius, ‘Muutama sana tämän lehden talouspuolesta’, *Suomen Sotilas* 52/1928, pp. 1095–1096; Ilmari Heikinheimo, ‘Miten aloitimme’, *Suomen Sotilas* 52/1928, 1099–1102.

¹² The editors in chief were M.A., literary historian Ilmari Heikinheimo (1919–1922), student of law and later Professor of Law Arvo Sipilä (1922–1925), M.A. Emerik Olsoni (1926) and army chaplain, later Dean of the Army Chaplains Rolf Tiivola (1927–1943). Important collaborators who were also Jäger officers were Veikko Heikinheimo, military historian and Director of the Cadet School Heikki Nurmio, Army Chaplains Hannes Anttila and Kalervo Groundstroem, as well as Aarne Sihvo, Director of the Military Academy and later Commander of the Armed Forces. Articles on new weaponry and military technology were written by several Jäger officers in the first years the magazine was published; a.o. Lennart Oesch, Eino R. Forsman [Koskimies], Verner Gustafsson, Bertel Mårtensson, Väinö Palomäki, Lars Schalin, Arthur Stenholm [Saarmaa], Kosti Pyykkänen and Ilmari Järvinen. All of these made successful military careers, later becoming lieutenant colonels or higher. In the last number of the first volume, 1919, the editors published the photographs of 13 of the magazine’s “most eager collaborators”. Out of these 13, nine were officers, of which five were Jäger officers. The five civilians were a Master of Arts, two Doctors of Philosophy and one clergyman. See ‘Suomen sotilaan avustajajalleria’, *Suomen Sotilas* 50–52/1919.

¹³ ‘Toimituksen pöydän takaa’, *Suomen Sotilas* 1/1920, p. 11; 6/1920, p. 58; 11/1920, p. 11–12; 16/1920, p. 284. After the magazine’s first 18 months these rather frequent notices on the circulation ceased to appear, probably indicating that the circulation had started to decline. I have not been able to locate comprehensive circulation statistics.

The contents of *Suomen Sotilas* not only express the hopes and objectives of some of the same people who were in charge of training and educating the conscripted soldiers, but also their concerns and fears with regard to young men. In its first number, the editors of *Suomen Sotilas* proclaimed that the ambition of the magazine was to “make the men in the ranks good human beings, good citizens and good soldiers”. Its writings should serve “general civic education and completely healthy spiritual development” and strive towards “the fatherland in its entirety becoming dear to and worth defending for our soldiers.”¹⁴ A concern about *lacking* patriotism or even hostility towards the national armed forces can, however, be read between these lines. This concern did not diminish much during the 1920’s, but was stated even more explicitly by the former editor-in-chief Arvo Sipilä (1898–1974) in the magazine’s tenth anniversary issue in December 1928:

It is well known, that among the youths liable for military service there are quite a number of such persons for whom the cause of national defence has remained alien, not to speak of those, who have been exposed to influences from circles downright hostile to national defence. In this situation, it is the natural task of a soldiers’ magazine to guide these soldiers’ world of ideas towards a healthy national direction, in an objective and impartial way, to touch that part in their emotional life, which in every true Finnish heart is receptive to the concept of a common fatherland (...)¹⁵

The editors of *Suomen Sotilas* were painfully aware of the popular and leftist criticism of circumstances and abuses in the army throughout the 1920’s. In 1929 an editorial lamented, “the civilian population has become used to seeing the army simply as an apparatus of torture, the military service as both mentally and physically monotonous, the officers as beastlike, the [army’s] housekeeping and health care as downright primitive.” The same text greeted the recent PR drive of the armed forces, inviting the conscripts’ relatives into the garrisons for “family days”. There, the editorial claimed, they would see for themselves that circumstances were much better than rumour would have it.¹⁶ The initiative behind these “family days”, however, arose from the officers’ intense concerns over the popular image of the conscript army¹⁷ – concerns that were also mirrored in the pages of *Suomen Sotilas*.

¹⁴ ‘Uudelle taipaleelle lähdeittäessä’ [editorial], *Suomen Sotilas* 1/1919, pp. 2–3.

¹⁵ Sipilä, ‘Suomen Sotilas’ 1928.

¹⁶ Y.J., ‘Omaisten päivät’, *Suomen Sotilas* 28–29/1929, p. 565.

¹⁷ According to historian Veli-Matti Syrjö, the “family days” was an initiative by Colonel-Lieutenant Eino R. Forsman. In his proposal, Forsman pointed out how an understanding between his regiment and the civilian population in its district was obstructed by popular ignorance

Images of soldiering as articulations of the masculine self

As I interpret the texts in *Suomen Sotilas*, they tried to counter the criticisms and negative images of military training in the cadre army by offering their readers – the young conscripts – positive objects of self-identification. Descriptions of valorous citizen-soldiers, associated with masculine virtues and social prestige, were made available as self-images for the reader to step into and make his own. The texts provided possible articulations of the masculine self; stories that a man could tell about himself and thereby fashion himself as a certain kind of person and a certain kind of man. Through this particular knowledge about soldiering and masculinity, the reader was related to other men – because in the narrative universe of *Suomen Sotilas*, soldiers are always men – who had been, were or would be defenders of the Finnish nation. Implicitly and sometimes quite explicitly, they ascribed the reader a degree of commonality with all these other men; a brotherhood-in-arms.¹⁸ Yet where there is sameness there must also be difference. These texts therefore construct gender differences as well, probably often unwittingly, between different kinds of men, and between men and women.

The magazine's representations of soldiering were not unanimous and uniform, but manifold, varied, and to some extent contradicting each other. I would nevertheless maintain that the interwar volumes of *Suomen Sotilas* contain certain recurring thematic topics or figures of thought with strong commonalities in their contents over the whole stretch of the period. Neither the fictional nor the non-fictional texts were, generally speaking, particularly imaginative, artful or original. They scooped their materials from a collective cultural inventory at the cross-section of upper-class military tradition, Christian-clerical morality, middle-class manliness and nationalism.

The magazine's interwar volumes contain a number of different yet interconnected ideas and normative messages about what a Finnish soldier was like, or should be like, and what behaviours, characteristics and duties were associated with men and manliness. Taken together, they do not form a crystal-clear and sharply demarcated ideology, but rather a *cluster* of ideological notions and rhetorical techniques, a fuzzy entity with no sharp borderlines. The frequency of occurrence of many of the particular

regarding the circumstances and service in the regiment, and the propensity of the civilian population to rather "believe in all kinds of slander against the armed forces". Syrjö, *Puolustusvoimien asema* 1986, pp. 42–43.

¹⁸ On the concepts of self-identification, self-understanding, sameness and commonality, see Rogers Brubaker & Frederick Cooper, 'Beyond "identity"', *Theory and Society* 29 (2000), pp. 1–47.

assertions discussed in this chapter was arguably not high enough to send an unequivocal message to a conscript who occasionally browsed through an issue or two during his year in military service. I would, however, argue that there is enough historical evidence to be found in the magazine to say something significant about how *the people writing it* looked at educating young men into soldiers and citizens.

4.2 *The man-soldier-citizen amalgamation*

In the autumn of 1922, the First Pioneer Battalion in the city of Viipuri arranged a farewell ceremony for those conscript soldiers who had served a full year and were now leaving the army. On this occasion, the ideal graduate of the Finnish Army's civic education gave a speech to his comrades. – At least, so it must have seemed to the officers listening to pioneer Kellomäki's address, since they had it printed in *Suomen Sotilas* for other soldiers all around the country to meditate upon. This private told his comrades that the time they had spent together in the military might at times have felt arduous, yet “everything in life has its price, and this is the price a people has to pay for its liberty”. Moreover, he thought that military training had no doubt done the conscripts well, although it had often been difficult and disagreeable:

You leave here much more mature for life than you were when you arrived. Here, in a way, you have met the reality of life, which most of you knew nothing about as you grew up in your childhood homes. Here, independent action has often been demanded of you. You have been forced to rely on your own strengths and abilities. Thereby, your will has been fortified and your self-reliance has grown. In winning his own trust, a man wins a great deal. He wins more strength, more willpower and vigour, whereas doubt and shyness make a man weak and ineffective. You leave here both physically hardened and spiritually strengthened.¹⁹

This talented young pioneer had managed to adopt the way of addressing his fellow soldiers that marked many ideological texts in *Suomen Sotilas*. He was telling them what they themselves had experienced and what it now meant to them, telling them a particular version of their own life-story, telling them *who they were* as men, citizens and soldiers. His speech made use of two paired figures of thought that often occurred in the interwar volumes of the magazine. He claimed that military education was a learning process where

¹⁹ Pioneer Kellomäki, ‘Asevelvollisuutensa suorittaneille’, *Suomen Sotilas* 42–43/1922, pp. 610–611.

boys and youngsters matured into adult men; and furthermore, that the virtues of the good soldier, obtainable through military training, were also the virtues of a useful and successful citizen and a strong and manly man. As I read these assertions, they were rhetoric means of claiming that the unpleasant hardships of military service were not oppressive and corrupting, as claimed by the army's critics, but in the end meaningful and rewarding, not only for the nation, but also for the individual soldier.

What supposedly happened to young men during their military service that made them "much more mature for life"? In the army, young men allegedly learned punctuality, obedience and order, "which is a blessing for all the rest of one's life". Sharing joys and hardships in the barracks taught equality and comradeship. "Here, there are no class differences." (1919).²⁰ The exercises, athletics and strict order in the military made the soldiers return "vigorous and polite" to their home districts, admired by other young people for their "light step and their vivid and attentive eye" (1920).²¹ Learning discipline and obedience drove out selfishness from the young man and instilled in him a readiness to make sacrifices for the fatherland (1923).²² The duress of military life hardened the soldier, strengthened his self-confidence and made "mother's boys into men with manly willpower and stamina" (1924).²³ The thorough elementary and civic education in the army offered possibilities even for illiterates to succeed in life and climb socially (1929).²⁴ The order, discipline, exactitude, cleanliness, considerateness, and all the knowledge and technical skills acquired in the military were a "positive capital" of "incalculable future benefit" for every man – there was "good reason to say that military service is the best possible school for every young man, it is a real school for men, as it has been called" (1932).²⁵ "If we had no military training, an immense number of our young men would remain good-for-nothings; slouching and drowsy beings hardly able to support themselves. [The army] is a good school and luckily every healthy young man has the opportunity to attend it" (1938).²⁶

It is noteworthy how the rhetoric in *Suomen Sotilas* about military service improving young men's minds and bodies usually emphasised the *civic* virtues resulting from military training. Military education was said to

²⁰ 'Sotilaitten lausuntoja sotaväestä: kerätty erään aliupseerinkoulun ainevihoista', *Suomen Sotilas* 44-45/1919, pp. 626-627.

²¹ O. Keskinen: 'Kunniattomuutta', *Suomen Sotilas* 37/1920, p. 610.

²² Lääk. majuri Angervo, 'Sotamiehen sonetteja', *Suomen Sotilas* 10/1923.

²³ Nurmio, 'Sananen sotilaspedagogiikkaa' 1924, p. 656-657.

²⁴ Vilho Nenonen, 'Hänestäkin tuli MIES', *Suomen Sotilas* 26-27/1929, pp. 450-451.

²⁵ 'Puolustuslaitoksen menoista' [editorial], *Suomen Sotilas* 36-37/1932, p. 377-378.

²⁶ Isäsi, 'Erään isän kirje alokas-pojalleen', *Suomen Sotilas* 19/1938, p. 393.

develop characteristics in young men that were useful to themselves later in life and beneficial for civil society in general. Conscripts being disbanded in 1922 were told that experience from the previous armed forces in Finland had proven that the sense of duty, exactitude and purposefulness in work learnt in military service ensured future success in civilian life as well. If the young men wanted to succeed in life, they should preserve the manhood and briskness they had learnt in the army, “in one word, you should still be *soldiers*.”²⁷

Such rhetoric actually implied that the characteristics of a good soldier, a virtuous citizen and a manly man were one and the same. As the recruit became a good soldier, he simultaneously developed into a real man and a useful patriotic citizen. The Finnish Army, an editorial in 1920 stated, “is an educational institution to which we send our sons with complete trust, in one of the decisive periods of their lives, to develop into good proper soldiers and at the same time honourable citizens. Because true military qualities are in most cases also most important civic qualities.” If the army fulfilled this high task well, the text continued, the millions spent in tax money and working hours withheld would not have been wasted, but would “pay a rich dividend.”²⁸

Texts in this vein were most conspicuous in *Suomen Sotilas* during the early 1920's, as conscription was still a highly controversial issue and heated debates over the shaping of military service went on in parliament. In 1922, just when the new permanent conscription law was waiting for a final decision after the up-coming elections, an editorial in the magazine expressed great concerns over the possibly imminent shortening of military service. The editors blamed the “suspicious attitude” among the public towards the conscript army on negative prejudices caused by the old imperial Russian military. The contemporary military service, they claimed, was something quite different. It was a time when young men “become tame”, realised their duty as defenders of the fatherland, improved their behaviour

²⁷ A. Lyytinen, 'Kotiutettaville sotilaille', *Suomen Sotilas* 13/1922, p. 202. A similar printed speech from 1923 claimed that soldiers during the year in the army have learnt to better love and appreciate their parents and family and value their personal freedom higher, which should make them understand the significance of the fatherland's freedom. See Ylimatruusi Vegelius, 'Kasarmista lähteville' *Suomen Sotilas* 38/1923, p. 563. See also Luutn. Hanén, 'Sotilaan päävelvollisuus' [editorial], *Suomen Sotilas* 7/1921, p. 106; Tykkimies, 'Kalliit hetket', *Suomen Sotilas* 27/1921, p. 426.

²⁸ A.A.K., 'Pieni tapahtuma – ja pari vakavaa sanaa sen johdosta', *Suomen Sotilas* 5/1920, p. 66. Cf Hanén, 'Sotilaan päävelvollisuus' 1921; Emil J. Ovaska, 'Sotilaskasvatus ja siviilielämä', *Suomen Sotilas* 5–6/1932, pp. 55–56; 'Asevelvollisuus – isänmaallinen kunniatehtävä' [editorial], *Suomen Sotilas* 19/1937, p. 363.

and were united across class borders as they came to understand and appreciate each other's interests and opinions.²⁹

All these positive expectations can be read as mirroring anxieties among the educated middle classes over continued class conflicts in the wake of the Civil War and the *lack* of patriotism and a "sense of duty" among young men in the working classes. The assurances that military service would inevitably induce the right, "white" kind of patriotism and civic virtue in young men and unite them in military comradeship appear to be fearful hopes in disguise.³⁰ As late as 1931, the conservative politician Paavo Virkkunen wrote in *Suomen Sotilas* that the bitterness "still smouldering in many people's mind" after the events in 1918 had to give place for "positive and successful participation in common patriotic strivings". He saw young men divided by political differences and hoped that they would be united by the common experience of military service, "a time of learning patriotic manly condition" and "a fertile period of brotherly comradeship and spiritual confluence."³¹

Educating the conscripted body

Moral education and physical development were closely intertwined in the invocations of how military service improved young men and brought them to maturity. The military exercises, it was claimed, would make the conscripts' bodies strong, healthy and proficient. In 1920, the committee for military matters in parliament made a statement about the importance for national security of physical education for young men. Pleading to the government to make greater efforts in this area, the committee pointed out how games, gymnastics and athletics not only generated the "urge for deeds, drive, toughness and readiness for military action" in the nation's youth, but also developed discipline, self-restraint and a spirit of sacrifice.³² The male body should be trained and prepared for a future war in the army, but also

²⁹ Vanha Sotilas, 'Puolustuslaitoksemme tulevaisuus vaaliuurnilla', *Suomen Sotilas* 11/1922, p. 162.

³⁰ See e.g. 'Sotilaitten lausuntoja sotaväestä' 1919; Aarne Sihvo, 'Toveruus', *Suomen Sotilas* 31/1922, pp. 438-439; Vanha Sotilas, 'Toverielämä sotaväessä', *Suomen Sotilas* 31/1923, pp. 446-447; E.J. Pakkala, 'Tupatoverit', *Suomen Sotilas* 47/1924, pp. 854-855; E. Parikka 'Isänmaan puolesta', *Suomen Sotilas* 1-2/1930, pp. 21-23; Kokelas Y. K—n, 'Sotilastovereiden vapautuessa', *Suomen Sotilas* 33-34/1931, pp. 426-427.

³¹ Paavo Virkkunen, 'Isänmaallisen nuorison puolustustahto', *Suomen Sotilas* 37-38/1931, pp. 463-464. Cf 'Mitä edellyttää tunnuslauseemme: Kansa ehjäksi idän vaaraa vastaan?' [editorial], *Suomen Sotilas* 3/1925, pp. 37-39.

³² Vp 1920, Asiakirjat V:2, Anomusmietintö N:o 5, *Sotilasasiainvaliokunnan mietintö N:o 2 edustaja Matti Helenius-Seppälän anomusehdotuksen johdosta sotilaitoksen muuttamisesta kansanmiliisin kannalle; Eduskunnan anomus sotilaitoksen muuttamisesta kansanmiliisin kannalle*. Vp 1920, protocols, pp. 702-705.

developed and disciplined into a moral, industrious and productive citizen's body. The militarily trained male body, claimed *Suomen Sotilas* in 1920, was handsome and energetic, aesthetically balanced, harmonious, lithe and springy – unlike the purely civilian male body, marked by clumsiness, stiff muscles and a shuffling gait.³³

According to Klaus U. Suomela, a frontal figure in Finnish gymnastics writing in the magazine in 1923, the lack of proper military education and the hard toiling in agriculture and forestry had given the Finns a bad posture and unbalanced bodily proportions. Their arms, shoulders and backs were overdeveloped in relation to the lower extremities. Gymnastics to the pace of brisk commands as well as fast ball games and athletics would rectify these imperfections and force the Finns, “known to be sluggish in their thinking”, to speed up their mental activities, Suomela stated. He admitted that “the Finnish quarrelsomeness” would be worsened by individual sports, but this would be counteracted by group gymnastics and team games.³⁴ Suomela seems to have viewed Finnish peasant boys from the vantage points of the athletic ideals of the educated classes, emphasising slenderness, agility and speed, and found their bodies too rough-hewn and marked by heavy labour.³⁵

After independence and the Civil War, Finnish military and state authorities immediately saw a connection between security policy, public health and physical education. Officers and sports leaders eagerly debated how gymnastics and athletics formed the foundations for military education.³⁶ Proposals to introduce military pre-education for boys in the school system were never realised, but physical education for boys and men in elementary schools and the civil guards nonetheless emphasised competitive and physically heavy sports in the 1920's and 1930'. These “masculine” sports were thought to develop the strength and endurance needed for soldiering. Light gymnastics, on the other hand, were considered more appropriate for in schoolgirls, developing “feminine” characteristics such as bodily grace, nimbleness and adaptation to the surrounding group. Female bodies were primarily seen as intended for motherhood; giving birth and raising healthy new members of the nation.³⁷

³³ Tauno Lahtinen, 'Armeija ruumiinkulttuurin kehittäjänä', *Suomen Sotilas* 11-13/1922, pp. 125-126; Keskinen, 'Kunniattomuutta' 1920.

³⁴ Klaus U. Suomela, 'Voimistelu ja urheilu kansan kasvattajana', *Suomen Sotilas* 9/1923, p. 134-5; Cf Lahtinen, 'Armeija ruumiinkulttuurin kehittäjänä' 1932.

³⁵ On the body ideals of the middle-class athletics movement, see Bonde, *Mandigbed og sport* 1991, pp. 126-127, 162-163.

³⁶ Erkki Vasara, *Valkoisen Suomen urheilevat soturit. Suojeluskuntajärjestön urheilu- ja kasvatustoiminta vuosina 1918-1939* (Helsinki, 1997), pp. 113-124.

³⁷ Tuomaala, *Työätekevistä käsistä* 2004, pp. 234-236, 240-247; Vasara, *Valkoisen Suomen urheilevat soturit* 1997, pp. 113-124, 132-135, 496-498.

Sports and athletics were given lavish attention in *Suomen Sotilas*. The magazine reported extensively on all kinds of sports competitions within the armed forces, publishing detailed accounts and photographs of the victors. Sports were evidently assumed to interest the readership, but the editors also attached symbolical and political importance to sports as an arena of national integration. An editorial in 1920 claimed that in the army sports competitions, "Finland's men could become brothers" as officers and soldiers, workers and capitalists competed in noble struggle. "There is a miniature of Finland's sports world such as we want to see it – man against man in comradely fight, forgetful of class barriers and class hate. May the soldiers take this true sporting spirit with them into civilian life when they leave military service."³⁸ Hopes were expressed that conscripts, permeated with a patriotic sense of duty after receiving their military education, would continue practicing sports and athletics in their home districts, not only to stay fit as soldiers and useful citizens, but also in order to spread models for healthy living and physical fitness among the whole people.³⁹

Immature recruits of an underdeveloped people

The rhetoric about the army as a place where boys or youngsters *became* adult men and useful, responsible citizens logically required a denial of maturity and responsibility in men who had not yet done their military service. The 21-year old recruits who arrived for military training, many of them after years of gainful employment, were directly or indirectly portrayed as somehow less than men, as immature youngsters who had not yet developed either the physique or the mind of a real man. In this context, the writers in *Suomen Sotilas* could take up the moral position of older and wiser men who implicitly claimed to possess the yardstick of true manliness and the power to judge young soldiers in this respect. Any critique or resistance against the methods of military service was dismissed and ridiculed as evidence of immaturity or lack of manly toughness. "You know very well that perpetual whining does not befit a man, only women do that", wrote an anonymous "Reservist" in 1935 – i.e. somebody claiming to already have done his military training.⁴⁰ An "Open letter to my discontented son who is doing his military service" (1929) delivered quite a paternal dressing-down of any

³⁸ 'Urheilun avulla Suomi yhdeksi!' [editorial], *Suomen Sotilas* 39/1920, p. 642.

³⁹ See e.g. Luutn. Levälähti, 'Tulevaisuus velvoittaa', *Suomen Sotilas* 40/1920, p. 658; K., 'Urheilu ja voimistelu Pioneerit-Pataljoonassa', *Suomen Sotilas* 28–29/1923, pp. 418–419.

⁴⁰ Pioneerireservialikersantti, 'Sotaväen mainonta', *Suomen Sotilas* 8/1935, p. 202. Cf Parikka, 'Isänmaan puolesta' 1930; 'Sotilaan vapaudesta' [editorial], *Suomen Sotilas* 23/1937, p. 444; Isä, 'Luonteen karkaisu', *Suomen Sotilas* 3/1939, p. 36.

reluctant conscript, claiming that the only cause for discontent with army life was a complete lack of “sense of duty”. The military, however, provided a healthy education in orderliness and fulfilling one’s duties, taking one’s place in the line “like every honourable man”.⁴¹

This immaturity of the Finnish conscript was sometimes described as not only a matter of individual development, but also associated with traits of backwardness in Finnish culture and society, which could, however, be compensated for both in individuals and the whole nation by the salubrious effects of military training. It was a recurring notion that Finns in layers of society without proper education had an inclination to tardiness, slackness and quarrelsomeness.⁴² This echoed concerns over negative traits in the Finnish national character that had increased ever since the nationalist mobilisation against the Russian “oppression” encountered popular indifference. The spread of socialism, culminating in the rebellion of 1918, made the Finnish people seem ever more undisciplined and inclined to envy, distrustfulness and deranged fanaticism in the eyes of the educated elites.⁴³ In an article published in 1919, Arvi Korhonen (1897–1967), a history student and future professor who had participated in the Jäger movement as a recruiter, complained about the indolence and lack of proficiency and enterprise of people in the Finnish countryside. Korhonen called for military discipline and order as a remedy for these cultural shortcomings. “Innumerable are those cases where military service has done miracles. Lazybones have returned to their home district as energetic men, and the bosses of large companies say they can tell just from work efficiency who has been a soldier.” Korhonen claimed that similar observations were common enough – he was evidently thinking of either experiences from the “old” conscript army in Finland or from other countries – to show that “the army’s educational importance is as great as its significance for national defence.”⁴⁴

Another variation on this theme ascribed a kind of primordial and unrefined vitality to Finnish youngsters, which had to be shaped or hardened

⁴¹ A.R., ‘Avoin kirje sotapalveluksessa olevalle tyytymättömälle pojalleni’, *Suomen Sotilas* 13–14/1929, p. 255; Cf Otto Lajula: ‘Suomen sotilas joka sotamiehen käteen’, *Suomen Sotilas* 44/1929, p. 715.

⁴² Oskari Heikinheimo, ‘Sotakuria’, *Suomen Sotilas* 28/1919, pp. 394–395; H[eikki] N[urmio], ‘Vapaussotamme 5-vuotismuistojen alkaessa’, *Suomen Sotilas* 4–5/1923 pp. 54–56; N.J.Ks, ‘Eräs kansanluonteemme ”sydänvirhe” [editorial], *Suomen Sotilas* 39/1923; Jouko Luosto, ‘Kuri – sotilaallisuuden perusta’, *Suomen Sotilas* 2/1936, p. 32.

⁴³ Högnäs, *Kustens och skogarnas folk* 1995, pp. 127–135.

⁴⁴ Arvi Korhonen, ‘Maamies ja sotilas’, *Suomen Sotilas* 32/1919, p. 450–451. Korhonen later became an important academic. He worked as Deputy Director of the Military History Department of the General Staff in 1927–1940, after which he became Professor of History at Helsinki University. Eino Jutikkala, ‘Arvi Korhonen’, *Suomen Kansallisbiografia-verkkojulkaisu*, <<http://artikkelihaku.kansallisbiografia.fi/artikkeli/7003/>>, updated version published 12.2.2008, retrieved 08.04.2009.

by military training in order to result in manly conduct and become useful for society. The trainer of the Finnish Olympic wrestling team Armas Laitinen wrote an article in this vein in 1923, explaining why the military service was a particularly suitable environment to introduce young men to wrestling:

Almost without exception, healthy young men arrive to the ranks and care of the army. The simple youngsters of backwoods villages arrive there to fulfil their civic duty, children of the wilds and remote hamlets, whose cradle stood in the middle of forests where they grew to men, healthy, rosy-cheeked and sparkling with zest for life. In the hard school of the army they are brought up to be *men*, in the true sense of the word, and that common Finnish sluggishness and listlessness is ground away. Swiftiness, moderation and above all manly vigour are imprinted on these stiff tar stumps and knotty birch stocks. They gradually achieve their purpose – manly readiness. The army has done its great work. A simple child of the people has grown up to a citizen aware of his duty, in which the conscious love of nationalism has been rooted forever.⁴⁵

Jäger lieutenant and student of theology Kalervo Groundstroem (1894–1966) was even less respectful towards the recruits when he depicted the personal benefits of military training in 1919. In the army, he wrote, everything is done rapidly and without any loitering, “which can feel strange especially for those from the inner parts of the country”.

It is very salutary that many country boys, who all their lives have just been laying comfortably next to the fireplace, at last get a chance to rejuvenate and slim themselves. And we can only truly rejoice that numerous bookworms and spoilt, sloppy idlers get an airing by doing field service.

Barracks life and the healthy influence of comradeship rub off small-mindedness, selfishness, vanity and other “sharp edges” in a young man’s character, claimed Groundstroem. Military training is therefore “a useful preparation for future life.” Moving in step with others, the soldiers acquire a steady posture, their gaze is fortified, their skin gets the right colour, they always have a healthy appetite, and flabby muscles are filled out and tightened. The finest result of this education, however, is the “unflinching sense of duty” it brings forth.⁴⁶

The “sense of duty” mentioned in many of the quotes above stands out as the most important shared quality or virtue of the ideal soldier and ideal male citizen in the ideological cluster of *Suomen Sotilas*. From this military

⁴⁵ Armas Laitinen, ‘Suomalainen sotilas – suomalainen painija’, *Suomen Sotilas* 10/1923, p. 155–156.

⁴⁶ Kalervo Grou[n]dstroem: ‘Kasarmiin astuessa. Uusille tulokkaille omistettu’, *Suomen Sotilas* 17/1919, p. 232. Groundstroem fennicised his surname into Kurkiala in 1927.

and civic arch virtue, the other characteristics of a good soldier and a good citizen quoted so far could be derived, such as self-restraint, a spirit of sacrifice, order and discipline, punctuality and exactitude in the performance of assigned tasks, unselfishness and submitting to the collective good, etc. The writers in *Suomen Sotilas* usually positioned themselves through their texts as superior to the readers in knowing what duty meant and hence entitled, indeed obliged, to educate the readers, who were positioned as thoughtless yet corrigible youngsters. In the context of *Suomen Sotilas*, references to “a sense of duty” conveyed a message to the individual man that he needed to submit himself and his actions in the service of something higher and larger than his own personal desires and pleasures – submit to the army discipline and to the hardships and dangers of soldiering.⁴⁷

4.3 *History, forefathers and the spirit of sacrifice*

A vast array of texts and pictures in *Suomen Sotilas* were intent on conveying a sense of national history and military traditions to the readers. The magazine abounded with histories of Finnish military units and tales of battles and campaigns where Finnish men had fought, all the way from the times of the national epos *Kalevala* and the Iron Age up until the Liberation War and the Tribal Wars of 1918–1922. The stories of the *hakkapeliitta* Finnish cavalrymen of Gustavus II, the Finnish soldiers of Charles XII, the soldiers and officers of the Finnish War 1808–1809 as portrayed by Runeberg, and the Jägers and other heroes of 1918 were tirelessly retold. This canon of national military heritage was iterated through different genres, both as military history, carrying textual markers of factuality, and as fictional adventure stories.

The recurrent theme of this canon was the claim that Finns had always been good soldiers; strong, coarse, unyielding and fearless men who did not hesitate to sacrifice their lives for their military honour or their freedom.⁴⁸

⁴⁷ Otto Lajula, 'Suomen sotilas joka sotamiehen käteen', *Suomen Sotilas* 44/1929, p. 715.

⁴⁸ Some examples: Arvo Wiklund, 'Ase kädessä Aunuksen puolesta', *Suomen Sotilas* 5/1920, p. 67–69; A.R.G. Stenius, 'Sotilas ja isänmaa', *Suomen Sotilas* 34/1921, pp. 522–523; Känä, 'Sissien seassa: Kunnianteko', *Suomen Sotilas* 35/1921, pp. 542–544; Jääkärikapteeni [Veikko] Heikinheimo, 'Hiihtohetkiä Merenkurkulla', *Suomen Sotilas* 5–6/1922, pp. 73–75; Jääkäriväpeli [Kaarlo] Sakko, 'Muistelmia sotaväessä olostani Saksan armeijassa', *Suomen Sotilas* 28–29/1923, p. 407; Väinö Salminen, 'Suomalainen sotamies Pariisissa', *Suomen Sotilas* 42–43/1924, pp. 782–783; Relatius, 'Kun suuret olivat pieniä', *Suomen Sotilas* 4/1925, p. 58–59; Toivo Kivi, 'Kaksi episodaa', *Suomen Sotilas* 5–6/1932; Arne Haapakoski, 'Suomalainen onnensoturi. Mies, jota luodit karttoivat', *Suomen Sotilas* 11–12/1933, p. 140; K.A. Wegelius, 'Vapaussodan historiaa', *Suomen Sotilas* 2/1936, pp. 29–31, 56; Juohtenus, 'Karhukeihäiden viimeinen suuri taistelu', *Suomen Sotilas* 2/1937, pp. 35–36; T.

According to Heikki Nurmio, who was a central figure both within military education and military historiography in the 1920's,⁴⁹ it was important to make the conscripts aware of these historical traditions since they were sources of “national military spirit and soldier virtues” for the young army. However, he balanced the glorification of Finnish soldierhood by pointing out that they illustrated both the strengths and the weaknesses of Finnish men as soldiers.⁵⁰ In the same spirit, Olavi Uoma wrote that the 17th century *hakkapeliitta* cavalrymen had understood that the Finns' many defeats in the border clashes with neighbouring peoples had derived from a spirit of passivity and defensiveness. For that reason the *hakkapeliittas* had assumed a “spirit of offensive”, which they had left as an “invaluable heritage” to their descendants. “The smaller our number, the more ruthlessly we have to attack, if we want to pull through”, enjoined Uoma of the readers, obviously trying to prepare them for confronting a Soviet attack.⁵¹

Recurring references to the Finnish “fathers” upheld a historical myth where these anonymous forefathers for hundreds of years had not only fought Swedes and Russians, but also striven for an independent state.⁵² One typical such text from 1929 put conscription in the context of Finnish men fighting and prevailing over superior forces throughout the centuries. It related the words of a grandfather, explaining to his grandson about how the men of their home village resisted the Russian Cossacks in the past. The old man urges the boy to remember that their village has been burnt dozens of times by the Eastern enemies,

... and you can count by many hundreds the men of your tribe who over the centuries have sacrificed their lives to drive out the oppressors from this neck of the woods. The land we call our own was bought with the heart-blood of our fathers. A Finnish man will not bear a foreign yoke and nothing but death breaks his perseverance. (...) You too, my boy, will grow up to be a man and then you should know what you are obliged to by the deeds of the fathers of your tribe. Foreign feet must not trample the land that for centuries has drunk the blood of men defending their freedom.⁵³

Pohjankanervo, 'Muinaistietoja esi-isäimme puolustuskäsityksistä', *Suomen Sotilas* 4/1938, p. 53–54; Isä, 'Luonteen karkaisu' 1939.

⁴⁹ Cf Elfvengren, *Yleisesikunnan organisaation synty* 1997, pp. 230–232

⁵⁰ Heikki Nurmio, 'Historialliset traditiot ja perinnäismuistot myötäkavattajina', *Suomen Sotilas* 33–34/1924, pp. 631–634.

⁵¹ Olavi Uoma, 'Mitä "Hakkaa päälle" oikeastaan merkitsee?', *Suomen Sotilas* 14/1933 p. 167–168. Cf Jääkäri, 'Voiton usko', *Suomen Sotilas* 12/1935, p. 326.

⁵² For the view of modern historiography, see e.g. Jussila, *Suomen historian suuret myytit* 2007, pp. 151–181, 209–229, 264–269.

⁵³ Eino Virkki, 'Yleinen asevelvollisuus, vanhan vaarin kertomuksen mukaan', *Suomen Sotilas* 2/1929, pp. 33–34. Cf. Vanha Sotilas, 'Kansanvoima ja sotavoima' [editorial], *Suomen Sotilas* 16/1920, p. 274;

Historian Derek Fewster has described how ardent Finnish nationalists in the interwar period thought Finland had now *regained* an independence lost in the dark Middle Ages to conquering Swedes and later Russians. For many zealots, “the political situation emerging in 1917–1918 was a return to an ancient, ethnic truth”. Although the constructions of a Great National Past lost some of the heated intellectual topicality it had had during the decades before independence, Fewster points out that it reached new levels of popularisation during the interwar period. Historical novels had a vogue in the 1930’s, accompanied by a multitude of new publications for boys and youngsters presenting adventures in prehistorical and medieval Finland. “For the continued national project, the distant past still provided excellent examples of how the Finns were to manifest their patriotism and fulfil their destiny”, writes Fewster. He finds that the military aspects of ancient Finnishness were inflated to “a veritable trade mark of the republic” after independence. Warlikeness was made a predominant feature of ancient Finnish society in narratives and visual representations in novels, magazines and even public monuments. Fewster calls the phenomenon a “militarisation – even masculinisation” of early medieval Finnishness. The distant national past became “a fully militarised mirror of contemporary society” as the ancient Finns were portrayed as fighting the same battles that modern Finns were told to prepare themselves for.⁵⁴

Using history to challenge and encourage men

The militarised and masculinised construction of the nation’s past was used to put the magazine’s readers under a moral obligation to honour their forefathers’ sacrifices by continuing their heroic struggle. Making a rather liberal interpretation of historical facts, Heikki Nurmio in 1924 portrayed the fight for national freedom as a *historical mission*, which had to be made clear to the conscripts through historical education:

With the roar of thunder, these [historical memories] speak immense volumes to us about Finland’s centuries-long struggle towards freedom and national independence, a struggle for which generation after generation, towns and countryside, noblemen, clergymen, peasants and

Jalmari Niemi, ‘Sotilaan tehtävä’, *Suomen Sotilas* 45/1920, p. 736; Jussi Hagberg, ‘Ennen ja nyt’, *Suomen Sotilas* 8/1924, p. 131–132; Heikki Nurmio, ‘Suomen Sotilas ja Suojeluskuntamies! Sinä puolustat isiesi uskoa’, *Suomen Sotilas* 2/1925, pp. 21–23.

⁵⁴ Derek Fewster, *Visions of Past Glory. Nationalism and the Construction of Early Finnish History* (Helsinki, 2006), pp. 309–313, 320–330. Seija-Leena Nevala has described similar representations of female heroes in the past in the magazine of the *Lotta Svärd* organisation; Seija-Leena Nevala, *Lotta Svärd-aikakauslehti isänmaallisille naisille vuosina 1929–1939* [Unpublished Master’s thesis] (Tampereen yliopisto, 1993), pp. 90–93.

the poorest tenant farmers and workmen of the backwoods in ancient times have *uncompromisingly sacrificed everything they had*. Those passed-away generations demand the same of the present generation and knowledge of their destiny is the best way of making clear the historical mission of the Finnish people.⁵⁵

In the pages of *Suomen Sotilas*, this mission was naturally centred on the duty of young men to do their military service without complaint and prepare to go to war if needed. There was a “tax to be paid”, in the form of military service, to the forefathers who had toiled and suffered to make the barren land fruitful and prepare a way for Finland’s freedom.⁵⁶ The debt to the men of the past could, however, also be used for other moral appeals, such as calling for national unity after the divisive events of 1918. The memory of the deaths of the heroes of 1918 “binds each and every one of us to take care that their sacrifice is not allowed to go to waste”, claimed a text in 1921 bearing the headline “The Memory of the Heroes of Liberty”.⁵⁷

These texts in effect presented an implicit challenge to young men. In order to be men and step into the timeless chain of Finnish manhood, they had to do what their forefathers had done, dare what they had dared, sacrifice what they had sacrificed. “Is the present military service really such a heavy burden that the present youth, parading its sports activities, cannot bear it upright, or were our forefathers after all of hardier stock in spite of the lack of sports?” scorned an “Uncle” in 1931.⁵⁸ Through the portrayal of the forefathers as indomitable warriors, defending the land that they had cleared and tilled through tireless labour, a standard for “real” Finnish manliness was set and the conscripts were challenged to demonstrate that they met this standard:

We read stories about men, who have died smiling knowing that they have done a service to the country they love. Young men! We don’t want to be inferior to them, because this land and this people are dear to us too. We do as our forefathers have done, like all real men in the

⁵⁵ Heikki Nurmio, ‘Historialliset traditiot ja perinnäismuistot myötäkasvattajina’, *Suomen Sotilas* 33–34/1924, pp. 631–634. Emphasis in original.

⁵⁶ ‘Kotiajatuksia kasarmissa. Sotilaan kirjeestä’ [editorial], *Suomen Sotilas* 11/1920, p. 178. Cf [Urho Koitto] Sihvonen, ‘Puhe, jonka Joensuun sk. piirin piiripäällikkö jääk. kapt. Sihvonen piti Joensuun sankarihaudalla Pohjoiskarjalan vapaudenpatsaan paljastamispäivänä 12. 8. 1923’, *Suomen Sotilas* 36/1923, p. 526.

⁵⁷ Toivo Juntto, ‘Vapaussankarien muisto’, *Suomen Sotilas* 37/1921, p. 570. Cf Nurmio, ‘Vapaussotamme 5-vuotismuistojen’ 1923: “The memories of the freedom fight are the most sacred memories our people have; they have to be cherished and left as our heritage to coming generations, who have to be taught their holy obligation to likewise sacrifice all their strength for preserving Finland’s independence and freedom.”

⁵⁸ Setä, ‘Vähän päiviä’, *Suomen Sotilas* 45–46/1931, p. 554.

world have done and always will do, we fight for the country and the people when it is in peril.⁵⁹

This standard was even sometimes given a name: ‘the spirit of the fathers’. A 1920 short story by Jäger Captain Kaarle Massinen told about an old man who gave a real scolding to the Red Guards confiscating his land during the Civil War. The old man called the guardsmen “sluggards” and stated that they never would have bothered to work those fields the way he had done. “The spirit of the fathers, the Finnish farmer who had always lived free from serfdom, had erupted like a volcano”, Massinen declared and suddenly turned to address the reader: “– Finland’s soldier, you, who labour in the barracks, sometimes at your rifle, sometimes over a book, does the spirit of the fathers live in you?”⁶⁰

Many of the stories about the forefathers’ valour and the spirit of the fathers also encouraged young men, assuring them that they did have what it took to be a warrior. The text quoted above, calling out to young men “we don’t want to be inferior to them”, actually continued by urging the reader to “let your best inner voice speak to you, let your natural, inherited instincts affect you”. Then, claims the author, you will “assuredly” find the courage and willingness to defend this country. The “spirit of the fathers” was thus portrayed as not only a model and example for present generations, but as somehow inherent in Finnish men. An anonymous “Jäger”, writing an editorial for *Suomen Sotilas* in 1935, claimed that the “spirit of the fathers” had aroused the “mighty White Army” in 1918 and restored order, safety, legality and freedom to the country. He described this spirit as both “solemn and binding” and a “firm and lasting heritage”, descending all the way from the battles of the Thirty-Years War and the Great Nordic War, indeed from the distant battles of “the age of sagas”. Yet this spirit, he explained, was not only a military spirit, but also the spirit of the peaceful work that had built the country. “That work has asked for fitness and skill, manliness and grandness just as much as defending the country.”⁶¹ – Again, we see the equation of military and civic virtues. The very same manly spirit that had made the forefathers such formidable warriors had allegedly also been their driving force as they cleared and built the land.

The success of Finnish athletes on international sports arenas during the 1920’s and 1930’s were used in *Suomen Sotilas* in the same way as the feats

⁵⁹ Heikki Halonen, ‘Olenko valmis?’, *Suomen Sotilas* 21/1924, p. 393.

⁶⁰ K[aarle Arvo] Massinen, ‘Isäin henki’, *Suomen Sotilas* 14/1920, pp. 235–236.

⁶¹ Jääkäri, ‘Viel’ elää isäin henki’ 1935. Cf I[lmari] H[eikinheimo], ‘Sotilaan kirjasto’ [book review of Artturi Leinonen, ed., *Ilkan ja Poutun pojat. Etelä-Pohjalaisten Sota-Albumi* (Helsinki, 1918)] *Suomen Sotilas* 4/1919, p. 39. See also Armas Laitinen, ‘Mietteitäni Suomen ensimmäisistä armeijan painimestaruuskilpailuista’, *Suomen Sotilas* 30/1923, pp. 434–435.

of mythic forefathers; to convey a sense of a national community characterised by the physical and psychic qualities demonstrated by these sports heroes. Niilo Sigell wrote that the Finnish athletes who won several medals in the Olympic Games in Antwerp in 1920 were expressions of “the toughness, endurance, strength and vigour of our tribe” and “the force and power of character that has transformed the grim wildernesses of the north into abodes of human cultivation and endured hard times of war, hunger and pestilence”. In these athletes, Sigell found the same national character that had manifested itself in the heroes of the Thirty Years War or the Liberation War.⁶² A text about the Finnish achievements in the Olympics in 1924 pointed to the “healthy life in the countryside” where most Finns still resided and referred to the Finns as a people that had “toiled in woodlands and skied through wildernesses”.⁶³

Connecting the Finnish nature, landscape and climate with the national character, sports achievements and military virtues, these writings evidently aimed at infusing the readers with pride and confidence in the inherent strength of their people, implying the Finns could fend off a quantitatively superior enemy by virtue of their superior quality as soldiers.⁶⁴ Writer and historian Jalmari Finne even explained the extraordinary bravery of Finnish men in battle, throughout the centuries, as deriving from the tranquil life of a nation of farmers. The sedate life and taciturnity of the Finns, he explained, built up a storage of strength and energy waiting for a discharge. “An opportunity to fight has been like a relief. ... Battle is the place where a Finn feels all his inner strength blossoming, a moment of rejoice. ... Bravery, the highest and most beautiful expression of manliness, is in the Finn’s blood and only needs an opportunity [to emerge] and then it seems to astonish other [peoples].”⁶⁵

Gendered sameness across time and space

By challenging the reader, the texts about military history and valorous forefathers hint at the shadow of a doubt. There is a whisper of suspicion

⁶² Kapt. [Niilo] Sigell, ‘Urheilu, kansallistunto ja soturikunto’, *Suomen Sotilas* 38/1920, pp. 626–627.

⁶³ Maanpuolustaja, ‘Eräitä ajatuksia olympialaisvoittajista ja heidän saavutuksiensa merkityksestä kansallemme’, *Suomen Sotilas* 31–32/1924, pp. 594–595.

⁶⁴ On how the Finnish achievements in international athletics competition were used for nationbuilding and conveying messages of a masculine national character, see Mervi Tervo, ‘Nationalism, Sports and Gender in Finnish Sports Journalism in the Early Twentieth Century’, *Gender, Place and Culture* 8:4 (2001), pp. 357–373.

⁶⁵ Jalmari Finne, ‘Suomalaisen urhoollisuus’, *Suomen Sotilas* 2/1920, p. 18. Cf Aarne Sihvo, ‘Tahto voittoon’, *Suomen Sotilas* 1/1920, p. 2; A.V. Salo, ‘Oletko hyvä ampuja?’, *Suomen Sotilas* 3–4/1932, p. 31; Jääkäri, ‘Voiton usko’, *Suomen Sotilas* 12/1935, p. 326.

between the lines asking whether manliness has decayed, whether Finnish men have softened and become too comfortable and spoilt to fight. This is an old rhetorical device. Historian of masculinity Jonas Liliequist has noted how notions of manliness being something perishable and corruptible are constantly recurrent throughout history in the shape of warning cries against emasculated morals and demands for the return to more vigorous and manly ways. Thus they are not expressions of masculinity being in “crisis” in certain periods, concludes Liliequist, but inherent traits to patriarchal constructions of masculinity. They are “a kind of rhetoric aimed at mobilising and strengthening established or competing claims for power and prestige”. Since norms for masculinity seem to be easier to articulate in contrast to something unmanly than in the shape of positive ideals, Liliequist suggests that masculinity has a tendency to always present itself as threatened.⁶⁶

In the case of interwar Finnish military propaganda, however, this rhetorical device was used with a “double twist”. It was utilised to cast the authors and editors as representatives of a generation that had already proven itself in the “Liberation War” and now called out as the spokesmen of a community of real Finnish men spanning the centuries. Nevertheless, the doubt about today’s manliness itself was usually invoked in order that it could be triumphantly overthrown. Young men had to prove their manhood, but *Suomen Sotilas* radiated a stirring conviction that they certainly could and would pass that test, since they were *Finnish* men.

When historian Einar Juvelius introduced a new series of articles on Finnish history in 1920, he expressed his hope that the commencing series would encourage young soldiers to acquaint themselves with their forefathers’ “unwavering readiness and irrepressible faith in the future – the same readiness and faith that the Fatherland now awaits from its every son.”⁶⁷ The little word “same” here indicates a notion of a fundamental sameness among the manly defenders of Finland; some core manliness shared by all Finnish men in arms across time and space. We have already seen the how the “spirit of the fathers”, “awakening” in 1918, was declared to be the *same* spirit that motivated forefathers in ages long past. Our military service is like children’s play compared to what the Jägers had to endure, a conscripted probationary officer wrote in a letter to the magazine in 1931, “– although both are motivated by the same purpose, the same feeling, the same trend of ideas, the same call.”⁶⁸ This notion of masculine *sameness* conveyed a message that the Finnish conscript has it in him. If Finnish men

⁶⁶ Liliequist, ‘Ära, dygd och manlighet’ 2009, p. 121.

⁶⁷ Einar Juvelius, ‘Suomen Sotilas!’, *Suomen Sotilas* 21/1920, p. 362. Cf ‘Uusille sotamiehille’ [editorial], *Suomen Sotilas* 22–23/1933, p. 275.

⁶⁸ Y.K., ‘Sotamiehen tunne’, *Suomen Sotilas* 31–32/1931, pp. 408–09.

throughout the centuries and as recently as in 1918 demonstrated this hardy, valorous and unyielding manliness that is part of the male national character, then why should the present young generation be any different?

4.4 Self-restraint and the moral dangers of military life

Less than a year and a half had passed since the end of his campaigns as a Jäger, when second lieutenant and theology graduate Hannes Anttila published an article in *Suomen Sotilas* in the early autumn of 1919. The text, entitled “The enemy lurking in the dark”, opened with an eerie story about a soldier volunteering for night reconnaissance into enemy territory. It is his first patrol service, and as the soldiers move into the dark night, the protagonist is struck by terror. After a short struggle with himself, he manages to overcome his fear.

... I dare not go back now. I am a soldier, a Finnish soldier. Come ravage, come death! Forward I will go, until the mission is accomplished! (...) And you went. And you returned, returned as a man in the eyes of your relatives and your fatherland. You did not shun the danger, even if it terrified you. You fulfilled your duty, even if it felt heavy. And that is why you did a man’s work.

At this point, Anttila’s text makes a sudden jump to an evening leave in a garrison town in peacetime. There too, we are told, an enemy is lurking in the dark: “the sin of immorality” and its consequences, venereal disease. Even if the incautious soldier would be lucky enough to not catch an infection, he will certainly “desecrate his soul” if he does not turn back in time. If you commit this sin, Anttila asks the reader, can you then look your mother, your sister, your wife or your fiancée in the eye with the same honesty as before? Anttila’s final appeal is written in the second person singular, addressing the reader like a priest in the pulpit addresses his congregation:

Are you, my reader, really so weak that you cannot restrain your own lusts? ... Should you one day become the father of a family? Think what miserable creatures your children will be if you splurge the holy creative powers of your youth in the whirls of licentiousness ... Mother Finland needs the stout arms of her every son to help her at this moment. Are you, my reader, a support and security to your fatherland or are you a burden and dead encumbrance? If you stray the city streets at nightfall with filthy thoughts in your mind, turn back,

because that turning back is no shame to you but an honour! For he who conquers himself has won the greatest victory.⁶⁹

“The enemy lurking in the dark” wove together a certain moral behaviour with a number of different masculine positions: the courageous warrior, the son, the brother, the husband, the father and the patriotic citizen. An analogy was made between the manly warrior overcoming his fear before battle and the young man struggling to overcome his carnal desires. Honour and manliness demanded facing the two kinds of danger with equal courage, overcoming one’s instincts and emotions through willpower and a sense of duty.

Hannes Anttila and other “moralist” writers in *Suomen Sotilas* used a rhetorical technique associating unwanted behaviour with weakness and unmanliness, and the wished-for behaviour in conscripts with the courageous warrior.⁷⁰ They evidently did not think it would make a sufficient impression on the conscripts to tell them to behave in a certain manner because it was the “Christian” or “moral” thing to do. Instead, they tried to draw on the readers’ notions of *manliness*. They obviously thought that the threat of being labelled as weak and *unmanly* in the eyes of their comrades would have a stronger effect on the rakes and lechers among the soldiers than just being branded as debauched. Perhaps they thought that “well-behaved” conscripts were best helped in the rough military environment if they were told that doing the morally right thing was also true manliness.

Such explicitly moralising texts, often but not always written by military priests, formed a significant subspecies among the rich variety of texts in *Suomen Sotilas*, especially during its first half-decade. Although these writings seldom referred explicitly to Christianity and religious decrees, they can nevertheless be associated with the trend of ‘muscular Christianity’ that arose towards the end of the nineteenth century in countries with an important cultural influence on Finland, such as England, Germany and Sweden. Muscular Christianity associated Christian morality with strength and other stereotypical manly characteristics. This kind of rhetoric was also used by for example moral reformists in Finland opposing prostitution around the turn of the nineteenth century.⁷¹

⁶⁹ Hannes Anttila, ‘Pimeässä vaaniva vihollinen’, *Suomen Sotilas* 40/1919, pp. 564–565.

⁷⁰ Cf e.g. Verner Louhivuori, ‘Ryhtiä’, *Suomen Sotilas* 14–15/1919, p. 175. The author and journalist Veikko Korhonen (1888–1942) published several fictional short stories in the same vein; cf Veikko Korhonen, ‘Kotiinpaluu’, *Suomen Sotilas* 6/1923, p. 91; idem, ‘Kevät ja kasarmi’, *Suomen Sotilas* 13/1923, pp. 191–192; idem, ‘Aiheeton syy’, *Suomen Sotilas* 32/1923.

⁷¹ Pirjo Markkola, ‘Mannen som moralreformist. Manligheten och prostitutionskontrollen i Finland vid sekelskiftet 1900’, in Anna Jansdotter & Yvonne Svartström, eds., *Sedligt, renligt, lagligt. Prostitution i Norden 1880–1940* (Göteborg & Stockholm, 2007), pp. 39–70, at pp. 45–49. Cf John

As we have seen, there were widespread moral concerns about the new military system in Finland, even in circles far removed from socialist anti-militarism. Drinking and sexual contacts with women in the garrison towns, behaviours which from a strictly military point of view were health hazards rather than anything else, were more profoundly worrying from a religious perspective, as were the rude language and indecent marching songs favoured not only by the rank-and-file but many officers as well. In Great Britain, Germany and Sweden, Christian revivalists founded recreation centres for soldiers in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, an era of expanding mass armies and international armaments race, not least out of concern over the sinfulness spreading in the military training centres.⁷² The “old” Finnish Army’s magazine for soldiers in the Russian era, the bilingual *Lukemisia Suomen Sotamiehille/Läsning för den Finske Soldaten* (Readings for the Finnish Soldier, 1888–1902) contained writings depicting the barracks of the Finnish conscripted troops as places where innocent young men from the countryside were introduced to all kinds of vices.⁷³ These moral concerns resurfaced when conscription was reintroduced in 1918–1919. For example, the dean of the military priests received a letter in 1921 from the vicar of a rural congregation where worried parents had held a meeting to discuss the immoral influence of army life on their boys. Swearing, drinking, prostitutes roaming the garrison areas, and “the great dangers of immorality and the corruption of morals in bodily and spiritual respect” were mentioned in the letter.⁷⁴

The military priests, responsible for both the moral and civic education of the conscripts, shared the popular view of military life as potentially debauching young men. According to Regiment Pastor Verner Louhivuori, “that roughness which is characteristic to men” was multiplied in military life due to the absence of softening “counter-forces”. The military environment, he wrote, could become an ordeal for those who did not want to be brutalised.⁷⁵ Jäger officer and theology student Kalervo Groundstroem

Springhall, ‘Building Character in the British Boy. The attempt to extend Christian manliness to working-class adolescents, 1880–1914’, in Mangan & Walvin, eds., *Manliness and Morality* 1987, pp. 52–74; Olaf Blaschke, ‘Fältmarskalk Jesus Kristus. Religiös remaskulinisering i Tyskland’, in Yvonne Maria Werner, ed., *Kristen manlighet. Ideal och verklighet 1830–1940* (Lund, 2008), pp. 23–50.

⁷² Elin Malmer, ‘Guds ord till lägerplatsen. Missionsrörelsen och soldathemmen’ in Werner, ed., *Kristen manlighet* 2008, pp. 191–212.

⁷³ Anders Ahlbäck, ‘Där pojkar blir män. Manlighetskonstruktion i finländska tidskrifter för värnpliktiga 1890–1940’, *Historisk Tidskrift för Finland* 89:2 (2004), pp. 135–165; idem, ‘En riktig karl är behärskad, ren i själen och ädel till lynnet.’ Manlighet och moral i tidskrifter för finska värnpliktiga, 1888–1939’, *Läbde* 1/2005, pp. 133–146.

⁷⁴ V.A. Markkula to A. Melin 26.5.1921. Finnish National Archive, Sörnäinen Branch, Sotarovastin arkisto, saapuneita yksityisiä kirjeitä 1920–1938.

⁷⁵ Verner Louhivuori, ‘Rekrytint kirjeleviä kokemuksia’, *Suomen Sotilas* 22/1919, pp. 310–311.

warned for the “dangers of barracks life” in 1919. The military comradeship, which he himself in the previous article had celebrated as “a good educator”, could also be a breeding ground of “all things base and infamous”, Groundstroem wrote, hinting at soldiers’ contacts with prostitutes. The recruit, new to these surroundings, was especially susceptible to bad influences.⁷⁶

These moralists evidently espoused the contemporary middle-class notion that the characteristics of the sexes were complementary – “counterforces” – to each other. In Finnish nineteenth century bourgeois notions of gender, virtue and moral purity was seen as more characteristic of women than men. It was a woman’s task as mother and wife to infuse morality in her sons, reinforce it in her husband and mitigate men’s hard, rational and unemotional values. Becoming a father was seen as essential for restraining man’s inherent selfishness.⁷⁷ According to this view on the relationship between manhood and womanhood, the young men in the barracks, still unbridled by the responsibilities of fatherhood, lived in a moral danger-zone.

The year spent in all-male company during the military service was supposed to make men out of boys and teach them to function as part of a group. Yet even in the army’s own magazine, the single-sex environment was at the same time seen as potentially detrimental to young men’s moral and ultimately their physical health – especially in a context where country boys for the first time resided in a larger city, with all its temptations.⁷⁸ Within the moralist discourse, the celebrated military comradeship could suddenly be seen in terms of a worrying tendency of young men to go with the crowd – a moral weakness that was contrasted to the lonely but manly champions of righteousness among the soldiers.

⁷⁶ Kalervo Groundstroem, ‘Vaaroja kasarmielämässä. Uusille tulokkaille omistettu’, *Suomen Sotilas* 20/1919, p. 276. Cf Hannes Anttila, ‘Urhoollinen sotilas’, *Suomen Sotilas* 29/1920, pp. 490–491; Lauri Rikala, ‘Hyvää yleishenkeä sotilaat!’, *Suomen Sotilas* 27/1919, p. 378; Heikki, ‘Kotiajatuksia kasarmissa’ 1920; Vanha isäsi, ‘Isän kirje kasarmissa olevalle pojalleen’, *Suomen Sotilas* 14/1921, p. 218; Isäsi, ‘Kirje sotilaspojalleni’, *Suomen Sotilas* 42–43/1923; Bertel Törnwall, ‘Virran mukanako vaiko vasten virtaa?’, *Suomen Sotilas* 20–21/1929, pp. 376–377 and 24–25/1929, pp. 430–431. The same message can also be found in the 1919 committee report on the need for civic education in the army; see *Henkisen hoidon järjestämiseksi sotaväessä asetetun komitean mietintö* 1919, p. 3–4.

⁷⁷ Häggman, *Perheen vuosisata* 1994, pp. 173–194; Räisänen, *Onnellisen avioliiton ehdot* 1995, pp. 102–108; Jalava, ‘Kansakunnan miestä muokkaamassa’ 2006.

⁷⁸ On the moral dubiousness of city life, see e.g. Bertel Törnwall, ‘Virran mukanako vaiko vasten virtaa?’, *Suomen Sotilas* 20–21/1929, pp. 376–377; Korhonen, ‘Kotiinpaluu’ 1923; idem, ‘Kevät ja kasarmi’ 1923; Matti Selanen, ‘Vapaa-aikojen vietosta’, *Suomen Sotilas* 3/1936, pp. 71–72.

Battling over the meanings of manliness

From the concerned moralist writings in *Suomen Sotilas* one can sense that priests and other educators understood the battle against immorality in the barracks as a battle over the meanings of manliness. Mirrored and distorted through the disapproval of the moralists, the outlines of a popular military culture very different from the lofty ideals of middle-class rhetoric are discernable; a “bachelor masculinity” where rough language, equivocal jokes and songs, drinking and womanising could be markers of masculine toughness and virility among the soldiers, not the signs of weakness of character. In the words of a “Corporal”, published in 1939,

There is still a preposterous notion of real manliness among wide circles among our people. Thousands upon thousands of young men delude themselves and their surroundings into believing that the characteristics of a manly man is coarse language, alcohol consumption and morally loose living. Supporters of such an “ideal of manliness” can also be found among those fulfilling their military service. ... A real man is one who is temperate in his thoughts, words and living, pure and noble, and courageously fights off everything that might harm him in on way or another.

Comrade soldiers! Do not follow false ideals of manliness[!]⁷⁹

In this way, military priests and other military educators with a “moralist” stance tried to wrest the authority of definition for themselves. Through their writings and teachings, they presented youngsters with another model for manliness, which they depicted as mature, adult and based on carefully thought-out moral principles. They contrasted this responsible manliness to the dissolute man’s self-centred hedonism. The pseudonym “Old Soldier” claimed that many of the boys who did their military service had not yet become steady and “never considered what is right and what is wrong”. They had only thoughtlessly gone through life without caring about the consequences of their actions. For this reason, he warned young men to choose their friends in the army with great care.⁸⁰ A text published in 1922 warned inexperienced and innocent recruits against the dangers of bad company in the barracks, depicting the possible consequences in terms of venereal disease and lifelong sickness:

Would it not after all have been much better [for that soldier] to stay morally pure as he used to be, in spite of his comrades scorning him as a “mother’s boy”? Many times he would have had to hear others say

⁷⁹ Korpraali, ‘Oikeasta miehekkyydestä’, *Suomen Sotilas* 1–2/1939, p. 16. Cf Vanhempi Veli, ‘Kaksi tahrapiikkua’, *Suomen Sotilas* 7/1936, p. 179; Matti Selanen, ‘Oikeita miehiä tarvitaan!’, *Suomen Sotilas* 1/1937, p. 12.

⁸⁰ Vanha Sotilas, ‘Toverielämä sotaväessä’, *Suomen Sotilas* 31/1923, pp. 446–447.

that he did not dare do anything manlike. Yet let the others say what they want, because if anything is manly it is exactly the ability to restrain oneself and draw back from the road of evil.⁸¹

The moralists thus thought that there were not only ideals of manliness, but also labels of unmanliness, sanctioning unwanted behaviour among the soldiers, competing with their own ones. They tried to mobilise their readers for their own moral agenda and make them set a good example for their comrades.⁸²

In order to fulfil his moral obligations as a son, brother, husband, citizen and soldier, a man had to win control over himself, his inner fears and lusts, as well as his natural laziness and his inclination to follow to crowd. As explained by a “former soldier boy” in 1929, self-restraint was even the prerequisite for a man being truly free. In an open letter to a soldier doing his military service, this author stated that conscripts should not complain about losing their freedom. True freedom is not what you think, he told the receiver. It is not the liberty to “reel about half-drunk in the village green”. Quoting the nineteenth century Hegelian philosopher and ideologue of Finnish nationalism Johan Vilhelm Snellman (1806–1881), he explained that freedom is not unruliness but submitting to discipline and existing laws. “Your notion of freedom is precisely unruliness, to be at the command of the whims, lusts and desires of the moment. They command you even now and do not let your mind in peace until they are allowed to riot freely. You are thus not free, but their slave.” He encouraged the conscript to try and always control his instincts, his will and his actions, always preserving his presence of mind. Military training would foster this kind of self-control, he stated, whether the conscript wanted it or not.⁸³

Willpower, struggling with oneself and even self-denial were in *Suomen Sotilas* cast as akin to the warrior’s courage in combat through metaphors of fighting and battle. “Who conquers a bear is a man, but only he is a man’s man who conquers himself”.⁸⁴ “A man without courage is no man. A man is called to fight. He must fight against violence and injustice, against the

⁸¹ Funcus, ‘Toverielämän varjopuolia kasarmissa. Asevelvollisuutensa suorittaneen mietteitä’, *Suomen Sotilas* 14/1922, p. 218. Cf Vanha siviilimies, ‘Taistelu pahoja tapoja vastaan toveripiirissä’, *Suomen Sotilas* 34/1923, p. 494.

⁸² Vanha siviilimies, ‘Taistelu pahoja tapoja vastaan’ 1923; Tykkimies, ‘Kalliit hetket’ 1921; Lyytinen, ‘Kotiutettaville sotilaille’ 1922; T., ‘Jokainen kansalainen on kasvattaja!’, *Suomen Sotilas* 12–13/1937, p. 306.

⁸³ Entinen sotapoika, ‘Alokas X:lle’, *Suomen Sotilas*, 19/1929, p. 350. The very same notion of sensuality being antithetical to spiritual freedom occurs in ‘Luonteenkasvatuksen erikoistehtävistä’, *Suomen Sotilas* 13–14/1935, pp. 335–337. On the soldier fulfilling his duty and submitting to the common will, see Arvo Pohjannoro, ‘Sotilaan “vapaudesta”’, *Suomen Sotilas* 2–3/1924, p. 20.

⁸⁴ Tykkimies, ‘Kalliit hetket’ 1921.

forces of nature, against open and sneaking dangers.”⁸⁵ “To triumph over oneself is not among the easiest things in the world. There have been world conquerors who have subdued many peoples and countries, but who have been defeated in the struggle against their own lusts.”⁸⁶ There were certainly both good and evil present among the soldiers, wrote an “Old Soldier” in 1923, but the education of a citizen-to-be cannot be only protective. “His education should also teach him to *conquer himself and conquer the dangers and difficulties of life.*” (...) The military service is *preparing for battle, preparing for victory. He who attacks will win*, this is true in many military situations and it is also true here.”⁸⁷

The virtue of self-restraint

Towards the early 1930’s, the number of explicitly moralising writings diminished in *Suomen Sotilas*. Such texts were usually no longer published as editorials, but appeared in less prominent sections of the magazine, such as the Letters to the Editor pages. This could be an indication of sentiments calming down, as the conscript army slowly became established. Alternately, it could indicate a rhetoric shift where the older and somewhat condescending moral exhortations came to be understood as old-fashioned or counterproductive. What did *not* change in the “moral” agenda of *Suomen Sotilas* throughout the period, however, was the focus on the allegedly very manly virtue of self-restraint.⁸⁸

The emphasis on self-control is familiar from nineteenth century western bourgeois ideologies of manliness.⁸⁹ In Swedish nineteenth century self-improvement books for bourgeois youngsters and autobiographies by old bourgeois men, studied by gender historian David Tjeder, building *a strong character* was offered as the proper road towards manliness and the only way for a young man to avoid the pitfalls of his passions. Character, a vague term equivalent to moral principles in general, was in this literature seen as a hidden potentiality in all men; at the same time the true self of the individual and the effect of hard, enduring work. The “moralists” studied by Tjeder claimed that young men must withstand the passions and

⁸⁵ ‘Luonteenkasvatuksen erikoistehtävistä’ 1935.

⁸⁶ V.A. Heikinheimo, ‘Kuka on sankari?’ *Suomen Sotilas* 3/1920, pp. 34–35.

⁸⁷ Vanha Sotilas, ‘Toverielämä sotaväessä’ 1923.

⁸⁸ [Aarne] Sihvo, ‘Kunnia’, *Suomen Sotilas* 9/1920, p. 146; Yrjö Kivimies, ‘Pelkuri’, *Suomen Sotilas* 15/1924, pp. 276–278; Parikka, ‘Isänmaan puolesta’ 1930; Sotilaskasvattaja, ‘Humalaiset sotilaat junissa’, *Suomen Sotilas* 7/1936, p. 179; ‘Ole tyyni, rohkea ja peloton!’ [editorial], *Suomen Sotilas* 16–18/1939, p. 315.

⁸⁹ Bonde, *Mandighed og sport* 1991, pp. 21–39; Mosse, *Image of Man* 1996; Bederman, *Manliness and Civilization* 1995, pp. 11–12.

temptations of youth and build a strong character in order to become successful.⁹⁰

In the moral teachings of *Suomen Sotilas*, however, character, or the idea of having or striving for a permanent strength of will and morals, was not a central concept.⁹¹ Instead, morality and self-restraint were mostly discussed in terms of a continuous fight and struggle, a battle that a man must ceaselessly wage against immorality, both in the society around him and within himself. There does not seem to be a notion of this struggle having a terminus in a strong character achieved once and for all. The moral struggle is rather portrayed as a life-long condition. A useful citizen had to live his whole life fighting against “viciousness, drunkenness and the bestiality hidden in human nature”; without continuous moral struggle “the core of national life” would eventually be corrupted by immorality.⁹²

The reason for this difference between the moralist writings in *Suomen Sotilas* and David Tjeder’s material might be the stronger connection in *Suomen Sotilas* to Christian theology. If *Suomen Sotilas* is compared with its nineteenth century predecessor, *Lukemisia Suomen Sotamiehille*, one can certainly see that Christian ideals such as submissiveness, humility and repentance, predominant in the older magazine, are played down. In the interwar period, moral virtue is recast in terms of will-power and self-restraint, reflecting an ideal soldier who is also an enfranchised citizen and thus more “adult” and autonomous in comparison to the ideal humble imperial subject of the nineteenth century. God and religion as the foundations of moral behaviour in the nineteenth century magazine are largely replaced with appeals to the readers’ patriotism in the 1920’s and 1930’s.

Nevertheless, through the prominence of military priests among the magazine’s collaborators, Christian religion still runs like a thin but ever-present thread through *Suomen Sotilas*. Religion intertwines with patriotism as the basis of the Finnish citizen-soldier’s morality and virtue. It is a defining difference between the righteous Finnish nation-in-arms and its adversary, the godless Bolsheviks.⁹³ This strong presence of Christian ideals

⁹⁰ Tjeder, *Power of Character* 2003, pp. 56–63; cf Bonde, *Mandighed og sport* 1991, pp. 21–23.

⁹¹ The concept of character occurs in a few writings where it is then seen as the goal of the education and self-education of young men, a mental quality not inborn but created by the individual himself by the power of his own will or by education or life experience. See T. Attila, ‘Luonteen tunnusmerkkejä’, *Suomen Sotilas*, 29–30/1924, p. 560; ‘Mikä on päämäärämme?’ [editorial], *Suomen Sotilas* 7/1935, p. 171; ‘Luonteenkasvatuksen erikoistehtävistä’, *Suomen Sotilas* 13–14/1935, pp. 335–337; Isä, ‘Luonteen karkaisu’ 1939.

⁹² E. Kantelo, ‘Taistelu on elämää’, *Suomen Sotilas* 46/1923, p. 685.

⁹³ L.P. Tapaninen, ‘Sotilaan kristillisyyys’, *Suomen Sotilas* 44–45/1919, pp. 624–625; V.A. Heikinheimo, ‘Kuka on sankari?’, *Suomen Sotilas* 3/1920, pp. 34–35; J. Kunila, ‘Voittojen tie’ 1/1921, p. 2; E.G. Gulin, ‘Sankari-Ihanne. Uuden vuoden alkaessa’, *Suomen Sotilas* 1/1925, pp. 2–3; J. K. Kulomaa, ‘Korven

and influences is also one reason why the ideal images of Finnish soldiers in *Suomen Sotilas* almost never become aggressively virile, but retain a “softness” almost surprising for a military magazine from the heydays of Finnish nationalism. Throughout the period the images of soldiering in *Suomen Sotilas* and its ideology of military manliness retain an aura of moral purity and noble-mindedness that certainly served to camouflage the ugly realities of militarisation, military life and modern warfare, but still were strikingly different from contemporary fascist masculinities.⁹⁴

4.5 *The manly military nation and its others*

Military educators writing in *Suomen Sotilas* tried to construct ideals of military manliness centred on a sense of duty, a spirit of sacrifice, and self-restraint. An important element in all these constructions, hidden in expressions such as “every decent man” or “like our fathers before us”, was an imagined sameness and community among all Finnish men who did “what a man had to do” and valorously defended their country. To the extent that this brotherhood-in-arms made out a special category of people, united around and through a military manliness, the citizen-soldiers’ sameness among each other had to be constituted through a logic of difference from other categories. Firstly, a great part of the Finnish nation was deemed incapable of bearing arms and therefore in need of the soldiers’ protection: women, the old and the young. Secondly, there were those who threatened the Finnish nation from the outside, namely the Russians and Bolsheviks. Thirdly, a heterogeneous group of Finnish men was deemed capable of bearing arms, yet for varying reasons failing to fulfil this duty and therefore threatening the nation from the inside.

Fathers, mothers, women

The relationship between the conscript and those he was set to protect was usually depicted in terms of the obligations of a good son towards his parents, sisters and younger siblings, not in terms of a father and husband protecting the members of his household. This was perhaps natural, as the intended readership, the conscripts, were only 20–22 years old. However, it

kosto’, *Suomen Sotilas* 28–29/1932, pp. 325–326; ‘Barbaarinen teko’ [editorial], *Suomen Sotilas* 7/1935, p. 169.

⁹⁴ Cf e.g. Theweleit, *Männerphantasien* 1977–1978; Mosse, *Image of Man* 1996, pp. 155–180.

gives a particular flavour to the gendered relationship between the citizen-soldier and those it was his duty to protect and die for. In texts about the “fathers” and “forefathers” in *Suomen Sotilas* it is the mature man, master of his house and household, who goes to war. In texts directly addressing the readers as conscripts, however, they are spoken to as *sons* of either their physical parents or the abstract nation – “the Fatherland” or “Mother Finland” – who only pass over the threshold to real manhood by preparing to go to war. In relation to those incapable of bearing arms, the conscripted soldier does not fight and die to defend his property and his own patriarchal position, but to *serve* his family and his society. He is motivated but also bound by filial obedience, love and gratitude. He essentially sets out to defend a power structure that is not dominated by him and his comrades but by their fathers.

In those rather few instances where individual fathers appear in the magazine, they are often stern, rebuking or commanding figures, such as the “father” quoted above writing an open letter to his “discontented son” in military service, telling him he must develop a sense of duty to become a manly man.⁹⁵ This is a father figure in front of which the young conscripted man is supposed to be ashamed to show himself “soft”, complaining about treatment in the army of withdrawing from his civic duty.⁹⁶ The images of mothers, however, are more ambiguous. Mothers are always depicted as loving their sons immensely. Mostly, this love is depicted as good, selfless and beautiful. The iconic mother is a moral educator and the ideal soldier is bound to her by love, gratitude and filial duty. He wants to protect her and he wants her to be proud of him.⁹⁷ Drawing on this particular mother-son relationship, Finland as a nation is sometimes referred to as *Suomi-äiti*, Mother Finland, signalling that the relationship of the soldier to the nation should be that of a loving son to his mother.⁹⁸ In some other instances, however, mothers are criticised for spoiling their sons by being too pampering or too dominant. Being a “mother’s boy” was presented as shameful for a man, and a great deal of the blame was directed at the mother.⁹⁹ The border line was thus subtle and sometimes blurred between

⁹⁵ See p. 159 above. Cf V. Korhonen, ‘Isän kirjeitä sotapojalleen 1. Erilaisia asepalvelukseen lähtöjä’, *Suomen Sotilas* 8/1938, pp. 165–166.

⁹⁶ See also Juho Koskimaa, ‘Isä ja poika’, *Suomen Sotilas* 49–51/1921, pp. 21–23; Vanha Isäsi, ‘Isän kirje’ 1921; A.R., ‘Avoin kirje’ 1929; Isä, ‘Luonteen karkaisu’ 1939.

⁹⁷ V.A. Rantala, ‘Vanhan-Leenan pääsiäislahja’, *Suomen Sotilas* 44/1920, pp. 726–727; Veikko Korhonen, ‘Kodin raunioilla’, *Suomen Sotilas* 48–51/1923, pp. 752–754; Törnwall, ‘Virran mukanako’ 1929; Kivi, ‘Kaksi episoddia’ 1932.

⁹⁸ Anttila, ‘Pimeässä vaaniva vihollinen’ 1919; Halonen, ‘Olenko valmis?’ 1924; Lehtinen, ‘Invalidien parissa’ 1924; Veikko Kannas, ‘Kaikille sotapojille!’, *Suomen Sotilas* 47–48/1931, pp. 596–597.

⁹⁹ Vilho Reima, ‘Kodit ja sotapoikamme’, *Suomen Sotilas* 39/1919, p. 548; Tapauksia seurannut, ‘Oskari O:n sotilasura’, *Suomen Sotilas* 16/1921, pp. 265–266; Veikko Korhonen, ‘Reservikasarmista.

the good mother, who educated and motivated the manly citizen-soldier, and the bad mother, who detained her son in infancy, prevents him from stepping into manhood and thus reverses the relationship between protector and protected.

Women as heterosexual partners of soldiers rarely appear in *Suomen Sotilas*. The writers apparently did not expect the 21–22 year-old conscript to have a girlfriend, fiancée or wife waiting at home. Neither did they want him to think much about how soldiering related to his future relationships with women. In some fictional short stories a woman as a potential future lover and wife appears a motivating force for the soldier, spurring the hesitant man into battle,¹⁰⁰ giving him a reason to resist the vices of garrison towns,¹⁰¹ or punishing the coward or traitor by refusing him her love.¹⁰² In general, however, the absence of female characters in the magazine's pages is remarkable. It must have underlined the absence and exclusion of women from the everyday life of conscripted soldiers in the garrisons, and contributed to constructing women, heterosexual love and heterosocial domesticity as almost otherworldly in relation to the military world of men; belonging to another, distantly future age than the one the conscripts now lived in.

Other than as mothers, women mostly appear in *Suomen Sotilas* as *Lotta Svärd* volunteers, working hard, bravely and patriotically for the common task of national defence with women's chores: cooking, nursing and clothing the soldiers. These women were on the one hand active agents, but on the other hand confined to the feminine sphere of admiring and taking care of the male military heroes.¹⁰³ The image of female volunteers within the military system was certainly always positive; they were needed and useful and could be portrayed as courageous, even heroic in their own womanly manner.¹⁰⁴ Yet the gendered division of labour was immovable, and the portrayal of women in *Suomen Sotilas*, as mothers, lovers or Lottas all conveyed the implicit message that armed defence and the fighting itself was a male task. When there had been some letters to the editor of a Finnish newspaper in 1930 concerning conscription and military training for women,

Pari muistelmaa', *Suomen Sotilas* 10/1923, p. 157; J.J., 'Pojastako polvi huononee?', *Suomen Sotilas* 9–10/1929, pp. 169–170.

¹⁰⁰ J.P. Raivio, 'Taavetti', *Suomen Sotilas* 3/1919, pp. 25–29.

¹⁰¹ Korhonen, 'Kotiinpaluu' 1923.

¹⁰² Veikko Korhonen, 'Petturin kotiintulo', *Suomen Sotilas* 30/1923, pp. 431–432; H.J., 'Kavaltaja. Kertomus Suomen sodan päiviltä', *Suomen Sotilas* 1–2/1932, pp. 12–14.

¹⁰³ E. I., 'Naiset ja jääkäriiliike' 1919; Greta Krohn, 'Lotta Svärd', *Suomen Sotilas* 6/1921, p. 90; Katri Bergholm, 'Tervehdys invalideille', *Suomen Sotilas* 20–23/1923, p. 255–256; 'Helsingin sotilaskoti', *Suomen Sotilas* 44/1924, pp. 801–804.

¹⁰⁴ K. Eskolin, 'Muuan Lotta Svärd. Muistelmia vapaussodan ajoilta', *Suomen Sotilas* 5/1920.

the editors of *Suomen Sotilas* only observed that the idea had been refuted by “many valid arguments”. They chose to comment on it themselves in the form of a photograph showing female members of the Russian Red Army among their male comrades, all looking relaxed and cheerful. “A repulsive sight”, the editors curtly noted.¹⁰⁵

Russians as depersonalised others

The male others in *Suomen Sotilas* can be related to George L. Mosse’s term ‘countertypes’. Mosse’s instances of countertypes to German ideal masculinity in the nineteenth century were social outsiders such as Jews, Gypsies, vagrants, habitual criminals and the insane. In cultural representations, these countertypes were characterised by ugliness, restlessness, and lack of self-control.¹⁰⁶ David Tjeder, however, found a rather different kind of countertypes in nineteenth century self-help books for young men. There, unmanly men were not clearly demarcated social groups completely outside “normal” society, but gamblers and drunkards, ordinary men who had failed, made the wrong choices and therefore “fallen” into vice. These countertypes, Tjeder argues, had a different functionality from Mosse’s permanent outsiders. The young man could not find easy self-assurance in feeling superior to the countertype, but was threatened by the possibility that he might become one of them if he did not heed the moralists’ advice. “Because men could fall, any middle-class man ran the risk of becoming that Other.”¹⁰⁷

The countertypes in *Suomen Sotilas* best matching Mosse’s description are the images of Russians, especially Russian Bolsheviks. In those instances where Russians were described in more detail it is obvious that they serve as a foil to Finnishness. A portrayal of Russian revolutionary soldiers stationed in Finland in 1917–1918 illustrates this: “Those loitering good-for-nothings slouching around in their down at heel boots and their stinking, dirty and shabby uniforms called themselves *soldiers!* Well, it certainly was the time of *svaboda* [freedom] – who would then care about such trivial things as washing his face or mending his trousers! (...) The outer appearance of those Russian squaddies was an excellent image of the confusion of their mental life (...)”¹⁰⁸ These countertypes indirectly underline the importance of a Finnish soldier being clean and tidy, his outer appearance expressing a rational and virtuous

¹⁰⁵ ‘Naisten asevelvollisuus’, *Suomen Sotilas* 3/1930, p. 25.

¹⁰⁶ Mosse, *Image of Man* 1996, pp. 6, 56–76.

¹⁰⁷ Tjeder, *Power of Character* 2003, pp. 65–96, quote p. 94.

¹⁰⁸ Vääpeli, ‘Pieniä havaintoja. Sotilaittemme ulkonainen asu’, *Suomen Sotilas* 3/1919, p. 25.

mind; otherwise, *he is no true Finnish man*. Bolsheviks were portrayed as lazy and thievish people who shunned work and preferred confiscating goods from good thrifty people – marking the importance of honesty and industry in Finnish national character.¹⁰⁹

Two longer texts on the national character of the Russian people in 1932 explained that due to centuries of oppression by the Orthodox Church and the tsars, and in the absence of both individual freedom and religious and moral education, the Russians had developed into purely emotional beings, governed by impulses and temporary moods. A Russian could therefore anytime contradict his own actions. He was unreliable, deceitful, completely unconcerned about lying and thieving, and lacked a sense of justice. Because he was a fatalist and did not think he could influence his own destiny or wellbeing, he lacked diligence and a sense of responsibility. He preferred talking to acting. He did not care about punctuality or efficiency. He treated a woman more like beast of draught than as his wife. As soldiers, Russians were intrepid but mentally slow, lacking in independence and perseverance. Finally, the author pointed to the eradication of the educated classes and the prohibition against religious education as the main obstacles for societal progress in Russia; “Without religion nothing lasting can be achieved!”¹¹⁰

A Finnish soldier, one can derive from this description of the enemy, should be rational and always preserve his *sang-froid*; be principled and honest, treat women with respect, work hard and be the architect of his own fortune. He should also appreciate his individual freedom as well as the importance of Lutheran religious education and the leadership of the educated classes for Finland’s progress and prosperity. Due to the Russian’s weaknesses as soldiers, the Finnish Army could be victorious if its soldiers were quick-minded, self-propelled and persistent.

On the whole, however, Russians were seldom described as individuals or as a people with certain characteristics. Russians in general and Russian Bolsheviks in particular were mostly referred to as an almost dehumanised force of evil, chaos and destruction, a threat against everything valuable in Finnish society and everything specific for the Finnish nation.¹¹¹ Russia was

¹⁰⁹ Leo Rainio, 'Joulu Inkerissä', *Suomen Sotilas* 49–52/1931, pp 627–628.

¹¹⁰ E. V-s, 'Piirteitä Venäjän kansan luonteesta', *Suomen Sotilas* 28–29/1932, pp. 322, 344, 34–35/1932, pp. 367–368, 375. On Bolshevik atheism as the road to amorality, see also 'Barbaarinen teko' [editorial], *Suomen Sotilas* 7/1935, p. 169.

¹¹¹ For the image of Russia and Russians in printed publicity in Finland more generally, see Kari Immonen, *Ryssästä saa pubua... Neuvostoliitto suomalaisessa julkisuudessa ja kirjat julkisuuden muotona 1918–1939*, (Helsinki, 1987).

“Asianness” threatening to destroy the entire Western culture.¹¹² Russia meant “hunger for land, bestiality and deceit”¹¹³ and Bolshevism meant slavery as opposed to Finnish freedom.¹¹⁴ Russia was *the* Enemy, in an almost absolute sense.

Finnish men as countertypes: the dissolute and politically deluded

Those Finnish men who were considered outsiders to the community of manly soldiers, consisted of the rakes, the politically deluded, and the simpletons. Of these, only the rakes can easily be labelled as countertypes; their images in *Suomen Sotilas* correspond closely to the warning images of “fallen men” that David Tjeder has depicted. As we have seen, dissolute men were depicted as weak since they were incapable of self-restraint, e.g. in relation to alcohol, and lived “at the command of the whims, lusts and desires of the moment”. They were not free, but slaves under their passions and therefore they were unmanly men. As countertypes, they served to underline the *manliness* – not namby-pambyness, as the moralists feared that young men might think – in moral purity, abstinence and self-control. Both physically and morally weakened by their vices, the rakes as countertypes displayed how immorality destroyed the soldier’s fitness to fight and how true patriotism therefore demanded continence and clean living.

On the whole, however, these countertypes are not very prominent in *Suomen Sotilas*, and where they appear they are seldom described in any graphic detail. If there was any concern over Finnish men degenerating into unmanliness and effeminacy through over-civilisation, similar to concerns in the large industrial nations before the Great War,¹¹⁵ it does not show in the pages of *Suomen Sotilas*. Given the very low degree of urbanisation and industrialisation in interwar Finland it might not be surprising that military educators were not so much concerned over the enfeeblement of their conscripts as over the relative strength and vigour of young men with the “wrong” political outlook.

Finnish socialists and pacifists who resisted conscription or even worked at undermining the Finnish armed forces were depicted as more threatening to the manly military nation than the rakes and the temptations

¹¹² Nurmio, ‘Vapaussotamme 5-vuotismuistojen’ 1923; Hagberg, ‘Ennen ja nyt’ 1924; ‘Maailman militaristisin maa’, *Suomen Sotilas* 3/1936, p. 73; Prometheus, ‘Työläisten asema Neuvostoliitossa’, *Suomen Sotilas* 2/1937, pp. 37–38.

¹¹³ Rafael Ström, ‘Suomen Ceterum Censeo’, *Suomen Sotilas* 18/1924, p. 329.

¹¹⁴ ‘Turmiolliset opit ja asevelvolliset nuorukaisemme’, *Suomen Sotilas* 41/1924, p. 756.

¹¹⁵ See e.g. Mosse, *Image of Man* 1996, pp. 77–86; Bederman, *Manliness and Civilization* 1995, pp. 13–20; Kimmel, *Manhood in America* 2006, pp. 80–104; Bonde, *Mandighed og sport* 1991, pp. 27–30.

of vices. These politically “deluded” men had a kind of borderline status as both outsiders and insiders to the community of Finnish men. They were not usually depicted as unmanly, weak or cowardly men, although they deliberately refused or resisted the central manly duty of fighting for the nation. They differed from the countertypes Mosse analysed – images of Jews, vagrants, and lunatics – in that they presented a real and tangible political opposition and challenge to the political establishment and military system. They certainly were contrasted to “proper”, patriotic men in *Suomen Sotilas*. However, military educators could not just comfortably single them out social outcasts, contrapose them to ideal military manliness, and be assured of the readers’ sympathy.

Socialists, according to the magazine, failed to put the fatherland and the nation above all else, and instead promoted either their selfish class-interest and party ambitions¹¹⁶ or the “fantasy of internationalism, so manifestly indicating [mental] morbidity”.¹¹⁷ In 1924, an editorial warned for the dangers of socialist teachings and the “irresponsible” work of communist “moles” and infiltrators in the armed forces, “agents of the Russians selected and bought among the most morally spineless elements”, trying to incite conscripts into treason to their country. Communists were people who wanted to “deprive us of our freedom and put Russian slavery in its stead, in order to ensure the wellbeing of a few traitors”.¹¹⁸ Understood as countertypes, socialists were used to emboss the difference between driving special interests and putting the common good of the whole nation above all else; between unscrupulous people allying themselves with hostile forces abroad, to achieve their own goals, and selfless people who understood that when the country was threatened from the outside, all internal strife must be set aside. This contrast associated patriotism with unselfishness, loyalty and solidarity.

Pacifists were the objects of several writings especially around the turn of the decade 1930. The attention given in the magazine to refuting pacifism was due, among other things, to two anti-militaristic books that attracted much attention in Finland around this time; Erik Maria Remarque's internationally acclaimed *Im Westen Nichts Neues* [All Quiet on the Western Front] (1929) and Pentti Haanpää's *Kenttä ja kasarmi* [Fields and Barracks]

¹¹⁶ Sihvonen, 'Puhe' 1923; 'Mitä edellyttää tunnuslauseemme' 1925; Eino Virkki, 'Suomen vapaussota: yleispiirteinen esitys', *Suomen Sotilas* 17–19/1933, pp. 223–226; 'Yhteiskunnan etu oman edun edelle!', *Suomen Sotilas* 6/1936, pp. 149–150.

¹¹⁷ 'Työläinen ja isänmaa' [editorial], *Suomen Sotilas* 2/1923, p. 23.

¹¹⁸ 'Turmiolliset opit ja asevelvolliset nuorukaisemme', *Suomen Sotilas* 41/1924, p. 756. Cf Reserviläinen, 'Kommunistiset "Työväen opintoyhdistykset" ja asevelvolliset', *Suomen Sotilas* 1930, pp. 143–144; Kannas, 'Kaikille sotapojille!' 1931; Katri Lampén, 'Sotapoikiemme vaaroja', *Suomen Sotilas* 11–12/1933, p. 146.

(1928). There was also the *cause célèbre* of Arndt Pekurinen, a Finnish unconditional conscientious objector who was imprisoned several times in 1929–1932.¹¹⁹

The editors of *Suomen Sotilas* underlined that they loved the peace just like the whole Finnish people did. Since the Finnish armed forces were purely defensive, the Finnish pacifists were barking up the wrong tree: the Bolsheviks were the ones threatening the peace, not the Finnish Army.¹²⁰ Jäger General Major Aarne Sihvo, then Commander of the Armed Forces, complained in the Christmas issue of *Suomen Sotilas* 1929 that any attempts at strengthening nationalism and patriotism were met by a “war-cry in the name of pacifism swinging the flags of international brotherhood”. Sihvo wondered whether the pacifists obstructed nationalism out of true internationalism, thoughtlessness or indifference, or if they intentionally wanted to weaken and cause disunion in the country.¹²¹

In association with the case of Arndt Pekurinen, the editors of *Suomen Sotilas* stated that they agreed completely with him in that war was cruel, brutal. It should be eradicated from the face of the earth since it caused such suffering. They claimed to have depicted all the afflictions of war in their magazine and warned against talking lightly about war. They expressed their sympathy towards all strivings for peace. However, “we cannot make such a stupid and ill-advised conclusion from this conviction as Pekurinen and his kindred spirits.” In the present international situation and with the Soviet Union agitating world revolution, “one must be stupid and blind at the same time to not understand, to one’s regret, that we constantly live in the midst of the dangers of war.” Pacifists were thus naive idealists, as opposed to the sober realism of those receiving military training. The editors claimed that “all of us” – a ‘we’ obviously encompassing the reader – despised killing, but that *we* could not “passively watch and helplessly wait for the final blow, like Pekurinen the day the oppressor attacks our country. *We, who love peace and despise war, will fight to our last drop of blood on the fateful day for our homes, parents, sisters, brothers, and our whole people and its freedom.*”¹²² There is an unmistakable hint that Pekurinen was no normal, decent man, as he

¹¹⁹ See Kivimäki, ‘Mies, armeija ja vastarinta’ 2004.

¹²⁰ Aarno Paulanne, ‘Ratkaiseva tekijä’, *Suomen Sotilas* 40/1929, p. 644; E. K-lo, ‘Tuuti lasta Tuonelahan –’, *Suomen Sotilas* 42–43/1929, p. 673; ‘Rauhanaate’, *Suomen Sotilas* 11–12/1933, p. 133. A text by Count Coudenhoeve-Kalergi, the initiator of the pan-european movement, reprinted in *Suomen Sotilas* in 1932 warned that “as the Western countries dream of eternal peace, bolshevism Bolshevism is preparing a religious war against Europe”. [Richard Nikolaus] Coudenhoeve-Kalergi, ‘Punainen painajainen uhkaa!’, *Suomen Sotilas* 3–4/1932, p. 40.

¹²¹ Aarne Sihvo, ‘Kansallistunnon herättäminen’, *Suomen Sotilas* 49–51/1929, p. 804–806.

¹²² Rauhanystävä, ‘Väärästä päästä. Pari sanaa A. Pekurisen esiintymisen johdosta’, *Suomen Sotilas* 1–2/1930, pp. 16–17 [emphasis in original]. Cf Yrjö J.E. Alanen, ‘Rauhanaate’, *Suomen Sotilas* 6/1936, p. 154; Verner Louhivuori, ‘Pasifismi’, *Suomen Sotilas* 3/1938, pp. 46–47.

passively let himself be butchered and everything that he should love and protect be destroyed.

Simpletons as ambiguous others

Possibly the most intriguing and ambiguous other to the manly military nation was, finally, the simpleton. Various descriptions of funny oafs arriving to do their military service, and of all their hardships as they tried to get through recruit training, was a popular theme of humorous short stories in *Suomen Sotilas*. Several of these made explicit reference to the poem 'Sven Dufva' by J. L. Runeberg, included in the *Tales of Ensign Stål* cycle (1848). Runeberg's Sven Dufva was a half-witted but good-natured and above all brave-hearted young soldier in the Finnish War of 1808–1809, who did everything the wrong way around. In a tight spot, he turned out to be the only one staying his ground to heroically fight off the Russians, defending a narrow bridge all by himself.¹²³ In *Suomen Sotilas*, the common denominator in this kind of stories was that the protagonist was kind and dutiful yet somehow considered an "impossible" soldier at arrival for military training. He was too stupid to learn close-order drill or saluting superiors correctly, physically clumsy or slow, made fun of by the other soldiers, and brought the training officers into despair. Yet at the end of these stories, the *Sven Dufva* character always turned out to be either unusually brave in battle or skilled at something particular such as skiing, sharpshooting, making shoes or taking care of horses.¹²⁴ The most obvious message in these stories would seem to be that the army has a use for every man (who is physically fit enough to pass the medical exam), no matter how simple or uneducated he is. Courage, obedience and good will compensate for insufficient intelligence or proficiency.

The Sven Dufva stories always end by the protagonist becoming an accepted member of the manly community. Sven Dufva represents an inferior manliness, yet in these particular narratives even his limited skills and virtues are acknowledged. As a soldier, he acquires a certain social recognition in the military system that he might not get elsewhere in society

¹²³ J.L. Runeberg, *Fänrik Ståls Sägner* [1848] (Helsingfors, 1960), pp. 56–63.

¹²⁴ Setä, 'Sven Tuuva', *Suomen Sotilas* 13/1919, p. 170; [Aarno] Karimo, 'Sven Dufva: Muistelma Karjalan rintamalta', *Suomen Sotilas* 16–17/1922, pp. 277–280; [Arvo] P[ohjan]noro, 'Meidän aikamme Sven Duva eli "Hattulan Vääpeli"', *Suomen Sotilas* 38/1923, pp. 566–567; V.A., 'Kuinka Kallesta tuli korpraali. Pieni pala elettyä elämää', *Suomen Sotilas* 13/1924, pp. 235–236; J.K. 'Kalle Kopfhoch', *Suomen Sotilas* 17/1924, pp. 913–915; 'Aapeli', *Suomen Sotilas* 1/1925, p. 16; Sota-Kalle, 'Sven Duuva', *Suomen Sotilas* 52/1928, p. 1103; Kapteeni Leo Rainio, 'Mukula', *Suomen Sotilas* 5–6/1930, pp. 83–84; Heinrich, 'Sotamies Kasperin Swartz ja hänen viulunsa', *Suomen Sotilas* 6/1935, pp. 163–164; Relatiivus, 'Sotamies Ollikaisen taisteluvälineet', *Suomen Sotilas* 6/1935, pp. 165–167.

– as long as he partakes to his best ability in the common duty of all men. His admission to the manly military community is, however, no matter of course. It is open to doubt until he demonstrates his valour or usefulness through some dramatic episode, such as refusing to abandon his watch in a burning building until his officer arrives to give the order; or getting the best score in the company in the first shooting exercises.

Yet the Sven Dufva character does not seem to have been intended mainly as a positive model for unintelligent readers to identify with. As the authors half-benevolently, half-condescendingly invite the reader to laugh along with them at the funny Sven Dufvas, they rather incite the “normal” readers to tolerate these characters and accept them as comrades. In a sense, Sven Dufva is a countertype to the “normal” conscript and manly young man, who is supposed to be smart, nimble and quick to learn, go well with the group and not stand out as odd and different. The popularity of the Sven Dufva character probably to some extent reflect the amusement with which Finnish officers from the educated classes sometimes regarded soldiers from “uncultured” rustic areas. In some cases, however, pretending to be a fool can have been a form of popular resistance against the social arrogance of these officers.¹²⁵ As a cultural image, however, the Sven Dufva character can also be seen as a projection of many men’s fear of becoming the laughing stock of other men in the homosocial military world. Laughing at the stories about Sven Dufva in *Suomen Sotilas* would then mainly be a laughter of manly relief: thank God I am not like that.

4.6 Conclusion: The invitation into military manliness

In many ways, the images of soldiering and the objects of identification offered to young men in *Suomen Sotilas* correspond to the “new” military pedagogical agenda outlined by the young nationalist officers who envisioned a “new” kind of self-disciplined soldier. This should be no wonder, as the people drafting that agenda were also important collaborators in the magazine. This particular military manliness, centred on a sense of duty, a spirit of sacrifice and self-restraint, was offered to the conscripts with a promise of reward. The dutiful national warrior would not only serve the nation as a useful citizen in both war and peace, but also enjoy ensured individual success and prestige in peacetime society.

¹²⁵ On upper class officers’ attitude of “social arrogance” towards lower class soldiers, see Sörensen, *Blänkande eländet* 1997, pp. 68–70.

This part of the “civic education” in *Suomen Sotilas* is remarkably similar to nineteenth-century Prussian military propaganda described by Ute Frevert. Prussian military authorities, Frevert writes, were intent on counteracting socialism among the conscripts and educating them into a particular manliness marked by military virtues such as physical fitness, courage, self-assurance, loyalty, obedience, comradeship, anti-individualism, discipline and belief in authorities. Prussian conscription was legitimised by claims that only military training brought youths into full manhood. Military service, it was said, prepared the soldier not only for war, but also for life as a civilian. The army claimed to be a “school of manhood” bringing forth patriotic “sons of the fatherland”, industrious and steady men, stern fathers who took their civic duties seriously and were prepared to sacrifice themselves for king and country.¹²⁶

It seems evident that German models inspired Finnish military educators with cultural and professional connections to Germany. However, Prussian military propagandists in the nineteenth century had to motivate conscripts to fight for a monarchy under which they had only limited political rights.¹²⁷ The Finnish military educationalists writing in *Suomen Sotilas* could in theory have taken full advantage of the fact that Finland was a democratic republic. However, it is striking how *Suomen Sotilas* practically never places military service in connection with universal suffrage or the democratic nature of the new Finnish state. Citizenship was usually referred to in terms of the individual’s duty to be a useful member of society, prepared to sacrifice himself for the larger whole, and not in terms of political rights and freedoms worth defending. This could possibly be attributed to textual models from the German empire, but it might also betray a certain lack of enthusiasm about parliamentary democracy among the magazine’s editors and contributors.

Nonetheless, the Finnish interwar military propaganda appears less authoritarian in spirit than its German predecessors as described by Frevert. Against the background of the insurgency and civil war of 1918, it is actually surprising that submission and discipline were not emphasised more in *Suomen Sotilas*. Its nineteenth century predecessor, the magazine for soldiers in the “old” Finnish conscript army, tended to cast the relationship between soldiers and officers in paternalist terms of love, trust and obedience, reminiscent of the relationship of plucky boy scouts to their senior leaders.¹²⁸

¹²⁶ Frevert, ‘Militär als “Schule der Männlichkeit”’ 1997, pp. 161–162; idem, *Kasernierte Nation* 2001, p. 238.

¹²⁷ See p. 10 above. Frevert, ‘Jakobinische Modell’ 1997, pp. 24–26; idem, *Kasernierte Nation* 2001, pp. 33–50.

¹²⁸ Ahlbäck, ‘Där pojkar blir män’ 2004, pp. 139–144.

In comparison, *Suomen Sotilas* has remarkably little to say about the relationship between soldier and officer. The magazine's articles centre on the image of an *autonomous* citizen-soldier, in the sense that this soldier must be morally self-disciplined, self-propelled and self-controlled. The humility and obedience emphasised in the nineteenth century soldiers' magazine give place to an emphasis on will-power and a sense of duty.

In spite of the many condescending and admonitory passages quoted above, the images of the citizen-soldier in *Suomen Sotilas* are actually more austere and adult compared to corresponding images before national independence.¹²⁹ This is in keeping with the pedagogic agenda of educating a "new" kind of self-propelled soldier. It might also, after all, reflect an awareness that the reader to be addressed no longer the humble and obedient subject of the Russian emperor but the free citizen of a democratic Finnish republic. The conscripts would soon be entitled to vote at age 24. Countering the widespread scepticism against the cadre army system, the authors seem to have been intent on displaying the citizen-soldier submitting to the army discipline out of his own free will and going to war for his own, his families and people's sake – not for his officers or political leaders.

In general, it is striking how *little* was written in the magazine about groups outside the imagined community of men in arms. Women and civilians certainly played an implicit role as one reason why men had to be soldiers, but they were not given much attention and were seldom mentioned. As a broad observation, the constructions of masculinity in *Suomen Sotilas* were remarkably homosocial. Soldiering and manliness were defined and depicted within a male military community. The focus was on the young men's development and maturing in the company and under the guidance of other men and with other men as their models. Not even the male Others, the countertypes of military manliness among Finnish men, were particularly salient. The magazine was more intent on displaying positive instances of manliness than on using the threat of countertypes to make the readers step in line.

Nevertheless, rhetoric explicitly drawing on manliness seems to have been most forcefully used in contexts where military educators sensed the strongest challenges against their views. It was forcefully used to justify military training in a cadre army in the early 1920's, when parties of the left and centre called into question the whole justification of such a training. In the 1930's, however, explicit talk about manliness was rather to be found in the context of the struggle against "false ideals of manliness" among the

¹²⁹ Ahlbäck, 'Där pojkar blir män' 2004, pp. 162–163.

young men in the barracks. The rhetoric of manliness was the heavy artillery in these educationalists' arsenal, the irrefutable argument *non plus ultra* that was used when other means proved insufficient. Whether rake, socialist or pacifist – what young man would be indifferent to being labelled *unmanly*? Conversely, the image of the valorous citizen-soldier protecting his country was an image that the military educators thought every man would like to identify with, no matter which political opinions he held. They thus hoped soldiering would work as a cement holding men and through them society together, coating the fissures and conflict lines in the social fabric.

Joshua A. Sanborn has interpreted universal conscription as one of the most comprehensive and important modern forms of a process where individuals through a “call” from the sovereign through the medium of ideology become incorporated into political communities and become subjects with identities, duties and loyalties. “Ideology is the covenant between sovereign and subjects regarding the way that power will be organised, the ways that reality will be publicly understood, the way that events will become imbued with meaning, and the way that individuals will be able to find their place in the world”, writes Sanborn, drawing on the theoretical work of Louis Althusser, among others. Ideology produces order and meaning in a chaotic and humbling world. It is living, changing and participatory. The individual either responds to the call or – rarely, but sometimes –refuses it.¹³⁰

The texts of *Suomen Sotilas* potentially had such ideological effects on their reader, calling out to them; - “Young man!” – “Finnish soldier!” They offered identities and recognition in exchange for submitting to certain duties and obligations. However, the archived volumes of the magazines themselves still tell us as little about how they were read and received. Did the readers accept the call and submit their destinies to the nation, in order to be recognised as virtuous citizens? Were they attracted by the offering of guidance towards manly status and prestige in return for obedience and self-discipline? Did they refuse the call – or simply ignore it? The real effects and impact on the readers are difficult to estimate and should probably not be exaggerated.

How a text will be read and what meanings it will carry for different readers is by no means fixed or limited by the author's intentions.¹³¹ Yet from a historical point of view, these magazines probably tell us more about

¹³⁰ Sanborn, *Drafting the Russian Nation* 2003, pp. 14–17. Cf Louis Althusser, ‘Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses. Notes towards an Investigation’ (1970), in idem, *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays*, Vol. 2 (New York & London, 1971), pp. 142–183.

¹³¹ Cf Stuart Hall, ‘The work of representation’, in idem, ed., *Representation. Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices* (London, Thousand Oaks & New Delhi, 1997), pp. 13–74, at pp. 24–26.

the people who wrote them than the people who read them. The people who toiled, often in their spare time, to fill issue after issue of *Suomen Sotilas* with text obviously did have motives and purposes for their work. It remains interesting and relevant to ask *why* they wrote at all, and why they wrote the way they did. Some of the writers, especially the military priests among them, had obvious intentions to exercise a moral authority. They wanted to reshape the values and behaviour of the conscripts, make them submit to military discipline, motivate them to exercise self-discipline, and infuse them with Christian-patriotic morality. Others, such as the authors of adventure stories or causeries, possibly only wanted to support national defence by entertaining the conscripts and keeping them in a good humour – although even the most entertaining pieces in the magazine often had a rather obtrusive *sens moral* and a conspicuous eagerness to show military life in a positive light.

Few of the authors would have agreed or admitted that the texts they wrote were intended at portraying the authors *themselves* as manly men and legitimate holders of power and influence – yet that is often what they did. *Suomen Sotilas* can be read in the way David Tjeder has interpreted nineteenth century handbooks for young men; as a way for middle-class and middle-age male authors to legitimate their own power and authority in society. Tjeder places the bourgeois discourse on self-control and character within the contexts of how the middle classes tried to claim a moral superiority in relation to the aristocracy (who only controlled the surface, their behaviour, not the inner true self) and how middle-aged, middle class men legitimated their power over women and socially inferior men. Since these powerful and prosperous men allegedly were the only people with a proper character, they were allegedly morally superior to others; and since they had achieved this character through hard work, they had justly deserved their position. They had the power to grant young men admittance to their circle of superior manliness, if these only did as they were told and passed the test they defined.¹³²

The men writing for *Suomen Sotilas* wielded – at least tried hard to wield – a certain authority and power in relation to their readers, who were placed in the position of the disciple, the young man who is to be guided by older, wiser and more experienced men on the path towards adult manhood. However, I think Stephen Whitehead is right in his critique of patriarchy theories that see men with power as rational actors that somehow manipulate gender ideological forces from the outside and use them as instruments to shore up their power and interests.¹³³ We should not see the

¹³² Tjeder, *Power of Character* 2003.

¹³³ Whitehead, *Men and Masculinities* 2002, pp. 81–112.

men writing for *Suomen Sotilas* as somehow above or outside the ideologies and gendered power structures they reproduced. They lived themselves in the ideological reality that they wanted their readers to enter; in a sense, they were its products. Although they might consciously have used models for manliness as rhetorical devices, it would be wrong to read what they were doing as *mere* manipulation and rational techniques for domination or self-legitimation. It is important to take these men seriously and apprehend how they were *passionate* about the Finnish nation and protecting its independence. Partly as an extension of their nationalism, I think many of them had a true and deep-felt concern for young men and their development. Their texts should certainly be read with an acute sense for the power mechanisms at work, but also for the genuine hopes and desires, fears and anxieties they express.

To illuminate this concluding point, I want to point to where the writers of *Suomen Sotilas* had espoused the expression “spirit of the fathers”, which some of them were so fond of. It originated in J.L. Runeberg’s poem ‘The Veteran’ from the aforementioned *Tales of Ensign Stål* (1848). This poem tells the story of an old veteran living in great poverty who one day dons his old uniform and walks down to the church green to watch a battle between Finnish and Russian troops during the Finnish War of 1808–1809. He longs to “hear the clashing/ of sword-blades yet once more”, recall the memories of the strength and courage of his youth and see the new generation of fighters, “the courage of its blood”. Calmly, he sits through the raging battle, in the midst of bullets whizzing by and soldiers falling next to him, his countenance beaming “as if transfigured”. Late in the day, the Finnish troops are victorious. As the last Finnish detachment is about to leave the battlefield, the veteran stands up and calls out to them:

“Ye sons of our own country,
 So youthful and so bold,
 Is there one here who values
 The words of warrior old?
 “Great thanks to you he renders
 For this illustrious day;
 For no more glorious combat
 Did e’er his eye survey.
 To God be praise and glory
 We triumph yet again;
 Still lives our father’s spirit,
 And still our land has men!”¹³⁴

¹³⁴ Johan Ludvig Runeberg, *The Songs of Ensign Stål. National Military Song Cycle of Finland*, [1848] translated by Clement Burbank Shaw, (New York, 1925), pp. 41–46.

Did the writers of *Suomen Sotilas* think this was excellent propaganda and a superb toolkit for the manipulation of unsuspecting conscripts? Or were they, rather, deeply touched by the poem themselves? If the latter was the case, exactly what in the poem was so touching to them? Was it the image evoked of a community of Finnish men down through the ages, of oneself belonging to a national brotherhood-in-arms, united over the abyss of temporal distance through the same destiny to be warriors, the same continued fight? Was it the way it struck a chord in their personal experience of fighting the “Liberation War” – or rather, a chord in how they wanted to remember that experience – as a way of gaining recognition from their fathers, or forefathers, or the entire world; recognition as men and members of a manly nation, not the browbeaten lapdogs of foreign masters? These are speculative questions, but I find the possibility compelling that the talk about manhood, forefathers, citizenship and morality in *Suomen Sotilas* should be understood not only as disciplinary power mechanisms, but also as an attempt on part of the authors to convey something positive to the readers. An attempt to let them feel the gratification of being hailed and recognised through the ideology of nationalism, of being able to triumphantly answer to the call, “You, young valiant son of our native soil!” – “Yes! Yes, that is me, that is who I am!”

5 Stories and memories of soldiering

At the age of 61, Lauri Mattila wrote down his memories of military training in a garrison in Helsinki forty years earlier. Mattila, a farmer from a rural municipality in Western Finland, was evidently carried away by his reminiscences, since he wrote almost 200 pages. The resulting narrative is a fascinating depiction of both the dark and the bright sides of military service in interwar Finland.¹ Recalling his service in 1931–1932 from the vantage point of the early 1970's, Mattila underlined that he had a positive attitude to the army as a young man and reported for duty “full of the eagerness of youth and military spirit”. In his memories, he marked his loyalty with “white” Finland. However, the conditions of military training he described are in many places shocking to read. He remembered recruit training as characterised not least by the insulting language of superiors:

The training style of the squad leaders was to bawl, accuse and shame the recruit. A conscripted corporal could give instructions like the following when he instructed a recruit [in close-order drill]. Lift your head, here you don't dangle your head like an old nag. You have a stomach like a pregnant hag, pull it in. Now there I've got a man, who doesn't know what is left and what is right. Tomorrow you will get yourself some litter to put in your right pocket – and hay from the stables to put in your left pocket, then you can be commanded to turn towards the litter or turn towards hay. Maybe then you will understand the commands.

The recruits' carefully made beds were ruined daily, “blown up” by inspecting officers, and Mattila had all the meticulously arranged equipment in his locker heaved out onto the floor because his spoon was lying “in the wrong direction.” As he moved on from recruit training to NCO training, he and the other NCO pupils were virtually persecuted by squad leaders who punished them at every step they took, incessantly making them drop to a prone position, crawl, get up again, run around the lavatories, clean the rifles, polish the squad leaders' boots etc. The squad leaders cut the buttons of their tunics off almost daily and the pupils had to spend their evenings sewing them back on. The squad leaders could humiliate soldiers by making them kneel before them. In one instance a soldier was forced to lick a squad leader's boot. According to Mattila, all this passed with the silent consent of the NCO school's sadistic director, a Jäger major.

¹ TYKL 45, nr 195.

Yet Mattila also remembered training officers who were excellent educators, especially one lieutenant who always had surprises in his training programme, trained the men's power of observation and always rewarded good achievements. The sergeant major of Mattila's recruit training unit who had terrified the recruits on their first days of duty is later in the narrative described as a basically kind-hearted man, bellowing at the soldiers "always tongue in cheek". Mattila recalled his platoon's ambition of always being the best unit in the company with apparent pride, as well as his regiment's self-understanding of being an elite corps superior to other military units in the area. He wrote about how he acquired new acquaintances and friends during his service and how he would sit around with them in the service club, discussing "religion, patriotism, theatre, opera, we sometimes visited them (...) and yes we talked about women and it can be added that we visited them too." After his NCO training, Mattila was assigned to be a squad leader in the main guard. He lyrically depicted the daily changing of the guard, the military band playing and the sidewalks filled with townspeople never growing tired of watching the spectacle. "Whoever has marched in that parade, will remember it with nostalgia for the rest of his life", he wrote.

As he reached the end of his long account, Lauri Mattila summed up what the military training had meant for him:

I was willing to go to [the military] and in spite of all the bullying I did not experience the army as a disagreeable compulsion, but as a duty set by the fatherland, a duty that was meaningful to fulfil. Moreover, it was a matter of honour for a Finnish man. My opinion about the mission of the armed forces and their educational significance has not changed. For this reason, I do not understand this present direction that the soldiers' position becomes ever more civilian-like and that it becomes unclear who is in command, the soldier or the officer. The barracks must not become a resting home spoiling the inmates[.]

The memories of this upper middle aged farmer account for a unique individual experience. Yet they also contain many elements typical of reminiscences of military training in the interwar period: the shock of arrival in an entirely different social world; the harshness of recruit training; the complex relationships between soldiers and their superiors; the male comradeship between soldiers and the perceived adventurousness of any contacts with women of their own age; the slowly ameliorating conditions as disbandment day grew closer; and the final assessment of military training as a necessary duty and its hardships as a wholesome experience for young men.

In a sense, this chapter moves on from the rhetoric of politics, hero myths and army propaganda into the "real world" of garrisons, barracks and training fields, as that world was described by "ordinary" conscripts – not

only educated, middle-class politicians, officers or educationalists, but also men of the lower classes. My ambition, however, is not to investigate what “actually happened” in military training, or what the conscripts “really experienced”, but to study the images of conscripted soldiering and Finnish masculinities that arose from men’s story-telling about military training. The chapter studies *narratives* about the social reality of interwar military training, both as written in the period and as memories written down decades later.

The civic education and “enlightenment” propaganda, analysed in the previous chapters, powerfully propagated the notion that it was in the all-male environment of military service, together with and guided by other men, that a boy or youngster was transformed into a man and somehow reached full and real adult manhood. The army was “a school for men” or “the place where men were made”. It was never stated in military rhetoric of the era that learning the technical use of weapons or elementary combat tactics was in itself what made men into boys. Instead, this transformation was, by implication, brought about by the shared experience – shared with one’s same-sex peers – of living in the homosocial military environment and coping with the demands put on the conscripts by their superiors and by the collective of male comrades. On the other hand, there was also, as we have seen, a vivid political criticism of military training within the confinements of a cadre army, as well as loud-spoken moral concerns that this same male environment would damage young men. In this critical discourse, the homosocial relationships both to superiors and to “comrades” debased the young man, the former through brutalising him and the latter through morally corrupting him.

The conscripts were all exposed to the army’s “enlightenment” efforts, but it cannot be taken for granted that they subscribed to their contents any more than it can be assumed that men from a working class background espoused socialist anti-militarism. Whether they embraced or rejected the idea of military training as a place “where men were made”, it is significant how they depicted the social relationships among men in the military, forming the arena for whatever metamorphoses they thought that they and their fellow conscripts went through.

To the extent that soldiering became a crucial part of Finnish manhood in the interwar period, stories about what military service was “really like” conveyed messages to its audiences – and to the narrators themselves – about what it meant to be a Finnish man. How did army stories depict what happened as conscripted young men arrived for their military training? How did they describe the experience of entering the all-male military world, with its social relationships, practices and ideological environment? How did different narratives about personal experiences of

military training relate to contemporary notions of soldiering as either enhancing or debasing the conscript's masculinity?

In this chapter, I have chosen to emphasise how many men told a story about the hardships, harshness and even brutality of military training – images of soldiering largely contradicting the pro-defence discourse studied in the two previous chapters. The proportion of stories about the austerity of military discipline or even abuses and bullying does not prove whether this was a defining feature of Finnish military training at any particular point in time – in some men's experience it was, in others' it was not. Many men certainly had largely positive memories, emphasising good relationships to superiors, tolerable conditions and supportive comradeship. Yet even these narrators appear conscious of the powerful presence in popular culture of a "dark story" about the practices of military training that they were anxious to refute.

I think one reason why the narrators – including some of those who underline that they got on well in the military and even enjoyed themselves – chose to narrate and highlight stories about forced subordination and bullying was because these stories referred to a *contradiction* between experiences of soldiering and understandings of masculinity. This contradiction derives from the tensions between notions of manhood as a *sameness* and equivalence among men on the one hand, and homosocial relationships in the military where men were hierarchically graded in a web of formal and informal super- and subordination on the other hand. These tensions between gendered sameness, even solidarity, and hierarchical difference, domination and subordination permeate the gender order of modern "citizens' armies" because of their ideological heritage, combining ideas of equal citizenship with the military logic of absolute obedience.

The complete and unquestioning submission demanded in the interwar Finnish conscript army, and the oftentimes humiliating methods used to bring it about, meant a loss of autonomy and self-control for the conscript. He was defencelessly exposed to potential abuse. This could be understood as a fall from traditional manhood into the unmanliness of dependency and passivity. It contradicted the notion and narrative tradition of soldiers as manly warriors and the army as a place "where boys become men" or "where men are made". It also contradicted the contemporary nationalist defence rhetoric of self-restraint, a sense of duty and a spirit of sacrifice, since the bullied conscript was under *external* compulsion, forced forward not by internal motivation but by force of violence and the threat of even worse punishments. Moreover, the relationships *among* the rank-and-file conscripts were run through with informal hierarchies actively upheld by the soldiers themselves. The authors Pentti Haanpää and Mika Waltari addressed this contradiction in the army books they published around 1930 –

each in his fashion. I believe that most other men's storytelling about interwar military training was also, to some degree, influenced and shaped by struggling with this paradox of manhood.

5.1 *The historicity of experiences and memories*

This chapter analyses two groups of sources depicting experiences of military service in the interwar period; Pentti Haanpää's *Fields and Barracks* (1928) and Mika Waltari's *Where Men Are Made* (1931) on the one hand, and a collection of autobiographical reminiscences on the other. Haanpää and Waltari wrote their army books during or immediately after they went through military training, whereas the autobiographical narratives were written down much later, in response to an ethnological collection of memories of military training carried out in 1972–1973. The two books are the testimonies of only two single individuals, but immediately reached large national audiences and thus made the images they conveyed available for others to re-use, confirm or criticise. The collection of reminiscences, on the other hand, contains the stories of hundreds of former soldiers, most of whom probably never published a text or took part in public debate.

These sources are compared and contrasted in this chapter in order to bring out both their similarities and differences and to discuss how the narrators' class, age, and political outlook informed depictions of the actual experience of interwar military training. Both the literary works and the reminiscences are, however, highly complicated historical sources in terms of what they actually carry information about. When, how, and why they were written is essential for what stories they tell and for how they craft experiences and memories into narratives. They are shaped by cultural notions, political issues, and the historically changing contents of individual and collective commemoration. Perhaps more so than in any other chapter of this book, it is therefore necessary to discuss the circumstances in which these sources were created, and the problems of source criticism associated with them, before entering their narrative world.

Two authors, two worlds

Pentti Haanpää's collection of short stories, *Kenttä ja kasarmi: Kertomuksia tasavallan armeijasta* (*Fields and Barracks: Tales from the Republic's Army*, 1928), and Mika Waltari's *Siellä missä miehiä tehdään* (*Where Men Are Made*, 1931) are the best-known and most widely read literary works of the interwar period depicting the conscripts' life in military service. In addition to these

two books, only a few short stories and causerie-like military farces on the subject were published in the period.² Three motion pictures about the conscript army were also produced 1929–1934. These films were made in close cooperation between the film company and the armed forces. The images of soldiering they conveyed, as analysed by historian Kenneth Lundin, was of a similar kind to those in military propaganda materials such as *Suomen Sotilas*. The films became a success with the public and were followed by no less than four military farces, premiering in cinemas in 1938–1939. The first feature film about the conscript army, ‘Our Boys’ (*Meidän poikamme*, 1929), was released in the wake of *Fields and Barracks*. The film was first advertised as both more objective and truthful, and later as more patriotic in its supportive attitude to the armed forces and a strong national defence than *Fields and Barracks* – which demonstrates the impact of Haanpää’s work.³

Pentti Haanpää (1905–1955) was born into a family of “educated peasants” in rural Northern Finland. His grandfather had been a representative of the peasantry in the diet of Finland in the nineteenth century and was the author of moral tales. His father and two uncles were also both politically active in their local community and amateur writers. Yet Haanpää did not go through any higher education as a young man. He took occasional employment in farming and forestry and went on living on his family’s farm far into adult age. When he made his literary debut in 1925, the cultural establishment in Helsinki greeted him as a ‘man of nature’; a lumberjack and log rafter from the deep forests; a narrator brought forth from the depths of the true Finnish folk soul. His three first books received enthusiastic reviews in 1925–1927 and critics labelled him the new hope of national literature. All this only made the shock the greater for the nationalist and bourgeois-minded cultural establishment when Haanpää published *Fields and Barracks* in November 1928.⁴

Haanpää had done his military service in the “wilderness garrison” of Kivimäki on the isthmus of Karelia, close to the Russian border, in 1925–1926. Since he lacked formal academic education, he served in the rank-and-file. During his time in the Kivimäki garrison, he developed a deeply felt indignation towards the army’s educational methods. He wrote the short stories of *Fields and Barracks* during the year after his disbandment. They were fictional stories, but set in the contemporary Finnish conscript army

² Envall, *Kirjailijoiden kentät* 1984, pp. 9–15, 109–110.

³ Lundin, ‘Armén i rampljuset’ 1992; Kenneth Lundin, ‘Armeija astuu valkokankaalle. *Meidän poikamme*-elokuvan taustaa ja tarkoituspäriä’, in *Suomen kansallislefilmografia. Vuosien 1907–1935 suomalaiset kokoillan elokuvat* (Helsinki, 1996), pp. 395–398.

⁴ Vesa Karonen, *Haanpään elämä* (Helsinki, 1985), pp. 9–17, 32–34.

and written in a style combining expressionism with psychological realism. They depicted military life as a time of gruesome hardships, sadism and violence that appeared meaningless to the conscripts and frustrated officers to the point of desperation. Haanpää's regular publishers considered some sections portraying the soldiers' uninhibited joking and partying so indecent that they wanted them to be left out. Haanpää refused to make even minor omissions and took his manuscript to a small socialist publishing house, which published it unaltered.⁵

The book aroused great controversy in Finland in the autumn of 1928 because of its hostility against both the military training system and the official pro-defence rhetoric. It was discussed in editorials as well as book reviews. There were demands for all copies to be confiscated and many bookshops did not dare put the book openly at display. The book was nevertheless a small commercial success – four new editions were swiftly printed. Yet Haanpää became an outcast in the mainstream cultural scene for several years.⁶ The reception of Haanpää's book will be further discussed in the final chapter of this book. This chapter, however, focuses on the images of soldiering it contained.

Mika Waltari (1908–1979) was born into a family of priests and public servants. According to his memoirs, a Christian, bourgeois and patriotic “white” spirit impregnated his childhood home. He attended an elite school for the sons of the Finnish-nationalist bourgeoisie, the Finnish lyceum ‘Norssi’ in Helsinki, and was a member of the YMCA and the Christian Students’ Association. He emerged as a prolific author age 17 and published several novels and collections of short stories and poems in 1926–1930. Entering the University of Helsinki as a student of theology, he switched to science of religion and literary studies after three terms. He socialised in young artists’ circles, most importantly the famous ‘Torch bearers’ (*Tulenkantajat*) group that combined Finnish nationalism with internationalism and optimistic modernism. The great success of his best-selling first novel, ‘The Great Illusion’ (*Suuri illuusio*) in 1928 helped him taking the leap of giving up his plans to become a priest and committing himself to a writer’s career.⁷

Waltari partly wrote *Where Men Are Made*, which is almost in the form of a diary, during his military service. In the book, he actually depicted how he managed to get access to the company office’s typewriter and an allowance to write on his manuscripts during his recruit training. *Where Men*

⁵ Ibid., pp. 40–52.

⁶ Ibid., p. 53–69; Envall, *Kirjalijoiden kentät* 1984, p. 30.

⁷ Mika Waltari, *Kirjailijan muistelmia*, ed. Ritva Haavikko (Porvoo, Helsinki & Juva, 1980).

Are Made is a literary reportage, written from Waltari's first person perspective, describing his everyday life as a conscript in a very positive tenor. Published only two years after the scandal surrounding Haanpää's work, Waltari's army book was received and read as a response to *Fields and the Barracks*.⁸ It is nonetheless important to keep in mind that Haanpää's was not the only negative depiction of army life in circulation since the fierce anti-militarist campaigns of 1917. Waltari's book probably would have been written even if Haanpää had never published his. The press reactions it received were, however, muted in comparison to the furore around *Fields and Barracks*; it was greeted with satisfaction by some of Haanpää's critics, but not celebrated as a major literary work.

Both Haanpää and Waltari obviously wanted to have an impact on how the Finnish public conceived of the conscript army. Yet *Fields and Barracks* and *Where Men Are Made* are also works of art, intended to convey aesthetic impressions, ideological messages, and understandings of human feelings and motives. One might ask to what extent they may be said to mirror the attitudes and understandings of larger collectives rather than only the original and imaginative vision of two artistic individuals. For my purposes, however, I have judged Haanpää's and Waltari's army depictions to be valuable sources to the cultural imagery surrounding conscription in the interwar period. In their books there are echoes of contemporary opinion and notions about masculinity, class, conscription, military training and the cadre army, which are familiar from the materials examined in previous chapters of this work. Although Haanpää and Waltari were talented writers, they also had to make sense of what they experienced in the military through relating it to previous cultural knowledge. Their works were products of creative imagination, yet no doubt were influenced by the forms and contents of stories about army life and political debates over conscription they had heard and read. Their narratives, in turn, provided frames of reference for their readers' subsequent stories about military training; models for emplotment and evaluation to either embrace or reject. I approach Haanpää and Waltari as both unique individuals *and* participants in a collective tradition of reminiscence or story-telling about army life, a tradition that they tapped into and used, but also influenced and to some extent transformed.

⁸ Envall, *Kirjalijoiden kentät* 1984, pp. 30, 40-41.

Remembering military training

The collection of autobiographical reminiscences, which is studied in this chapter parallel with Haanpää's and Waltari's literary depictions, resulted from a writing competition arranged by the Ethnology Department at the University of Turku in 1972–1973. Men who had been conscripted into the armed forces of independent Finland were asked to write down and send in their memories of military training in the peacetime army. In addition to using the department's network of regular informants, the competition was advertised in a brochure about voluntary defence work that was distributed to every household in Finland in the autumn of 1972. The 10 best contributions would be rewarded and the first prize was an award of 500 marks (equivalent to about 500 Euros at present). Those who entered their names for the collection were sent a very detailed questionnaire by mail. The response was unusually strong for an inquiry of this kind. The Ethnology Department received almost 700 answers, which altogether comprised almost 30 000 pages (A5), both handwritten and typed.⁹ Many men had evidently felt a great desire to recount their army memories.

However, the accounts of military training they wrote probably tell us more about how old men in the 1970's made sense of experiences in their youth than about how they might have articulated those experiences at the time. As historians using interviews with contemporary witnesses have increasingly stressed since the late 1970's, oral testimony – what people tell an interviewer about their memories, or equally what they write down from memory in response to a questionnaire – cannot be read as direct evidence of factual events or even the “original” subjective experiences of those events. Experiences and memories are marked by historicity: they are dynamic and changing. Memories are fleeting and fragmentary and only take solid form as mental images or articulated narratives in a specific act of recollection that always takes place in the present. What an individual considers it relevant to remember, in the sense of telling others about his or her past, changes over time.¹⁰ How a man experiences military training when he is in the midst of it, how he talks about it when just returned to civilian life, and how he remembers it as an old man, can produce three very different stories. More than a source of history, these reminiscences are a kind of history writing in themselves, where contemporary witnesses become their own historians, constructing and narrating their own history. Academic oral history since the 1980's, writes Ronald J. Grele, has been

⁹ Leimu, *Pennalismi ja initiaatio* 1985, pp. 16–21.

¹⁰ Aleida Assman, *Der lange Schatten der Vergangenheit. Erinnerungskultur und Geschichtspolitik* (München, 2006), pp. 24–28.

“predicated upon the proposition that oral history, while it does tell us about how people lived in the past, also, and maybe more importantly, tells us about how the past lives on into and informs the present”.¹¹

My original reason for using the collection of reminiscences from the 1970’s was a desire to grasp what “ordinary” men without higher education told friends and family about their own experiences of conscripted soldiering. I wanted to contrast the images of soldiering in the political sphere, military propaganda, and the “high culture” of literary works by esteemed authors to the “low culture” of popular oral culture. However, this oral culture has not been recorded in contemporary sources. It can be faintly discerned in press reports and parliamentary debates on the scandalous treatment of conscripts outlined in Chapter Two. Some of its elements can be guessed at from criticisms of “old-fashioned” training methods in texts on military pedagogy, the rhetoric of civic education directed at soldiers, or the literary imagery produced by Mika Waltari and Pentti Haanpää. As such, however, I have estimated that no other available corpus of sources bears witness to it any more closely than the 1972–1973 collection of memories, which is very comprehensive and multifaceted.¹² It contains the narratives of hundreds of men from the lower classes, whose voices are not present in the written historical sources from the interwar period.

Almost 300 of the answers entered for the writing competition depicted military training in the interwar period. I have used a sample of 56 narratives, comprising 4213 pages, including a random sample as well as all the narratives surpassing 100 pages, because of their relative richness of detail. The sample was made only among those men who had served in the infantry, since this was by far the largest branch of the armed forces and overwhelmingly dominated the public image of “the army”. Among the authors in the sample are twelve farmers, nine workers in industry, crafts and forestry (three carpenters, two masons, an engine-man, a sheet metal worker, a sawmill worker and a lumberjack), and four men who worked or had worked in the service sector (two office clerks, a policeman and an engine driver). Five men obviously had had a higher education, although this was not asked in the questionnaire, as they stated folk school teacher (2), agronomist (2) or bank manager to be their occupation. Five further men were or had been in managerial positions that did not necessarily require

¹¹ Ronald J. Grele, ‘Oral History as Evidence’, in Thomas L. Charlton, Lois L. Myers & Rebecca Sharpless, eds., *Handbook of Oral History* (Lanham, 2006), pp. 43–101, at pp. 59–61.

¹² An alternative route would have been hunting up contemporary letters or diaries written by conscripts while doing their military service in the Finnish conscript army. Such contemporary materials have, however, proven difficult to find. With enough time and effort, letters and diaries written by conscripted men from the social elites could probably be discovered but the prospects of reaching the experiences of uneducated men along this route seem unpromising.

higher education: a district headman at a sawmill, a head of a department (unspecified), a shop manager and a stores manager. Four had been regular officers or non-commissioned officers. Twelve men did not state their occupation.

Researchers of memory knowledge within folklore studies and oral history greatly emphasise the particular situation where experiences and memories are articulated into narratives.¹³ The Finnish folklorist Jyrki Pöysä points out that a “collection” of reminiscences never actually consists in gathering something pre-existing that is “out there”, waiting for the researcher to come and collect it. Instead, it is a creative activity, where memories, narratives and folklore are produced in cooperation between the informants and the scholars. The questions asked, and how they are put, make the informant intuitively feel that certain narratives are expected of him and he thus may recall only certain things in memory and not others.¹⁴

The 1972-73 collection of memories of military training was executed in a manner that signalled approval and appreciation of universal male conscription and the Finnish armed forces. The brochure that was the main advertising channel of the writing competition propagated voluntary civic work for supporting national defence. The ingress of the questionnaire connected the history of universal conscription and the national armed forces with “over fifty years of Finnish independence”. It further claimed that “every Finnish man has learnt the art of defending the country” in those forces, thus recycling old phrases from nationalist defence rhetoric. It was also pointed out in the first section that the collection of reminiscences was realised in “collaboration with the General Staff”. All this might have influenced who participated in the collection and who shunned it, as well as the informants’ notions of what kind of narration was expected of them. Juha Mälkki who has worked with all the answers from the interwar period surmises that the informants might represent mainly those with positive attitudes to the army.¹⁵ It is impossible to know which voices might be missing, yet in my opinion the collected material offers a broad spectrum of experiences and attitudes, including significant numbers of very negative images of military service.

The questionnaire, worked out by the ethnologists at the University of Turku, contained almost 230 different questions, grouped under 40 numbered topics, ranging from material culture, such as clothing, food and buildings, to military folklore, in the form of jokes and marching songs, and

¹³ See e.g. Alistair Thomson, *Anzac Memories. Living with the Legend* (Melbourne, 1994), pp. 230–234.

¹⁴ Pöysä, *Jätkän synty* 1997, p. 39.

¹⁵ Mälkki, *Herrat, jätkät ja sotataito* 2008, p. 40.

to the relationships between men and officers and among the soldiers themselves.¹⁶ The meticulous list of questions was evidently based on a very detailed and specific pre-understanding of the social "morphology" of military life; notions of how military life is organised and structured and what social and cultural phenomena are specific to it. For example, regarding leaves of absence the questionnaire asked: "What false reasons were used when applying for leaves, or what stories were told about such attempts? Was it difficult to actually obtain leave when there was a real need, or were there suspicions that the reasons were falsified? What kinds of men were the most skilled in getting leave?" The questions asked were ways of helping the informants remember, but directed their recollections towards certain topics, excluding others. Many informants wrote at length about the first questions in the questionnaire, but further on answered more briefly and started skipping questions, apparently exhausted by the long list of questions and the cumbersomeness of writing.¹⁷ On the other hand, several informants chose to tell "their story", largely ignoring the questions asked.

The ensuing narratives have to be read with sensitivity as to how they are written in response to specific questions, at particular stages in their authors' lives, and in a particular historical situation. The Finnish men writing for the collection in 1972–1973 were born into, grew up, and did their military service in the same mental and political landscape as Mika Waltari and Pentti Haanpää. Yet by the time they wrote down their memories of military training they had also experienced a world war and Finland's military defeat in 1944, which against all odds secured Finland's survival as an independent nation. They had heard the resurgent Finnish communists criticise the interwar period as one of Finnish militarism and characterise the Finnish war efforts as aggression. They had witnessed the official pact of "friendship and mutual assistance" between Finland and their former foe, the Soviet Union. They had recently observed the emergence of a youth revolt in the 1960's with its anti-authoritarianism and critical stance towards the nationalist and moral values of previous generations. All of this was present in their "space of experience", illuminating and giving new meanings to their own experiences of military training as young men.

Individual memories overlap and connect with other people's memories and images of the past, shared by larger collectives, such as generations or nations. This can provide social support for individual memories, increasing their coherence and credibility through linguistic interaction with other people. It can also, however, result in people

¹⁶ *Tiedusteluja kansankulttuurin alalta, N:o 45 lokakuussa 1972, Muistelmia sotilaskoulutuksesta*, Kansatieteen laitos, Turun Yliopisto [questionnaire included in the TYKL collection].

¹⁷ The same observation is made by Mälkki, *Herrat, jätkät ja sotataito* 2008, pp. 42–43.

confusing their own personal memories with things that happened to other people that they have only heard or read about.¹⁸ Historian Christof Dejung points out how the informants he interviewed about their memories of the Second World War in Switzerland had re-interpreted, re-shaped and re-articulated their memories since the war under the influence of political debates on Swiss history, stories they had been told, books about the war years they had read, and films they had seen. Individual memories, Dejung summarises, are parts of collective patterns of interpretation that originate both in the past and the present.¹⁹

The oral historian Alistair Thomson stresses the psychological motives at work in the process where memories are constructed and articulated. People compose or construct memories using the public languages and meanings of their culture, but they do it in such a way as to help them feel relatively comfortable with their lives and identities. In Thomson's words, we want to remember the past in a way that gives us "a feeling of composure" and ensures that our memories fit with what is publicly acceptable. When we remember, we seek the affirmation and recognition of others for our memories and our personal identities.²⁰

Still, I find that a radical scepticism regarding memories as evidence of the past would be an erroneous conclusion. As many oral historians have pointed out, distortions due to distance from events, class bias and ideology, as well as uncertainty regarding the absolute accuracy of factual evidence are not unique to oral evidence or reminiscences, but characteristic of many historical sources. For example, court records are based on oral testimony that has often been re-articulated and summarised by the recording clerks. Newspaper reports are usually based on the oral testimony of interviewed people that has been evaluated, condensed and re-narrated by journalists.²¹ The historian always has to make a critical assessment of his sources in the light of other sources as well as theories and assumptions about human motives and behaviour. In this respect, memories are not different in kind from most other historical source materials.

The literary historian Alessandro Portelli, famous for his oral history work, writes that oral sources tell us less about events than about their meaning, about how events were understood and experienced and what role they came to play in the informant's life. Still, he underlines that the

¹⁸ Assman, *Schatten der Vergangenheit* 2006, pp. 24–28.

¹⁹ Dejung, *Aktivdienst und Geschlechterordnung* 2007, p. 41.

²⁰ Thomson, *Anzac memories* 1994, pp. 8–11.

²¹ Paul Thompson, *The Voice of the Past. Oral History* [1978], 2nd edition, (Oxford & New York, 1988), pp. 101–110; Alessandro Portelli, *The Death of Luigi Trastulli and other stories. Form and Meaning in Oral History* (Albany, 1991), pp. 2–7, 51–52.

reminiscences told by people in oral history interviews often reveal unknown events or unknown aspects of known events. They always cast light on the everyday life of the lower, “non-hegemonic” social classes that have left few traces in public archives. Oral sources might compensate chronological distance with much closer personal involvement. Portelli claims that in his experience, narrators are often capable of reconstructing their past attitudes even when they no longer coincide with present ones. They are able to make a distinction between past and present self and to objectify the past self as other than the present one.²²

Neither can memories be held as the product of the interview situation alone. The oral historian Luisa Passerini points out that when someone is asked for his or her life-story, this person’s memory draws on pre-existing storylines and ways of telling stories, even if these are in part modified by the circumstances.²³ According to the oral historian Paul Thompson, the encapsulation of earlier attitudes in a story is a protection, which makes them less likely to represent a recent reformulation.²⁴ Recurrent story telling can thus preserve memories, but if there is a strong “public memory” of the events in question, it can also distort personal recollections. In interviews with Australian veterans from the First World War, conducted in the 1980’s, Alistair Thomson found that memories of the post-war period, that had rarely been the focus of conversation and story-telling, seemed more fresh and less influenced by public accounts than the stories about the war years. Thomson connects this with the powerful presence in Australian culture of an “official”, nationalist commemoration of the Australian war experience. He describes a process where the diverse and even contradictory experiences of Australians at war were narrated through a public war legend, a compelling narrative that smoothed the sharp edges of individual experiences and constructed a homogenous veteran identity defined in terms of national and masculine ideals.²⁵

Nonetheless, Thomson found that oral testimony collected in the 1980’s still indicated the variety of the Australian veterans’ experiences. Many of the veterans Thomson interviewed had preserved a distance from the nationalist myths about the war experience. The influence of the public legend depended on each veteran’s original experience of the war, on the ways he had previously composed his war remembering, and on the social and emotional context of old age. In the case of the Swiss commemoration of

²² Portelli, *Death of Luigi Trastulli* 1991, pp. 50–53.

²³ Luisa Passerini, *Fascism in Popular Memory. The Cultural Experience of the Turin Working Class* [1984](Cambridge, 1987), p. 8.

²⁴ Thompson, *Voice of the Past* 1988, p. 140.

²⁵ Thomson, *Anzac memories* 1994, p. 106, 215–216.

the Second World War, Christof Dejung points out that in spite of strong national myths about the manly defence of Switzerland, the political left, women, and the Jewish community have maintained diverging memory cultures that were ignored in official commemoration until recently.²⁶ In the final analysis, Alistair Thomson concludes from his study that there is plentiful evidence in oral testimony to make for histories representing the range and complexity of Australian experiences of war. The use of soldier's testimony should, however, be sensitive to the ways in which such testimony is articulated in relation to public narratives and personal identities.²⁷

I think we can assume that certain parts of the memories of military training in the Finnish conscript army were formed and influenced by decades of the informants telling and listening to army stories together with other men. Many of their elements have probably been told and retold many times since the interwar period. An informant might be prone to include a story that has been successful with his previous audiences – comrades, colleagues, and family members – in his answer to the writing competition. Just as Haanpää and Waltari were using and commenting on contemporary popular traditions and political debates, the men composing their memories in the 1970's certainly borrowed elements and narrative forms from literary and oral traditions in depicting military life. However, comparisons with the critical press reports and parliamentary debates on the treatment of conscripts, accounted for in Chapter Two, as well as with Pentti Haanpää's and Mika Waltari's army books, reveal that essential narrative elements in their reminiscences were already in public circulation in the interwar period.

In comparison to the cultural images of the Finnish front-line experience in the Second World War, there was by far no such equally powerful "official" commemoration or nationalist legend about interwar military training in post-war society, prescribing how one was supposed to remember it. However, historian Juha Mälkki assumes that the experiences of fighting the Second World War were formative for how pre-war military training was remembered and narrated. Mälkki has used the 1972–1973 collection for a study of the emergence of the particular military culture making possible Finland's relatively successful defence against the Soviet Union in 1939–1940. He reckons that the informants' notions of which military skills and modes of functioning turned out useful or even life-saving in the Winter War informed their evaluation of their peacetime military

²⁶ Dejung, *Aktivdienst und Geschlechterordnung* 2007, pp. 35–36, 43–44.

²⁷ Thomson, *Anzac memories* 1994, p. 215–218. Cf Dejung, *Aktivdienst und Geschlechterordnung* 2007, pp. 46–48

training, which was in retrospect seen essentially as a preparation for the war experience.²⁸

This is an important observation. However, we must not presume that the informants' war experiences had a uniform impact on all of them.²⁹ I find significant and want to stress not only the similarities, but also the *differences* among the different voices and stories in the collection. The ways experiences are articulated are never completely determined by culture, public memory or even personal history. There are always different and mutually contradictory models of interpretation circulating in a culture. Despite their elements of collective tradition, the variation among the memories display how conscripts were influenced by their varying socio-cultural backgrounds and political stances, both in how they experienced military training in their youth and in how they reproduced or re-assessed their experiences during their later lives. It also bears witness to how not only self-reflection, but also factors as difficult to capture as what we call personality, temperament and genuine innovativeness make human experience richer and more unpredictable than any social theory can fully fathom.³⁰

5.2 *Entering the military world*

When men recalled how they reported for duty and entered military training, the formal hierarchy and the relationships between the recruits and their new superiors and teachers were often in the foreground of their stories. These superiors consisted of different groups: regular officers, regular non-commissioned officers (NCOs), conscripted probationary officers and conscripted squad leaders. Two different storylines about the attitude different military superiors took towards the conscripted soldiers can be abstracted; a "dark story" about disciplinary harshness and brutal abuses of power, and a brighter story about efficient training and well-liked and even admired superiors who were skilled and inspirational military educators. Whether they tell the dark or the brighter story – usually they do both, intertwining negative and positive anecdotes – most of the narrators

²⁸ Mälkki, *Herrat, jätkät ja sotataito* (Helsinki, 2008), e.g. pp. 37–50, 248–249.

²⁹ The informants were not asked to state whether they fought in the Second World War or not. Since all men fit for service born in and after 1894 were later mobilised during the Winter War, it can be assumed that a great majority of the informants in my sample were war veterans. On the age classes mobilised in 1939, see Nurminen, 'Muuttuva armeija' 2008, pp. 62–73.

³⁰ Cf Kivimäki, 'Sodan kokemushistoria' 2006.

studied here portrayed interwar military training as an extremely hard, tough and demanding experience. The narrators, especially those depicting military service in the 1920's, portrayed relationships between conscripted soldiers and their superiors as strained and marked by animosity on both sides of a hierarchical chasm.

The reminiscences of Heikki Kolehmainen, born in 1897, concern a regiment in Tampere in 1919-1920 and provide most elements of the "dark story". Kolehmainen made a professional military career after his military service, working for many years as a regular sergeant-major and advancing to officer's rank during the Second World War. He was, moreover, already accustomed to military life when he was called up in 1919, since he had fought in the Civil War the year before. In spite of this familiarity with military life both at the time of writing down his memories in 1972-1973 and at the time of entering his military service, his memories convey a sense of appalled consternation at the loud shouting and commotion on his day of arrival for military service. "Using unexpectedly loud and bawling language [the Jäger officers] squashed us recruits, clattering and struggling in the stairs, into the large, cheerless and dreary squad-rooms." The conscripts were woken up the next morning by a "seemingly demented corporal", who ran screaming from room to room. As the training began, the soldiers' superiors instituted a culture of haste. Whatever the recruits did, they were always pressed on to do it faster and told their performance was not good enough. There were incessant inspections of the dormitories and equipment, mainly intent on finding faults. The recruits' beds and lockers were dismantled - "blown up" - almost daily by the duty officer because they allegedly were not properly made and arranged. Lectures and classes Kolehmainen remembered as tedious, "and as we usually had not learnt anything the end of each class consisted of bawling".³¹

Some of the treatment Kolehmainen and his comrades experienced at the hands of their squad leaders - it is unclear whether these were conscripted or regular NCOs - could be characterised as outright bullying. E.g. the practice of *huudattaminen* [-making someone shout] was often used to punish and humiliate some individual soldier. He would be ordered to climb a tree, a large rock or some other high place and shout out something in the vein of "I'm the biggest fool of this company!" The commands and instructions of the squad leaders Kolehmainen remembered as "yelling, barking, and richly larded with abuse even offensive of one's manly honour, and very often with clumsily presented obscene jokes." The squad leaders instructed the men that if a recruit mistakenly turned in the wrong direction

³¹ TYKL 45, nr 35, pp. 8-9, 15, 29-30.

during the profuse close-order drill exercises, the man facing him should spit in his face. A certain regular sergeant always led the so-called *santsi*, which were extra exercises in the evening after the ordinary daily programme, ordered as punishments for individuals or whole units. “He was famous for his harshness, an almost sadistic ruthless tormentor, whose narrow programme almost exclusively consisted of making us get down [flat on the ground] and get up again, over and over.”³²

Kolehmainen describes the relationships between regular officers and conscripts as distant and cold. Between the officers and men, there was “an insuperable armour-plating.” The officers never showed the men their more relaxed, personal face, only “an official face expressing contrived gravity and ambition”. When an officer faced his unit, stately and with emphasised briskness yet “without the faintest shadow of a smile”, the rank-and-file soldier “felt like assuming an attitude of a strong inferiority complex, expressed in his fearful glance and tense being”. In his memories, Kolehmainen refers to the Jäger officers’ ‘Prussian’ notions of discipline, such as emphasising the differences in rank between conscripted NCOs and the other conscripts. The corporals were not allowed to eat with the other soldiers but had to use the NCO dining room, yet even there they had to sit at a different table than the sergeants. Himself moving on to corporal school to be trained as a NCO in the reserve, he wondered at the principles of selection which seemed “alien and strange” to him: “the spirit in those days was that only the noisy, mouthy, yelling and inclined to bully were thought best suited as NCOs. Those who were calm, businesslike and strived for humane treatment of their subordinates, however, were considered neglectful and ineffective good-for-nothings.”³³

In addition to all this, Kolehmainen’s contingent suffered from the food scarcity and epidemics plaguing the armed forces in the difficult years following the Civil War.³⁴ No wonder that those many nights when he and his fellow conscripts were punished for one thing or another by confinement to the barracks were “mostly spent in silent melancholia”, someone perhaps singing alone, “stumps from here and there, mainly expressions of heavy-heartedness”. Some of the recruits found the conditions so appalling that a group of them was seriously planning to escape from the garrison and join an expeditionary force on its way to fight the Bolsheviks in Eastern Karelia.

³² TYKL 45, nr 35, pp. 22–25.

³³ TYKL 45, nr 35, p. 88.

³⁴ In most memories from the years 1918–1920, the bad feeding of the conscripts, poor lodgings and raging epidemics are highlighted; TYKL 45, nr. 1, pp. 2–3, 6–7; nr 8, pp. 1–4; nr 14, p. 17; nr 20, pp. 41, 49; nr 27, p. 64; nr 32, pp. 2–4, 7; nr 35, pp. 31, 60–62; nr 38, p. 16; nr 108, pp. 1–3.

They told their comrades, “Certainly things cannot be as miserable there as here”.³⁵

The narrative of Onni Mähönen, born 1913, who served in the Karelia Guards’ Regiment in Viipuri in 1935–1936, provides an example of a “brighter” story, almost opposite to that of Heikki Kolehmainen. Mähönen had received basic military training in the civil guards before he was called up. He underlined in his recollections that he had a very positive bias when he entered military training. Around the time of his call-up, as he recalled, there was a general spirit among young men that military service was “a natural part of every male citizen’s duties”. This probably in part reflects attitudes in Mähönen’s own social circles at the time, but probably also the higher acceptance of conscription and military training across the political spectrum of Finnish society in the 1930’s, as compared to the early 1920’s.

Elements of military training familiar from Kolehmainen’s narrative recur in Mähönen’s memories, but are treated in an altogether different manner. Although the recruits in Mähönen’s unit were – like most interwar conscripts – awoken with a lot of racket the first morning, he thought that this was “somehow only proper”. There was quite enough time for getting oneself ready. “In general, military life broadly speaking started out just according to my expectations.” He found recruit training was easy since he already had most of the required skills. His squad leader was a “very calm and businesslike fellow who scarcely raised his voice without due cause.” There was “a lot of fuss” about how the beds were made and the lockers ordered, but according to Mähönen, “that was how discipline was built at [the regiment] in those days and I have to say that it had an effect, later on the squad rooms stayed tidy, things were in good order and every item of equipment was tightly in its own place.”³⁶

Just as Heikki Kolehmainen and Onni Mähönen remembered the roaring of superiors as one main impression of entering the military, even Onni Mähönen described his first such experience at some length. On his day of arrival, Mähönen’s company sergeant-major gave the recruits a warning speech about the dangers of the city during evening leaves:

[T]o an ordinary recruit the whole business seemed quite a bit of yelling and bullying. – During his whole sermon [the sergeant-major] walked slowly in front of the row, very close to the men, shouting at the top of his voice. – I had ended up in the front row and I must admit it felt strange in spite of all my [positive] bias [to military service], when the sergeant-major looked me straight in the eyes, at

³⁵ TYKL 45, nr 35, pp. 8–15, 38, 87, 90, 100.

³⁶ TYKL 45, nr 216, pp. 1–15, 20.

about ten centimetres distance, his shouting resounding in the whole corridor.”³⁷

This was evidently behaviour unfamiliar to Mähönen from the civil guards. It disconcerted him in spite of his eagerness for soldiering. Yet in his memories he put it off as a “dramatised roughness” that was a “peculiarity” for this particular sergeant major. His other superiors were “normal”.

Medical problems prevented Mähönen’s plans for NCO training. He was instead assigned to be a scribe at the regiment headquarters. There, he got on very well with the officers. “I never heard any shouting, bawling or sneering at the headquarters.” Neither does Mähönen report any bullying or improper treatment of the conscripts during recruit training or in any other context. “If you duly performed your duties with a sensible attitude to military discipline, you did not have to experience anything very extraordinary in the Karelia Guards in those days”, he writes.³⁸ These very wordings can, however, be read as indications of Mähönen’s awareness that his positive experiences of military service were not shared by all young men. He recounts a significant incident towards the end of his military service, as he was at the military hospital for some medical examinations and talked to patients who served as soldiers in other military units. “I had got on well so far, I might say very well, life had been brisk and I had found lots of new comrades”, Mähönen wrote. “... I guess that was the reason I thought everybody else took the same attitude to this phase of life, and because of that I was rather shocked when I found out that others were of a very different opinion.” He especially remembered a big and coarse man who burst into tears and said that he certainly had heard life in the army was miserable, but that he never had thought it could be as miserable as this.³⁹

Stressing the toughness and harshness

Circumstances varied between different military units, as illustrated by Heikki Kolehmainen’s and Onni Mähönen’s experiences. However, a majority of the reminiscences throughout the period emphasise the toughness and harshness of military training. The “dark stories” of military training spread in the interwar period not least through the story-telling of men who returned home after serving their time. It was evidently common that these disbanded men tried to frighten younger men who had their military training in front of them by telling them more or less truthful

³⁷ TYKL 45, nr 216, p. 6.

³⁸ TYKL 45, nr 216, pp. 18, 24–26.

³⁹ TYKL 45, nr 216, p. 23.

stories about what awaited them. Yet there were counterforces and counternarratives as well, as those youngsters who were active within the civil guards movement before their military service were reassured and encouraged to expect an interesting and stimulating time as they reported for service.⁴⁰

Entering military training seems to have had a shocking and depressing effect on many conscripts, especially during the years immediately after the Civil War when the military organisation was underfunded, understaffed and underdeveloped, and conscription and military training still strange, unfamiliar and subject to much resistance among the general public. Toivo Kantonen, who lived in a municipality with a socialist majority in 1918, recalled the psychological effect of the introduction of conscription to the “white” army as “the same as if there would now all of a sudden be a new law that everybody who has turned 65 will be killed”.⁴¹ Eero Tuominen, whose departure to the call-up from a train station where people openly wept for their sons leaving for an unknown destiny was described in the Chapter Two, wrote to his girlfriend two weeks later that military service felt like being a prisoner. His friend Vilho was so home-sick that he had lost all appetite, he wrote. “The off-duty hours are long and terrible here. Otherwise there is certainly so much running about that you don’t have much time to think.”⁴² Others recall how especially the first weeks in the military felt hopelessly dreary. “I remember that I slid into a state of depression of some kind, everything somehow felt indifferent to me.”⁴³

One recurrent memory associated with entering military service throughout the period is the superiors’ loud shouting and roaring at conscripts, often insulting them.⁴⁴ An informant who served in 1920–1921 illustrated the normal behaviour among superiors by contrasting it with his first meeting with the sergeant-major in his new unit after he finished corporal school: “I guess the most sensitive among us were silently crying for joy. He namely talked like a human being. We had the impression that the company sergeant-majors did not know human language, even if some words did sound familiar amongst all the shouting, screaming, barking and swearing.”⁴⁵

⁴⁰ Cf TYKL 45, nr 126, pp. 1–2; nr 165, p. 29; nr 179, p. 8; nr 195, p. 7; nr 227, pp. 21–23.

⁴¹ TYKL 45, nr 20, pp. 5–6, 8.

⁴² TYKL 45, nr 27, pp. 7–8, 10.

⁴³ TYKL 45, nr 126, p. 14. Cf nr 8, 20, 62, 90, 179 and 230.

⁴⁴ TYKL 45, nr 27, p. 49; nr 38, p. 3, 6–7; nr 85, pp. 6–9, 17, 21–22; nr 132, p. 34; nr 195, pp. 13–14, 30–31; nr 208, p. 19; nr 227, p. 36.

⁴⁵ TYKL 45, nr 65, p. 33. For a very similar story, see nr 85, p. 18.

Depictions of recruit training, the first three months of military training, dominate the reminiscences. This was evidently the toughest part of military service in many units, during which the superiors tried to socialise the new recruits into strict military discipline. The conscripts were still unaccustomed to the new and strange world they had entered. During the first weeks of training, they were kept in complete isolation from the surrounding civilian world. In many units recruits could get an evening leave for visiting the surrounding city only after the recruit period. Even then, conscripts who lived further away were only allowed leave to visit their families once during their military service. In the 1930's, a conscript could already hope for two or three home leaves during the year, but if one's company officers were in the least dissatisfied with one's conduct even these could be refused. As a collective punishment for some conscript's misdemeanour, all leave could be suspended, and the soldiers confined to their barracks for days or weeks.⁴⁶

The narratives about recruit training typically stress the emphasis superiors put on manifesting hierarchy. Many informants recalled that the officers made a point of keeping relationships between officers and men extremely formal and distant.⁴⁷ Likewise, the never-ending and repeated cleaning and ordering of squad-rooms and equipment lockers, making of beds and cleaning of rifles during recruit training, usually making up the first three months of training, were highlighted elements in the memories.⁴⁸ The "blowing up" or "blasting" of meticulously made lockers, clothing bundles and beds are described as normal practice in most units. This meant that the inspecting NCO swept down the equipment onto the floor in disorder because it allegedly was not in satisfactory order. According to some narratives, the squad leaders or sergeant-majors sometimes even threw the bedclothes out of the barracks window. In some units this wrecking seems to have happened almost daily over longer periods of time, in others it was a method used a couple of times in the beginning of the recruit training.⁴⁹

The actual military training during the recruit period was remembered as mainly consisting of close-order drill exercises. An informant who was called up in 1931 claimed his unit did five hours of close-order drill training

⁴⁶ Leimu, *Pennalismi ja initiaatio* 1985, p. 160; TYKL 45, nr 78, p. 36; nr 126, p. 14; nr 227, pp. 202–203; nr 230, p. 54.

⁴⁷ TYKL 45, nr 1, pp. 1–3; nr 32, p. 6; nr 35, pp. 87–89; nr 50, pp. 11–13; nr 65, p. 33; nr 78, p. 8; nr 90, p. 36; nr 138, p. 4; nr 208, pp. 15–16; nr 227, pp. 295–297; nr 244, p. 49.

⁴⁸ Others also commented on the constant hurry instituted by the superiors, especially during the morning routines: TYKL 45, nr 84, p. 7; nr 202, p. 2; nr 227, pp. 37, 61; nr 232, p. 2.

⁴⁹ TYKL 45, nr 32, p. 5; nr 65, pp. 9–10; nr 78, p. 9; nr 85, p. 20; nr 90, pp. 41–42; nr 96, pp. 29–30; nr 132, p. 53; nr 147, p. 16–17; nr 159, pp. 5–6; nr 195, pp. 41–44; nr 208, p. 7; nr 226, p. 16; nr 227, pp. 33, 76, 262; nr 230, p. 9; nr 244, p. 30; nr 250, p. 8.

daily for over a month.⁵⁰ One man even wrote the recruit training took half of the one-year service and mostly consisted in close-order drill. Recruit training certainly was not that prolonged anywhere, but the statement is significant concerning the impressions and memories this man was left with.⁵¹

Bullying

As the recruits were socialised into a particular military behaviour, considerably more brutal means than wrecking beds were used to demonstrate the superiors' power and the soldiers' powerlessness in the military hierarchy. The reminiscences convey the same images of widespread practices intended at scaring, bullying and humiliating the soldiers into unquestioning obedience that were expressed in critical press reports of the 1920's and even the writings of officers who wanted to reform military education.

People understand and articulate the same events differently, emphasising or playing down certain aspects, repressing some memories or believing that what they have heard or read happened to themselves. Nevertheless, as a rough estimate according to how the informants themselves appear to have appraised how they were treated, a quarter of them describe personal experiences of severe bullying by a person in superior military rank. Another third experienced some milder forms of harassment. One in ten stated that although there was no bullying in their own unit they knew that it was frequent in some neighbouring unit. Overall, two thirds of the informants claim to have experienced or observed some form of bullying. Thus, one third reported no observations of bullying by superiors. There is a tendency in the material of the accounts of bullying growing milder and less frequent towards the end of the 1920's and throughout the 1930's, although severe instances of bullying are still reported in the 1930's. There is also a general shift in the memories, where regular NCOs and officers dominate the stories about harsh treatment and bullying in the early 1920's, whereas conscripted squad leaders are pointed out as the worst tormentors of recruits in many accounts of military training in the 1930's.

A usual form of bullying individual conscripts in the 1920's was the so called *huudattaminen* [-to make someone shout] described above by Heikki Kolehmainen, where an individual soldier was humiliated by being ordered

⁵⁰ TYKL 45, nr 179, p. 18. Cf nr 27, p. 17; nr 172, p. 4; nr 202 p. 3; nr 226, p. 17; nr 232, pp. 6-7.

⁵¹ TYKL 45, nr 65, p. 26.

to climb a high place and cry something.⁵² Valtteri Aaltonen, who served in 1923, wrote in his memories that conscripts were made to shout out sentences about themselves such as: “Recruit N.N. is a useless man for the Finnish Army”; “Recruit N.N. has got sawdust, eggshells and sour milk in his head and they are all mixed up too”; or “Recruit N.N.’s sister has calving fever”.⁵³ Jorma Kiiski, who did his military service that same year, remembered how his squad leader forced “one of the weakest boys” to climb a pine tree. The soldier could not manage climbing higher than a couple of metres. The squad leader stood screaming under him, holding his bayonet to the soldier’s behind and the soldier was crying with shame and fear.⁵⁴ “There was some kind of bullying going on every day”, continued Kiiski. Kustaa Liikkanen (born 1902) was punished by a sergeant inspecting the lockers who found some breadcrumbs in his drinking cup and thought his blanket was in bad condition. The sergeant hit Liikkanen over the head with the blanket, causing it to split and form a kind of poncho over his shoulders. In this gear, he was ordered, “to take the cup between my teeth and jump squat out into the [barracks] corridor, shouting loudly that I had shat in the cup”.⁵⁵ This form of bullying, aimed at humiliating individuals, however, seems to have decreased towards the end of the 1920’s and was not exercised at least by regular NCOs or officers in the 1930’s.⁵⁶

More often, the conscripts were bullied as a collective. In many units there was a practice of punishing the conscripts for even the smallest infringements, oftentimes even alleged breaches of regulations, with so-called *santsi*, extra duty. *Santsi* usually consisted in physically extreme close-order drill, with an emphasis on the heavy and dirty practice of instantly hitting the ground at the command, lie headlong pressed to the ground and then get up again, repeated over and over for up to an hour, sometimes in muddy fields, sleet or water puddles. To the soldier’s mind, it was often more a question of harassment and bullying than just punishments or adequate military training.⁵⁷ For example, Toivo Verronen who served in 1936–1937 remembered a lieutenant who ordered the soldiers to first take off their blouses and then lie prone in a forest terrain covered by dry reindeer moss –

⁵² TYKL 45, nr 32, p. 5; nr 35, p. 25; nr 65, p. 11; nr 78, p. 11; nr 90, pp. 10–11; nr 96, p. 33; nr 132, p. 15; nr 147, p. 29.

⁵³ TYKL 45, nr 96, p. 33.

⁵⁴ TYKL 45, nr 90, pp. 10–11.

⁵⁵ TYKL 45, nr 85, p. 24.

⁵⁶ Cf Leimu, *Pennalismä ja initiaatio* 1985, pp. 163–165.

⁵⁷ TYKL 45, nr 14, p. 7; nr 20, p. 10; nr 32, p. 5; nr 38, p. 14; nr 65, pp. 11, 63–64, 73–76; nr 85, pp. 26, 30, 37; nr 96, pp. 32–33; nr 165, pp. 56–58; nr 179, p. 21; nr 208, p. 6; nr 216, pp. 15, 21–22; nr 226, p. 12; nr 227, pp. 261, 264; nr 230, pp. 25–26; nr 232, p. 5; nr 238 pp. 2–3; nr 244, pp. 29–30.

a very prickly bed.⁵⁸ Heikki Kolehmainen recalled that his unit at NCO school was once made to crawl 150 metres through sleet mixed with horse manure.⁵⁹ Another usual form for *santsi* was extra marches with a heavy load, sometimes in the middle of the night or ‘spiced’ with hitting the ground and getting up – with the heavy load – every now and then.⁶⁰ A milder yet in some units very frequent form of harassment was making the soldiers crawl around the floor of their squad rooms, going beneath the bunk beds, or sometimes under every second bed and over every second.⁶¹

More imaginative and even theatrical forms of *santsi* were also well remembered by some narrators.⁶² Eino Sallila (born 1901) served in Kouvola in 1920–1921 and according to his memories the recruits were heavily bullied in his unit. He wrote at some length about a certain sergeant-major who was known for his ironical bullying style. Sallila described how this sergeant-major enjoyed himself, “like a cat playing with a mouse”, at the beginning of an “extra exercise” for a group of conscripts to be punished for keeping their hair too long or having dirty finger-nails.

He strode up in front of our group, stepping like a cock, and roared (...) “we will spend a little stimulating and educative time here outdoors, after which you can compare how much more gorgeous you [with long hair] are in comparison to those who followed the regulations.” (...) By now the sergeant-major was already energised and stepped up to the boy standing first in line and two inches from his nose he roared: “Now you tell me the reason why this group is standing in front of me.” This boy drew his lungs full of air and roared in the same style: “Because we had shitty finger-nails.” Thus the staging was in order and the performance itself could begin. There was a command: “Long-haired and shitty-nailed, attention...”

The soldiers were commanded to hit the ground and get up several times and to crawl forward on the ground while holding on with both hand to their rifles held behind their necks. Sallila recalled that when a fat boy did not keep up and lifted his seat a bit off the ground the sergeant-major came rushing and pushed him down with his boot: “when you lift your bottom like that, the enemy will notice you and shoot so many holes in your ass that we will drown in shit. – Don’t you even know that we are practicing for war –“. After these “exercises” had continued for an hour, the group was

⁵⁸ TYKL 45, nr 230, p. 33.

⁵⁹ TYKL 45, nr 35, p. 50.

⁶⁰ TYKL 45, nr 72, pp. 12–13; nr 90, pp. 13–14; nr 184, p. 23; nr 227, p. 158; nr 238, pp. 2–3.

⁶¹ TYKL 45, nr 85, p. 23; nr 132, p. 30; nr 195, pp. 172–173; nr 244, p. 31.

⁶² TYKL 45, nr 85, p. 24; nr 159, p. 5; nr 184, p. 23; nr 195, pp. 160–161, 172–173; nr 202, pp. 4–5.

commanded to run up and down a steep hill, all the time ordered to hit the ground and get up. Sallila commented:

This devilish form of torture is perhaps not possible to completely explain in words. (...) As we afterwards were standing in line in front of our barracks and that "dear mother" of ours was again striding in front of us looking rather satisfied, our group certainly did not look much like a valiant contingent of soldiers. (...) Every member in our bodies and every piece of clothing we had on were so wet that our tongues were the driest parts of us. It seems a miracle that nobody got seriously hurt in this operation.⁶³

In most cases, the soldiers did not dare lodge a complaint against abusive superiors. "[I]t was unusual that anybody complained, and if he did he would not do it twice, you got under pressure for that."⁶⁴ In many cases it was also impossible to report abusive superiors because no formal breach of regulations had been made. It was often impossible to make a sharp distinction between relevant training for warfare, punishments in accordance with regulations, and harassments.

Well-liked and admired superiors

In spite of the many accounts of harshness, bullying and abuses, it must be underlined that many men throughout the period and especially in the 1930's shared Onni Mähönen's positive experiences, claiming that the overall relationships between superiors and soldiers in their own unit were quite good. Almost everyone who participated in the 1972-1973 collection remembered individual superiors who were well-liked and even admired by the men. In the descriptions of these popular officers, what was emphasised is not as much their friendliness as their calm, businesslike, matter-of-fact and civil manner, as well as their fairness. In most cases, it was also underlined how well-liked officers combined justness and correctness with a markedly competent, professional and highly demanding attitude to the men's military training. All these qualities, however, were appreciated not least in contrast to other, not so calm superiors.

Jorma Kiiski (b. 1903) described the "reassuring" feeling he had when he met his new lieutenant at NCO school. Instead of giving Kiiski a scolding for the condition of his rifle, this lieutenant declared that his rifle was hopelessly worn out. Kiiski did not forget to mention in his memories that the lieutenant was even smiling as he said this – evidently a remarkable circumstance in this context. "During the whole six months in [NCO]

⁶³ TYKL 45, nr 65, pp. 17-21.

⁶⁴ TYKL 45, nr 50, p. 13.

school I could witness how this lieutenant really was a veritable humane gentleman who did not want to show how difficult he could make his subordinates' lives."⁶⁵ When Urpo Sallanko (b. 1908) was sent to the company commander for a telling-off because he had resisted his squad-leaders demands for demonstrative submissiveness, he was impressed by the calmness, "almost friendliness" of the captain. This officer said to him, "I like men who have character, and we are not trying to break it but educate it. But do you understand that here you must also learn to obey?" He was told to obey his superiors, but come to see the captain in person if he has anything to complain about and was let off with a very light punishment. "A very happy boy left [the captain's] office. I did not mind the punishment, but I had expected brawling and bullying and now he spoke to me like a father to his son or like man to man. That was why I was so relieved."⁶⁶

Just as in Sallanko's case, the company officers – lieutenants and captains – and higher-ranking officers were often remembered as benevolent although distant paternal figures who protected the conscripts from bullying by lower-ranking superiors. The same Eino Sallila, who reported on severe bullying, cherished the memory of how the battalion commander once intervened as their Jäger sergeant major was keeping "extra exercises" for his unit on a Sunday, which was prohibited. "The sharp voice of the commander interrupted the sergeant-major's explanations: 'Take these men to their barracks immediately. Finland's army does not need Prussian any more than Russian teachings of this kind, is that clear.' The [estimation] of this captain T-n rose sharply among the men in the garrison, but rumour said that among his fellow officers it sank."⁶⁷

Among the men who had served in the 1920's, several informants stated that the reason why there were no abuses in their unit was that the company commander did not tolerate it.⁶⁸ This implies that these men considered bullying such a normal state in the armed forces at the time of their military service that its absence required a positive explanation. Albert Lahti (b. 1907) wrote that there was no real bullying in his company; "We had been blessed with regular NCOs better than average".⁶⁹ On the other hand, since the soldiers thought that committed and competent officers could stop the bullying, they might have understood its occurrence as evidence of the company officers' silent approval, indifference or sheer

⁶⁵ TYKL 45, nr 90, p. 15.

⁶⁶ TYKL 45, nr 165, pp. 95–109.

⁶⁷ TYKL 45, nr 65, p. 37. Cf nr 78, pp. 18–20,

⁶⁸ TYKL 45, nr 65, p. 37; nr 72, p. 35; nr 147, pp. 15–16, 28–29; nr 165, p. 109; nr 175, pp. 8, 35; nr 227, pp. 157–158.

⁶⁹ TYKL 45, nr 147, pp. 28–29.

incompetence. Even in some memories of military training that do not include accounts of inappropriate treatment, the military culture of excessive harshness and bullying is thus present as a shadow or potential that must be negated.

5.3 *Understandings of disciplinary practices*

Brutal treatment of soldiers certainly was no peculiarity to the Finnish Army. It is a familiar picture of life in modern Western armies. Within social research, it has often been interpreted in *functionalistic* terms. The objective is to initially break down the recruit, strip him of his dignity, individuality and previous identities, in order to subsequently rebuild him as an efficient soldier, identifying only with his military unit and combat group. His dignity is given back to him only when he has disciplined himself to become a well-oiled part of the fighting machine, desensitized to and prepared to perform military violence.⁷⁰ Ethnologist Pekka Leimu, who has analysed the 1972–1973 collection for a study on hazing among the conscripts (1985), takes the view that harsh methods were necessary to discipline recalcitrant conscripts in the wake of the Civil War 1918. He interprets for example the practice of *huudattaminen* as a method for breaking down a conscript's resistance by making him ridiculous in front of the other soldiers.⁷¹

Among the testimonies of men who themselves experienced interwar military training, we find a range of different understandings of the reasons behind the disciplinary practices in use. Most of them, however, differ markedly from the functionalist interpretation of brutality and bullying as a rational method for disciplining and socialising recruits into soldierhood. They rather looked to the individual psychology of the bullies for the reasons behind abusive practices.

⁷⁰ See e.g. Thomas Kühne, 'Der Soldat' in Ute Frevert & Heinz-Gerhard Haupt, eds., *Der Mensch des 20. Jahrhunderts* (Frankfurt a.M., 1999), pp. 344–372, at pp. 349–351; Frevert, *Kasernierte Nation* 2001, p. 246, 270; Sanborn, *Drafting the Russian Nation* 2003, pp. 168–170; Dejung, *Aktivdienst und Geschlechterordnung* 2007, pp. 125–126. Many such interpretations are inspired by Erving Goffman's analysis of total institutions in *Asylums. Essays on the Condition of the Social Situation of Mental Patients and Other Inmates* (New York, 1961).

⁷¹ Leimu, *Pennalismi ja initiaatio* 1985, pp. 166–167

Pentti Haanpää: soldiers and officers corrupting each other

Pentti Haanpää was obviously intrigued by the question of *why* the relationships between soldiers and officers often became so hostile. This particular question was a key theme in his collection of short stories about army life, where he tried out a range of different possible answers through the medium of fiction. Haanpää did not look for answers in any rational military curriculum, but in the contradictions and tensions between the psyche and character of Finnish men on the one hand and the military system on the other. He can actually be read as pointing to a contradiction between Finnish masculinity and military subordination as an underlying cause for the bullying of conscripts. In spite of largely writing about military life from the perspective of the conscripts, uneducated farmhands and forestry workers from Eastern and Northern Finland, Haanpää did not straightforwardly blame the officers for the conflict-ridden misery of military life that he portrayed. Rather, his stories told about a military world where the officers and soldiers harassed and corrupted each other in a vicious circle.

The conscripts Haanpää portrayed found peacetime military service meaningless and unproductive. In the light of modern gender historical research,⁷² one interpretation of his army stories is that the exaggerated emphasis on close-order drill and indoor duties in recruit training ran contrary to two central traits in contemporary agrarian norms for masculinity. Firstly, the value put on personal autonomy – not bowing one’s head to any other man – preferably based on freeholdership, but also on being a skilled and esteemed workman. Secondly, the importance of a man being in useful, productive labour to support himself and his family. Haanpää further places the conscripts he portrays within a traditional image of the Finnish peasants and workers as obstinate, even hostile, towards authorities and officials.⁷³ Against their officers, these conscripts “harboured all the bitterness, suspicion and animosity of the Finnish character towards one they have to obey”, he writes. If there is not a war to fight,

“[w]hy then knock about in barracks and sweat and monkey about on the exercise fields and excessively pretend to honour another man, a superior decorated with buttons and ribbons? To the Finns’ character this was awkward, laborious and agonising. They did not understand

⁷² See p. 17 above.

⁷³ Cf Pöysä, *Jätkät ja suomalainen maskuliinisuus* 2000, pp. 8–12; Pöysä, *Jätkän synty* 1997, pp. 241–243.

any work that was done for some distant, obscure, hypothetic, hardly understandable reasons.”⁷⁴

The resulting recalcitrance and hostility towards superiors annoy and enrage the officers of Haanpää’s stories, provoking them to use ever more abusive means to force the soldiers into submissiveness. The forms of bullying Haanpää mentions are similar to the ones described in the 1972–1973 collection; shouting, endless close-order drill exercises used as a punishment or to break the soldiers’ resistance, the practice of *huudattaminen* or ‘make-them-shout’, ordering the soldiers to crawl around their squad-rooms beneath their bunk beds, etc.⁷⁵

Haanpää was both understanding and caustic about the idealism of nationalist officers. In the opening story of *Fields and Barracks*, ‘The German Jäger’ (*Saksan jääkäri*), Haanpää portrayed a Jäger officer who fought in the world war, the Liberation War, the Estonian War of Independence and the “tribal wars” in Eastern Karelia, ending up as a training officer in the Finnish Army. He is born a tenant farmer’s son, but still allowed to attend elementary school. He reads “more books than is healthy for somebody bound to become a workman”. He meditates upon Runeberg’s and Topelius’s images of the Finnish people, “beautified by the sheen of poetry” and is infatuated with ideas about “manly fitness, justice, valour, fatherland”. Arriving at the training camp of the Prussian army during the Great War, Haanpää’s Jäger protagonist feels “betrayed” and “depressed”. The barracks and training fields are grey and dull and there is no sign of the military grandness he had expected. “He felt that here one should rather take on the humility of a whipped dog.” Haanpää’s biographer Vesa Karonen suggests Haanpää was in part describing himself as a young man and his own dismay at the disillusioning contact with the bleak realities of military life.⁷⁶

The idealism of this Jäger sergeant-major is gradually eroded by his war experiences. It receives a final blow from the reluctance and unyieldingness of Finnish conscripts in peacetime military service. These conscripts, as depicted by Haanpää,

fearfully awaited their military service, malingered to be exempted if only possible, thought the barracks and training fields were gloomy and gruesome, torture devices invented to plague people, and the year spent there gone to waste, wiped out of their life history. And a moment of great racket and joy it was when they departed from there, a resurrection, a waking up from the dead, a day of freedom.⁷⁷

⁷⁴ Haanpää, *Kenttä ja kasarmi* 1928, pp. 21–22.

⁷⁵ E.g. Haanpää, *Kenttä ja kasarmi* 1928, pp. 24, 71–74, 81, 84.

⁷⁶ Karonen, *Haanpään elämä* 1985, p. 49.

⁷⁷ Haanpää, *Kenttä ja kasarmi* 1928, pp. 21–22.

The Jäger sergeant-major becomes increasingly depressed by seeing the conscripts' "sleepy, grumpy and suffering" faces each morning. The only thing they are enthusiastic about is inventing schemes to avoid and escape their duties and exercises. They despise their officers, thinking that someone who serves for money in the armed forces is "either too lazy or otherwise unskilled" to find employment in civilian society. The task given the officers, to educate patriotism in the soldiers and make them trust and love their officers, proves utterly impossible in the face of the conscripts' averseness. "Swearing and roaring at them was what you had to do, otherwise they would not move an inch." Their obstinacy and scornfulness make the sergeant-major, a thoughtful and idealistic patriot, enraged. "He felt a desire to make these men run until they dropped dead, order them up a tree and down headlong into a snowdrift, to do something really evil, to really humiliate them, to make them understand how great power a man of one golden ribbon had in this Republic."⁷⁸

The officers' frustration with obstinate soldiers is the main explanation offered by Haanpää for the bullying of subordinates, yet he tried out others as well. One story in *Fields and Barracks* is a sketch of a sergeant who in his youth has been ridiculed for his vanity and ambitions by the people in his village, making him embittered and hateful towards all human beings. He finds his place in life as a training NCO in the army. "Now he was in a position that could not be better, now he could enjoy the sweetness of revenge, let out the endless hate and bitterness he felt towards all human flesh and blood." Haanpää describes how the sergeant enjoys making dozens of men move at his order, lie prone on the ground and crawl, how he takes pleasure in singling out a soldier to playfully torment him, how he revels in seeing robust men in front of him frothing with rage yet unable to utter a word of protest.

In another story, the main character is a middle-aged captain who has deteriorated from being a light-hearted, plucky and ambitious young officer, "happy and agile like a kitten", into a jaded and embittered drunk, "his soul like a mistreated worn-out draught animal". What caused him to change? Who knows, the voice of the narrator tells us; perhaps the burden of life, the greyness and monotony of life in a small garrison town. Then came the alcohol, "poisoning his blood and heart", changing his character and shattering any hopes of further advancement. Constantly ill-humoured and hung-over in duty, he takes it out on his conscripts, his only satisfaction in life being the knowledge that his men fear and hate him.

⁷⁸ Haanpää, *Kenttä ja kasarmi* 1928, pp. 24-25.

In the final analysis, Haanpää seems to be blaming the military system more than these individual officers' weaknesses of character. The officers he depicts are depressed by having to train ever new droves of recruits who play as stupid as they can and must be taught the most basic things by force. These officers all seem plagued by the same weariness, drinking most nights and arriving at the company in the morning in a bad mood. Haanpää seems to condemn the whole concept of professional, full-time training officers that was one of the core principles of the cadre army system in its Prussian and Russian forms; "few people could find joy and harmony to last a lifetime in teaching fast and efficient ways of killing".⁷⁹ In Haanpää's images of soldiering, not only the conscripts but the officers themselves suffer terribly from the effects of this unsound profession.

Mika Waltari: taking the "right" attitude

Mika Waltari's literary depiction of his military service presents a very different interpretation of the army discipline. He had a decidedly positive bias to military service and described his mood upon reporting for duty as the anticipation, both anxious and excited, of a great adventure. He had grown tired of himself and his everyday life, he wrote, he felt that it was "heavy to lead one's own life that still has not found a direction". One day he decided not to wait for his respite from military service to end, but headed for the call-up office. Reporting for duty, he sensed that he was leaving "everything old, ordinary and tiresome" behind and journeying into a completely new and unknown world. He was looking forward to "not having to think and worry" for himself, only follow orders. "I have only one ambition; that I would be able to take the right attitude, to submit myself and obey. Adjust to a new sphere of life, cope where others do [...]"⁸⁰

Waltari was not disappointed and disillusioned by the reality of military life the way Haanpää evidently was. This probably had something to do with the differences between the social settings in which they served. Because of his educational level, Waltari was immediately upon arrival singled out for leadership training and sent to the NCO school summer camp in Parola in Southern Finland. There, he joined a group mainly

⁷⁹ Haanpää, *Kenttä ja kasarmi* 1928, p. 24. In spite of the prohibitory law in force 1919–1932, alcoholism was considered a major problem among regular officers and NCOs and commented upon with concern in many contemporary sources. As described in chapter 3.3 above, many officers considered themselves overworked, underpaid and not receiving the social recognition they thought they deserved. A professional officer among the 1972 informants describes heavy drinking as a widespread problem among regular NCOs in his regiment in the 1920's. See TYKL 45, nr 35, pp. 181–182.

⁸⁰ Waltari, *Siellä missä miehiä tehdään* 1931, pp. 7–8.

consisting of educated youngsters from middle class families in the capital Helsinki. Most of them had the ambition of being picked out for reserve officer training and therefore strove to outperform each other, whatever challenges their superiors presented them with. They thought of themselves as an elite among the conscripted citizen-soldiers and were evidently to some extent treated as such by their superiors.

Waltari does not describe having witnessed or experienced any real bullying or abuses. He certainly describes the less enjoyable sides of the conscripts' life in detail – the gloominess and weariness of duty, the extreme physical strain and exhaustion of marching exercises, the tiresome meticulousness of equipment maintenance and the strictness of discipline.⁸¹ For example, he describes the draconian rifle-inspections, where nothing seems to be good enough for the inspecting probationary officers who more or less arbitrarily order the tired conscripts to re-polish scrupulously cleaned rifles. “I get to understand that it is impossible to ever get the rifle cleaned. That the inspector can always and in every case reject each and every rifle if that amuses him. [...] We do not even want to understand. We just think the whole business is especially invented to torment us and take revenge upon us.”

Yet in the end, Waltari does not seem to be truly critical of anything in the military training system. Although the conscripts' life feels arduous at times, there is no malevolence anywhere causing their hardships, only necessary training and preparation for war. Illustrative of his attitude is his comment the first time he experiences what is known in the military colloquial language as “licking the ground”, being ordered repeatedly to hit the ground flat during an exercise because the training officer is displeased with the conscripts' performance. “It was not gruelling at all, rather a refreshing incident.”⁸²

One evening, after a hard day of military exercises, Waltari's squad is taken for an “extra singing lesson” in the form of a forced march at high speed. They are being punished for not having learnt the regiment's marching song well enough. This is a typical form of disciplinary action, an experience that somebody else might have described as bullying, but which Waltari regards as a justified correction. Waltari has hurt his heel on a tough marching exercise two days before and suffers increasing pain during the march. Eventually he is dizzy with shooting pain and cannot keep up with the troop. The probationary officer leading the exercise gives him permission to stay behind, “he knows that my foot has been sore, he is sorry

⁸¹ Waltari, *Siellä missä miehiä tehdään* 1931, pp. 51–54, 77–79, 109–111, 205.

⁸² Waltari, *Siellä missä miehiä tehdään* 1931, p. 33.

for me.” Although this superior thus has knowingly caused him immense pain, Waltari is not angry with the officer but with *himself*. He sheds tears of shame as he is forced to fall behind.⁸³ The humiliation for him is not in being subordinated and maltreated, but in not being able to take it like a man, to endure anything the others do, shrugging it off afterwards with a laugh.

In connection with this same “singing lesson” Waltari actually describes how he and his comrades articulate the experience afterwards, in effect defusing the pain and humiliation suffered. During the march, the conscripts “curse with black hearts, we hate the marching song, we hate the whole institution, the camp, our clothes, the road.” Yet a few weeks later, Waltari writes, “we will remember this march as one of the funniest memories of this whole summer. Because of this, we come to admire and love the song. It is the marching song of *our* regiment, mighty and wonderful. Its familiar tune bitter-sweetly thrills the heart and gives us a tremendous sense of duty, love and strength to endure all hardships.”⁸⁴ He thus ascribes another meaning to what happened, turning a loathsome and perhaps humiliating experience into a positive experience, formative of his identity as a member of this particular group of young men who shared the experience.

Throughout, Waltari portrays his superiors as good-hearted men who behind their strict official facade deeply care for their soldiers. The severe sergeant-major at summer camp is the conscripts’ “terror and delight” and his shouting can be heard from the company office all day long – yet the conscripts are secretly proud of him and fear him and mock him “like schoolboys would a teacher”. They tell the most fanciful horror stories about him, although in reality, according to Waltari, the sergeant-major is a kind and dutiful man. He tries to keep everything running and is simply overworked. “No wonder if he is irritated and tyrannises us. Actually [he] is sometimes very friendly and tries to arrange everything for our best.” The sergeant-major at reserve officer school, where Waltari ends up after his recruit training, is also both feared and well-liked. “His command of language is magnificent and he treats us like mischievous puppies that he tries to bring up to decent living, sometimes with lenience, sometimes with strictness.”⁸⁵ Where Haanpää used the metaphor of a whipped dog for conscripted soldiering, Waltari thus uses the image of untamed puppies that are educated with loving stringency.

⁸³ Waltari, *Siellä missä miehiä tehdään* 1931, p. 81.

⁸⁴ Waltari, *Siellä missä miehiä tehdään* 1931, pp. 79–80.

⁸⁵ Waltari, *Siellä missä miehiä tehdään* 1931, pp. 98–99, 212–213

There is one passage where Waltari as a recruit already seems half aware of the preferential treatment he and his comrades are getting, as he is talking to a conscript from another unit. “They have an awfully harsh recruit training. They are mainly completely ordinary ground level catfish [recruits].”⁸⁶ In general, however, he makes an effort to assure the reader that most of the horror stories told about military training are simply outrageously exaggerated. Waltari repeatedly describes how the soldiers take pleasure in boasting about the toughness of their training. When Waltari and his comrades are commanded to peel potatoes for the whole regiment together with soldiers from another unit, they entertain each other by competing in who can tell the wildest stories about tyrannical officers and physically extreme exercises, taking pride in having a harder training, being more “under the steamroller”, than the soldiers of any other unit. “Is it any wonder that you hear the most remarkable stories about the army?” Waltari asks.⁸⁷

The 1972–1973 memories: contemplating the bullies

Most of the elderly men writing down their memories of military service in the early 1970’s did not reflect or comment as explicitly as the two young authors Haanpää and Waltari on the reasons behind the sometimes harsh treatment of soldiers in their writings. Perhaps they regarded it as a given aspect of military life in the period; perhaps they felt that the time for criticising or defending these practices had long passed and that it was more significant to their own narrative that they had been through it and coped with it. The terminology used in the memories nevertheless gives some clues.

One frame of interpretation was the notion of a ‘Prussian discipline’ brought to Finland by the Jägers (see p. 128 above). Here, the incomprehensible elements of military training – the harshness, the yelling, the theatrical emphasis on hierarchy, saluting and geometrically precise formations – are made understandable and at the same time usually rejected as “foreign” customs. The concept of “Prussian discipline” externalises elements of military culture experienced as absurd, as something that could not have been invented within Finnish culture, that was unsuited to the Finnish man’s character and that was in time replaced by an emerging domestic military culture that was both more humane and better suited to local circumstances. This nationalistically coloured interpretation thus

⁸⁶ Waltari, *Siellä missä miehiä tehdään* 1931, pp. 76–77.

⁸⁷ Waltari, *Siellä missä miehiä tehdään* 1931, pp. 22, 62–63, 163–164, 170–172, 212, 223; quote p. 63.

includes a notion of Finnish conscripts as somehow more independent and unyielding than their German counterparts.⁸⁸

Three other colloquial terms from interwar military jargon were also used to describe harsh disciplinary treatment; *simputus* ('bullheading') that originally referred to older pupils at the cadet school hazing younger arrivals, but soon spread into the vernacular, designating a bullying based on the power to command within the military hierarchy as well;⁸⁹ *höykytys*, which translates as 'hammering' or 'torment'; and *santsi*, literally referring to an extra portion of food, which meant extra duty as a punishment. Calling a disciplinary practice *simputus* was a clear marker that it was considered mere harassment. Although *höykytys* or *santsi* in principle could refer to punishments in accordance with regulations, corrections for real neglectfulness or minor misdemeanours, these terms in the narratives were also commonly used in association with representations of unjust collective punishments for insignificant lapses of individuals or even for fabricated accusations.

According to the reminiscences, the conscripts did not in general regard these practices as rational instruments of military training but as harassment. Urpo Sallanko, serving in 1929–1930 wrote, "... my nature rose up in protest against this 'hammering'. I thought it had nothing to do with training for defending the fatherland."⁹⁰ The narrators tend to understand bullying, especially practices they designated as *simputus*, in terms of the individual psychology of certain superiors. Eino Sallila commented on one abusive sergeant, "Finland was certainly short of men in those days, as such sadists had to be tolerated in the army for years on end."⁹¹ The young soldiers depicted in their recollections discarded the bullies as men lacking self-restraint who are only taking out their personal problems and aggressions on the soldiers. The men remembering bullying offered explanations such as the low educational and mental level of NCOs in the 1920's;⁹² the war traumas of the Jäger officers;⁹³ the bullies having marital problems or simply a hang-over;⁹⁴ an officers' bitterness over his degradation due to alcoholism;⁹⁵ the immaturity of a very young squad leader who had

⁸⁸ TYKL 45, nr 35, pp. 113–114; nr 50, pp. 13, 30; nr 90 pp. 40–41; nr 114, p. 28.

⁸⁹ Leimu, *Pennalismi ja initiaatio* 1985, pp. 116, 119, 124. At least one informant in the 1972 collection uses the term *simputus* in its more original sense for the bullying of recruits by privates in the previous age class; see TYKL 45, nr 226, p. 8.

⁹⁰ TYKL 45, nr 165, p. 57.

⁹¹ TYKL 45, nr 65, p. 76.

⁹² TYKL 45, nr 26, p. 7; nr 35, p. 119; nr 179, p. 45.

⁹³ TYKL 45, nr 50, p. 30.

⁹⁴ TYKL 45, nr 38 p. 14; nr 85, pp. 32–33; nr 126, p. 28.

⁹⁵ TYKL 45, nr 230, p. 25.

volunteered for service;⁹⁶ the envy of a bullying sergeant-major from a proletarian background towards conscripts from higher social strata;⁹⁷ and the sadistic or abnormal personal character of the bullying officers.⁹⁸

Contempt for the bullies and an attempt to construct them as weaklings in spite of their formal power over other men runs through the descriptions of bullying. The conscripted NCOs inclination to bully recruits was explained as their being intoxicated with power and unable to manage the position they had been assigned. Valtteri Aaltonen (b. 1903) wrote,

For these "gentlemen" their position as superior and in authority had gone so badly to their head that they, or most of them, had to use this "position" for making life more difficult for us recruits. The officers were somewhat more bearable. They of course had received more academic education than the NCOs whose education at the best only amounted to elementary school.⁹⁹

In his memories, Heikki Kolehmainen referred to corporals who took their rank too seriously as 'cockerels'.¹⁰⁰ Kustaa Liikkanen, who served as a conscript in the Turku garrison in 1922-23, derided the lack of self-restraint and natural leadership qualities in the company's sergeant-major in his memories, by admiringly describing a certain corporal Kamonen as a very talented military educator:

His behaviour and commanding was on quite another level than [the sergeant-major's]. Kamonen's style of command was crisp, but at the same time it was demanding, calm but very resolute. He never got over-excited. In other words, he did not jump out of his skin. Never spraying spit in the eyes of those he was commanding. His eyes never bulged as much as an inch out of his head. Thus, self-confidence above all.¹⁰¹

In other words, according to Virtanen, officers who had to bawl at the soldiers or bully them in order to get something done were not using a disciplinary technique, but were simply revealing themselves as men with neither self-confidence nor self-control and therefore unsuited as leaders of other men.¹⁰²

Heikki Kolehmainen, who in the 1970's could comment upon the interwar development from the perspective of a long professional military

⁹⁶ TYKL 45, nr 179, p. 45.

⁹⁷ TYKL 45, nr 232, p. 23.

⁹⁸ TYKL 45, nr 35, p. 25; nr 65, pp. 70-76; nr 138, pp. 4, 45; nr 179, p. 21; nr 232, pp. 23, 33.

⁹⁹ TYKL 45, nr 65, p. 25.

¹⁰⁰ TYKL 45, nr 35, p. 87.

¹⁰¹ TYKL 45, nr 85, p. 39.

¹⁰² Cf TYKL 45, nr 179, p. 22.

career, estimated that one main reason for the bullying and maltreatment of conscripts in the 1920's was simply the lack of properly trained regular personnel. Whereas all kinds of "dregs of society" had to be employed as NCOs in the early 1920's, the quality of training officers slowly rose towards the end of the 1920's, claims Kolehmainen. In his experience, the scarcity of educated personnel was finally overcome in his regiment as late as in 1937.¹⁰³ As a combined result of efforts to develop military training, a slow increase in the number of professionally trained officers and better educated NCOs, general enhancement of the army's organisational structures, as well as public and political pressure, the bullying seems to have decreased and softened in the 1930's. However, it never completely disappeared from either the practices or popular notions of military training in the interwar period.

Functionalism versus meaning in understandings of bullying

To some extent, sociological interpretations of military bullying as 'breaking down and re-building' the soldier can be applied to the Finnish interwar case. Recruit training, with its emphasis on close-order drill and indoor duties, was evidently aimed at drilling the soldiers into instinctive, unquestioning and instantaneous obedience. According to Juha Mälkki, Finnish military thinking in the 1920's understood military discipline as the exact and mechanical fulfilment of given orders. Visitations by high ranking officers focused on inspecting the soldiers marching past in close-order and the neatness of garrisons and camps. The outer appearance of the troops was taken as evidence of how disciplined they were, which in turn was understood as a direct indicator of how well they would perform in combat, i.e. how well they would execute given orders.¹⁰⁴

However, the incessant inspections, where nothing was ever good enough, perfectly made beds were "blasted" and laboriously cleaned rifles "burnt", also seem to have been intended to instil the soldiers with a sense that not even their utmost efforts were ever enough to fulfil military requirements. Not only should the soldiers feel that they were constantly supervised and that even the slightest infringements of regulations – a lump of sugar in the drinking cup, the spoon lying in the wrong direction – would be detected and punished by their superiors.¹⁰⁵ They should also feel they were good-for-nothings who only by subjecting themselves to thorough and

¹⁰³ TYKL 45, nr 35, pp. 119–132. Cf nr 126, p. 24.

¹⁰⁴ Mälkki, *Herrat, jätkäät ja sotataito* 2008, pp. 148–166, 189.

¹⁰⁵ Cf Ulrich Bröckling, *Disziplin. Soziologie und Geschichte militärischer Gehorsamsproduktion* (München, 1997), p. 179.

prolonged training by their superiors might one day reach the status of real soldiers.

These practices have been interpreted in terms of a *feminisation* of the recruits in previous research. E.g. Kathrin Däniker finds that recruit training in Switzerland at the end of the nineteenth century over-emphasised chores that were female-coded: making beds, cleaning and care of one's clothes. As the officers never performed any of these tasks, they symbolically inhabited the masculine and dominant position of a binary gender order transferred from civilian into military life. Symbolical references to the dualist gender order in civilian life were thus used to prop up and legitimate the superordination of manlier officers and the subordination of less manly soldiers. Misogynist abuse and humiliations stripped the recruits of their manly honour, which they had to win back by fighting their way through the ever tougher combat training towards the end of their military service.¹⁰⁶

Explicitly feminising abuse is, however, not mentioned in the Finnish memories of military training, save some very few exceptions.¹⁰⁷ This might be due to self-censorship or forgetfulness, but might also point to an interesting trait in the traditional gender order in northern Scandinavia and Finland, marked by more egalitarian gender relationships than Southern European cultures. The opposite of manliness in many contexts was not womanliness, but being a boy or youngster who was not yet a skilled workman.¹⁰⁸ The soldiers' manly pride as workmen was taken away by the denial of their ability to perform even the simplest task correctly. They were reduced to the position of boys, who could not yet perform an adult man's tasks as a warrior, due to weakness and lacking skill, but who would arrive there one day – provided they were obedient and ready to learn from those superior in masculine warrior's prowess.

In the Finnish case, there does not seem to have been any centrally controlled system or articulated plan behind this particular way of socialising the conscripts into a specific military behaviour and attitude, nor behind its extreme forms, the bullying by superiors. Rather, abuses and bullying occurred where superior officers turned a blind eye, and was easily weeded

¹⁰⁶ Däniker, 'Die Truppe – ein Weib' 1999, p. 120; Hämmerle, 'Relevanz des Connell'schen Konzepts' 1997, pp. 113–114.

¹⁰⁷ "Have you been a wetting nurse in civilian life? No sir. Well then do up the button on your chest." TYKL 45, nr 85, p. 19. The same "joke", here attributed to a sergeant-major in a garrison in Western Finland in 1923, is reported to have been used by a corporal on the Eastern border in 1936–37; see TYKL 45, nr 238, p. 2.

¹⁰⁸ Johansson, 'Beautiful Men' 1989; Löfström, *Sukupuoliero agrarikulttuurissa* 1999, pp. 148–153, 194; Östman, *Mjök och jord* 2000, pp. 155–157, 172–174; Jonas Liliequist, 'Peasants against Nature. Crossing the boundaries between man and animal in seventeenth and eighteenth century Sweden' *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 1:3 (1991), pp. 393–423, at p. 419.

out where commanding officers wanted to stop it. The hierarchical relationships therefore varied from company to company. The rather poorly organised armed forces of the early 1920's had to manage with NCOs and training officers without proper military education. There was a lack in the supervision of how conscripts were treated.

Many officers certainly also seem to have harboured a mindset, perhaps shaped by old European military traditions, according to which scaring, humiliating and bullying the soldiers into fearful obedience was a natural and necessary part of shaping a civilian into a soldier. In addition to the military imperative of producing obedient and efficient soldiers, many officers embraced the political project of rebuilding the conscript into "a citizen conscious of his patriotic duties". The reminiscences do not, however, reveal much of how this was undertaken, other than by draconian discipline. The 'enlightenment lectures' given by the military priests are hardly mentioned. A few men bring up that officers delivered patriotic speeches on festive occasions such as when the soldiers gave their oath of allegiance or were disbanded.¹⁰⁹ Traces of the political re-education project mainly become visible in recollections of the ban on socialist newspapers and other leftist publications in the garrison areas, permanently reminding conscripts from a "red" background that their citizenship was seen as questionable. Certain cafés and restaurants in the garrison towns that were associated with the workers' movement were also out of bounds for conscripts on evening leaves. Some informants write about how conscripts were anxious to conceal their family association with the red rebellion or the workers' movement from the officers in fear of harassment. Many informants mention that certain conscripts' advancement to NCO or officer training was blocked because of their or their families' association with the political left – a view confirmed by recent historical research.¹¹⁰

Some of the officers might very well have had rational and articulate ideas about the functionality of harsh and humiliating methods. However, as described above, many Finnish military educationalists in the 1920's already viewed this traditional military pedagogy as counter-productive to the needs of a national Finnish army whose effectiveness in combat had to be based on patriotic motivation and not on numbers or 'machine-like obedience'. Neither did the men who personally experienced interwar military training later choose to present the bullying as somehow productive of anything positive, be it discipline, group cohesion, or a new military identity.

¹⁰⁹ E.g. TYKL 45, nr 195, pp. 87–88, 122.

¹¹⁰ TYKL 45, nr 65, pp. 51, 59–60; nr 66, pp. 27–30; nr 96, p. 89; nr 165, pp. 65–66; nr 175, p. 34; nr 196, p. 87; nr 202, p. 10; nr 203, pp. 66–67; nr 230, pp. 58, 72; nr 238, p. 5; nr 244, p. 53. Nurminen, 'Muuttuva armeija' 2008, pp. 58–60.

One way of understanding Haanpää's, Waltari's and the 1970's informants' articulations of experiences of army discipline is to read them as strategies for dealing with the symbolic and psychic threat posed to the narrators' own masculinity by ostentatious military subordination. In his book on men's violences towards women, sociologist Jeff Hearn points out that committing violence is a "resource for demonstrating and showing a person is a man". This violence does not have to be socially accepted in any moral sense to still bring the violator in association with the activity, dominance and, indeed, violence, which all are hallmarks of masculinity in western culture.¹¹¹ Conversely, being bullied carries the threatening mark of unmanliness. The contempt expressed for bullying superiors could, then, be interpreted as one way of handling this threat, by belittling the bullies. Deriding one's superior as a sadist, a drinker, an illiterate dreg, or a person lacking natural authority was a way of claiming that his bullying was evidence of lacking manliness, thus denying his superior masculinity as a man who dominated and subordinated other men. A different strategy to handle the threat to manhood of being bullied, as demonstrated by Mika Waltari, was to belittle the bullying itself, to deny that you were being bullied at all, claiming it was "nothing", just a bit of rough play, something a man must be able to take with a bit of humour. By shrugging it off, the narrator could display his own masculine toughness and endurance that made him "untouchable" – the superiors could not humiliate him since he did not take a bit of *santsi* or *höykky* too seriously.

5.4 *The male body in military service*

In stories about military training, the male body is both an object of disciplinary regulation and a site of personal experiences of shame and pride, of humiliation and proving one's worth.¹¹² Conscripted men's bodies from family and working life into garrisons and training fields, packed them into dormitories of 20 to 50 men, robbed them of zones of intimacy, infringed on their integrity, and demanded they performed extreme physical tasks. It shaped men's bodies through gymnastics, drill, sports and field exercises. It trained men into particular postures and ways of moving and using their bodies as well as particular attitudes towards their bodies,

¹¹¹ Jeff Hearn, *The Violences of Men. How Men Talk About and How Agencies Respond to Men's Violence to Women* (London, 1998), pp. 35–37.

¹¹² Cf Canning, *Gender history* 2006, pp. 168–169.

marked by recklessness towards the body's vulnerability – a typically masculine corporeality in modern Western society.¹¹³ Yet the body's vulnerability put limits to what the men could be put through. The body could also be an instrument or arena of resistance to the system, as conscripts faked or inflicted illness and injuries upon themselves. As the British historian Joanna Bourke has remarked, writing about English soldiers in the First World War: "...the malingerer's protest *centred* on his body; often, it was the last remaining thing he could claim as his own."¹¹⁴

Male bodies and the military gaze

The first concrete contact with conscription and military service for a young man was actually the call-up inspection. The colloquial term often used in Finnish for the call-up, *syyni*, refers to viewing or gazing – to the conscript being seen and inspected by the call-up board. As most men remembered the call-up, the youngsters had to undress in the presence of the others called up and step up stark naked in front of the examination board.¹¹⁵ Juha Mälkki characterises this practice as part of the "inspection mentality" of the era.¹¹⁶ It was evidently an embarrassing or at least peculiar experience for many young men, since it often needed to be treated with humour in narration, giving rise to a large number of anecdotes.¹¹⁷ One of these stories demonstrates how jesting was used at the call-up itself as a means of defusing the tense situation of scores of young naked men being inspected by older men behind a table. Albert Lahti remembered that a young man at his call-up tried to cover his genitals with his hands as he stepped up on the scales to be weighed. A local district court judge corrected him tongue-in-cheek: "Come, come, young man, don't cover anything and don't lessen the load. Step down and take your hands off your balls and then step up on the scales once more so we can see your real weight. – You don't get away as a crown wreck that shamelessly!" The boy did as he was told and steps back upon the scales with his hands at the sides and is greeted by the judge: "All right, what did I tell you, four kilogrammes more weight straight away as you don't support those balls". Laughter rolled around the room where a "court room

¹¹³ Cf Alexandra Howson, *The Body in Society* (Cambridge, 2004), pp. 53–59; Whitehead, *Men and Masculinities* 2002, p. 189.

¹¹⁴ Bourke, *Dismembering the Male* 1996, p. 81.

¹¹⁵ Two informants in the sample mention that the men were inspected "half-naked" or in their underpants; TYKL 45, nr 203, p. 2; nr 227, p. 15.

¹¹⁶ Mälkki, *Herrat, jätkät ja sotataito* 2008, p. 92.

¹¹⁷ E.g. TYKL 45, nr 85, p. 2; nr 96, pp. 4–5; nr 175, p. 3; nr 179, pp. 2–3; nr 195, pp. 3–4; nr 202, p. 1; nr 230, p. 2.

atmosphere” had reigned the moment before. The joke was on the boy on the scales – according to the end of the story he afterwards asked his comrades in round-eyed wonder whether his balls could really be that heavy. For that, he got the nickname ”Lead Balls”.¹¹⁸

At the call-up, male bodies were sorted into those fit and those unfit for military service. As such, there was nothing very particular about the criteria applied. In the military, just as in the civil sphere, it was considered superior for a man to be strong, not weak, tall rather than short, have good eyesight and hearing, well-shaped limbs and no serious or chronic diseases. Yet hardly anywhere else at this time was such a systematic examination and corporeal *comparison* of young men’s bodies made, accompanied by a categorical sorting strongly associated with masculine pride or shame over one’s own body. The physical examination at the call-up often stands out in the memories of military service as a kind of test of manhood and appears to have left behind strong images in memory. Even if few men probably were looking forward to their military service, being categorised as fit for service was still a matter of manly honour, whereas being exempted on the grounds of being physically unfit carried a strong stigma of unmanliness.¹¹⁹

The colloquial term for those discarded, *ruununraakki*, literally translates as “crown wreck”, somebody whose body was such a wreck that it was *not good enough* for the crown, for serving the country as a soldier. According to many informants, the ‘crown wrecks’ were shown contempt in the interwar years, also by young women who would not accept their courtships.¹²⁰ Historian Kenneth Lundin has noted that in 1930’s feature films set in the conscript army, the ‘crown wrecks’ were always depicted as lazy, fat malingerers.¹²¹ Urpo Sallanko (b. 1908) recounted in his memories that he was very nervous at the call-up because he was of small stature. Both his older brothers had been categorised as ‘crown wrecks’ and discarded. Hearing about his brothers, a neighbour woman had told the other women in his home village that ”she would be ashamed to give birth to kids who are not good enough to be men of war. This naturally reached my mothers ears,” Urpo wrote, “and made her weep”.¹²² Lauri Mattila’s friend Janne was sent home “to eat more porridge” because of his weak constitution and “was so

¹¹⁸ TYKL 45, nr 147, pp. 5–6.

¹¹⁹ TYKL 45, nr 44, p. 2; nr 65, p. 2; nr 66, pp. 5–6; nr 138, p. 1; nr 195, pp. 4–5, nr 238, p. 1.

¹²⁰ TYKL 45, nr 35, pp. 3–4; nr 126, p. 33; nr 147, p. 7; nr 203, pp. 1–5; nr 244, pp. 3, 6. Cf Mälkki, *Herrat, jätkät ja sotataito* 2008, pp. 81–82.

¹²¹ Lundin, ‘Armén i rampljuset’ 1992, pp. 383–384.

¹²² TYKL 45, nr 165, pp. 2–4.

ashamed of his fate that he never told anyone about what happened to him at the call-up”¹²³.

This notion of ‘crown wrecks’ seems to have been a tradition from the days of the ‘old’ Finnish conscript army in the 1880’s and 1890’s. At that time, as mentioned in Chapter Two, roughly one tenth of each age cohort was called up for active service and about a third for a brief reserve training. The military authorities could thus be very selective at the call-up examinations, only choosing the physically “best” developed for the drawing of lots that determined who had to do three years of active service and who was put in the reserve. According to Heikki Kolehmainen (b. 1897), this tradition was alive and well in the countryside when he entered service in 1919. “You would often hear old men tell about the drawing of lots, about their service in the reserve or the active forces, and like a red thread through those conversations ran a positive, even boastful attitude bringing out the manliness of having been classed fit for conscription in those days. We [youngsters] accordingly thought of those who had served for three years as real he-men, of those who had served in the reserve as men, and of the crown wrecks as useless cripples.”¹²⁴

Nevertheless, as already mentioned (see p. 77), the ‘crown wrecks’ were a group of considerable size. In the days of the “old” conscript army, at the end of the nineteenth century, even half of each age cohort was exempted. Being in higher education or being a sole provider were valid grounds for exemption, but a weak physique was the most usual reason. In the 1920’s, about one third of each male age class never entered service on these grounds, and towards the end of the 1930’s roughly one man in six was still discarded. Claims that politically “untrustworthy” men would have been rejected under the guise of medical reasons have, however, been convincingly refuted by historical research.¹²⁵ Historian Juha Mälkki claims that the number of men who received military training precisely met the manpower needs of the planned wartime army organisation and that the number discarded would thus have been governed by operative considerations in interwar Finland.¹²⁶ Nevertheless, the high rejection rates caused public

¹²³ TYKL 45, nr 195, pp. 4–5.

¹²⁴ TYKL 45, nr 35, pp. 3–4. Cf nr 126, p. 33. One informant born in 1911 mentions that at his call-up in the early 1930’s, people in his home district still referred to the call-up as the “drawing of lots” – a term lingering from the nineteenth century call-ups. TYKL 45, nr 196, p. 1.

¹²⁵ Ilkka Nummela, ‘Ruunun raakit – totta vai näytelmää’ in Kalevi Ahonen et al., eds., *Toivon historia. Toivo Nygårdille omistettu jublakirja* (Jyväskylä, 2008), pp. 93–101. See also Nurminen, ‘Muuttuva armeija’ (2008).

¹²⁶ Juha Mälkki, *Herrat, jätkät ja sotataito* 2008, pp. 77–78. Finland was by no means unique in this respect. In the US call-ups in 1940–1941, 40–50% of the young men called up were discarded, which launched a public debate about public health and how to improve the physical condition of

concern over the state of public health. Somewhat surprisingly, these numbers were not kept secret, but discussed openly in the press.¹²⁷ Being a “crown wreck” was thus not an existence on the margin of society, but rather usual. Although being fit for service was probably associated with superior virility by most contemporaries, the stigmatisation of being discarded might be exaggerated in both the collected reminiscences and interwar popular culture.

Hardening the conscripted body

The army stories emphasise elements of recklessness in how superiors treated the bodily integrity and the vulnerability of the conscript. This is in line with the “dark story” of bringing out the toughness and hardships of military service, but also depicts a military culture where the individual soldier was trained to physically merge with his unit and become indifferent to the nakedness, pains or vulnerabilities of his particular, individual body. The individual body should become part of a collective military body and serve a higher end, which might demand it being sacrificed.

Nakedness at the call-up can be interpreted as a stripping of the youngsters’ old, civilian identities, as a symbolic initiation that was repeated and completed months later, when the recruit arrived at his garrison and had to hand in his civilian clothes and don the uniform clothing of the army institution.¹²⁸ In the light of the reminiscences, it seems that stripping naked was rather an introduction to a military culture where there should be nothing private or intimate about one’s body. Once the recruits entered service they had virtually no private sphere of bodily integrity. They spent their days and nights in a group of other men; sleeping, washing, and easing nature in full visibility of a score of other youngsters. The scarcity of toilets, causing long queues, and going to the latrine at camp in close formation with one’s whole unit stand out in some men’s memories.¹²⁹ Even more colourful are descriptions of the so-called “willie inspection” as the men stood in

young men. See Christina P. Jarvis *The Male Body at War. American Masculinity during World War II* (DeKalb, 2004), pp. 58–62.

¹²⁷ For example, in 1929 the press reported on the discardment rate of 37,88% at the call-ups that year; 'Icke mindre än 37,88 proc. Av de värnpliktiga kasserades i fjol', *Hufvudstadsbladet* 4.5.1929. Discardment rates were also published in other contexts, like the 1920 report of the parliamentary conscription committee and a 1937 issue of the national magazine on social policy. See *Asevelvollisuuslakikomitean mietintö* 1920, appendix nr. 8; Lehmus, 'Asevelvollisen nuorison ruumiillinen kunto' 1937.

¹²⁸ Cf Goffman, *Asylums* 1961, pp. 16–18; Kühne, *Der Soldat* 1999, p. 349; Frevort, *Kasernierte Nation* 2001, pp. 245–247; Kivimäki, 'Mies, armeija ja vastarinta' 2004, pp 348–351.

¹²⁹ TYKL 45, nr 147, p. 27; nr 172, p. 3; nr 175, p. 46; nr 195, p. 149.

naked in line to be very intrusively inspected for symptoms of gonorrhoea and other venereal diseases.¹³⁰ Janne Kuusinen still remembered fifty years later that some men were ashamed the first time they had to undergo this and would not take off all clothes, that some men caught a cold as they were made to stand naked for over an hour, and that one man was diagnosed with tight foreskin and sent to surgery the next day.¹³¹ This ruthlessness concerning the conscripts' bodily privacy can be understood as sheer brutality or as part of a training in dissolving physical individuality. A soldier should neither be shy nor self-conscious about his body.

Army stories display the pride men felt over their bodies having been found fit for military service at the call-up. However, in many narratives these bodies were greeted as too soft and immature upon reporting for duty, as mere "raw material" or "a shapeless mass of meat"¹³² that almost completely lacked the strength, toughness, skills and comportment required in a soldier. At every turn, the recruits were reminded that they were not yet physically fit for war, but needed ruthless bodily training and hardening. Their status as complete greenhorns was in many units manifested through bodily signs. Their hair was cut or even shaved off, in some units under ritualistic forms administered by the older soldiers. They were allotted the shabbiest and most worn-out uniforms and equipment. "Dreams of soldier life in handsome uniforms were roughly scrapped on the very first day", commented Eero Tuominen, who ten months later became a storekeeper sergeant himself, and remembered as the greatest benefit of this new position that for the first time he could get a uniform tidy enough to visit a theatre.¹³³ Valteri Aaltonen realised that the Finnish soldiers on home leave in neat uniforms with the insignia that he had seen in his home district were "an idealised image", as he entered the garrison, saw the soldiers in their everyday clothes and got his own kit.¹³⁴ Jorma Kiiski claims one recruit in his unit was given a shirt that had 52 patchings.¹³⁵ The stories about torn and unsightly uniforms mainly date from the early to mid-1920's, but informants serving in later years also remember that the storekeeper sergeants were demonstratively rude to the new recruits and seemed to make a point of handing out boots and uniforms in impossible sizes to each of them.¹³⁶

¹³⁰ TYKL 45, nr 50, p. 16; nr 66, p. 32; nr 85, pp. 28–29; nr 165, p. 5; nr 196, pp. 94–95. On the attempts to control venereal disease in Finnish society in the period, see A. Sakari Härö, *Taistelu Sukupuolitauteja vastaan. Sosiaalhygieninen yhdistys ry. 50 vuotta* (Helsinki, 1996), pp. 6–17.

¹³¹ TYKL 45, nr 72, pp. 8–9.

¹³² TYKL 45, nr 238, p. 1.

¹³³ TYKL 45, nr 27, pp. 13, 63–64.

¹³⁴ TYKL 45, nr 96, pp. 12–13.

¹³⁵ TYKL 45, nr 90, pp. 5, 24–26.

¹³⁶ TYKL 45, nr 85, p. 6. Cf nr 172, pp. 1–2; nr 232, p. 2.

In official discourses on military education, the shaping and strengthening of the conscripted body centred on gymnastics, sports and athletics. The official Sports Regulations for the armed forces, approved by the Minister of Defence in 1924, underlined how modern athletics derived their origins from ancient combat exercises. Sports, it was stated, especially team games, developed the soldiers' mental as well as physical fitness for modern warfare. The regulations gave detailed instructions for baseball, football, skiing, swimming, and a number of branches of athletics.¹³⁷ However, according to historian Erkki Vasara, the regular army never received sufficient funding for sports grounds and equipment during the interwar years. In this area, the civil guards were much more advanced than the regular army. Sports and athletics in the army focussed on competitions between different units and therefore mainly engaged the most skilled sportsmen among the conscripts.¹³⁸

For most conscripts, physical education meant morning gymnastics, close-order drill, marching and field exercises. The physicality of military training was remembered by some in terms of stiffness, strain and pain. Military training especially in the 1920's emphasised a "military" rigidity in comportment and body language. Instructors gave meticulous guidelines for standing in attention: protrude your breast, pull in your stomach, set your feet at an angle of 60 degrees to each other, keep your elbows slightly pushed forward, and keep your middle finger at the seam of your trousers, etc.¹³⁹ Paavo Vuorinen (b. 1908) remembered one sergeant major who made every formation in line into an agonising experience:

I guarantee that a [very small] ten penny coin would have staid securely in place between one's buttocks without falling down, as we stood there at attention, as if each one of us had swallowed an iron bar, and still [the sergeant major] had the gall to squeak with a voice like sour beer: "No bearing whatsoever in this drove, not even crushed bones, just gruel, gruel ... Incessant, impertinent barking all the time, utter insolence really."¹⁴⁰

Finnish military education in the interwar period continued a European military tradition, originating in the new emphasis on military drill in the seventeenth century, where recruits had to learn new "soldierly" ways of moving their bodies, even how to stand still. The soldier was robbed of

¹³⁷ *Urbeiluohjesääntö* (Helsinki, 1924), especially pp. 9–17.

¹³⁸ Vasara, *Valkoisen Suomen urbeilevat soturit* 1997, pp. 116–117, 301, 482–484, 489–490; Kronlund et al., *Suomen puolustuslaitos* 1988, pp. 258–260, 520–521.

¹³⁹ TYKL 45, nr 85, p. 19.

¹⁴⁰ TYKL 45, nr 132, p. 34.

control over his own body posture, even the direction of his eyes.¹⁴¹ Jorma Kiiski (b. 1903) understood this training in a certain bodily carriage as a dimension of the pompous theatricality of the "Prussian discipline". "There was a lot of unnecessary self-importance, muscle tension to the level of painfulness, attention, closing the ranks, turnings, salute, yes sir, certainly sir, no matter how obscure the orders."¹⁴²

Stories about the harshness and brutality of military training entail strong images of how the conscripted body was put under extreme physical strain. An important element in the "dark" stories is the ruthlessness showed by superiors as they pressed the conscripts beyond their physical limits. Kustaa Liikkanen relates how his unit was on a heavy ski march in full marching kit. Two conscripts arrived exhausted at the resting-place a good while later than the rest. The sergeant-major started bellowing about where they had been, making them repeatedly hit the ground, barking, "I'll damned well teach you about lagging behind the troops. Up! Down! Don't you think I know what a man can take! Up! Down!"¹⁴³

To "harden" the soldiers and simulate wartime conditions,¹⁴⁴ or sometimes only as a form of punishment, officers made their men march until some fainted. Eino Sallila took part in a field manoeuvre lasting several days. On the march back to the garrison, he claims, many conscripts were so exhausted that they fainted and fell down along the road. One fainting soldier in Sallila's group rolled down into a ditch filled with water, but when Sallila ran to pick him up, an officer roared at him to let the man lie. Back at camp, a higher-ranking officer praised the men for their efforts, adding that in order to understand the exertions they had been put through, "you have to be aware of the purpose of the exercise – we are exercising for war." Sallila sourly commented in his memories that had the enemy attacked on the next day, the whole regiment would have been completely disabled.¹⁴⁵

The army stories portray some officers as unflinching in their opinion that smarting and bleeding sores were something a soldier must learn to doggedly endure. Kalle Leppälä had constantly bad chafes on his feet during

¹⁴¹ Martin Dinges, 'Soldatenkörper in der Frühen Neuzeit - Erfahrungen mit einem unzureichend geschützten, formierten und verletzten Körper in Selbstzeugnissen' in R. van Dülmen, ed., *Körpergeschichte* (Frankfurt a.M., 1996), pp. 71–98; Foucault, *Discipline and punish* 1977, pp. 135–141; Klas Borell, *Disciplinära strategier. En historiesociologisk studie av det professionella militärdisciplinära tänkesättet 1901–1978* (Stockholm & Uppsala, 1989), p. 52; Sörensen, *Blänkkande eländet* 1997, pp. 70–73.

¹⁴² TYKL 45, nr 90, pp. 52–53.

¹⁴³ TYKL 45, nr 85, p. 9.

¹⁴⁴ According to Hew Strachan, the German army during WWII put soldiers in training under stress similar to that of a combat situation in order to make them aware of their inner reserves and of their ability to draw on them before they confronted the reality of combat. Strachan, 'Training, morale and modern war' 2006, p. 222.

¹⁴⁵ TYKL 45, nr 65, pp. 67–68.

the recruit period, due to badly fitting boots. “Sometimes I bled so much in my boots that I had to let the blood drop out along the bootlegs in the evening. I never complained about the sores, but took the pain clenching my teeth. It was pointless complaining about trifles, that I gradually learned during my time in the army; I did not want to become known as a shirker.”¹⁴⁶ Viljo Vuori (b. 1907) had so bad sores during a march that the medical officer told him to put his pack in the baggage, but when his company commander found out about this, he was ordered to fetch the pack and continue marching. The next day, Vuori was unable to walk and the foot was in bad condition for a long time.¹⁴⁷ Both the medical officer and the company commander probably foresaw this physical effect of marching on with the heavy pack, but where the physician found it necessary to stop at this physical limit, the other commander thought the conscript must learn to press himself through the pain, even if it would disable him for weeks.

Pentti Haanpää portrayed the physical “hardening” of conscripts in a short story about a recruit who tells his second lieutenant he is ill and cannot take part in a marching exercise, but is dismissed; “A soldier must take no notice if he is feeling a bit sick. You must hold on until you fall. Preferably stay standing until you drop dead. Get back in line.” The sick conscript marches ready to faint and vomits at the resting place. An older soldier hushes him away from the spew, making him believe he will be in even greater trouble if the second-lieutenant finds out, only to then pretend to the passing officer that he himself has been sick. The “old” soldier gets a seat in a horse carriage and the sick recruit learns his lesson. In the army, a man must learn to endure hardships, but above all acquire the audacity and skilfulness to shirk duty and minimise the strain.¹⁴⁸

The military discipline regulated many areas of the conscripts’ corporeality yet at the same time military culture had a quality of brisk outdoor life that in some narratives is portrayed as invigorating or even liberating. In Haanpää’s stories, the corporeal dimension of military training appears to be strenuous work that produces no results, at least none that the soldiers comprehend. The Finnish conscript depicted by Haanpää enjoys disbandment not least as a physical release from the straitjacket of the strictly disciplined military compartment, relaxing his body and putting his hands deep down into his pockets.¹⁴⁹ Mika Waltari and his comrades, on the contrary, experience some elements of military life in terms of bodily freedom from the physical constraints of school discipline and urban middle-

¹⁴⁶ TYKL 45, nr 227, pp. 82, 145.

¹⁴⁷ TYKL 45, nr 138, pp. 16–18.

¹⁴⁸ Haanpää, *Kenttä ja kasarmi* 1928, pp. 31–38.

¹⁴⁹ Haanpää, *Kenttä ja kasarmi* 1928, p. 142.

class family life. Waltari's initial impressions of life at summer camp are marked by physical sensuousness and the cultured town-dwellers romanticisation of rough and masculine outdoor life. "We enjoy that our hands are always dirty. We can mess and eat our food out of the mess-kit just as we like. We do not have to care at all about our clothes. We can flop down on the ground anywhere we like and roll and lounge."¹⁵⁰

Pride in endurance

Pressing one's body to extreme physical performances could also be a positive experience and a matter of manly honour and pride. Many informants highlight depictions of their heaviest marches in full pack, by foot or on ski, lasting several days. Kustaa Liikkanen mentions with marked pride how he pulled through a seven-day skiing march with 18 kilograms of pack plus his rifle and 100 cartridges of live ammunition.¹⁵¹ Lauri Mattila remembered an extremely heavy 32-hour march, including a combat exercise, in sweltering summer heat with full pack. The boots and pack chafed the soldiers' skin on the feet, thighs and shoulders. Dozens of soldiers fainted along the way. They were driven by ambulance a few kilometres forward and then had to resume marching. Nonetheless, Mattila recalled the march as a kind of trial that none of the men wanted to fail. "It was a march where everything you can get out of a man by marching him was truly taken out. It was a matter of honour for every man to remain on his feet and march for as long as the others could march and making the utmost effort they fainted and fell to be trampled underfoot by those behind".¹⁵²

Mika Waltari actually describes the painful experience of a heavy marching exercise in more detail than Haanpää; the scorching summer sun, the sweat, the thirst, the weight of the pack, straps and boots chafing and cutting into the skin, hands going numb and eyes smarting from sweat and dust, the mounting pain in every limb and the increasing exhaustion. "In my mind there is only blackness, despairing submission, silent curses rolling over and over." Yet as soon as Waltari and his comrades are back at camp they start bickering and cracking jokes about how they could have walked much further now they had been warmed up, and they proudly compare their sores and blisters. They happily tell each other that the major has praised their detachment. Once they have been for a swim and bought doughnuts from the canteen, Waltari describes their state of mind and body as virtually

¹⁵⁰ Waltari, *Siellä missä miehiä tehdään* 1931, pp. 34–35.

¹⁵¹ TYKL 45, nr 85, pp. 51–54.

¹⁵² TYKL 45, nr 195, pp. 167–168.

blissful: “We are proud and satisfied beyond imagination. It only does you good, comrades! Who the heck would like to be a civilian now? Nowhere else can you reach such a perfect physical feeling of happiness.”¹⁵³

In Waltari’s eyes, the army fosters “healthy bodies accustomed to the heaviest strains, more manly and more hardened men than in civilian circumstances.”¹⁵⁴ Waltari himself appears to have been eager to demonstrate his manly fitness, to prove that in spite of being an intellectual, artist and town-dweller he could cope with the military and even enjoy his training. He really lives the part and seems to regard his manhood as proven and recognised by the physical hardships he has endured. Just as in Lauri Mattila’s narrative, it is a matter of honour to Waltari and his comrades to “take it like a man” and cope with whatever the others manage.

Even if many army stories signalled disapproval of the physical treatment of conscripts, the narrative tradition conveyed a cultural knowledge about what a healthy male body had to take and what it should stand. Enduring physical strain and pain without complaint and without breaking down was not so much idealised as portrayed as a grim necessities, as part of the male condition for a particular generation.

Resisting bodies

The body was a central arena for the power struggle that often raged between the soldiers and their superiors, where officers and NCOs tried to force subordination through punishments directed at the body in the form of strain, exhaustion and pain. Bodies resisted this treatment through injuries and illness, real or faked. During the first years after the Civil War, as many conscripts were undernourished, the exercises and punishments could be dangerously exhausting. “The exercises were tough, get up and hit the ground until the boys were completely exhausted and the weakest fell ill and at times the hospital was full of patients.”¹⁵⁵ Throughout the 1920’s, however, the press reported on how men returning from military service gave an appalling picture of poor sanitary conditions and deficient medical services. One non-socialist daily local newspaper wrote in 1925,

Ask the gentleman, whose son has performed military service, ask the peasant or the worker, and the answer shall very often be that the youngsters have been badly neglected, overstrained, been treated according to all too Prussian methods. [...] There’s talk of life-threatening illnesses contracted in the military service, talk of deaths,

¹⁵³ Waltari, *Siellä missä miehiä tehdään* 1931, pp. 70–76.

¹⁵⁴ Waltari, *Siellä missä miehiä tehdään* 1931, p. 93.

¹⁵⁵ TYKL 45, nr 32, p. 4. Cf Mälkki, *Herrat, jätkät ja sotataito* 2008, p. 87.

of overstrain due to unacceptable punishment methods, of venereal disease due to shabby clothing handed out to the young soldiers, of tuberculosis contracted through transmission from sick soldiers. [...] A father whose healthy son has returned ruined by illness will become an irremediable anti-militarist and strongly influence his environment, and a father whose son has been conscripted in spite of sickness and returned with ruined health can be counted to the same category.¹⁵⁶

This image of the conscript army as an unhealthy and even dangerous place for young men was largely confirmed by the chief medical officer of the Finnish Army V.F. Lindén in an interview for the press agency of the social democratic newspapers in 1928. Lindén brought his concern over the bad general state of health among conscripts to public attention. The mortality among Finnish young men aged 20–21 was about twice as high as it had been before the introduction of conscription, stated Lindén. More than 1200 conscripts had died in service over a period of eight years – 250 out of them due to accidents or physical violence and 95 through suicide. However, Lindén thought that the main reasons for the high mortality rates were too heavy exercises in the first weeks and months of recruit training, lack of sanitary personnel, and deficient knowledge of personal hygiene and prevention among the conscripts.¹⁵⁷

The alarming press reports on the conscripts' state of health cease around 1930. Evidently, the sanitary conditions and medical treatment of conscripts improved. Juha Mälkki has also pointed to the possible significance of a new law on compensations for casualties, injuries and ill-health contracted during military service, passed in 1926. Because of the law, the military authorities were faced with new economic incitements to better monitor the health of individual conscripts and counteract mistreatment and overstraining exercises.¹⁵⁸

Illness could, however, be both welcome and unwelcome among the conscripts. For some, malingering became the only available method of resisting the military system, claim control over their own body and shirk duty. For others, the military service became twice as arduous because of fevers, sores and other injuries. The memories of military training are full of stories about how mercilessly the medical officers declared fit for duty any conscripts reporting sick. In some units, conscripts were afraid to report

¹⁵⁶ 'Konturteckning från Helsingfors', *Åbo Underrättelser* 4.10.1925.

¹⁵⁷ 'Skrämmande mortalitet i armén. Tvåhundrafemtio olyckor till döds under 8 år', *Hufvudstadsbladet* 25.11.1928. Cf 'Skrämmande siffror om dödlighet och sjuklighet inom vårt lands armé', *Arbetarbladet* 23.11.1928; 'En beklaglig utveckling' *Västra Nyland* 8.12.1928; 'De sanitära förhållandena inom militären föremål för en grundlig utredning', *Hufvudstadsbladet* 4.12.1929; 'Hälsotillståndet i armén', *Svenska Pressen* 9.12.1929; 'Det svaga folket', *Vasabladet* 12.12.1929.

¹⁵⁸ Mälkki, *Herrat, jätkät ja sotataito* 2008, pp. 108–116.

sick even if they really were unwell. They thought that the distrustful medical officers would not put them on the sick-list anyway and they knew that soldiers reporting sick but declared fit were punished with extra duty upon returning to their company.¹⁵⁹

Stories about how one could sham illness or inflict injuries upon oneself abound in the reminiscences, from the case of a boy who cut off his finger with an axe to escape the misery of military service¹⁶⁰ to less dramatic mischief such as rubbing one's throat with a toothbrush to make it look sore, eating tea leaves or cigar butts, or just feigning various pains.¹⁶¹ According to Pentti Haanpää, the men in line envied and loathed those on the sick-list who just loafed around in the dormitory all day, and the soldier fit for service "cursed himself who cannot get sick since the body is so damned healthy".¹⁶² Yet it is evident that even if the malingerers' cunning could be admired and their pleasant life envied, malingering was not quite honourable. Some informants mention that malingerers were unpopular among the other conscripts since they could incur punishments such as suspension of leave for the whole unit if detected. Stories about malingering are often told as humorous anecdotes, but none of the informants admits to having malingered themselves.

The silence around killing

One central corporeal aspect of military training is virtually never touched upon in the army memories and stories: what it was like to learn to kill other people. Combat training and especially close quarters exercises are usually mentioned only in passing and there are no comments on whether it felt awkward or only natural to learn, e.g., the right moves to swiftly gore your adversary in a bayonet fight. According to the guidebook for bayonet fighting by Jäger major Efraim Kempainen, "the whole energy of the learner must be directed at beating the antagonist as quickly as possible. In serious action the rule must be: kill or get killed."¹⁶³ In the guidebook for close quarters, presumably mirroring the content of lectures and practical

¹⁵⁹ Jfr t.ex. TYKL 45, nr 27, pp. 64–65; nr 138, 16–18; nr 195, p. 16. One informant claimed that even if a soldier was relieved of outdoor duties by the medical officer, his company commander could "take revenge" by denying the soldier the home leaves due to him; TYKL 45, nr 227, p. 203. Some informants claim there were instances of sick conscripts dying because of the officers' suspiciousness; TYKL 45, nr 65, pp. 63–64; nr 90, p. 12; nr 196, pp. 112–113; nr 230, p. 33. Cf Mälkki, *Herrat, jätkät ja sotataito* 2008, p. 105.

¹⁶⁰ TYKL 45, nr 35, p. 130.

¹⁶¹ TYKL 45, nr 220, p. 13–14; nr 227, p. 287–288; nr 244, p. 45.

¹⁶² Haanpää, *Kenttä ja kasarmi* 1928, p. 99.

¹⁶³ Jääkärimajuri Efraim Kempainen, *Pistintaisteluoapas* (Helsinki, 1923).

training in the army, it was pointed out how not only the rifle with bayonet and hand grenade, but also the soldiers field axe, pick, and spade were excellent striking weapons.¹⁶⁴ Did lessons such as these make no memorable impression on young Finnish men in the 1920's and 1930's? Was it too self-evident to them twenty years after the Second World War that soldiering is about killing, or was this an aspect of soldiering too painful to articulate, or put under a too strong cultural taboo?

Somewhat surprisingly, it is Mika Waltari and not Pentti Haanpää who writes explicitly on how combat training made him reflect on the horrors of a real war and on what it would be like to kill and risk one's own life in battle. Yet Waltari turns the passage in question into a rejection of pacifism, as "a dream that enfolds weak hearts and mediocre intelligences". Hesitation to kill in war, he states, is only an expression of selfishness and lack of patriotism. "Suddenly I sense the happiness and love of this lovely brown earth, our country that foreign boots must never trample. I feel that I could pierce the bodies of strangers, human beings like me, in cold consideration, fear sending shivers down my spine." ... "And I am not self-conceited enough to hesitate to die for [this country] if destiny should one day call."¹⁶⁵

Many of the 1972–1973 informants might have felt like Waltari in this respect, but shunned the unavoidable loftiness in these extreme articulations of patriotism. They had shown their position in action, not in words. Being concrete about one's approval of killing in defence of the nation might have felt especially awkward in the period when they were writing, marked by the pronounced friendship between Finland and the Soviet Union on the official level and the anti-authoritarian cultural movements of the 1960's and 70's. Yet they were possibly also reproducing a narrative pattern they had learnt in their youth.

The moral and practical education given to Finnish conscripts corresponds to Joshua S. Sanborn's analysis of how Russian soldiers were trained for the Great War. The Russian conscripts in military training were desensitized to performing violence, since it was reduced to a set of rules and a system of procedures that made war seem orderly and rational. Military training, Sanborn states, took place *above* the act of violence, in references to grand symbols such as the Emperor, the Fatherland/Nation or the Faith; *below* the act in the mechanics of movement that produce violent results; *before* it in the preparation for death in battle; *after* it in terms of the glory that accrues to the victorious soldier; and *during* it in terms of manly

¹⁶⁴ *Ohjeita läbitaistelua varten* (Helsinki, 1928).

¹⁶⁵ Waltari, *Siellä missä miehiä tehdään* 1931, pp. 57, 233.

and military virtue. The act of violence itself, however, was absent and not talked about. The reason for this discretion, Sanborn argues, was that that the army had been given the task of training men who would commit extreme violence in certain circumscribed situations, but who could also one day reintegrate back into civilian life.¹⁶⁶

Not only within military training, but throughout the cultural arenas in interwar Finland where soldiering was depicted and debated, the “technical” objective of military training – learning a range of techniques to efficiently kill people and destroy infrastructure – was nearly never mentioned. Conscription forged a tight symbolic link between manhood and the execution of lethal violence in war, but any debate over this link in itself stopped after the Civil War. Eventually, all parties came to take for granted that men and men only were authorized and duty bound by the nation-state to kill when needed, to protect the country and all its inhabitants. Yet in Finland as in other European countries, conscripted men were usually only talked about as victims of violence – sacrificing their life in battle, enduring the violent harassments of brutal superiors – and never as the performers of violence. An obvious example is the imagery of *Suomen Sotilas*, where much was said about a sense of duty and a spirit of self-sacrifice, but nothing about how one prepares mentally for killing the enemy. There was an obvious cultural unease around “the license to kill” given to every fit male citizen, and so it was wrapped in a cloak of silence. That unease and the lack of words to describe it still show in the reminiscences written in the early 1970’s.¹⁶⁷

5.5 *Comradeship: magical unity and violent tensions*

When military service was thought of as a formative experience for young men, the horizontal relationships among them, the famous military “comradeship”, was at least as important as vertical relationships between the soldiers and their superiors and educators. How this comradeship was depicted carried messages not only about what soldiering was like in practice, but about what young men were like and what influence they had on each other, in the absence of parents, siblings, wives or girlfriends. In Finnish men’s stories about their military training, there are hints at a particular kind of affinity among men, but also images of a social collective

¹⁶⁶ Sanborn, *Drafting the Russian Nation* 2003, p. 168.

¹⁶⁷ Cf Frevert, *Kasernierte Nation* 2001, pp. 242–243.

run through by hierarchies, conflict lines and social tensions. Not only were the soldiers often depicted to be in conflict with their superiors. Social life among the conscripts was also demarcated by boundaries and informal hierarchies erected and upheld by the soldiers themselves.

One must remember that the soldiers' life together was not based on any voluntary choice or preference, but forced upon them by the military system. As Ute Frevert points out in her study of conscription in the German *Kaiserreich*, military "comradeship" should not be confused with civilian friendship. Unlike friendship, military comradeship did not require any personal sympathy between the men. It did not have to be sought and tried, but came included as the conscripts were assigned to different squads and groups. It was more or less a necessity for the soldiers to try getting by with the group he was placed in. Intellectual fellowship was superfluous. According to Frevert, comradeship was a given fact in the military, more practical, regularised, firm and unequivocal than friendship in the civilian sphere.¹⁶⁸

Frevert has also made the interesting suggestion that conscription strengthened men's identification with other men on the basis of gender, overriding social division lines among men to a higher degree than in previous times.¹⁶⁹ In her own study of conscription in nineteenth century Germany, she found that in spite of the official ideology of equality and comradeship among all conscripts, socio-economic hierarchies and division lines from civilian society were often reproduced within the army. Nonetheless, she underlines that the army was an institution where regional differences and the opposition between cities and countryside lost importance, since all recruits shared more or less the same experiences there, regardless of their geographic origin. It was also the only institution in German society that brought burghers and workers, farmhands, sales clerks and students in close contact with each other. At least in retrospective, in the memoir works of German middle class men, the military service was described as a place where men learnt to understand themselves as part of a bigger whole.¹⁷⁰

The genuine rejoicing of comradeship

Cultural models for describing military comradeship as central to the experience of military training were certainly available in interwar Finland,

¹⁶⁸ Frevert, *Kasernierte Nation* 2001, pp. 248–249.

¹⁶⁹ Frevert, 'Soldaten, Staatsbürger' 1996.

¹⁷⁰ Frevert, *Kasernierte Nation* 2001, pp. 228, 250–251, 258.

as displayed by Mika Waltari's 1931 description of his own military service. Waltari depicted military comradeship with an intensity and warmth that is exceptional in my material, but matched the contemporary celebration of military comradeship e.g. in German associations for veterans from the Great War, as studied by Thomas Kühne.¹⁷¹ Waltari actually made the relationships among the conscripted soldiers the key theme of *Where Men Are Made*. His first impressions of army life, as described in the book, are dominated not by barking officers and horrible wake-up calls, but by the friendliness and support of the other soldiers upon his arrival at his regiment in Helsinki. He is delighted to describe the atmosphere on his first night in the barracks, when the lights have just been switched off, stealthily smoked cigarettes glow in the dark, a small jug of smuggled vodka mixed with water goes around, and the conscripts whisper stories to each other. When he is transferred to NCO school a few days later, he joins a group of young men sharing his own social background. Half the men in his tent at summer camp were university students and several alumni of the *Norssi* lyceum, the same elite school in Helsinki Waltari himself had attended. "It is almost like coming home", he writes.¹⁷²

A 22-year old Bachelor of Arts at the time, Waltari described his recruit training in terms reminiscent of a boy scout camp; a time of boyish eagerness, playfulness and comradeship in midst of the lyrically described Finnish summer nature. He gives the reader to understand that he had yearned for belonging and attachment to a larger whole in the cosmopolitan artist circles where he had spent the previous years and now immensely enjoyed the warm, close comradeship he found among his old school friends and soldier comrades. He depicts long rainy Sundays spent in the warmth and security of the tent at summer camp, the "strangely homely and lovely twilight feel", some soldiers playing cards, others smoking (although it is prohibited), someone writing a letter and Waltari and his friends in a serious mood, thinking about the future:

We are still boys, who only know life from a very narrow sphere, from home, school, some small erotic experiences, and sports achievements. Now we all have more serious eyes than usually. We feel the binding and demanding beckoning of real life in the distance. Until Muusio again takes to teasing Lahtikarhu...¹⁷³

Whereas playing war games was meaningless and contrary to the male dignity of the men Haanpää depicted, Waltari and his middle-class

¹⁷¹ Kühne, *Kameradschaft* 2006, pp. 27-57.

¹⁷² Waltari, *Siellä missä miehiä tehdään* 1931, p. 28; cf p. 167.

¹⁷³ Waltari, *Siellä missä miehiä tehdään* 1931, pp. 144-145.

comrades enjoy recruit training at the summer camp as a last sheltered haven, a relapse into the carelessness of boyhood, before adult life with its responsibilities and worries. “Actually everything is very much a game for us. (...) We are only boys. It is wonderful to leave all thinking, forget about historical dates and biographies and scientific research methods.”¹⁷⁴ Waltari enjoys sharing joy and sadness with his comrades, the lazy hours at the service club, the “growing manhood, melancholy and longing” of autumn nights at the barracks.¹⁷⁵ He feels “the magical unity of the troop” as they march singing through camp.¹⁷⁶ One night towards the end of recruit training, when Waltari is awake as assistant duty officer, he walks along the tents full of sleeping young men and reflects on the weeks spent at summer camp:

I already know that my purest and manliest memories will be associated with this summer. In my mind, I pass through the beautiful, hot days, – all the fatigue, depression and euphoria.

The boys talk in their sleep. One thing at last I have found. The beautiful, genuine rejoicing of comradeship, the community of downheartedness and gladness. Every single boy is my friend, every single grey blouse arouses a warm quiver of comradeship within me.

How could the young Waltari express such a certainty that these would be the “purest and manliest” experiences of his life? Here, the cultural notions and narrative models informing Waltari’s story-telling strongly shine through.

The difficulty of describing comradeship

Historians Thomas Kühne, Joanna Bourke, and others, have in their studies on the world wars of the twentieth century noted how martial-heroic masculinities existed side by side with military comradeship marked by warmth and solidarity, motherly care, intimate friendship and love between men. The friendship and love between two soldiers could take on marriage-like forms on the front, male couples sleeping together and caring for each other.¹⁷⁷ This intimacy between men occurred in the extreme stress and insecurity of combat and life on the frontline. Could not, however, the hardships of peacetime military training bring forward something similar?

¹⁷⁴ Waltari, *Siellä missä miehiä tehdään* 1931, pp. 34–35, cf pp. 96, 138.

¹⁷⁵ Waltari, *Siellä missä miehiä tehdään* 1931, p. 173.

¹⁷⁶ Waltari, *Siellä missä miehiä tehdään* 1931, pp. 36–37, cf pp. 74, 91–92.

¹⁷⁷ Bourke, *Dismembering the male* 1996, pp. 124–144; Thomas Kühne, “...aus diesem Krieg wird nicht nur harte Männer heimkehren“. Kriegskameradschaft und Männlichkeit im 20. Jahrhundert’ in Kühne, ed., *Männergeschichte* 1996, pp. 174–192.

Surely, Waltari was not the only man in interwar Finland who experienced and enjoyed warmth, closeness and support among his soldier comrades. Yet either the Finnish men writing down their army stories in the 1970's did not experience the close, even romantic military comradeship described by Mika Waltari, or they were unable or unwilling to explicate what comradeship or friendship with other men had meant to them during their military service. A whole set of the questions in the 1972–1973 ethnological questionnaire referred to the conscripts' activities among themselves. For example, the ethnologists asked, "What did you do in evenings or other off-duty hours when you were not permitted leave? What games were played, what songs were sung and what was talked about? Was alcohol ever brought to the barracks? What about women? Was there betting? How was the time spent in the service club?" Some of all these questions would easily have accommodated even sentimental narration about comradeship, for example, "What kind of esprit de corps or feeling of togetherness reigned among the men in your dormitory, squad, platoon, company, military unit or service branch?"¹⁷⁸ Yet on this matter most answers were shortish, in the vein of "the group spirit was good".¹⁷⁹

The informants' narratives about comradeship tended, just like the questions asked by the ethnologists, to concentrate on the soldiers' off-duty activities together, not their emotions for each other. They mention things such as singing, playing cards (although this was not permitted), discussing and telling each other stories, going for walks, wrestling or dancing to the accordion or violin of some fellow conscript. Some men were assiduous letter writers, others spent much time talking, playing games or reading books and newspapers in the service club, some only sat around in the squad room deep in their own thoughts. A couple of informants mention a "strong feeling of togetherness",¹⁸⁰ but the general impression is that the soldiers were mainly bored in their eventless and confined off-duty hours.¹⁸¹ One informant who wrote ten full pages A4 about his military training gave this answer to the question about what the soldiers did off duty: "[U]nder this question I seriously tried to recall how that scarce spare time was spent, but I could not find any point of reference, there hardly was anything special."¹⁸²

Some fragments in the reminiscences hint at, if not intimacy, then at least a relaxedness among the conscripts regarding certain forms of intimacy

¹⁷⁸ *Tiedusteluja kansankulttuurin alalta, N:o 45 lokakuussa 1972, Muistelmia sotilaskoulutuksesta*, Kansatieteen laitos, Turun Yliopisto.

¹⁷⁹ Cf TYKL 45, nr 96, pp. 76–77; nr 175, p. 9; nr 184, p. 12; nr 227, p. 209; nr 232, p. 26; nr 244, p. 51.

¹⁸⁰ TYKL 45, nr 35, p. 95; nr 227, p. 209.

¹⁸¹ E.g. TYKL 45, nr 35, p. 90; nr 78, pp. 39–40; nr 196, p. 77; nr 227, p. 207.

¹⁸² TYKL 45, nr 238, p. 5.

and sentimentality that in later periods might have been considered ridiculous or unmanly for a 21-year old man. One example is the habit of dancing in *härkäpari* [-oxen couple] – two men dancing together for the lack of female partners.¹⁸³ In today's world this would give rise to jests and allusions to homosexuality, yet to working men in the 1920's and 1930's, often used to living for periods in all-male environments such as work camps for mobile teams of workmen in forestry, rafting, road and railroad construction etc,¹⁸⁴ it perhaps was quite natural. The soldiers' autograph albums, where the soldiers wrote down song texts, jokes and poems and illustrated them with drawings, provide another clue.¹⁸⁵ One informant recalled that the contents of the song-book texts were so indecent that they could not be taken back home upon disbandment.¹⁸⁶ He failed to mention, however, that significant elements in the contents of these notebooks were highly sentimental love poems, often written down by comrades in each other's albums, elaborating on the theme of unrequited love or being left by a lover. Although love in these poems is heterosexual, the popularity of this shared folklore among the soldiers hints at an emotional openness among the conscripts that the informants did not usually remember or wish to highlight half a century later.¹⁸⁷

The men participating in the 1972–1973 collection, aged circa 55 to 75, were perhaps simply not inclined to speak openly about their feelings for other men. To feel or even write about the kind of enchantment expressed by Waltari would possibly have seemed unmanly to them. Even if some of them would have been willing to describe it, they might have lacked a language and narrative form to do so. Army stories as an oral narrative genre tend to focus on anecdotes about memorable incidents, not on descriptions of psychological states or social relationships. On the other hand, the silences on this account should perhaps be taken at face value, as indications that the bonds formed between men in military training often were not deeply personal. The questionnaire asked informants whether they later stayed in touch with their comrades from military training, and they usually answered in the negative.

¹⁸³ TYKL 45, nr 27, p. 8; nr 96, pp. 76–77; nr 146, p. 28; nr 220, p. 16; nr 226, pp. 78–79; nr 227, pp. 78–79.

¹⁸⁴ Cf Johansson, 'Arbetare' 2006, p. 116–119.

¹⁸⁵ TYKL 45, nr 195, p. 59; nr 226, p. 50; nr 227, p. 211; nr 232, p. 27; nr 244, p. 51.

¹⁸⁶ TYKL 45, nr 232, p. 27.

¹⁸⁷ TYKL 45, nr 125, autograph album; nr 143, autograph album; nr 159, pp. 32–55; TYKL 45, unnumbered autograph album written 1933–1934; nr 218, autograph album; nr 219, autograph album. Similar albums are found in the Folklore archives of the Finnish Literature Society. See for example SKS, Kansanrunousarkisto, LM 49, 74, 94, 99, 100, 192, 208–212, 611, 612. See also Mälkki, *Herrat, jätäkät ja sotataito* 2008, pp. 123–125.

The roughness of military comradeship

In Pentti Haanpää's army stories, there are hardly any traces of warm and romantic comradeship of the kind that Mika Waltari was so infatuated with. The conscripts Haanpää describes band together mainly in opposition to their superiors, in wild partying or in bursts of black humour, easing the mental pressure of living under the officers' oppression. The laughter of military humour, as described by Haanpää, could be directed not only against the superiors as a vehicle for symbolic resistance. He was keen to show his readers that the joke among soldiers was often at a comrade. In one of his stories, a group of soldiers being transported by train in a cattle wagon without a toilet grab hold of their comrade who is relieving himself through the open door and hold him fast, trousers down and bare-bottomed, as the train passes a station filled with people. The others are splitting their sides with laughter, but the victim is enraged and the joke results in a fistfight. – This was the section that Haanpää's regular publishers above all wanted removed, but the author fiercely resisted omitting these particular elements of comradeship from his depiction of soldiering.¹⁸⁸

In the last story of *Fields and Barracks*, some conscripts celebrate their approaching disbandment by organising a "love party", bringing prostitutes to the barracks at night. Haanpää hardly intended this story as a sympathetic depiction of military comradeship, but rather as an image of soldiers giving way to pent-up pressures in a crude and orgiastic manner. The commotion of the "partying" keeps awake those conscripts who would only want to sleep. The medic, "a tall and religious boy" is woken up and persuaded to provide his partying "comrades" with protection against venereal disease, in spite of his shock and revulsion with the whole business. A few days later, on their very last night in military service, the soldiers bring smuggled liquor to the barracks and have a noisy drinking-bout, "vomit and pieces of lockers and stools littering the floor".¹⁸⁹

Only the second to last paragraph of Haanpää's book indicates some kind of positive solidarity among the soldiers, as they bid farewell to their comrades. Together, they had lived a year under the same roof,

...endured hardships and shared joys, dragged heavy boots in the dust of summer roads or so often hit the wet ground of the fatherland. Together they had sung a song, laughed and cursed, maybe enjoyed comfort from the pleasures of this world from the same bottle or the

¹⁸⁸ Karonen, *Haanpään elämä* 1985, p. 41.

¹⁸⁹ Haanpää, *Kenttä ja kasarmi* 1928, pp. 142–143.

same woman. Now they parted possibly never to share the same road again.¹⁹⁰

There is a hint of nostalgia here, yet *Fields and Barracks* as a whole conveys a feeling of slight distaste for the form that even the non-hierarchical relationships among the soldiers take on in the corruptive world that was Pentti Haanpää's picture of the conscript army.

Tensions and division lines among conscripts

The memories of Albert Lahti (b. 1907) illustrate an entire set of divisions lines among the conscripts that also recur in other narratives. Lahti was a politically "white" young man who had been a member of the civil guards and was intent on fulfilling his service in an exemplary manner. This, however, repeatedly brought him into conflicts with his "comrades" where political differences were mixed with different attitudes taken to military discipline. In 1927–1928, as Lahti did his military service in the garrison town of Kuopio in Eastern Finland, Finnish society was still highly polarised. The efforts of army officers to screen off their conscripts from leftist agitation and educate them into a proper "patriotic" non-revolutionary mindset had side-effects of deepening the political rifts among the soldiers.

Similar to many other units throughout the period, recruits in the Kuopio regiment who had military experience from the civil guards were given two weeks leave from recruit training.¹⁹¹ This practice stirred up much resentment, partly because a membership of the Guards was still a source of animosity to many working class conscripts in the 1920's, and in part because this special treatment caused envy among the other recruits.¹⁹² Albert Lahti applied for and got extra leave for having received basic military training in the Guards, but later regretted ever applying. He felt he "got into deep shit" because of his special leave. He especially remembered a corporal who for this reason took to the habit of always giving him the most repulsive tasks, saying, "Since you have been on leave for special competence, you surely can perform this assignment too."¹⁹³

Neither did Lahti's eagerness to comply with military regulations and demand the same of others go down well with his comrades. He was labelled "war crazy" and made fun of by his comrades. As explained by another informant in the collection,

¹⁹⁰ Haanpää, *Kenttä ja kasarmi* 1928, p. 143.

¹⁹¹ TYKL 45, nr 147, p. 65; nr 179, p. 20; nr 244, pp. 46–47; Waltari, *Siellä missä miehiä tehdään* 1931, p. 59.

¹⁹² Cf TYKL 45, nr 84, p. 18; nr 165, p. 112; nr 138, p. 9; nr 203, p. 66; nr 227, p. 147.

¹⁹³ TYKL 45, nr 147, p. 14.

A real soldier tries to shirk always and everywhere even as a recruit, which means that nothing is ever done without orders, since the chief is always right according to regulations. There are always some “war crazy” people in the crowd, but they were rather frozen out from the group, you did not talk much with them etc., they attempted to take revenge for this when they returned from [NCO] school, by bullying and such.¹⁹⁴

Albert Lahti remembered with obvious bitterness an incident from his time as a conscript NCO where one of his “comrades” fastened a so-called “hunger cord” on his collar without his noticing. The ‘hunger cord’ was the badge of rank marking a regular NCO. When the other soldiers noticed Lahti’s cord, they started to roar with laughter at him. He rushed away from the group highly offended. “My life was disgusting and sickening then and quite a while afterwards.”¹⁹⁵ This episode brings out contempt for regulars and ridicule of conscripts taking the “war games” of military training seriously, familiar from Pentti Haanpää’s short stories – with the important exception that Lahti did not himself share this attitude. He was hardly the only one taking military service seriously. In many units, life was thus more complex than in the literary worlds of Pentti Haanpää and Mika Waltari, as soldiers with quite different stances on military service had to live closely together and somehow get along with each other.

Lahti’s zeal to follow regulations brings the regional and social tensions between conscripts to light as well. He was irritated with the conscripts in the older age class who were natives of Kuopio, since they took French leave much more impudently than the country boys. They knew the routes into the city and had places to go. This, he writes, caused disputes within the group and envy towards the town boys. When Lahti was in charge of the guard patrol, he was draconian in controlling permits and “scorched”, i.e. reported, even conscript NCOs who were on unlawful errands, increasing his reputation as “war crazy” and “regular NCO”.

In general, however, regional tensions are not mentioned as often in the 1972–1973 collection as political and social divisions among the soldiers. Juha Mälkki has observed tensions between conscripts from urban and rural areas in the memory narratives, but concluded that these tensions eased once the men got to know each other better.¹⁹⁶ Conscripts from different parts were strange to each other in the beginning, but mostly soon settled in together as they got used to each other.¹⁹⁷ Class differences seem to have

¹⁹⁴ TYKL 45, nr 238, p. 4.

¹⁹⁵ TYKL 45, nr 147, pp. 82–83.

¹⁹⁶ Mälkki, *Herrat, jätkät ja sotataito* 2008, pp. 293–303, 308–310.

¹⁹⁷ Cf TYKL 45, nr 27, p. 17; nr 35, p. 91; nr 138, p. 9; nr 146, p. 29.

been harder to ignore. In the memories of some men who came to military training from very poor homes the awareness of one's own underprivilege still resounds.¹⁹⁸ In Albert Lahti's case, class differences emerge in association with the 'hunger cord' incident. It turned out that the "perpetrator" was one of his best comrades, who was envious because Lahti had been appointed vice platoon leader instead of him. According to Lahti, this corporal V. "thought himself to be vastly superior to a poor country cottage boy like me, since he was 'big and handsome like a gypsy's horse' and of very wealthy parents."¹⁹⁹

Albert Lahti's 121 pages of army memories furthermore broach the tensions between the soldier collective and aberrant individuals. There were, as many informants recall, two fundamental unwritten rules among the soldiers; not to steal from each other and never to inform on another soldier. Some add a third rule, which was that such shirking that affected the other soldiers negatively was uncomradely.²⁰⁰ Lahti recalled that a scribe in NCO school was considered an informer by the other soldiers and castigated by being ridiculed. His comrades each night put a baby's feeding bottle under his pillow. The scribe twice moved to other squad rooms to escape this harassment, but was treated in the same way by his new "comrades". When he finally made a complaint and the sergeant-major made an inquiry into the matter, the other soldiers explained that the scribe "is such a big baby that he snitches on the slightest prank, so we try to make him a man".²⁰¹

Group pressure and group cohesion

Christof Dejung has pointed out that military comradeship had a double nature among the Swiss soldiers in the emergency service during the Second World War he studied. On the one hand, the ideology of comradeship constituted an attempt by the military authorities to weld the soldiers together with emotional bonds into a unit easier to handle. It was supposed to create a group pressure, forcing the individual conscript to comply with the military collective. On the other hand, the comradeship between soldiers could develop a dynamic of its own and result in mutual solidarity among the soldiers directed *against* their superiors. A military subculture emerged

¹⁹⁸ Cf TYKL 45, nr 20; nr 66; nr 227.

¹⁹⁹ TYKL 45, nr 147, p. 84.

²⁰⁰ TYKL 45, nr 72, p. 30; nr 216, p. 38; nr 217, pp. 209–210.

²⁰¹ TYKL 45, nr 147, pp. 111–113.

among the soldiers, diverging from rules and regulations and difficult for the officers to control.²⁰²

This duality between group pressure to conformity within the group and group solidarity outwards is clearly visible in the Finnish storytelling surrounding the institution of the *remmiapelli* [-belt call]. This was the most institutionalised, famous and violent form of “comrade discipline”, where a soldier who broke the unwritten rules of comradeship and offended the group solidarity was subjected to physical punishment. In the belt call, the victim was held fast on a table and a group of other soldiers thrashed him with their belts. In different variations the victim could be stripped naked, wrapped in a wet bed sheet or forced to run the gauntlet.²⁰³ Vilppu Eskelinen (b. 1897) who served in Hamina in 1919 commented, “they were hard punishments to be sure, to make you remember that you had committed an offence, there would have been no discipline without it although it truly was a rough game, some got so much that they fainted.”²⁰⁴ According to some informants, the belt call could cause grievous bodily harm, confining the victim to his bed next day or even causing fractures and internal injuries. However, it was impossible for the victims to formally report the abuse because of the “law” against informing.²⁰⁵ The “belt call” was mostly administered without the officers’ knowledge, but was evidently tolerated or even approved of by the officers. In spite of the often visible traces, nobody recalls it ever having been investigated and punished by superiors.

As historian Thomas Sörensen has pointed out in his study of enlisted hussars in Sweden around 1900, the informal rules of solidarity among soldiers could serve to conceal and perpetuate severe abuses among the soldiers.²⁰⁶ Describing how Prussian training officers delegated disciplinary measures against “maladjusted” soldiers to their “comrades”, Ute Frevert concludes that this was a way of implicating the soldiers in a “collective of perpetrators” that ensured collective silence.²⁰⁷

Just as in the Swiss army as studied by Christof Dejung, the Finnish officers tried to harness group pressure among the soldiers for their own disciplinary purposes. In the 1920’s especially, in the heydays of the

²⁰² Dejung, *Aktivdienst und Geschlechterordnung* 2007, p. 185. See also Mälkki, *Herrat, jätäkät ja sotataito* 2008, p. 301.

²⁰³ TYKL 45, nr 35, p. 81; nr 65, p. 31; nr 66, p. 31; nr 90, p. 31; nr 132, p. 70; nr 147, p. 34; nr 159, p. 21; nr 165, p. 104; nr 184, p. 25; nr 195, p. 97; nr 196, pp. 84–85; nr 227, pp. 162–163; nr 250, pp. 7, 23.

²⁰⁴ TYKL 45, nr 26, p. 14. Cf nr 44, p. 11, “it felt horrible to just even watch”.

²⁰⁵ TYKL 45, nr 165, p. 104; nr 195, p. 97; nr 227, p. 163.

²⁰⁶ Sörensen, *Blänkande eländet* 1997, pp. 118–121.

²⁰⁷ Frevert, *Kasernierte Nation* 2001, p. 270.

“Prussian discipline”, collective punishments for the infringements of individual soldiers were widely in use. This put enormous pressure in the form of the comrades’ anger on conscripts who did not swiftly conform to the group – whether out of defiance or inability. In many cases of comrade discipline, the men punished had drawn down suspension of leaves over their comrades by taking French leave or other breaches of regulations. In some cases, the officers more or less candidly encouraged the conscripts to exercise “comrade discipline” on especially troublesome individuals. If the victim was unpopular among the other soldiers they might be happy to comply, but invitations to comrade discipline from above could also spark off resistance among the conscripts and weld them together against their superiors.²⁰⁸

Former soldiers bring up group solidarity mainly in connection with their squad’s, company’s or regiment’s relationship to military and civilian outsiders. Many mention that they regarded their own regiment or unit as an elite corps or superior to neighbouring units. The officers encouraged the conscripts to feel pride in their own unit. This building of group identity and cohesion through symbolic hierarchies was manifested in forms that ranged all the way from scuffles between the inhabitants of different squad rooms in the barracks and good-hearted exchanges of insults with neighbouring units to huge gang fights and bloodshed between soldiers from different regiments, during evening leaves in the garrison towns.²⁰⁹ Kalle Arola who served in Helsinki in 1928–1929 remembered that there were such street fights between soldiers from the different regiments stationed in Helsinki. Since the honour of one’s regiment was at stake, there was an unconditional rule that one had to join in if one’s comrades became involved in a fight. The soldiers in Arola’s regiment took weapons along for this purpose when they left the garrison for any evening leave – even bayonets, hidden down a bootleg.²¹⁰ In garrison towns where no other units were present, there was always the possibility of soldiers and local civilian young men picking fights with each other. In those cases, the same rule of solidarity with one’s unit applied.²¹¹

²⁰⁸ TYKL 45, nr 50, p. 30; nr 65, p. 29–31; nr 72, p. 28; nr 165, pp. 101–102; nr 216, p. 38.

²⁰⁹ TYKL 45, nr. 35, pp. 95, 123–125; nr 96, p. 94; nr 146, p. 29; nr 147, p. 95; nr 172, p. 3; nr 179, pp. 35, 46; nr 184, p. 29; nr 195, pp. 144–145; nr 216, pp. 49–52; nr 230, p. 76; nr 232, pp. 20, 30.

²¹⁰ TYKL 45, nr 150, p. 21.

²¹¹ TYKL 45, nr 78, p. 13; nr 172, p. 6; nr 195, pp. 22–23; nr 196, pp. 27–30; nr 244, p. 55.

“Oldies” and “catfish” - the age hierarchy among conscripts

Finally, the memories of Albert Lahti describe one more axis of tension of great significance among the soldiers, namely the informal hierarchy between the “oldies” and the “catfish”. Because there always had to be a certain number of trained soldiers in military preparedness, there was an overlapping system for the call-ups. At least one age class of “old” soldiers were always in service during the months it took to give the new recruits, the “catfish”, basic military training. These older and younger soldiers formed two distinct soldier groups, with the previous arrivals extremely keen on maintaining and demonstrating a hierarchical difference. In Lahti’s unit, this started before the new recruits had even stepped off the train that brought them to Kuopio, as some older soldiers boarded the train and ran through it shouting at the new arrivals, in an imitation or parody of their officers: “Bugs, get out in the yard – you should have been out already!” From that day, the older soldiers were the “bane and bullies” of Lahti and his fellow recruits. In his unit, it was not the superiors in the formal hierarchy, but the oldies who “blasted” beds or tied the bed clothing together into tight knots when the recruits were out on duty. The catfish could buy “protection” against this by buying their seniors tea, buns and cakes. This blackmailing was especially directed at the most timid boys among the recruits who were terrorised into getting the “oldies” buns all the time from a nearby bakery.²¹²

Recruits in most interwar military units were insulted by the “oldies” as “mackerels”, “catfish”, “bugs”, “bloodyheads” (referring to the recruits’ new-shaved scalps), “pisshead-catfish” and many other imaginative invectives. “When you met a recruit you always showed them a gesture with the hand as if sawing off the neck. In other words, you had better cut your throat! Seeing a recruit coming towards you in town you felt he certainly is such an idiot! A recruit, a pisshead catfish.”²¹³ The recruits were also often told to go hang themselves; they might as well kill themselves, because unlike the oldies who were soon to be disbanded the catfish would, they were told, never get out of the army.

The older soldiers arranged various “welcomes” for the recruits, such as putting bricks, barbed wire, logs of wood etcetera in their straw mattresses; or treating them to a “piss alarm call” which meant waking them up in the middle of the night with some hellish noise, having them fall in a formation and taking them to the lavatories – sometimes repeatedly. The “oldies” seized parts of the younger soldiers’ food, such as the pieces of meat in the soup, leaving only the broth to the “mackerels”. They tried to trick

²¹² TYKL 45, nr 147, pp. 16–17.

²¹³ TYKL 45, nr 230, p. 79.

recruits to buy all kinds of army equipment or simply stole their equipment forcing them to buy it back, and so on.²¹⁴

The bullying of recruits by their conscripted squad leaders could be seen as a part of this hazing of the younger soldiers by the previous age class, although with one significant difference: the squad leaders could use or abuse the absolute power of command they had over the recruits and disguise hazing as training or disciplinary measures. Those who did their military service towards the end of the interwar period remembered the conscripted squad leaders as the worst tormentors of the younger conscripts, not the regular NCOs, officers, or the older private soldiers. Arvo Virtanen who was called up in 1933 wrote, "The [conscripted] corporals' power was total – one corporal had a recruit wash the gaps between his toes with the recruit's own toothbrush. Making someone dance with a broom or close-order drill with empty boots were amusements of the corporals, together with many other forms of bullying."²¹⁵

The hazing rituals in the Finnish conscript army have been extensively studied by ethnologist Pekka Leimu (1985). He observes that hazing by the "oldies" in most units mainly took the form of "welcome ceremonies". The older soldiers wanted to immediately establish a firm informal hierarchy between them and the younger soldiers. Once that was taken care of there was no need for theatrical rituals, apart from the quotidian verbal abuse. Normally, material hazing was repeated or prolonged only if the younger soldiers somehow resisted or challenged the informal hierarchical order. However, in some branches of the armed forces, especially the field artillery and cavalry, hazing was especially ingrained and often took on brutal forms. Leimu explains the differences in cultures of hazing between different service branches with the fact that officers educated in imperial Russia dominated the cavalry and artillery and somehow disseminated old hazing traditions from Russian military academies among their conscripts. The infantry, on the other hand, dominated by Jäger officers educated in Germany, was relatively free from hazing until its forms slowly spread there too, due to officer circulation and an emergent culture of hazing at the new national cadet school in Helsinki.²¹⁶

Increasing measures were taken to stamp out hazing, such as lodging recruits and older soldiers in different corridors or buildings. However, Leimu thinks many officers probably tolerated the older soldiers' hazing of the recruits because they thought it was a necessary and beneficial form of

²¹⁴ See also Leimu, *Pennalismi ja initiaatio* 1985, pp. 157, 175, 189–190, 203, 210–213, 218–223.

²¹⁵ TYKL 45, nr 202, p. 4.

²¹⁶ Leimu, *Pennalismi ja initiaatio* 1985, pp. 199–200, 240–242.

initiation and socialisation into military life. However, as Leimu points out, military hazing was not a true initiation rite, since the recruits were never taken up into the older soldiers' community and never accepted as their equals. The hierarchical relationship between oldies and catfish prevailed until the oldies were disbanded. In the words of Albert Lahti, "only then [the catfish] were admitted to be human beings", meaning that only then could they move up the ladder to become oldies themselves – and manifest their position by oppressing the new recruits in their turn.²¹⁷ Leimu interprets this progression as a reflection of the fact that the conscripts in the peacetime army organisation were never allowed to pass the borderline running between conscripts and regulars. In a kind of imitation, the soldiers therefore constructed a borderline and hierarchy among themselves, at least allowing the conscripts to feel a sense of advancement and superiority in relation to the recruits. To phrase it slightly differently, I would say the oldies could lessen their own sense of being subjugated, and ease the tension between their sense of masculinity and soldiering, by erecting a relationship of masculine domination and superiority in relationship to the "unmanly" catfish.

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In the final analysis, it is not possible to draw definite conclusions from these materials about how Finnish men in military training related to and felt about their comrade soldiers and whether some deeper and more coherent gender solidarity among them emerged from the barracks. What we can observe, however, is how men used or refrained from using particular images of comradeship in their story-telling. On that account, I find it striking how the memories collected in 1972–1973 do not celebrate military comradeship in any way even remotely reminiscent of Mika Waltari's depictions.

It seems plausible that comradeship is not as important to narration about peacetime military training as it is to telling stories about war experiences. In his study of comradeship among German soldiers and war veterans during the twentieth century, Thomas Kühne suggests that the celebration of military comradeship is a way of directing attention away from the destruction, killing, and atrocities committed by men in war and conjure a deeply human image of soldiering.²¹⁸ Since no killing takes place in peacetime military education, that at least constitutes no reason to

²¹⁷ TYKL 45, nr 147, p. 114.

²¹⁸ Kühne, *Kameradschaft* 2006, p. 32.

emphasise comradeship in army stories. The soldiers in stories about peacetime military training always appear as victims of bullying and other hardships, not as perpetrators.

Mika Waltari and Pentti Haanpää harnessed depictions of the nature of comradeship to obvious political purposes. Waltari wanted to defend the military system and the spirit of collectivism inherent in “white” nationalism and found use for images of close, warm and happy military comradeship. Haanpää was intent on criticising the system and its corrupting impact on men and therefore painted a less rosy picture of comradeship. All this said, I think it is evident that Waltari’s and Haanpää’s depictions also reflect real differences in their personal experiences of military comradeship, in part owing to the different socio-cultural composition of their units. Their active participation in the interwar politics of conscription nevertheless amplified these differences and made them significant for their story-telling.

The men writing down their memories of military training in the 1970’s wrote in a different temporal context where the political heat around the issue of how to organise military training had abated long time ago. Enthusiastic images of military comradeship were not necessary for the stories they wanted to tell, not the way Waltari needed it for his defence of the existing cadre-army system. Yet neither were their stories Haanpää-like dystopias of how they had been morally corrupted by this particular way of organising military training. None of the 1972–1973 narrators seem to have been intent on criticising the cadre army’s very foundations the way Haanpää did. As I will discuss further in the next section, I think that an important guiding principle for their story-telling was rather to tell something about themselves, about the hardships they had endured and their own strategies for coping with the paradoxes and challenges of military training. They certainly wanted to convey a true picture to posterity about what military training had really been like in their times, but to many of them, army stories were essentially a part of their own life stories. Theirs were essentially individualistic stories about one man finding self-confidence and strength to be independent from others. In those stories about soldiering and manhood, close comradeship could not be the most central element.

5.6 Submission or resistance: finding trajectories to manhood

How did Finnish men eventually respond to the challenges facing them in the military? What strategies of coping did they chose and how did they

relate their self-understandings to the contradictions between army experiences and notions of manhood? Here, the different strands of this chapter become interwoven. There are connections between how men described the comradeship among the soldiers, how they depicted the soldiers' reactions to military discipline, and how they attempted to solve the paradoxes of military masculinity.

One strategy of dealing with the humiliating experiences of being forced into subordination was to use the available space for resistance – and tell stories about that resistance for years after. This strategy is found in many of the 1970's memory narratives. The memories abound with stories about how the conscripts managed to shirk duties, fool the officers, leave without permission, give smart repartees to dumbstruck officers or even physically fight back. Although some informants proudly describe how they themselves stood up to abusive officers,²¹⁹ most men tell the stories of “resistance heroes” observed and remembered with fascination – although not always undivided admiration – by the other, more cautious soldiers.²²⁰ One typical such story of resistance is Karl Rosenberg's (b. 1901) recollections of how three “merry rogues” were to be punished for drunkenness. They were lined up in the front of the rest of their company with full backpacks for *santsi*, extra duty, but they had fooled the officers by filling their backpacks with tin washbasins and other lightweight objects. When the sergeant started commanding them to run, hit the ground, etcetera, they obeyed orders, but did it in slow-motion “like a slowed-down sports film”, making the whole company roar with laughter. The captain was furious, “jumping up and down fists clenched in front of those boys screaming they were going to jail every one of them”. Rosenberg commented, “The Jäger captain had hardly seen anything like it on his journey to Germany, it was something only Finnish humour could bring by.”²²¹

Memories of how the soldiers could strike back against some particularly disliked superior by group solidarity were cherished in the narrative tradition. For example, in Kiviniemi in 1932, a loathed sergeant major in Vilho Lepola's unit had just been transferred to another unit, but had to pass by the barracks of his previous subordinates on his way to the office. The first morning he walked past, the conscripts gathered by the window and hurled insults over him, telling him to “climb that tree, arse foremost, and without using your hands!” In spite of the sergeant major's

²¹⁹ TYKL 45, nr 165, pp. 97–98.

²²⁰ TYKL 45, nr 38, p. 17; nr 65, p. 23; nr 84, p. 14; nr 85, pp. 82–83, 86–87; nr 126, p. 27; nr 138, pp. 26–29; nr 175, p. 6; nr 196, p. 34–35.

²²¹ TYKL 45, nr 114, pp. 27–28. Cf nr 85, pp. 86–87.

threats of reporting them, the shouting only intensified. The next morning, the same spectacle was repeated, after which the sergeant major started taking another route to his office.²²² Comradeship in the reminiscences thus displays elements of both pressure on individuals to submit to army discipline and a solidarity making resistance possible. It is akin to Pentti Haanpää's muddled depiction of a coarse and individualistic comradeship between soldiers, ambiguously both supportive and corruptive; a bond that was not in itself the cause of the soldiers' resistance and recalcitrance, but still incited them to defiance.

Among Pentti Haanpää's soldier comrades, the obvious response to being forced into submission was to attempt resistance in any form possible. The conscripts he portrayed have no personal motivation for a military service that appears meaningless to them and offers them nothing in return. Therefore, they try to reclaim at least some of their personal autonomy, or just make their existence a little bit more comfortable, by lying, cheating, shirking and malingering. As the conscripts are prevented from doing "honest" work, they find more manly dignity in doing nothing at all than in fooling around in the exercise fields playing war games. They brag to each other about how they have fooled and cheated the officers. They compete over who is most skilled in shirking duty without being caught. Behaviour such as sleeping while on guard duty becomes a matter of refusing complete subordination and regaining some control over one's own life and affairs.²²³

As a narrator, Haanpää was obviously fascinated by those characters among the soldiers who dare strike back against the officers, be it only by putting itching powder in a hated lieutenant's clothes without being caught.²²⁴ Several of the individual conscripts he describes are soldiers serving extra time because of repeated breaches of regulations. They have ceased to care about their ever renewed punishments and prolonged military service. Their sole remaining purpose in life is to demonstrate their defiance, unyieldingness, willpower and individualism to the officers and the other soldiers. In one story, one of these *sotavanhus* [-old man of war] characters commits suicide in order to take his revenge on a hated officer, blowing them up together with dynamite.²²⁵ In another, a *sotavanhus* spends his third Christmas Eve in the army, serving extra time and freezing in a cold and lice-infested prison cell. Yet he is still filled with pride when he overhears the younger soldiers on guard talking about him with admiration mingled with

²²² TYKL 45, nr 196, pp. 119–120.

²²³ Cf e.g. Haanpää, *Kenttä ja kasarmi* 1928, pp. 49, 62–63.

²²⁴ Haanpää, *Kenttä ja kasarmi* 1928, pp. 109–120.

²²⁵ Haanpää, *Kenttä ja kasarmi* 1928, pp. 82–86.

terror, calling him one of the wildest men ever known.²²⁶ These characters are die-hard individualists. Their resistance against the military discipline and abusive superiors is not based in the group solidarity among comrades. They wage their private wars against the system, only occasionally bonding together with their comrades in collective actions of defiance. The prestige as tough guys that they enjoy in other men's eyes probably spurs them on, although they certainly are not model men. Their destinies are more frightening than attractive to the "ordinary" conscript.

The most common forms of resistance described in the 1972–1973 collection were, however, passive ones: shirking duty, pretending to be stupid in class, saluting slowly and half-heartedly, leaving without permission and trying to return unnoticed. According to the informants, these strategies were specifically aimed at especially disliked officers and NCOs.²²⁷ Thus, they are not presented as an all-pervasive attitude to soldiering among the conscripts like in Pentti Haanpää's tableaux of military life.²²⁸ Even if the informants liked to celebrate isolated instances of resistance in their storytelling, an all-out story based on how they had shirked their way through the entire pre-war military training was probably not an image of themselves they could be comfortable with after the wars they had fought in 1939–1944.

Submission as manliness

Resistance was not the only way of preserving one's dignity in face of the military system. There was an opposite way, making adjustment and submission into a manly achievement in itself, as illustrated by Mika Waltari's army book. Among his comrades, young men from the educated, urban upper middle classes, submitting to army discipline was evidently not at all as problematic as for Pentti Haanpää's lumberjacks and farmhands. The reasons had much to do with class and social background. Waltari and his comrades were well adapted to benefit from the military system they had entered. They had been brought up and trained within a social environment and a school system that largely put the same demands on them as the army – a sense of duty, self-restraint, obedience and discipline. Just like the families that brought them up and the schools that educated them, the army motivated these young men by the promised reward of elite membership. The army confirmed their sense of being predestined for future leading positions by automatically picking them out for leadership training. It

²²⁶ Haanpää, *Kenttä ja kasarmi* 1928, pp. 89–90, 95–96.

²²⁷ See TYKL 45, nr 1, p. 3; nr 72, pp. 14–15, 26–28; nr 96, pp. 84–85; nr 132, pp. 22–23; nr 147, p. 66.

²²⁸ For some exceptions where shirking is described as ubiquitous, see TYKL 45, nr 35, p. 83; nr 203, p. 52; nr 238, p. 4.

stimulated their sense of competition – a central element in middle-class masculinities since the nineteenth century²²⁹ – by putting a prestigious reserve officer training within reach for those with the best performance. When Waltari has reached the stage of reserve officer training, he describes how their superiors now treat the cadets like young gentlemen. “We feel proud to be part of the elite among Finnish youth. It strengthens our self-respect and stifles presumption and boasting. We must really become men, who are able to fulfil the task we have been given.” That task is both to hold the reins in society and public life and to lead the troops, to “die among the first, be an example to others.”²³⁰

According to historian Veli-Matti Syrjö, students from bourgeois families in interwar Finland coveted the status of reserve officer, since it was evidence of both personal ability and proficiency and a patriotic sense of duty – shouldering the responsibility going with being a member of the elite.²³¹ The boyish “games in the sun” that Waltari and his comrades play during recruit training therefore have a competitive edge. Although these conscripts certainly revel in small breaches of regulations and shirking minor chores, such as cleaning or potato peeling,²³² peer group pressure among them is directed towards showing that they are fit to pass any test, “making it where the others do”, always keeping up with the others and preferably even outperforming them. Exhausted by tough marches and exercises, the pupils of NCO school jokingly shout to each other: *Se tekee vain terää!*, a Finnish saying meaning “It only does you good!” but that also could be understood as alluding to sharpness, the sting of a blade or the maturing of crops.²³³

Mika Waltari resolved the contradiction between masculinity and subordination by presenting the conscripts as boys on the threshold of real manhood and cast submission not as passive, oppressive and forbidding, but as active and productive of a more mature manhood. Contrary to the strong individualism among Haanpää’s rural workers, Waltari’s notions of manly maturity were connected with a collectivist view of society. He contrasted the immature selfishness of youth with adult, responsible manhood which is about conquering oneself, adjusting to the demands of real life in a society with others, and “learning the hardest and greatest skill of all” – submitting oneself to another’s will, for the sake of the common good. The military, he

²²⁹ See e.g. Stearns, *Be a Man* 1979, p. 114–115; Bonde, *Mandigbed og sport* 1991, pp. 24–27; Häggman, *Perheen vuosisata* 1994, p. 60; Tjeder, *Power of Character* 2004, pp. 199–232.

²³⁰ Waltari, *Siellä missä miehiä tehdään* 1931, pp. 215–216.

²³¹ Syrjö, *Puolustusvoimien asema* 1986, p. 72. Cf Waltari, *Siellä missä miehiä tehdään* 1931, pp. 215–216.

²³² See Waltari, *Siellä missä miehiä tehdään* 1931, e.g. pp. 52–53.

²³³ Waltari, *Siellä missä miehiä tehdään* 1931, pp. 76, 148, 162.

claimed, furthers this development, by “grinding away the defiance of false self-respect and immature individualism”.²³⁴ He thinks back at the follies of his youth, such as showing off on the dance floors of Paris jazz clubs, thinking, “thank God that is all past now. I have entered a new, manlier life. My individual foolishness and troubles do not mean anything anymore. I am only a small, insignificant part of a powerful whole.”²³⁵

This “powerful whole” is for Waltari in some instances the nation, country or fatherland, but first and foremost the community of soldier comrades. Manhood is achieved through taking part in the all-male world of the military and coping with its demands. In this respect, there is anxiousness in Waltari to prove something to himself and other men and demonstrate that he can pass the test of soldiering.

(...) I am secretly proud of myself. Proud that I can make it where the others do. That I have been able to submit even in the tightest spots. I have conquered myself, – I am proud that I am taking part, here, where men are made.²³⁶

The comradeship and community of young men fulfilling the tasks and duties that men and only men can perform in this gender order – *that* is what more than anything else seems to constitute the “making of men” that Waltari marks as the central topic of his book in its very title. Just as in the rhetoric of the *Suomen Sotilas* magazine, he claims that men leave the army with more vigour, strength and courage. “A new sense of self-confidence and responsibility has slowly grown within us, a consciousness that after these days life opens up before us in its entirety and freedom with its own commitments. And if we have coped here, why should we not cope in the larger world.”²³⁷

Subverting the notion of a “school for men”

Pentti Haanpää made ruthless satire on the very notions of the army as a ‘school for men’ that Waltari gladly used. The men in Haanpää’s stories certainly change during their military service, yet not the way idealistic army propaganda such as the texts in *Suomen Sotilas* would have it. In Haanpää’s army stories, military training produces defiance, underhandedness, cynicism and programmatic indolence. A recruit in one of Haanpää’s stories who witnesses the cunning of an older soldier malingering realizes that “this is

²³⁴ Waltari, *Siellä missä miehiä tehdään* 1931, p. 166–167.

²³⁵ Waltari, *Siellä missä miehiä tehdään* 1931, p. 87.

²³⁶ Waltari, *Siellä missä miehiä tehdään* 1931, pp. 120–121.

²³⁷ Waltari, *Siellä missä miehiä tehdään* 1931, p. 171.

how things are done in this firm. (...) A real man prevails and a real man helps himself.” His squad leader tells him,

Tricks are what works in the army! No use yearning or moaning here. To be sure, a man will be trained and taught here. Everyone is a catfish [tenderfoot] at first, but here at last an ordinary man learns, becomes overly learned, knows his tricks, knows how to arrange things for himself...²³⁸

The recruit learns his lesson; you cannot get by in the army without lying and cheating; “you will not live long if you try to follow all the regulations and all the bosses’ fancies”. In spite of this, the recruit stubbornly tells his squad leader that he still believes that the army is “a good school for a man: your reason develops and your nature is hardened.”

For Haanpää’s conscripts, who had apparently been doing adult men’s work and supporting themselves for years before the call-up, manhood was not something the army could confer on them, but rather something it could offend, diminish or take away through the humiliation of exaggerated subordination. For the middle-class town boy Waltari, manhood evidently still had to be reached or at least proven to a sceptical world – parents, teachers, peers, and not least men from the lower classes. For the artist and intellectual, the army provided a valuable *opportunity* for the construction of masculinities increasing his social prestige. The soldiers portrayed by Haanpää, however, did not see military training in the same light. Being men from the working classes, with elementary education at the most, the prestige of officer training was out of their reach. To them, the obvious answer to the contradiction between submission and manliness was to resist submission, at least to some degree.

Pentti Haanpää did not attempt to find a solution to the paradox between manly autonomy and military submission within the military system. The only solution he offered consisted in leaving this corrupting world. The Jäger sergeant-major in the opening story of *Fields and Barracks* manages to turn his life around for the better in the end – by resigning from the army and going home to take over his family’s farm after his father’s death. In spite of everything, Haanpää never criticises the principle that men (and only men) should bear arms and defend their country when needed. Rather, his train of thought bears remarkable similarity to the Finnish Agrarian Party’s criticism of the cadre army system and its arguments in favour of a militia army.²³⁹ To the Agrarians’ thinking – and obviously Haanpää’s as well – a sound Finnish man and citizen-soldier should

²³⁸ Haanpää, *Kenttä ja kasarmi* 1928, pp. 31–38.

²³⁹ See p. 72–82 above.

not be isolated from society in barracks and garrisons, but live in civilian society, doing his proper work to support himself and his family. He only now and then should be trained in the use of weapons together with his fellow men, for a day or two, or perhaps a few weeks each year. Thus, he should stay within a man's true place in peacetime, instead of entering the abnormal and corruptive social world of the cadre army, with its militaristic and aristocratic heritage from Russia and Prussia.

The attractive story of growing through hardships

On the bottom line – how did Eero Tuominen, Lauri Mattila, Heikki Kolehmainen, Onni Mähönen, Albert Lahti and all the other men who shared their army memories with the researchers in 1972–1973, finally choose to relate to what they had been through? Did they eventually subscribe to Pentti Haanpää's dismissal of the whole idea of the army as a place “where men are made”, or did they co-opt the positive interpretations offered by Mika Waltari and the “civic education” they had been given?

Many of the informants did not even try to ascribe some comprehensive meaning to the mass of fragmentary anecdotes they recalled from memory. However, it is characteristic of most narratives that their image of soldiering and military service is the image of an essentially very hard, tough and demanding social experience. As we have seen, the bulk of the reminiscences have much in common with Pentti Haanpää's depiction of military life: the bullying, the contempt for sadistic superiors, the strategies of passive resistance through shirking, comradeship that was often more about getting along with people than about being carried away by passionate affinity. Yet in spite of all these differences from Mika Waltari's enchanted pictures of army life, and the similarities between the many “dark stories” about military service and Haanpää's dystopia, the solution Waltari offered to the paradox between manhood and submission actually lies closer to how most men later chose to interpret their experiences of military training.

There are many indications that entering the interwar army was a shocking and painful experience for many men. I think four different strategies for fending off pain caused by the harshness of military life – even preventing or forgetting that pain – can be discerned in the memories. Three have already been discussed: disparaging and expressing contempt for the bullies, belittling and playing down the harassments in themselves, and symbolic resistance celebrating any counter-power the soldiers managed to exercise. The fourth strategy, however, is casting the whole experience of military training as a story of growth and personal development – as part of a trajectory to manhood.

According to Albert Lahti, a visible transformation of the conscripts took place over the course of their military service. The starting point, a recruit with his head shaven and the regiment's worst and most worn-out equipment, was a sorry sight:

No wonder that the poor recruit's face was fearful like a hare in the field and thus easily recognisable as a catfish with [hundreds of days] left. Then when you had started to grow up in age and wisdom and become a man in the second oldest contingent, you could exchange your clothes for better ones, your hair could start to grow a little bit (...) and your step grew more secure, and then even your face started showing "signs of life".

Lahti further remembered that as a conscripted NCO you could be very demanding with the recruits. Yet "when it came to a man who dared yell out "only a few more days", which you could see anyway by his longer hair, the angle of the cap, the relaxed and carefree behaviour etc., he would not [salute you], and many conscripted corporal or sergeant (...) did not bother or – to be honest – dare to demand it."²⁴⁰

Lahti's formulation that a recruit's "frightened" face only started "showing signs of life" roughly halfway through military training was perhaps articulated tongue-in-cheek. The humorous, a bit causerie-like style Lahti uses here runs through large parts of many men's military narratives. In his study of folklore concerning Finnish lumberjacks, Jyrki Pöysä writes that humour within folklore is often a way of protecting oneself and the audience when difficult things are touched upon. Within male collectives, humour can also be a way of marking affinity without forgoing the personal distance required among men.²⁴¹ Humour in army stories can thus be a textual method of providing emotional distance from memories and experiences that were truly hurtful at the time, but also a way of masking the positive emotional significance of closeness to other men during military service.

Eero Tuominen, who journeyed to his regiment under dark skies in April 1919 and who felt like he was in jail two weeks into his service, serves as another rather explicit example of how the narrative trajectory to manhood could be constructed. Tuominen writes that started feeling better about his military service when summer came, recruit training ended and he was commanded to NCO school. The alumnus of a rural folk high school, he enjoyed the company of the other pupils, "a select body, more developed". He made friends among other sportsmen at NCO school, "even some townfolk" who introduced him to the sights of Turku. As autumn fell, he still felt depressed and especially Sunday afternoons at the barracks were

²⁴⁰ TYKL 45, nr 147, p. 80.

²⁴¹ Cf Pöysä, *Jätjän synty* 1997, p. 13.

“hopelessly dreary”. In October he was promoted to corporal. “I was quite a boss in the recruits’ eyes. (...) However, I never got used to that bowing to me, it felt repulsive.” In February, he was put in charge of the regiment’s equipment stores. He got his own room, which he turned into a meeting-point for conscripts from his home district and sportsmen from different units. Then, finally, disbandment day arrived. Tuominen remembered he felt that this was the happiest in his life so far:

As I looked back on my almost one and a half year long military service, which took up two beautiful summers and one winter of my best youth, I noticed, that even if it was a mentally very difficult time for me, I eventually took to it like a duck to water. I noticed that I got along and succeeded in whatever I was confronted with. I felt my self/confidence grow. I noticed how well I got along with all kinds of people. (...) Freedom gone, homesickness, longing and bitterness all made that life so repulsive. But little boys were made into men there. That must be admitted.²⁴²

Although not everybody became a conscript NCO and few ever had their own room, the narrative of slowly improving conditions throughout military service is typical for the whole body of army memories. Recruit training was often remembered and described as the hardest and toughest time, not only in terms of everything being new and unfamiliar, but also because the focus of the military curriculum in this time period was on disciplining the recruits by means of close-order drill and indoor duties. To make things worse, the hazing of recruits by older soldiers mainly occurred in the first weeks of service. Throughout the first months of training, the soldiers’ squad leaders were conscripts from the older contingent, intent on paying back through their juniors what they themselves had suffered as recruits. As the older contingent was disbanded and the conscripts were led by squad leaders from their own contingent who could not boss them about in the same manner, many of the hierarchical tensions in the soldiers’ everyday life eased. Moving on from the close-order drill of recruit training to field training, NCO school or different special assignments were usually described as a great improvement – although NCO school could also mean even harsher discipline and “being a recruit all over again”. According to Juha Mälkki, a “mechanical barracks discipline” was replaced by freedom from routines and group-discipline during field exercises.²⁴³ Evidently, the regulars were also in general somewhat laxer in disciplinary matters when dealing with older soldiers.

²⁴² TYKL 45, nr 27, pp. 100–101, 107.

²⁴³ Mälkki, *Herrat, jätkät ja sotataito* 2008, pp. 192–193.

The informal hierarchy between older and younger soldiers provided rich materials for articulating the experience and crafting the narrative of conscripted soldiering as a story of development and growth. The disparagement of the younger soldiers served to make the “catfish” a kind of counter image, a foil against which the “oldies” could stand out as manly, mature and magnificent. The closer disbandment day grew, the stronger did the “oldies” manifest that they had served their apprenticeship and were now skilled warriors. On disbandment day, the process had reached its terminus. Valterri Aaltonen’s company commander – just like his officer colleagues writing in *Suomen Sotilas* – encouraged this thinking as he delivered a farewell speech to Aaltonen and his comrades, telling them they certainly were “handsome men” upon leaving.²⁴⁴ As Eino Sallila and his comrades returned to the train station in their village and stood on the platform saying goodbye, they felt “we were now fully men”. Remembering how they had departed from that very station one year earlier, they laughed at their own childishness back then.²⁴⁵ Other men as well embraced the notion that what they had been through had given them self-confidence and made them men. “That time was not wasted. There during one year a shy and timid country boy grew into a man who held his ground in the struggle of life.”²⁴⁶ “Afterwards my military service has shimmered in my mind as one of the memory-richest times of youth. Sometimes I have recalled it as the time when I was raised to be a man. I have heard many who have been to the army say: ‘Only when he has done his military service does a little boy become a man’.”²⁴⁷

Overall, however, only nine informants out of the 56 analysed here explicitly mention and co-opt some version of the maxim about the army as a “school for men”. These nine are not obviously different from the average in terms of age, education, profession or whether they got leadership training or not.²⁴⁸ It is impossible to say, whether the large majority who did not write about the connection between military service and manhood repudiated the notion. Some of them just never made it to the end of the two hundred questions where the ethnologists finally asked what attitude they had taken to their military service afterwards. However, Jorma Kiiski (b. 1903) was actually the only informant in my sample to summarise his memories in a decidedly negative tenor, obviously embittered by the

²⁴⁴ TYKL 45, nr 96, p. 108.

²⁴⁵ TYKL 45, nr 65, p. 84.

²⁴⁶ TYKL 45, nr 146, p. 48.

²⁴⁷ TYKL 45, nr 227, p. 325.

²⁴⁸ TYKL 45, nr 26, 27, 65, 146, 195, 203, 216, 227, 244.

bullying, “Prussian discipline” and misappropriation of the soldiers’ rations and pay that occurred in his unit;

I feel that the service and practices in my time were rather a failure. Pointless pomposity without end, pointless demands and showing-off to the point of brutality that I am the one who commands here and who knows everything. (...) When you are on a common mission, learning to defend the fatherland, there should be some humanity on both sides, also on part of the superiors towards their subordinates. Too much harshness and contemptuous arrogance only fosters anger and bitterness.²⁴⁹

Kiiski might be voicing the opinion of many who did not participate in the writing competition or did not bother to speak their mind. Yet even if most men did not explicitly write that it “made them men”, my general impression of reading the narratives, is that most informants had a positive attitude to their military service as old men despite their tough experiences at the time. To sum up their memories, they used expressions such as “I have looked back with gratefulness”, “a trouble-free time of my life”, “a fascinating time (...) new exciting things happening every day”, “rich with memories” or “I proudly remember...”²⁵⁰

There is a pattern in the army stories of initially emphasising the toughness, even brutality of military training and discipline and still end the narration on a positive note. Several informants comment on the same mechanism of memory that Mika Waltari described (see p. 226 above): one remembers the positive things; time heals all wounds. Emil Lehtoranta (b. 1900) wrote, “My diary gives an even much more austere picture of that form of life than in these memories, time has levelled out one’s opinions.”²⁵¹ Eino Kuitunen (b. 1915) reflected, “Even if there was a ‘sting in your breast’ and you were disgruntled over meaningless hammerings [-punishment exercises] in the army (this was called the recruit’s disease), on the whole and now with hindsight it was not at all too bad and the years 1939–1945 demonstrated beyond dispute the necessity of being in the army.”²⁵² As indicated by Waltari, this process of re-evaluation already started during the military service and speeded up as the men were disbanded. Yrjö Härkälä (b. 1912) wrote that in spite of all the soldiers’ fantasies about taking revenge on beastly superiors after disbandment, nobody ever did; “Those small extra exercises, already in the past [on disbandment day] were part of a young

²⁴⁹ TYKL 45, nr 90, pp. 54–55.

²⁵⁰ Informants quoted: TYKL 45, nr 44, 147, 172, 184, 232. See further nr 14, 27, 56, 84, 96, 114, 147, 175, 184, 195, 227.

²⁵¹ TYKL 45, nr 50, [cover sheet].

²⁵² TYKL 45, nr 226, p. 59.

man's life, they only made him a man, and once he had become a man he would not remember them in anger."²⁵³

Many narrators obviously took pride in having been “under the roller” and endured a military training that they actually made an effort to portray as extremely tough. Heikki Kolehmainen wrote that during the time of his service, in 1919–1920, the conditions and treatment of soldiers felt horrible, but with time he had come to see that the reasons lay in the primitiveness of the newborn army. The hard exercises hardened those who coped with them, wrote Kolehmainen, who claimed he could still, as a 75 year-old, sense their positive physical effects.²⁵⁴ Johannes Lindberg (b. 1900), one of the most critical voices in the collection, described very harsh superiors and resentment among the soldiers in the Karelia Guards Regiment in Viipuri, commenting, “to our mind such a hard training was not likely to foster a patriotic spirit”. Yet “it did not leave behind any lasting bitterness (...) it was strange to hear how [former soldiers] later mentioned with a kind of pride that they had served in the Karelia regiment.”²⁵⁵

Once the “hammering”, the rough treatment, had been endured and was bygone, it could be used to support a narrative identity of oneself as one who could cope with the hardest demands of manhood. Some mention it as a way of marking that their own military training was superior to military training in the 1970's. “They certainly made a youngster into a man, according to the discipline in those days, nowadays it is inadequate, they go home every week (...) it is easy nowadays and a short time and bad discipline compared to the old days.”²⁵⁶ “Nowadays the [soldier] material is weak, long hair, hairnets to keep their hair together. Back then they often shaved the head bald using a razor.”²⁵⁷ Even Jorma Kiiski, who was uncompromisingly bitter and negative over what he had experienced, wrote at the end of his account that in spite of everything he had never tried to frighten boys about military service, “on the contrary I have thought it to be necessary and even useful [for them]. Now it is completely different there [in the army]. Now it is as far as I know needlessly easy and comfortable in every way.”²⁵⁸

There are striking similarities between these stories and the understandings of military service advocated by interwar military rhetoric, such as pioneer Kellomäki's speech about growing in self-confidence and maturity through hardships and submission, published in *Suomen Sotilas* in

²⁵³ TYKL 45, nr 203, pp. 97–98.

²⁵⁴ TYKL 45, nr 35, p. 114.

²⁵⁵ TYKL 45, nr 50, p. 30.

²⁵⁶ TYKL 45, nr 26, p. 17. Cf nr 175, p. 22, 43; nr 195, p. 184; nr 196, p. 122; nr 244, p. 72.

²⁵⁷ TYKL 45, nr 203, p. 104.

²⁵⁸ TYKL 45, nr 90, p. 55.

1922. “You have been forced to rely on your own strengths and abilities and thereby your will has been fortified and your self-reliance has grown. (...) You leave here both physically hardened and spiritually strengthened.” (See p. 154 above.) Yet the former conscripts did not just imitate official propaganda from the interwar years. They used some of its elements, but put them into the much bleaker context of their personal experiences. Unlike Mika Waltari’s trajectory to manhood, their route led through the “dark stories” of hardships, conflicts and bullying, which drew both on their own memories and a popular tradition of understanding military service as oppressive of men from the lower classes. The key motive of their stories was not, like in Pentti Haanpää’s army critique, to bring out the inhumanity of the military training system, although they seem to display the same rather individualist notions of masculinity as Haanpää did. They demonstrate how they prevailed, not primarily by force of the support of a tightly knit homosocial collective, but by force of their own growing strength and hardiness. The stories of their hardships are, above all, the epic story of their own coping.

5.7 *Conscript soldiers and women*

Up to this point we have studied the masculinities of Finnish conscript soldiers as a homosocial matter of men’s relationships among each other in the secluded sphere of military garrisons and training camps. The military hierarchies and comradeships, the disciplinary methods and strategies of resistance or submission, even the ways Finnish men crafted trajectories to manhood out of their army experiences, have been described with almost no reference made to women. This, however, reflects how most men chose to tell their stories about military service. Their social relationships to women who were important in their lives at the time – mothers, sisters, female friends, girlfriends or wives – are largely blurred out of the narrative. However, this exclusion is not complete.

Since men in military training were for long periods physically separated from women it might seem only natural that they do not think women were significant to the story of what they experienced. Yet in fact women were present in the soldiers’ lives and they cannot exclude them altogether from the story. In brief passages, even mere sentences or subordinate clauses, women are glimpsed now and again. In the 1972–1973 collection, some men mention in passing that they had a girlfriend or a wife

either in their home district or in the garrison town.²⁵⁹ E.g. Kalle Leppälä (b. 1913) had a girlfriend and even became engaged to her during his year in military training. He only mentions her existence as if by accident when accounting for the number of leaves of absence he obtained during his service. In his 357 pages of army memories, the longest text in my material, he writes nothing at all about what the forced separation from his partner felt like, how he coped with it or how they stayed in touch.²⁶⁰ Eero Tuominen, whose narrative is extraordinary in its emotional openness and articulateness, is an absolute exception, as he describes the longing for his girlfriend after reporting for service, the bliss of spending time with her on one precious home leave, the anxiousness that she should find someone else while he was gone, and his sorrow and bitterness as her letters grew increasingly infrequent and their contact eventually flagged.²⁶¹

In Mika Waltari's otherwise so open-hearted army book, the author only mentions the existence of his own girlfriend on page 91. According to Waltari's autobiography, he met and fell in love with the woman who later became his wife one month before he reported for military service.²⁶² In *Where Men Are Made*, however, he never tells the reader anything about her more than that she has blue eyes and a blue hat. It is not clear whether this was to guard his privacy or because he felt she did not really have a place in a book about his military service. Nevertheless, Waltari effectively omits the woman he chose to share his life with, although she evidently was an extremely important element in his life during his military training. He only hints at the happiness of four days on home leave having something to do with being in love, but he is rapturous in describing his return to camp after "a short sad goodbye" from his fiancée. It is ambiguous whether his happiness that night, back at camp, is due to being in love with his girlfriend or with the homosocial collective of soldier comrades: "I undress in the dark, in the midst of sleeping boys breathing, the familiar smell of foot cloths and boots. Oh, everything, everything is beautiful."²⁶³

Seducers, beaux and innocents

An important part of the "bachelor masculinity" reigning in interwar Finnish Army barracks seems to have been the repertoire of "naughty" marching

²⁵⁹ TYKL 45, nr 66, p. 39; nr 175, p. 12; nr 179, pp. 23–24; nr 230, p. 5.

²⁶⁰ TYKL 45, nr 227, pp. 150, 158–160.

²⁶¹ TYKL 45, nr 27.

²⁶² Waltari, *Kirjailijan muistelmia* 1980, pp. 215–221.

²⁶³ Waltari, *Siellä missä miehiä tehdään* 1931, p. 127.

songs. These songs ranged in content from raw pornographic and sometimes misogynist imagery to joyful celebration of the mutual pleasures for both man and woman of sexual intercourse. In all of them, however, a self-image of soldiers was cultivated – sometimes soldiers in general, sometimes the soldiers of one’s own unit in particular – as irresistible seducers of women, always on the move towards the next conquest. The soldier’s relationship to women in these songs, sung on heavy marches to cheer up the mood and copied in the soldiers’ autograph albums, was that of a classic Don Juan.²⁶⁴ This was also the image of soldiers’ relationships to women in popular Finnish films of the 1930’s. Advertisements for military farces alluded to the power of attraction military uniforms had for women. Using military metaphors for soldiers “conquering” women was usual in the screenplays.²⁶⁵

Recounting their own time as conscript soldiers, however, men gave a much more diverse picture of the conscripts’ force of attraction on women than in the wish-fulfilling fantasies of indecent songs. Some did not mention the soldiers having had any contact with women during their year of service²⁶⁶ – apart from the “Sisters” at the service club, who were usually older than the soldiers, extremely highly respected and regarded as sexually out-of-bounds²⁶⁷ – whereas others mention that dating local women was common among the soldiers.²⁶⁸ In these army memories, men do not brag about having been successful among women as they were soldiers. Some point out that it was hard to find female company in a large garrison town, with a considerable surplus of young men. An ordinary penniless infantry man had great difficulty competing with conscripts in the artillery, cavalry and navy who had fancier uniforms – not to mention the NCOs and officers with their well-fitted uniforms and golden insignia of rank.²⁶⁹ The class barriers in interwar society reoccur in some stories about how girls in finer clothes had to be “left to the officers” at a large ball at the theatre of Kuopio in 1929, or how ordinary soldiers from the countryside mainly dated country girls who worked as housemaids in the town houses of Oulu in 1925–1926.²⁷⁰

Many conscripts seem to have been rather sexually innocent at 21, as mention often is made of “experienced” or “more experienced” comrades, “womanisers”, who told their comrades wild stories about their sexual

²⁶⁴ TYKL 45, nr 27, p. 78; nr 72, p. 44; nr 144, p. 273; nr 175, pp. 30–31.

²⁶⁵ Lundin, ‘Armén i rampjuset’ 1992, pp. 385–386.

²⁶⁶ See for example TYKL 45, nr 226, pp. 49–50

²⁶⁷ TYKL 45, nr 195, p. 142; nr 202, p. 9; nr 230, p. 29.

²⁶⁸ TYKL 45, nr 65, p. 57; nr 126, p. 36; nr 175, pp. 15, 28; nr 195, p. 183; nr 227, p. 200.

²⁶⁹ TYKL 45, nr 175, p. 15; nr 202, p. 9; nr 216, p. 48.

²⁷⁰ TYKL 45, nr 165, pp. 63–68; nr 126, p. 36.

adventures or were observed with obvious fascination by their comrades.²⁷¹ Masturbation and homosexuality among the soldiers are, unsurprisingly, non-topics in the material, save a couple of mentions that jokes were cracked about sleeping “hands on the quilt!”²⁷² Contacts between soldiers and prostitutes are mentioned in a small number of narratives – although none of the informants admit having paid for sex themselves – but they were evidently extensive enough to worry the military authorities, because of the spread of venereal disease. In this regard, the military system sent the conscripts a double message; the military priests demanded self-restraint and abstinence, lecturing the soldiers on the irresponsibility, filthiness and devastating effects on future marital happiness of contacts with prostitutes. The army medical service, however, took a more pragmatic approach, instructing conscripts who had sexual intercourse during leaves to visit the hospital when they returned for preventive treatment. Concealing venereal disease was punishable.²⁷³

The serious meanings of heterosexuality

Mika Waltari, who was the most enthusiastic describer of warm and close comradeship among male soldiers in my material, is also the only one to write at length about the significance of women within this homosocial collective. His soldiers talk and dream about women when they are in camp and they eagerly date girls when they are back at their town barracks in Helsinki. However, women appear as distant and exotic in this world of men. To some they are creatures to be pursued, seduced and conquered, big game to brag to one’s friends about. Yet to Waltari and his close friends, who are middle-class and with a “good upbringing”, they are above all associated with a vision of the future, of marriage, of emotional satisfaction and security in a stable heterosexual partnership. One night in camp, Waltari and his comrades lie around talking shyly about these things.

Of course we could talk and brag about the most incredible erotic adventures we have had, which are more or less fantasy. In fact most of us are very innocent, in the dangerous borderlands of manhood.

Now that we are healthy and a new strength is growing in our limbs, we all feel distaste for brute erotic looseness. A dark night in some bushes or naked hostel room would be a heavy fall for us. Now that we

²⁷¹ TYKL 45, nr 20, pp. 36–37; nr 44, p. 13–14; nr 65, pp. 35, 56–57; nr 85, pp. 64–65; nr 196, pp. 83–84; nr 230, p. 23.

²⁷² TYKL 45, nr 179, p. 47; nr 232, p. 36. Cf Mälkki, *Herrat, jätkät ja sotataito* 2008, pp. 126–127.

²⁷³ TYKL 45, nr 20, p. 31; nr 50, pp. 16–17; nr 203, p. 22; nr 226, p. 51; nr 232, p. 32; nr 238, p. 6. On fleeting sexual contacts and dealings with prostitutes, see also Mälkki, *Herrat, jätkät ja sotataito* 2008, pp. 120–122.

have something to give, we want to keep ourselves pure – that same word that made such an irritating and banal impression in Christian morality lectures.

Now we want to some day, when our true moment has come, give our whole strong youth. Get engaged and married when that time comes. In all of us glitters the beautiful illusory dream of a home of our own. Without our knowing, we are growing closer to society. Free, unfettered youth and the social system are always each other's enemies. But here, through submitting, a deeper and greater solidarity has unconsciously been impressed upon us.²⁷⁴

In the depiction of this scene, Waltari reproduces an image, familiar from the texts by middle-class men writing in *Suomen Sotilas*, of conscripts as “pure” virginal youths, living a stage of their lives centred on the community of young males, predestined although not yet ready for marrying and heading a household. This image was actually a vital precondition for the notion that the army was the place ‘where men were made’. If the recruits were already living in mature heterosexual relationships, they would already have been real men and military training could not have been legitimised by claiming it brought them into this state of being. Waltari also makes an association here between submission, military service, becoming a loyal, responsible and useful male citizen, and getting married. Soldiering and fatherhood – in the sense of being responsible for a family of one's own – thus join each other as two significant currents taking the young man towards adult, mature manhood and patriotic useful citizenship.

The silence around marriage and serious heterosexual partnerships in the other sources does not mean that they were not an important part of ideal masculinities among the lower classes as well. In Pentti Haanpää's army book, this is only hinted at through a few textual clues, yet in analysis it emerges as a key factor behind Haanpää's criticism of military life. The Jäger sergeant major in his opening story not only goes home to take over his family's little farm, as previously cited. He “fetches” a girl from the garrison town to live and form a family with her. She is not mentioned before the third to last sentence of the whole story although the Jäger evidently has had a lasting relationship with her. Haanpää lets the reader understand that the Jäger eventually finds fulfilment that army life can never give in a classic rural Finnish manhood based on marriage, fatherhood, land ownership and productive work. Twice he uses the word “barren” to describe the gritty military training fields, implicitly contrasting them to the proper place of a Finnish man, a field of corn or a timber forest where his labour bears fruit.

²⁷⁴ Waltari, *Siellä missä miehiä tehdään* 1931, pp. 114–115.

This barrenness of soldiering could also be understood as the antithesis of the virility and fertility of a man in his civilian roles as lover and father.²⁷⁵

One explanation for the omission of girlfriends and wives in army stories and memories might be the habit of “undercommunicating” one’s marital status that ethnologist Ella Johansson has noted in the barracks and working camp culture of Swedish mobile workers in the early twentieth century. Being married and thus head of a family was strongly a part of the ideal for adult masculinity. Yet this was played down among the workers, together with social and economic differences, in order to create a conflict-free atmosphere (one might say an illusion) of equality between men within a culture of “bachelor masculinity”.²⁷⁶ This would seem to apply to both army barracks culture and the narrative tradition stemming from it. Sexual adventure with women was overcommunicated in army stories, whereas serious commitment with women was undercommunicated.

Narrative homosociality

Finally, the silence of most men on what it was like being separated from one’s mother, sisters and possible female partners – sometimes for a whole year without a single home leave – should probably also be understood as informed by the narrative tradition of commemorating military service. This tradition was reflected and reproduced by the ethnologists organising the 1972–1973 collection. Among the more than two hundred questions they asked their informants, the only one touching upon the existence of women in the conscripts’ lives was a subquestion’s subquestion, under the topic of how evenings off-duty were spent in the barracks, strongly placing women within the context of men’s homosociality: “Was alcohol ever brought into the barracks? What about women?” The otherwise exhaustive questionnaire omitted any references to how the soldiers’ families related to their departure; if and how the conscripts stayed in touch with their families during the service; how they took care of possible problems arising at home due to their absence; or what home-coming was like. These subjects evidently did not belong to the story of an experience shared by all real men and only by them.

The exclusionary mechanisms of homosociality seem to be at work on the narrative level of image-making, leaving out women from the story of Finnish men’s soldiering. Historian David Tjeder has introduced the

²⁷⁵ Haanpää, *Kenttä ja kasarmi* 1928, pp. 78, 92. This observation has also been made by Markku Envall, see Envall, *Kirjalijoiden kentät* 1984, pp. 32–33.

²⁷⁶ Johansson, *Skogarnas fria söner* 1994, pp. 162–163; idem, ‘Arbetare’ 2006, p. 118. Cf Pöysä, ‘Jätkät ja suomalainen maskuliinisuus’ 2000, p. 13–14; Pöysä, *Jätkän synty* 1997, pp. 189–192.

concept of ‘implicit misogyny’ when discussing the silence on women in texts about how men should develop their character and build a social position. To leave women without mention implicitly stated that they did not qualify for the public sphere where men were useful citizens or achieved power and success.²⁷⁷ In a sense, leaving out women from the story of Finnish soldiering had a similar effect of strengthening the taken-for-granted notion that women and military matters had nothing to do with each other. Yet this exclusion of women does not seem misogynist to me in the sense of expressing a view on women as lacking importance for men. Rather, it indicates an unwillingness to reveal and articulate the *great* significance of women to many men. It seems no coincidence that the omission of women from this *narrative homosociality* especially concerns the conscripts’ mothers. The arguably most important woman in many men’s lives is also the one made most invisible. There was a homosocial script of manhood attached to military training, which was not so much expressive of the actual experience, as with how a man could craft a narrative about it that preserved his dignity in face of the treatment he had suffered and invest the experience with a positive meaning. To the extent that this script was about self-confidence and coping on one’s own, emotional independence from the one person one had been completely dependent upon was perhaps an unavoidable narrative logic.

5.8 Conclusion: Class, age and power in army stories

Men’s memories and narratives about military training in the 1920’s and 1930’s show that popular images and notions varied and partly contradicted pro-defence discourses. Many depictions of the disciplinary practices in use lie closer to the critique of the cadre army delivered by Social Democrats and Agrarians in the period, although men who recounted their own experiences of military training did not subscribe to the notions of its morally corruptive effects on conscripts.

Class and age affected how men’s army experiences were formulated. Comparing Pentti Haanpää’s and Mika Waltari’s army books, the contemporary class divisions and politics of conscription serve as an explanatory pattern for the differences between them. From the vantage point of the 1970’s and old age, other men mixed the polarised interpretations of the interwar period into a kind of synthesis that did not

²⁷⁷ Tjeder, *Power of Character* 2003, pp. 282–283.

serve the purpose of defending or criticising the cadre army, but of crafting a part of their own life-history.

Through his description of military comradeship, Mika Waltari conveyed an image of Finnish conscripts as boyish youngsters, blue-eyed boy scouts on the threshold of manhood and adult life. This was a prerequisite for the notion that military training could project them on a trajectory to a higher level of being, to mature manhood. That effect gave a positive meaning to the hardships they had to endure along that trajectory. Through forming a community of comrades, a brotherhood-in-arms, Waltari's citizen-soldiers supported and spurred on each other to learn and train for the task of men, defending the country. At the same time, through their affinity with the young male collective, they were taught the self-control and unselfishness needed to submit. This experience, Waltari claimed, endowed young men with the self-confidence to face adult manhood with its responsibilities. The effect of Waltari's narrative – whether it was his intention or not – was to defend the cadre army system by offering an attractive solution to the paradox between manliness and submission, and claiming that it only changed men for the better.

Pentti Haanpää, on the contrary, suggested an image of Finnish conscripts who were no compliant young boys when they arrived for military service, but rough-hewn adult workmen. Military training had no personal value for them, and without a war to fight the hardships and humiliations involved appeared to them as meaningless sadism and oppression. Haanpää's soldiers felt offended by military discipline and reacted by resistance and recalcitrance in any form available – shirking, cheating and lying. Haanpää had no use for the sedative notion of supportive comradeship that lessened the strain of life in a cadre army. In his portrayal, comradeship was more about an inflicted life together. He did not attempt to idealise military comradeship or even describe the conscripts' ways of being men as particularly sympathetic. The message emerging from his stories was rather that this was what common Finnish men are like, like it or not, and if the cadre army system stood in contradiction to it, the military system had to change.

To Haanpää's workmen, the army was an oppressive interruption robbing them of autonomy and dignity, but to Waltari's middle-class students it offered an opportunity to boost their white-collar masculinity with the prestige of being not only manly warriors, but also the military leaders of their generation. Waltari wrote in the "white" tradition, describing an affinity between men in military service, united across all other differences by gender, nationality and soldiering. Haanpää's images of soldiering were closely aligned with the political critique of the standing cadre army as an institution corrupting men, both through the oppressive

violence of a detached officer caste and through the roughness of comradeship in the “unnatural” circumstances of men living isolated from society in an all-male military hierarchy.

These differences are interestingly congruent with those between a ‘modern’, middle class Western masculinity and traditional rural and working class masculinities. Industrialisation and urbanisation, it has been argued in previous research, robbed middle-class masculinities of the traditional stable foundations of patriarchal masculinity; landownership or autonomy as a self-employed artisan. In the emerging modernity, masculinity became something every middle-class man had to prove and demonstrate through “making himself” in the fierce competition of the marketplace.²⁷⁸ This notion of a need to demonstrate a manliness that was not inherited as a social position from one’s father is strikingly similar to Mika Waltari’s eagerness to demonstrate that “he can make it where the others do”. Pentti Haanpää’s conscripts, on the other hand, navigate within a rural masculine value system where great value is put on the manly autonomy based on controlling one’s own labour. The soldiers depicted by Haanpää try to claim a degree of self-determination by using strategies of obstinacy and wilfulness as well as acting out elements of unrestrained bachelor masculinities, similar to the contemporary masculine culture in teams of male workmen, for example in forestry or railroad construction, as described by Ella Johansson.²⁷⁹

The culture of shirking and malingering could also be conceptualised as *Eigensinn*, a term that Alf Lüdtke has used to describe how contemporary industry workers on the continent temporarily distanced themselves from the hierarchies and demands of the workplace, refusing co-operation and gaining some sensation of pleasure through teasing fellow workers, walking around, talking to people, taking unauthorized breaks or just daydreaming; anything one was not supposed to do during working hours. *Eigensinn* or wilfulness, as outlined by Lüdtke, is thus not a form of resistance against the system, but rather attempts by individuals to temporarily ignore or evade the system, to create moments and places of independence from and disregard of the surrounding social order, insisting on time and space of one’s own.²⁸⁰ Conscripts displaying *Eigensinn* thus did not necessarily want to challenge or change the military system. Rather, they needed some space to breath within it.

²⁷⁸ Kimmel, *Manhood in America* 2006, see e.g. pp. 13–18, 58–59; Stearns, *Be a Man* 1979, pp. 49–51, 108–118, 127–139; Bederman, *Manliness and Civilization* 1995, pp. 10–15.

²⁷⁹ Johansson, *Beautiful men* 1989, pp. 74–75; Johansson, *Skogarnas fria söner* 1994, pp. 157–161; Johansson, ‘Arbetare’ 2006, pp. 115–122, 130–131.

²⁸⁰ Alf Lüdtke, *Fabrikalltag, Arbeitererfabrungen und Politik vom Kaiserreich bis in den Faschismus* (Hamburg, 1993), pp. 136–143, 375–382

In spite of the variations and differences across the 1972–1973 reminiscences, and the evident development towards better treatment of conscripts over the course of the interwar period, the collection as a whole reflects many experiences of military discipline, especially during recruit training, as containing elements of meaningless harassment reminiscent of Haanpää’s imagery. The explanations offered for superiors’ bullying, in terms of NCOs and officers taking out their personal frustrations and aggressions on their subordinates, are also in line with Haanpää. Yet none of the men who wrote about their military training after the Second World War really attacked the pre-war cadre army system in the same wholesale fashion as Haanpää. The cadre army had proven its worth in the war, and even if some men expressed bitterness over how they had been treated and wanted to expose the power abuses that had occurred, the general tenor in 1972–1973 was that interwar military training in its very hardness was necessary and useful.

Since it was not necessary any more to either attack or defend the institution itself, the narratives written down in the 1970’s are actually less black-and-white than the interwar literary depictions. They needed neither the demonising story about an officer corps rotten throughout, nor the idealised gendered myth of male soldiers’ unreserved solidarity and comradeship. Accounts of bullying and sadistic superiors could be accommodated in the same narrative with very appreciative descriptions of well-liked officers. Good comradeship and group spirit were mentioned in the same breath as violent conflicts among the conscripts were revealed. In the final analysis, many former soldiers evidently adopted the notion of military service as “a school for men”, a place where young men grow, harden and develop self-confidence through the very hardships they suffer, in order to invest a largely disagreeable or partially even degrading experience with a positive meaning. However, they did not idealise submission in itself nor the collectivist fusion with the homosocial group as Waltari did; theirs were individualist stories of their ability to cope.

Historian Thomas Rohkrämer has found the same pattern of a “growth narrative” surrounding nineteenth century German military service. The training, Rohkrämer claims, was intentionally laid out with an extremely hard and even humiliating recruit training in the beginning followed by slowly ameliorating circumstances. Once the soldier had adjusted to army discipline and taken on the behaviour his superiors wanted, he could enjoy certain rewards; a high social status in relation to civilians, an economically carefree existence, and a boosted attractiveness with women due to the “military bearing” and the gaudy uniforms of the epoch. Rohkrämer asks why so many men rallied round the cult of military manliness in the *Kaiserreich* and offers the explanation that military service was understood as

an initiation that was accepted and celebrated *afterwards*. Once the hardships of military training had been endured they could reap the benefits from public notions of men with military education as characterised by energy, vigour and resolution.²⁸¹

The reproduction of the assertion that the army is the place where boys become men cannot, however, be seen only as the innocent restoration of offended self-esteems through masculine identity-construction. It was also an image of soldiering and manhood with gendered power effects. The stories about the Finnish Army as a place “where boys become men” were a resource for men who had been there to demonstrate their own manliness. This is almost comically apparent in Mika Waltari’s eagerness to “make it where the others do” and his pride in “taking part here, where men are made”. The group he is so proud of being part of are educated middle-class youths, automatically qualified for NCO training, and, later, the *crème de la crème* of conscripts selected for reserve officer training. His celebration of the sense of “silent nobility” among the reserve officer cadets, and the feeling that they are part of an elite who must lead their generation in combat and die in the front row, comes very near to legitimising the social power and prestige of the educated classes he belonged to. When lower class men repeated the discourse about the army as the place where men were made they laid claims on another, more purely gendered or patriarchal kind of prestige as men with superior stamina and authority. The worse the conditions described in the “dark stories” of popular narrative tradition, the harder, tougher and more superior to the weaker men of later days did the narrators appear. Men who had already fulfilled their military service could boost their own social status with these narratives, at no additional cost to themselves, only to the generations of younger men who had to submit to the military system thus preserved and legitimised – and the women who were completely excluded from this particular arena of civic participation and social authority.

²⁸¹ Rohkrämer, ‘Militär als Männerbund’ 1995, pp. 172, 181–184.

6 Soldiering and the contested making of manhood

Two contrasting images of conscript soldiering were presented at the beginning of this study. The subsequent chapters have shown that Pentti Haanpää and Mika Waltari were not lonely eccentrics engaged in some quixotic duel over the true nature of military service. Their books about the army can be seen as two manifestations of a wider struggle concerning the shaping of universal male conscription that was contested in a number of arenas.

This thesis has examined the diversity and tensions among a range of public images of conscripted soldiering in interwar Finland, asking how soldiering was represented and given gendered meanings. It has demonstrated how the militarisation of Finnish men's lives in the period was initially surrounded by intense controversy. The contrasting images of soldiering in the period display stark disagreements, not only over how national defence and military training should be organised, but also over larger questions about the nature of male citizenship and the distribution of power and resources in the new national state of Finland. Even after a political consensus over the military system gradually emerged, popular notions and narratives of the real circumstances under which conscripts lived remained very mixed.

The conscript army of independent Finland started out with severe image problems. Some of these were inherited from the standing armies of authoritarian monarchies that served as organisational models for the Finnish cadre army. Other problems burdening the Finnish Army derived from the fact that it had been created in the midst of a civil war where its main task was to crush an internal socialist revolution. This initial ballast was further exacerbated through reports on the bad conditions provided for conscript soldiers throughout much of the 1920's. The pro-defence discourse in interwar Finland must largely be understood against the background of widespread negative images of the existing military system. Pro-defence nationalists and educationalists made great efforts to disseminate positive images of military service, but had to compete with popular notions of the conscript army as a morally and physically unhealthy place for young men, as well as a culture of story-telling about personal experiences of military training that often highlighted the brutal treatment and outright bullying of conscripts.

References to masculinity occurred in the imagery around conscription because military service was seen by contemporaries as defining important elements of male citizenship – what a man was duty-bound to do and endure for the sake of state and nation and where the limits of his duties should lie in peacetime. Military service was described as strongly formative of young men’s physical and moral development, both by the critics and the supporters of the existing military system. It seems that the very conflicts over the politics of conscription, as well as the resistance and reluctance among conscripts at the beginning of the period, prompted a contemporary debate about masculinity – about what Finnish men were like at their best and at their worst, and about what should and could be done about it. In part, manliness occurs in my material as a powerful rhetorical tool to wield when other arguments – political, economical or moral – do not seem to suffice.

Discussions clearly bearing on masculinity diminished in the 1930’s in many of the arenas I have studied. As the military system became a part of cultural normality, as the worst conditions were corrected, and as people grew accustomed to conscription and came to accept it – although not necessarily to like it – there was less need to talk about its impact on young men. However, this was more the case in the political arena and the ideological propaganda of “civic education” than in the popular culture of telling stories about individual experiences of military training. Even if the notorious bullying of conscripts obviously diminished over the period, men still found personal use for the claim that going through a harsh and demanding training had made a positive difference to their personal life history.

Soldiering: politics, myth, education and experience

My analysis of the parliamentary debates over the conscription system in Chapter Two has shown a prolonged scepticism and reluctance within civilian society towards the conscription system created by professional officers during the Civil War. There was a rather swift transition during the Civil War from widespread pacifism and doubtfulness over the expediency of any national armed forces towards a broad acceptance of the general principle of male conscription. The meaningfulness of maintaining a Finnish army was no longer disputed. However, the peacetime military service within a standing cadre army was initially criticised by the mass parties of the political left and centre. They could draw on a long international tradition of republican, liberal and socialist critiques of standing armies. The liberal and conservative MPs, on the other hand, were conspicuously restrained as they presented the existing military system as a grim necessity.

They largely refrained from celebrating any character building effects of soldiering. In spite of their glorification of the feats of the White Army in the “Liberation War” of 1918, politicians at the centre and right were wary of expressing any opinions that could be labelled as militarist. They were susceptible to public concerns over bad conditions in the garrisons and maltreatment of conscripts and resisted the military authorities’ most extensive demands for money and conscripted manpower.

I have highlighted how those politicians who wanted a people’s militia centred their critique of the cadre army on its alleged moral dangers for young men and the threat to democracy of a closed caste of professional officers. However, their reasons for doing so evidently had much to do with other issues of a political and economic nature; namely, the control over the armed forces in society, the enormous costs of creating and maintaining national armed forces, and the importance of young males in the workforce in a poor agrarian society. In their rhetoric, I have identified references to both idealised images of the Finnish male national character and visions of egalitarian male citizenship in the new democratic republic. The Agrarians alluded to a stereotype of Finnish men as autonomous freeholders, with a natural patriotic instinct to defend their property and families, yet averse to authorities and submissiveness. The Social Democrats expressed a more anxious notion of working-class men as susceptible to indoctrination and political corruption through military service. Nonetheless, they simultaneously tried to describe young workers as class-conscious, strong-willed men who would fight only for the good of the people and not the bourgeoisie.

Over the course of time, the parliamentary debates demonstrate a slow movement from strong scepticism towards acceptance of a conscripted standing cadre army; from strong notions that such an army could form a threat to democracy towards embracing it as a safeguard of the democratic republic; and from intense concerns that army life would corrupt young men towards confidence that it would at least do them no harm.

One objective of the interwar commemoration of the “Liberation War” was, in my analysis, to disseminate an understanding of the recent past that supported interwar patriotic mobilisation and military preparedness and counteracted the scepticism and reluctance surrounding the conscript army. In Chapter Three, I have argued that the heroic narratives about the Jägers conveyed images of the Finnish nation as masculine, youthful and ready for action, notions that national freedom and prosperity were based on military force and valorous manly heroism, and a message of the invincible strength of passionate, self-sacrificing patriotism. According to the heroic narratives, the Jägers were zealous young warriors, driven by flaming patriotism and antithetical to old-school aristocratic officers, such as the older and more

experienced Finnish officers who had served in the Russian army before the war. In the campaign to oust “Russian” officers from leading positions in the armed forces, it was claimed that the Jägers represented a new kind of officer, capable of motivating and filling conscripted soldiers with enthusiasm for military service and patriotic sacrifice.

The Jägers of heroic narratives were living examples of a Finnish military manliness that was now demanded of every young conscript in order to secure national independence. The national-warrior attitude to soldiering incarnated by the Jägers was made the objective of the military education of young men – with Jägers as models, planners, executors and leaders. Military thinkers within and associated to the Jäger movement claimed that Finland’s military and political situation demanded soldiers who had received a moral education instead of being drilled into mechanical obedience. These “new” national soldiers had to be strong-willed soldiers, motivated by patriotism, self-discipline, a sense of duty and a spirit of sacrifice. Moreover, they had to be led by officers embodying these same virtues to the highest degree; officers like the Jägers themselves.

The project of idealistic officers and educators to morally train a “new” kind of self-propelled Finnish citizen-soldier was put into concrete form with the project of giving the conscripts a “civic education”. In Chapter Four, I have demonstrated how the magazine for soldiers, *Suomen Sotilas*, used the rhetorical technique of associating the wished-for, well-disciplined citizen-soldier with strength, courage and “real” manliness in attempts to influence the readers’ self-understandings and behaviour. The magazine offered its readers images of military training as a process where young men matured into adult men marked by vigour, a sense of duty and self-restraint. Acquiring the skills and virtues of a good soldier, the young man would simultaneously develop into a useful and successful citizen. The hardships he had to endure would be meaningful and rewarding in the end, both for the nation and himself as an individual.

The magazine wrote abundantly on Finnish military history, challenging the readers to honour their forebears’ sacrifices and meet the standard of manliness set by previous generations, but also reassuring present-day conscripts by conjuring a sense of sameness, affinity and shared national character, marked by hardy, valorous and unyielding manliness, among Finnish men in both the past and present. However, the notion that army life could be corrupting of young men’s morals was also surprisingly conspicuous in the magazine, mainly in texts written by clergymen. These “moralist” writers obviously regarded “false” notions of manliness among the young conscripts as a great challenge to their educational project and attempted to push their own definitions of true manliness, centred on self-restraint and dutifulness. Leaning on post-structuralist theories about gender

and masculinity, I have argued that we should read their texts *both* as attempts to wield ideological power and as genuine expressions of their author's hopes, fears and personal experiences.

Finally, Chapter Five of this study has contrasted the official rhetoric surrounding conscription with the narratives that conscripted men told about their personal experiences of military service. The analysis of Pentti Haanpää's and Mika Waltari's accounts of military service connected the stark differences between them to both contemporary political disagreements over conscription and the class background and social prospects of the men they served with. As demonstrated by Haanpää, Waltari, and the collection of reminiscences written in 1972–1973, the social practices of military service were often divisive as they confirmed the class hierarchies and political conflict lines in civilian society. Educated young men such as Mika Waltari were confirmed in their consciousness of belonging to the nation's elite. They were given an opportunity to prove their physical fitness and leadership qualities. Men from working-class environments, on the other hand, could find that disciplinary methods perceived as bullying and harassment confirmed their understandings of the “white” army and capitalist state as oppressive of lower-class men.

Most men did not find much use for the trope of military comradeship in their army stories. It was important to Mika Waltari in his construction of military service as a development process within a tightly knit homosocial collective, but not to either Pentti Haanpää who attacked the military system by portraying it as corrupting human relationships, or the men writing down their memories of the army in the 1970's, who essentially wanted to tell a story of their individual ability to cope and their personal development.

As my analysis has shown, the images of soldiering in oral popular culture largely contradicted the loftiness of military propaganda. These popular images underscored the hardships and abuses that conscripts had to endure. Superiors' incessant shouting, formal and distant relationships between officers and men, exaggerated emphasis on close-order drills, and indoor duties such as making beds and cleaning rifles, gratuitous punishments and widespread bullying of subordinates – these were all central elements of a “dark story” about soldiering especially in the 1920's. Even those with positive personal memories indicated an acute awareness of these negative popular images. My interpretation is that the very association of military service with manhood and manliness meant that experiences of humiliating subjection in the army brought to the fore contradictions between notions of masculinity as sameness and as hierarchies among men. Men tried to deal with these contradictions in different ways, both in the social reality of military training and in the crafting of personal narratives

about it afterwards. It was usual to ascribe seemingly meaningless harassment to “Prussian” military customs unsuitable in Finland and ineffective on Finnish men. Individual superiors prone to bullying could be disparaged as weak in character and lacking real leadership qualities. Another strategy was to belittle and play down the harassments as only “proper” to military life and something a manly man could take with good humour.

The dominant narrative form in the army reminiscences was, however, to construct the story about soldiering as a process of personal growth, through hardships and even humiliating experiences, towards self-confidence, independence and adult manhood. Here, the rhetoric of military propaganda and popular stories met. Although the origin of this narrative model is uncertain, military educators and army authorities undoubtedly worked hard to repeat and reinforce it in official military ideology. Yet to the extent that men accepted this offering of prestige and recognition in exchange for their allegiance, they put it into the much bleaker context of their own experiences of hardships, conflicts and bullying. Thereby, they maintained a counter-narrative to official images of soldiering.

Throughout the study, I have pointed to homosocial constructions of soldiering and masculinity and the conspicuous absence of references to women and domesticity. I have referred this absence to a narrative split between the heroic world of male soldiers and the concerns and values of the domestic sphere. In a pattern reminiscent of the combination of a strict gender division of labour and close collaboration between men and women in agrarian production, women’s active participation in joint efforts for national defence was commended in men’s discourses on military matters – as long as women strictly occupied themselves with “female” tasks.¹ Introducing the concept of *narrative homosociality*, I have argued that the silence surrounding heterosocial relationships should not necessarily be read as expressions of misogyny or as a denigration of women’s civic participation. The silence around intimate relationships with women should rather be referred to a homosocial culture of undercommunicating serious heterosexual commitments among young men, in order to uphold an illusion of equality and brotherhood. Narrative homosociality concealed the status differences between men connected with marital status as well as the emotional importance of women, not least mothers, to many soldiers.

Another silence in my material concerns the language divide between Finnish- and Swedish-speaking citizens and soldiers. Language simply does not appear to be a topic in the sources I have used. This is an interesting

¹ Cf Östman, *Mjölken och jorden* 2000; Latva-Äijö, *Lotta Svärdin synty* 2004.

result of the study. Why were images of soldiering not differentiated according to language in the same way as they were differentiated according to class? On the level of ordinary conscripts' experiences, an obvious reason is that Finnish- and Swedish-speaking conscripts served in separate units and did not encounter the language divide in their everyday lives. Although some of their officers probably were Swedish-speaking, an ordinary Finnish-speaking conscript was mostly commanded by Finnish-speaking conscripted or enlisted NCOs and had little interaction even with his lieutenant or captain. The high ratio of Swedish-speakers among the higher-ranking Jägers could potentially have become the object of more intense nationalist critique, similar to the campaign against the "Russian" officers who had served under the Tsar. However, their status as war heroes obviously made their patriotism and "national spirit" difficult to call into question.

The fact that politicians and military educators abstained from playing on language nationalism in their rhetoric on conscripting young men is more intriguing. In a sense it is natural that national defence would be a context where national unity was emphasised and internal differences in domestic matters were downplayed. Yet as we have seen, internal class differences did push their way into debates on conscription and even military propaganda. In this particular context, the class divide was evidently deeper and more poisoned by mutual distrust than the language divide. In the wake of the Civil War, it was perhaps easier to imagine a national community of "white" Finnish- and Swedish-speaking soldiers once more defending the country against the Bolsheviks than to imagine the workers and the bourgeoisie as brothers-in-arms united in valourous patriotism. In this sense, the militarisation of masculinity actually served as a force integrating Swedish-speaking men into the Finnish nation-building project. This issue would, however, require further research.

Modernity and tradition

The conscript army, a state institution that encompassed *all* men on the sole basis of their gender and bodily fitness and excluded *all* women seemingly fits well into the image of a new kind of civil society, dissipating the unified culture of the old agrarian society and dividing men and women into separate spheres. From my materials, it is not possible to judge to what extent compulsory military service and the images of masculinity offered to conscripted men actually forced a modernisation of the Finnish gender order. What can be observed, however, is how the contemporaries themselves associated conscription and military training with images of modernity and tradition. Since everybody seemed to take for granted that that military service in a standing army would have a great transformative

impact on young men's development, the controversies over conscription came to express different visions of societal change and the nation's future.

There was a strong notion across the political spectrum that the cadre army system not only constituted a defence against external enemies, but also a defence of the traditional social order as well. However, the most eager proponents of the existing cadre army system can be interpreted as forging ahead with a disciplinary project of modernisation; they wanted Finnish men to *change* and learn self-restraint, strengthen their sense of duty and develop their spirit of sacrifice.

The mass parties of the political left and centre at first associated the standing conscript army with authoritarian, warlike monarchies of the past, an insular aristocratic officer caste and oppressive treatment of the rank-and-file. The Social Democrats and Agrarians saw the cadre army as an obstacle to democratisation and antithetical to a new era of equality, social progress and societal reforms - the kind of modernisation they themselves envisioned. In the Agrarian's arguments for a militia, no need to change or modernise Finnish men was expressed. On the contrary, they argued against the cadre army by celebrating a timeless masculine national character, an inherent aptitude for warfare in Finnish men, which they claimed had been proven once again in the Civil War of 1918. The Finn's love of freedom and fighting spirit would only be stifled and corrupted if he was incarcerated in barracks and drilled into mechanical obedience by upper-class officers. In a people's militia, on the other hand, soldiers would remain inseparable parts of civilian society, mainly occupied with productive labour and impossible to corrupt morally or politically. In their own vision of social progress, the Social Democrats hoped that young men would form part of a politically self-conscious workers' movement that would force through a modernity marked by social justice. The cadre army system threatened to put a check on that movement by defending capitalist interests and drilling young workers into compliant tools of the propertied classes.

The war hero cult surrounding the Jägers, as well as the military propaganda aimed at giving the conscripts a "civic education", included powerful images of the "Liberation War", marking the dawn of a new era of Finnish military manliness. The heroic narratives about the Jägers supported notions of the brand new national armed forces as representing something new and progressive in Finnish society. They powerfully associated the "liberation" of Finland from Russia with a masculinised national "coming of age" manifested in manly military action. Military reformers wrote about a "new" age of warfare that needed strong-willed, self-propelled and self-disciplined soldiers who fought for their nation out of their own free will and patriotic conviction. In nationalist propaganda, the Jäger officers were

constructed as a “new” kind of youthful and modern military leader who could fulfil the moral and technical requirements of a new era.

The military propaganda directed towards conscripts in training strongly connected this “new” military manliness with male citizenship. Military training was supposed to educate the conscripts for *modern* citizenship. This not only included preparing for defending the new nation and enduring the horrors of modern warfare. It also meant acquiring the energy, discipline and precision that characterised a member of an industrialised civilised nation. The army was ‘a school for men’ – the kind of men that the new Finland needed. This rhetoric, however, required depicting the 21 year-old recruits as initially deficient in their manliness. They were allegedly immature and imperfect in their spiritual, physical and civic development. This was not only a matter of their young age, but also the result of backward elements in the national character. Both the sluggishness of peasant culture in underdeveloped rural areas and the unhealthy, enervating and workshy life of pleasure in urban environments were presented as problems military education could compensate for. At the same time as military training made young men swift, vigorous, punctual and well-disciplined citizens aware of their duty, it infused a new vigour and energy into the whole nation.

The narratives of men who did their military service in the 1920’s testify that the “corporal spirit” criticised as old-fashioned and dysfunctional by contemporary military educators was alive and well in the Finnish armed forces. The “dark stories” about tyrannical superiors browbeating the conscripts resonated with critical claims about the questionable ideological and moral impact of this particular military training on young men. Their persistence through much of the 1920’s was highly problematic for those who wanted to represent the cadre army as part of national modernity and progress.

The literary scandal surrounding the publication of Pentti Haanpää’s *Fields and Barracks* in 1928 provides an ample illustration of the frictions between those in Finnish society who hoped the army would change Finnish men and those who thought the army itself was the problem, not the solution.² The press reviews deserve some attention in this concluding chapter, since they present us with a condensed picture of how conscription was connected with conflicting visions of modernity.

² For an overview of the reviews of *Kenttä ja kasarmi*, see also Karonen, *Haanpään elämä* 1985, pp. 53–69.

The socialist press lauded the book as a truthful and realistic depiction of army life from the perspective of ordinary soldiers.³ The non-socialist press, on the other hand, greeted the book with dismay. The magazine of the Civil Guards *Hakkapeliitta* accused Haanpää of downright lying, “poisoning young souls” with mendacious and coarse rubbish.⁴ The reaction it evoked in the pro-defence establishment was summarised in the headline of an editorial in *Suomen Sotilas*: “A desecration of the army”.⁵ Yet many book reviews and commentaries in the centrist and conservative civilian press also admitted that there was some truth to Haanpää’s stories. There were nuanced comments made, for example by the military pedagogy teacher Hannes Anttila, about undeniable deficiencies in the conscripts’ conditions and the need for officers to read Haanpää to understand some of their conscripts better.⁶ Still, the non-socialist press claimed that Haanpää had limited his description to only the bleakest and gloomiest aspects of military life. It was said that he lacked self-criticism, “true education” and the analytical capability of putting his observations into a larger context.⁷ Professor V.A. Koskenniemi, one of the greatest literary authorities of the era, dismissed the book as “sketch-like minor art” and noted that Haanpää’s laudable prose was tainted by the cheap trick of “boyishly defiant exaggeration”.⁸

To many non-socialist reviewers, what I would call the Finnish masculinities Haanpää portrayed seem to have been a greater concern than his images of the bad treatment of conscripts. The conservative newspaper *Uusi Suomi* criticised him for having identified himself with “the worst and most immature sections of the conscripts”.⁹ An editorial in *Suomen Sotilas* claimed that there was a minority among the conscripts who lacked “a clear understanding that military service is not meant for pampering and enjoyment, but a severe and difficult school preparing for war”. These elements among the soldiers, wrote the editors, were “morally often quite

³ Sasu Punanen, ‘Mitä Sasulle kuuluu’, *Suomen Sosiaalidemokraatti* 16.10.1928; A[ntero] K[ajant]o, ‘Pentti Haanpään uusi teos’, *Suomen Sosiaalidemokraatti* 24.10.1928; E.H., ‘Kuvauksia sotilaselämästä. Pentti Haanpään mestarileikkauksia Suomen tasavallan armeijasta’, *Työn Voima* 19.10.1928; Sissi, ‘Päivän kuvia’, *Työn Voima* 2.11.1928.

⁴ ‘Altavastaja’ [causerie], *Hakkapeliitta* 47/1928, p. 1692.

⁵ E.K., ‘Armeijan häpäisyä’, *Suomen Sotilas* 43/1928, p. 899.

⁶ Hannes Anttila, ‘Suomalainen sotilas’, *Itsenäinen Suomi* 12/1928, pp. 253–256; Huugo Jalkanen, ‘Kasarmielämä Pentti Haanpään heijastimessa’, *Iltalehti* 1.11.1928.

⁷ See e.g. L. V:nen [Lauri Viljanen], ‘Tendenssikirjako?’ *Helsingin Sanomat* 20.10.1928; H.N. [probably Heikki Nurmiol], ‘Pentti Haanpää ja me’, *Helsingin Sanomat* 4.11.1928; Esko Iiläinen, ‘Poliittiselta areenalta’, *Itsenäinen Suomi* 12/1928, p. 267–269; Armas J. Pulla, ”’Todellisuuskuvauksia armeijastamme”’, *Suomen Sotilas* 44/1928, pp. 927, 930.

⁸ V.A. Koskenniemi, ‘Pentti Haanpää sotilaskasvatuksemme kuvaajana’, *Uusi Aura* 17.10.1928.

⁹ R.K., ‘Pentti Haanpää: *Kenttä ja kasarmi*’, *Uusi Suomi* 25.11.1928.

underdeveloped, unpatriotic, even criminal”.¹⁰ A columnist in the agrarian *Ilkka* newspaper branded Haanpää’s book as mostly expressing “hatred of lords and masters” and its author as “one of those men still serving in the army who are impossible to educate because they do not comprehend what it means to be under somebody else’s command”.¹¹ The critic Lauri Viljanen wrote, “In accordance with his nature as a writer [Haanpää] feels the greatest sympathy for those individuals who find it the hardest thing in the world to grow accustomed to any form of societal discipline.”¹²

These reviews implied that beyond some fine adjustments, it was not the military system that needed fundamental change. Haanpää’s obstinate conscripts were the ones that really needed to be thoroughly reformed. They were seen as remnants of a primitive Finnish society of isolated villages, characterised by wilfulness and a smouldering hatred of any authority, unable to adjust to a new and changed society and citizenship. On this point, the young modernist author and critic Olavi Paavolainen was the most outspoken, as he reviewed *Fields and Barracks* for *Tulenkantajat* (The Torchbearers), a cultural magazine and mouthpiece of young artists oriented towards Western European culture and modernity. Paavolainen had done his own military service at about the same time as Haanpää. He found *Field and Barracks* “disgusting” because its author never rose above “the same low and unintelligent level of thinking and feeling” inhabited by the human types he depicted. Since Haanpää was no town dweller, but “the disciple of untamed conditions” – i.e., underdeveloped rural regions – he lacked “the intellectual and theoretical passion to solve problems”. Nevertheless, Paavolainen asserted that “anybody who has served in the army can testify that the majority of conscripts think and feel like Private Haanpää”. Yet he continued,

How one learns to hate [the Finnish] people during military service! Not because it is supine, incapable and slow, which qualities are offset by its honesty, tenaciousness and toughness – but because *it has an insurmountable dread of any order, regulation and – without exception – any commands*. It holds resisting any instructions as a matter of honour. (...) *This desire for recalcitrance expresses a basic trait in the Finnish national character.*¹³

Paavolainen thus actually agreed with Haanpää’s description of Finnish men and their reactions to military discipline, but saw the reason for their

¹⁰ [Editorial] ‘Mikä totuus?’, *Suomen Sotilas* 43/1928, p. 889.

¹¹ Tuomas, ‘Asiasta toiseen’, *Ilkka* 16.11.1928

¹² L. V:nen, ‘Tendenssikirjako?’ 1928.

¹³ Olavi Paavolainen, ‘Kirja, josta puhutaan’, *Tulenkantajat* 30.11.1928, pp. 33–35 [emphasis in original].

mentality not in some deep-rooted folk culture, but in nineteenth century nationalist agitation by the educated classes. The Finns, he wrote, had always been told in speeches and historical works that their hallmark was not to obey orders and not to accept the yoke of any masters – because these masters had always been foreign. The notion that every command and all lords and masters were bad things had been impressed upon the Finns by both national romanticism and socialism, claimed Paavolainen. It was time for Finnish men to liberate themselves from “the idealisation of a nation of virginal people living in the wilderness and a national culture of lumberjacks”, replicated by Haanpää. Paavolainen saw the cure in modern military training:

Look at the boys who come home from the army: how different they move, walk, talk, eat and think. Their brains, used to executing orders, work keenly, their bodies shaped by exercises and sports are lithe and obedient. In them is the stuff of a modern civilised nation. Military service has been a first-rate school. (...)

For want of anything better, Paavolainen found military training to be an excellent instrument for implanting a notion of “a new rhythm of life” in the Finnish people. Life in the modern world, he wrote, with its “telephones, offices, newspapers, street traffic, universities, radios, sports, transatlantic liners, train timetables and stock exchange news” was impossible if people had no concepts of discipline, exactitude and timetables.

Paavolainen’s modernist visions actually fit well into George L. Mosse’s interpretation of the “modern” image of masculinity as a stereotype designed to reassure the middle classes that progress, growth and dynamism could be combined with control and order.¹⁴ In the wake of the traumatic events of 1918, optimistic and idealistic visions of the Finnish male citizen shaped by military training held out the promise that such military training would defuse the threatening revolutionary potential in Finnish men from the lower classes and mould them into self-disciplined, dutiful, patriotic soldiers ready to sacrifice themselves for the nation. Their sense of comradeship with their fellow soldiers from all layers of society would ensure their loyalty to the existing social structure and direct their armed force outwards, towards a common enemy. The Jäger myth displayed how the dangerous passions of youth could be channelled and disciplined through nationalism and military training into a force that had a burning zeal, yet protected existing society against inner and outer foes instead of threatening it. The editors of *Suomen Sotilas* assured their readers that when the well-trained and self-disciplined citizen-soldier returned from the barracks to

¹⁴ Mosse, *Image of Man* 1996 (see p. 10 above).

civilian society he was indelibly marked with characteristics that would support the nation's progress towards modernity and prosperity without internal strife.

Yet a neat dichotomy cannot, after all, be made between a modernist middle class supporting a thorough re-education of Finnish men in the fields and barracks of the cadre army on the one hand, and recalcitrant peasants and workers resisting change on the other. The same circles that envisioned the military producing patriotic and useful male citizens often – whenever it suited their purposes – referred to the heroic national past, military traditions and an inherent unyielding bravery and coarse fighting skill in Finnish men. For example, the Jägers stood for the new nation and its ideal citizens, but in their strong and bold manliness also evoked memories of the Finnish forefathers, linking the modern nation to a mythical past. “The spirit of the forefathers” was presented as binding obligation on young men to show that they were not lesser men.

On the other hand, the political opposition and resistance to the cadre army and prolonged peacetime military service were not necessarily based on an opposition to modernity or modernisation as such – although Pentti Haanpää did idealise an archaic, agrarian way of life. Social Democrats and Agrarians also wanted progress into modernity, only they each had different visions of what kind of modernity was desirable for Finland. Neither of these parties really resisted the militarisation of Finnish manhood, although conscription would have looked very different if the militia army they proposed had been realised. The militia project expressed another view of the relationship between a man's task as a soldier and his task as a productive peasant or worker, a son, a husband or a father, where only open war was reason enough to tear a man away from his proper and primary places as a man. In this sense, the militia model implied a weaker polarisation and separation of male and female citizenship than the cadre army model that was realised.

Cultural conflict and compromise

The scandal surrounding *Fields and Barracks* appears in my material as the last great discharge of the tensions surrounding conscripted soldiering in the early years of national independence. A gradual movement from an atmosphere marked by conflict towards political and cultural compromises can be discerned throughout the interwar period. In the political sphere, the politics of conscription slowly converged as first the Agrarians and then the Social Democrats gave up on the idea of a people's militia and embraced the existing regular army, as the apparently most realistic protection against Bolshevik Russia and a safeguard of parliamentary democracy in the face of

rising right-wing extremism. The professional military establishment met the Agrarians halfway by incorporating the civil guards movement ever more firmly into the national armed forces.

A great deal of the officer corps obviously only realised very slowly how radically the conditions for the military training and the treatment of soldiers had changed after 1918, when universal male conscription was combined with national independence and parliamentary democracy. Incompetent NCOs were allowed to terrorise contingent after contingent of conscripts and severe hazing of younger soldiers was tolerated or even thought to serve the recruits' adjustment to the military world. However, the material scarcity and shortage of officers and NCOs with adequate training that had plagued the army in the early 1920's slowly eased. In the face of massive public criticism as well as the emergence of new ideas about military pedagogy, the armed forces eventually seem to have responded and made some partial adjustments to how conscripts were trained and treated. As a result, the regular armed forces' image in the public improved towards the end of the 1920's and was mainly positive in the 1930's. Conscription and military training became less controversial as the population became used to its existence and ever more men returned from their year in the army without having been noticeably corrupted.

Was masculinity militarised in interwar Finland? There are interesting parallels between Finnish developments towards a normalisation and acceptance of military service in the conscript army and the slow process of an increasing appreciation of soldiering in nineteenth-century Germany. Initially, images of *peacetime* soldiering in independent Finland – as opposed to heroic images of soldiers in combat – expressed an aversion, indignation and moral concern within civilian society over the new burdensome civic duty and the reportedly brutal treatment of conscripts reminiscent of attitudes in Germany during the first half of the nineteenth century. Yet with time, the public image of the Finnish conscript army improved, as it became associated with the protection of positive national values among ever broader layers of society. Men's experiences of military service ameliorated and even its hardships became a matter of manly pride. Manhood was undeniably militarised to some degree as ever more men and women thought of military service as “a natural part of every male citizen's duties” and “a matter of honour for a Finnish man”.

However, the political compromises and easing tension around conscription did not mean that Finnish men from all layers of society suddenly and wholeheartedly embraced the notions of manliness on offer in war hero narratives or the army's civic education curriculum. At least within the space of military training, the antagonisms between young conscripts and the disciplinary projects of both moralist educators and drillmasters

continued, albeit in gradually less harsh forms. Writers in *Suomen Sotilas* continued to complain about the “false ideals of manliness” among the soldiers. Conscripted men continued to report on experiences of abusive treatment or excessive disciplinary harshness. As demonstrated by Pentti Haanpää and some of the reminiscences analysed in this study, men who had not embraced a “white”, middle-class, idealistic patriotism could sense a contradiction between the practices of military discipline and their own notions of masculinity, centred on an autonomy based on controlling one’s own labour.

When Mika Waltari published his strongly positive, even enthusiastic depiction of military training in 1931, the public reception was lukewarm, demonstrating that this antithesis to Haanpää’s scandalous book did not resonate very well with general attitudes towards military service. The conservative daily *Aamulehti* labelled it a “boyish” work by a literary “odd job man”. The reviewer agreed with Waltari’s assessment that the army really made boys into men, but added, “the ‘making’ itself might feel extremely repulsive, pedantic and heavy-handed”.¹⁵ The social democratic *Työn Voima* dismissed the book as the subjective, egocentric, insipid and superficial description of reserve officer training by an educated upper class young man who had no real appreciation of the conditions among the ordinary rank-and-file soldiers.¹⁶ Olavi Paavolainen, reviewing the book for *Helsingin Sanomat*, criticised its author for being immature, self-absorbed, and unable to relativise how his own educational level shaped his experiences of military training. What only amused an educated boy like Waltari might feel very bitter for a country boy, Paavolainen stated. “All the hidden bitterness and discontent among the crowd of thousands of conscripts cannot just be put down to boyish posing and a playful will to resist.” The truth about military training, Paavolainen stated, was to be found exactly halfway between Haanpää and Waltari.¹⁷

Finland in the interwar period actually serves well to exemplify a crucial critique of R.W. Connell’s theory of a hegemonic masculinity, subordinating and oppressing other forms of masculinity: what exactly is to count as a hegemonic masculinity and how can it be empirically identified in a specific historical setting?¹⁸ Hegemony refers to domination based on persuasion and cultural consent. Finland, however, was a society where class

¹⁵ O.A.K., ‘Mika Waltari asetakissa’, *Aamulehti* 10.4.1931.

¹⁶ K-n, ‘Mika Waltari tasavallan armeijassa’, *Työn Voima* 11.4.1931.

¹⁷ Olavi Paavolainen, ‘Mika Waltari on ollut sotaväessä’, *Helsingin Sanomat* 8.4.1931.

¹⁸ Mike Donaldson, ‘What is hegemonic masculinity’, *Theory and society* 22:5 (1993), pp. 643–657; Whitehead, *Men and masculinities* 2002, p. 58; Hearn, ‘From hegemonic masculinity’ 2004, pp. 58–59; Liliequist, ‘Åra, dygd och manlighet’ 2009, pp. 117–119.

conflict was often starkly exposed in the political field, where the rural peasantry and urban middle classes viewed each other with mutual scepticism, and where a popular mass media culture reaching all layers of society was only incipient. Any pre-existing cultural and political hegemony in a Gramscian sense had largely collapsed into the bloodshed of the Civil War. Moreover, this happened after decades of mounting and unresolved social and political tensions. When the political and institutional dominance of the non-socialist, educated middle and upper classes was reasserted, for example through compulsory military service, it was initially based on physical coercion.¹⁹ What constitutes cultural hegemony in such a society? Although the values of 'white' Finland in many ways dominated the official state institutions such as elementary schools or the military, it is highly problematic to simply assume that, for example, the socialist electorate supported or even "consented" to those ideals. As different social groups slowly moved towards increasing political consensus around the conscript army, this can rather be understood as a class compromise than the re-establishment of middle-class hegemony.

Demetrakis Z. Demetriou argues that in Connell's original formulation, hegemonic masculinity appears as a closed and unified totality that incorporates no otherness. Non-hegemonic masculinities are absent from its formative processes. Inspired by Antonio Gramsci's writings on how the class seeking hegemony must resolve its internal conflicts by a process of interaction and reciprocity between groups leading and groups being led, Demetriou wants to understand hegemonic masculinity as a 'hybrid historic bloc' that incorporates elements from subordinated masculinities that are consistent with the project of men's domination over women.²⁰ This notion of *hybridisation*, that hegemony is negotiated through compromises, corresponds better with interwar developments in Finland than Connell's original model, but it is flawed by the same underlying notion of an unchanging patriarchal structure.

This study supports the view that although masculinities certainly are often connected with struggles for prestige and structures of domination and subordination, the hierarchies involved can be ambiguous and shifting from one particular arena to another. There is seldom one clear-cut norm for masculinity even within one social group, but a repertoire of available notions that are actively selected, used and modified for purposes ranging from candid, artistic or even playful self-expression to the cruel oppression

¹⁹ See e.g. Pertti Haapala, *Kun yhteiskunta hajosi. Suomi 1914–1920* (Helsinki, 1995); Ohto Manninen, ed., *Finland 1917–1920*, Vol 1–3 (Helsingfors, 1993–1995).

²⁰ Demetrakis Z. Demetriou, 'Connell's concept of hegemonic masculinity: A critique', *Theory and Society* 30 (2001) pp. 337–361.

of women or other men. Socially powerful groups and individuals try to wield the power inherent in defining normative masculinities and forms of unmanliness, but so do subordinate groups and individuals, both among each other and in relation to their superiors. The outcomes can sometimes be unexpected and are always marked by complexity.

The interwar period can definitely be understood as a period of contest between different notions of militarised masculinity. Yet to judge by the materials studied in this book, there was no clear winning party in that contest, no unambiguous persuasion to consent, no evident “hegemonisation” taking place. The proponents of the cadre army system and the particular form of self-disciplined military manliness associated with it certainly benefited from the factor of institutionalisation; military training in the cadre army was a fact throughout the period and most young men had to undergo its practices, whether they wanted to or not. The conservative pro-defence establishment also made great efforts to achieve what Connell and Messerschmidt call the “discursive centrality” characteristic of hegemonic masculinities,²¹ in arenas ranging from political debate to elementary school curriculum, civic education for conscripts, the commemoration of the “Liberation War” and even popular films and novels. However, the comprehensive picture of developments in the 1930’s is one of incomplete convergence and persistent lines of division.

Army stories display how both conscripts and officers often reproduced the social and political demarcation lines of civilian society within the military sphere. Many men certainly enjoyed homosociality and comradeship in the military, but few wanted or were able to verbalise friendship and intimacy in their reminiscences. Instead, their narratives highlighted how group solidarity often meant either violently establishing outward boundaries towards civilians, other contingents or other units, or “comrade discipline” within the group in the form of ritualised group beatings. When the fact is added that the military treated conscripts differently depending on their educational background and political outlook – barring suspected socialists from officer’s training – one must question to what extent military training in practice really served the construction of a more coherent male gender identity or some kind of gender-based affinity between men.

If a “hybridisation” of “hegemonic masculinities” took place, in the way suggested by Demetriou, this happened when many different, class-specific masculinities had to adjust to each other. All of them incorporated elements from alternative images of soldiering and manhood, but there was

²¹ Connell & Messerschmidt, ‘Hegemonic masculinity’ 2005, p. 846.

no coalescence into one hegemonic block. General consent really only formed over the basic principle that men and men only were entitled and obliged to take care of the armed defence of the country.

There was a recurrent notion that the Finnish common man was a brave soldier, but jealous of his self-determination, reluctant to conform to hierarchies and suspicious of “lords and masters”. This unyieldingness was sometimes criticised, but actually more often idealised as evidence of a particularly Finnish manliness. This becomes apparent in images of the civil guardsmen in the Civil War, in the political rhetoric of the Agrarians, as well as in Pentti Haanpää’s and many other men’s army stories. Men who were too eager to comply with the military educational objectives were derided as “war crazy” by their comrades in military training. According to the army stories, exaggerated expressions of dutifulness and patriotism were shunned among the conscripts.

Sociologist Knut Pipping described a similar mindset among the soldiers in his own machine gun company during the Second World War in his 1947 dissertation. Heroism or bravery was appreciated only to the extent that it served the wellbeing and survival of the group, not as an end in itself.²² Historian Ville Kivimäki has analysed Pipping’s account as displaying how the soldiers used their own standards for evaluating each other’s masculinity, including heavy drinking and heterosexual potency, not the ideals of “white” military manliness.²³ The most iconic post-war Finnish war novel, Väinö Linna’s *The Unknown Soldier* (1954), depicted Finnish soldiers in the same vein as Pipping, as brave and tough fighters, yet scornful of ostentatious discipline and lofty patriotic rhetoric.²⁴ However, Kivimäki points out that even if Finnish soldiers in the Second World War openly rejected many of the manifestations of “white” military manliness and the values attached to it, their own frontline masculinity took for granted that a man had to fight and defend the nation.²⁵

There was, however, evidently something irresistible to many men in the narrative motif that the army was “a school for men” and “the place where men were made”. Whether expressed explicitly in terms of achieving manhood or not, the trope of growing through hardships corresponded to men’s experiences of leaving military training more self-confident than when

²² Knut Pipping, *Kompaniet som sambälle. Iakttagelser i ett finskt frontförband 1941–1944* (Åbo, 1947).

²³ Anders Ahlbäck & Ville Kivimäki, ‘Masculinities at war: Finland 1918–1950’, *Norma* 3:2 (2008), pp. 114–131, at pp. 121, 123–124; Pipping, *Kompaniet som sambälle*, pp. 129–134, 144–152.

²⁴ A great number of translations have been made of this work. The first English editions were published in 1957 by Collins, London, and Ace Books, New York. Väinö Linna, *Tuntematon Sotilas*, (Porvoo, 1954).

²⁵ Ahlbäck & Kivimäki, ‘Masculinities at war’ 2008, p. 118, 124, 126–127.

they arrived. It also served to invest experiences of being subjected to humiliation and abuse with positive meaning, turning a loss of self-control and autonomy into a claim of having emerged from the ordeal stronger and more independent than before. Accepting this offer of recognition for their manhood, men lent their support to the system that had militarised their lives, yet this support was only partial. It did not prevent them from criticising its workings. Ultimately, it was not so much the official ideology of military manliness that engulfed Finnish masculinities, but rather that Finnish men selected elements from the militarised images of manhood and incorporated them into their own knowledge about themselves as men.

Swedish Summary – Sammanfattning

Den här boken studerar värnplikten i Finland 1918–1939 som en omstridd kulturell arena där olika samtida föreställningar om manlighet kom till uttryck, tävlade sinsemellan och omförhandlades. Den centrala frågeställningen är hur beskrivningar av finska män som soldater och berättelser om militärtjänst inom värnpliktens ram fortplantade och förändrade den kulturellt föränderliga kunskapen om manlighet i det finländska samhället. Med hjälp av teoretiska perspektiv från maskulinitetsforskning, genushistoria och ny militärhistoria analyseras en rad olika sammanhang där värnplikten och militärtjänsten debatterades och beskrevs: riksdagsdebatter om värnpliktsfrågor, pressrapporter om soldaternas förhållanden, heroiserande berättelser om de jägarofficerare som ledde och utformade militärutbildningen, militärpedagogiska skrifter, "medborgarfostran" i arméns soldattidning, samt skönlitterära skildringar och minnesberättelser om personliga upplevelser av mellankrigstida militärtjänstgöring. Genom att lägga samman dessa olika arenor skildrar avhandlingen skillnaderna i synen på värnplikt och manlighet mellan olika samhällsgrupper. Den jämför också manlighetens olika nivåer, från normativa föreställningar till sociala relationer, kroppslighet och subjektiv erfarenhet.

I analysen tillämpas genushistorikern Jonas Liliequists tankar om att vi bör studera hur individer och grupper aktivt och selektivt använder manligheter, en tillgänglig kulturell repertoar av föreställningar och ideal, för olika strategiska syften. Många av de ideologiskt färgade föreställningarna om värnplikt, medborgarsoldater och krigshjältar i mellankrigstidens Finland hade en lång europeisk idéhistoria men kom att anpassas till olika sociala och politiska gruppers behov och föreställningar om manlighet. Connells teoretiska modell för hegemonisk maskulinitet befinns vara inspirerande men som sådan alltför styvt strukturerad för en studie som framhäver kraftmätningen mellan olika mansbilder där ingen grupp hade eller uppnådde någon entydig dominans utan slutresultatet kan betecknas som ett slags ofullbordad rörelse mot en kulturell kompromiss.

Undersökningen demonstrerar att militariseringen av finska mäns liv efter självständigheten till en början var omgiven av ett starkt politiskt motstånd och intensiva meningsskiljaktigheter. Bilder av fredstida militärtjänstgöring uttryckte motvilja, indignation och moralisk oro över den

nya medborgarplikten och behandlingen av värnpliktiga unga män. Fastän en politisk konsensus långsamt växte fram kring militärpolitiken förblev de allmänna föreställningarna om militärutbildningen bland folkets breda lager blandade och motsägelsefulla. Det fanns en utbredd uppfattning om att militärtjänsten hade en starkt formande inverkan på unga mäns fysiska och moraliska utveckling. Detta föranledde olika grupper som debatterade och beskrev militärutbildningen att i sin retorik och sina berättelser hänvisa till hurdana finländska män var, vilka som var deras bästa och deras sämsta sidor, och vad som kunde och borde göras för att förändra eller bevara deras specifika manlighet.

Avhandlingen visar hur bilder av soldatskap och manlighet i regel var homosociala konstruktioner. Kvinnor nämndes sällan i sammanhang där värnplikten debatterades och beskrevs. I den mån hänvisningar gjordes till de värnpliktigas familjer framställdes de 20–22 åriga män som gjorde militärtjänst så gott som alltid i rollen som söner; det var i relationen till soldatens föräldrar som plikt, ansvar, stolhet och skam knutna till soldatskapet diskuterades. Utgränsningen av kvinnorna analyseras som en parallell till det tudelade medborgarskapet i mellankrigstidens Finland, där män och kvinnor gavs olika samhällseliga uppgifter att fylla. Den kan också tolkas som en narrativ klyvning mellan den militära manlighetens värld och den husliga, heterosociala sfären. Avhandlingen introducerar begreppet narrativ homosocialitet som beteckning på berättelsemönster som döljer skillnader mellan män och den stora betydelsen av kvinnor i mäns liv. Tystnaden kring heterosociala relationer skall inte nödvändigtvis skall tolkas som uttryck för misogyni utan kan, som Ella Johansson visat, ofta hänföras till homosociala manliga kulturer där seriösa heterosexuella relationer underkommuniceras för att upprätthålla en föreställning om jämlikhet och broderskap mellan män.

Analysen av riksdagsdebatterna om värnplikt under åren 1917–1932 visar en ihållande skepsis och motsträvighet inom civilsamhället mot det värnpliktssystem som under och strax efter inbördeskriget utformats av officerare som tjänstgjort i de ryska och tyska kejsarliga arméerna. Det skedde en relativt snabb övergång från pacifistiska tongångar före inbördeskriget till en allmän acceptans av principen om allmän manlig värnplikt efter kriget. Socialdemokraterna och agrarförbundet, de två stora masspartierna i den politiska vänstern och mitten, var ändå kritiska mot fredstida militärtjänstgöring inom en stående kaderarmé. De förde fram en milisarmé av schweizisk typ som ett mer demokratiskt alternativ, där mannens olika positioner som soldat och bonde eller arbetare hölls samman. De kunde stödja sig på en lång europeisk tradition av republikansk, liberal och socialistisk kritik av stående arméer som viljelösa verktyg för autoritära, anti-demokratiska regimer. Högern var å andra sidan påfallande angelägen

att undvika tongångar som kunde tolkas som militarism. Konservativa politiker var lyhörda för väljarnas oro över behandlingen av soldaterna och avhöll sig i regel från att förhålliga militärutbildningen vilken de närmast framställde som en beklaglig nödvändighet.

Manligheter uppträder i värnpliktspolitiken både som en underliggande kunskap som styr politiken och som retoriska instrument vilka används för att driva politik baserad på andra motiv. Kritiken mot kaderarmésystemet hängde samman med politiska och ekonomiska frågor om kontrollen över landets väpnade styrkor, de enorma kostnaderna förknippade med upprättandet av en ny nationell försvarsmakt, och den ekonomiska betydelsen av unga mäns arbetskraft i agrarsamhället. I den retorik som användes hänvisades emellertid till militärlivets moraliskt fördärliga inverkan på unga män, till idealiserade föreställningar om en tidlös finsk manlig nationalkaraktär, och radikala framtidsvisioner av egalitärt manligt medborgarskap i den nya demokratiska republiken. Agrarförbundets politiker anspelade på bilder av den finske mannen som en autonom självägande bonde med en naturlig fosterländsk instinkt att försvara sin egendom, sin familj och sin bygd, men med en styvnackad motvilja mot myndigheter och krav på undergivenhet. Denna mansbild kan dock ha medverkat till agrarförbundets tvekan att beväpna socialistiska unga män utanför kaderarméns kontrollmekanismer och deras beslut att kring 1920 överge milisidén. Socialdemokraterna höll fast vid milismodellen långt in på 1920-talet. De uttryckte implicit en mer ängslig uppfattning om hur lätt unga arbetarklassmän genom militärutbildningen kunde påverkas och politiskt korrumpas att gå emot sina egna klassintressen. Kasernlivet sågs också som ett hot mot arbetarrörelsens moraliska agenda om en skötsam arbetarmanlighet. Samtidigt försökte socialdemokraterna, något motsägelsefullt, hävda en bild av unga arbetare som klassmedvetna, viljestarka män som var beredda att strida för folkets väl men inte för borgerskapets klassintressen.

Den mellankrigstida minneskulturen kring "Frihetskriget" 1918 studeras här som en motkraft till den starka samtida skepsisen mot militärtjänstgöring inom kaderarmén. De heroiserande berättelserna om jägarofficerarna innebar en tolkning av närhistorien som stödde den fosterländska mobiliseringen för ett framtida krig mot Ryssland och en genusordning där soldatrollen var central i manlighetsidealet. De förmedlade bilder av den finska nationen som manlig, ungdomlig och handlingskraftig, framställde nationens frihet och välstånd som grundade på militär styrka och manlig hjältemodig stridsberedskap, samt förmedlade ett budskap om att unga mäns passionerade, självuppoffrande fosterländskhet var en enorm kraftresurs i nationens tjänst. Jägarna porträtterades som glödande patriotiska unga krigare, väsensskilda från de äldre officerare som tjänat i

den tsarryska armén vilka framställdes som motbilder till medborgarsoldatens ideal; som aristokratiska legosoldater, fjärmade från folket och styrda enbart av egenintresse. Jägarna däremot fick representera det nya slag av officerare som behövdes i moderna krig, där soldaternas patriotiska entusiasm, självdisciplin och offervilja var avgörande. Militärpedagogiska tänkare associerade till jägarrörelsen hävdade att Finlands militära och politiska situation krävde självgående soldater som fått en moralisk och mental träning för det moderna kriget istället för att ha drillats till mekanisk lydighet. De jägarofficerare som i slutet av 1920-talet kommit att dominera planeringen och verkställandet av militärutbildningen av värnpliktiga gjordes till levande exempel på en militär manlighet centrerad kring viljestyrka, självdisciplin, pliktkänsla och offerberedskap som nu skulle krävas av varje ung värnpliktig man.

Projektet att utbilda och träna en ny slags medborgarsoldat tog konkret form bland annat i försöken att ge soldaterna en "medborgarfostran" inom militärutbildningens ram. Arméns soldattidning *Suomen Sotilas* illustrerar hur denna medborgarfostran retoriskt associerade det beteende officerarna önskade se hos soldaterna med styrka, mod och verklig manlighet. I enlighet med uppenbara influenser från det förkrigstida Tyskland erbjöd tidningen läsarna modeller för självförståelse genom mytiska framställningar av nationens historia och en manlig tradition av försvarsberedskap samt bilder av militärutbildningen som en process där unga pojkar fysiskt och psykiskt mognade till vuxna män. Läsarna lockades med försäkranden om att den som tillägnade sig den gode soldatens egenskaper skulle bli en nyttig medborgare och en framgångsrik man i civilsamhället. Oron för att militärlivet kunde depravera unga män fanns emellertid också företrädd i texter skrivna av militärpräster vilka uppenbarligen betraktade "falska" föreställningar om manlighet bland unga män som ett allvarligt hinder för militärutbildningens fostrande uppgift.

Löftena om att militärutbildningen skulle göra tanklösa ynglingar till män, fosterlandets försvarare och ansvarstagande medborgare, kan tolkas som bilder ägnade att lugna det borgerliga Finlands oro över landets interna sociala splittring och hotet från bolshevismen. I enlighet med post-strukturalistiska teorier om maskulinitet och makt argumenteras i analysen även för att denna "medborgarfostran" måste ses *både* som ett försök att utöva ideologisk makt och som genuina uttryck för tankemönster, förhoppningar, farhågor och personliga erfarenheter som format skribenterna. Den erbjudna identifikationen med en viss militär manlighet kan inte tolkas enbart som en maktteknik utan måste också ses som en önskan att förmedla subjektiva värden och upplevelser som haft en stark positiv betydelse för skribenterna själva.

Den politiska och militära retoriken kontrasteras i avhandlingen med berättelser om mäns personliga upplevelser av militärtjänstgöring under mellankrigstiden. Analysen av Pentti Haanpääs (1928) och Mika Waltaris (1931) litterära skildringar av beväringarnas vardagsliv kopplar skillnaderna mellan författarnas synsätt till de samtida politiska meningsskiljaktigheterna men framför allt till skillnader i klassbakgrund och sociala framtidsutsikter. Bildade män från medelklassen såsom Mika Waltari kunde uppleva militärtjänsten som ett tillfälle att bevisa sin duglighet och få sin känsla av att tillhöra nationens elit bekräftad genom en reservofficersutbildning. Män från arbetarklassmiljöer kunde däremot uppleva de disciplinära metoderna som en bekräftelse av sin förförståelse av den "vita" armén och det kapitalistiska samhället som förtryckande. Militärtjänsten stod i motsats till en agrar arbetarmanlighet baserad på personlig autonomi och produktivt arbete.

Bilderna av mellankrigstida militärtjänst i folklig berättarkultur, så som de framträder i minnen nedtecknade och insamlade först på 1970-talet, framhäver umbärandena, de extremt fysiska prestationer som krävdes av beväringarna, och de maktmissbruk och trakasserier de måste utstå. Centrala element i en "mörk historia" om värnplikten, som dominerade särskilt minnesbilder av 1920-talet, var de överordnades förolämpande språkbruk och ständiga skrikande, avståndet och kyligheten i relationerna mellan manskap och befäl, överbetoningen på exercis i slutna ordning och inomhustjänsten med bäddning och skåpordning, godtyckliga bestraffningar och det utbredda översitteriet från överordnades och äldre soldaters sida. Förhållandena varierade uppenbarligen mellan olika enheter och förefaller ha förbättrats mot slutet av 1920-talet. Också de som ville skildra sin egen militärtjänstgöring i positiva tongångar markerade emellertid en medvetenhet om den "mörka historien" existens och kontrasterade explicit sina egna minnesberättelser mot denna.

Analysen av de litterära och folkliga berättelserna utgår från att kopplingen mellan militärtjänst och manlighet gjorde att upplevelserna av förödmjukande behandling i armén aktualiserade manlighetens inre paradoxer, motsättningarna mellan manlighet som en könsbaserad likhet mellan alla män och manlighet som en hierarkisk skala av över- och underordning bland män. Både i militärtjänstgöringens sociala verklighet och i sina berättelser efteråt försökte män handskas med denna motsägelsefullhet på olika sätt. En vanlig strategi var att externalisera trakasserier genom att avfärda dem som en importerad preussisk militärkultur som inte var anpassad till finska mäns lynne. En annan var att förstå det inträffade i termer av översittarens individuella psykologi, som uttryck för bristande ledaregenskaper, svag karaktär eller sadistiska böjelser. En tredje strategi var

att förringa trakasserierna som en naturlig och harmlös del av militärlivet som en verklig karl inte brydde sig om.

Det dominerande mönstret i minnesberättelserna var ändå att konstruera historien om militärtjänstgöringen som personlig utvecklingshistoria där berättaren genom att klara av vedermödor och även förödmjukande upplevelser tillägnade sig ett nytt självförtroende och tillförsikt att klara vuxenlivets krav på en man. Här möttes alltså den militära propagandan och det folkliga berättandet. De militära utbildarna var angelägna om att repetera och förstärka denna bild av militärtjänstgöringen. Många män accepterade åtminstone efteråt det erbjudande om prestige och erkännande som ingick i påståendet att militärtjänstgöringen gjort dem till riktiga män, men använde det ändå på sitt eget sätt, genom att sätta in det i en dyster kontext av sina egna erfarenheter av umbäranden, konflikter och trakasserier. Det militära kamratskapet, som Mika Waltari framställde centralt för hur militärtjänsten möjliggör en manlig mognad i ett tätt homosocialt kollektiv, utnyttjas däremot i de flesta mäns minnen knappast alls som ett sätt att ge positiv mening åt beväringstiden. Militärtjänstgöringen gestaltas istället som en berättelse om och ett bevis på den manliga individens autonoma förmåga att klara sig under vidriga omständigheter.

Med tiden förbättrades värnpliktsarméns offentlighetsbild och den kom i allt bredare samhällslager att förknippas med försvaret av positiva nationella värden. Män hade allt mer positiva erfarenheter av militärutbildningen och dess strapatser blev föremål för manlig stolthet och prestige. Olika grupper inom det finländska samhället närmade sig varandra i frågor rörande värnplikten. Den framväxande kompromissandan betydde dock inte att finska män från alla samhällslaget omfamnade den militära diskursens manlighetsideal. Många spänningar kvarstod, och den mest bestående bilden av finsk manlighet från mellankrigstiden blev den populära bilden av den finska mannen som en god och tapper soldat i krig men styvnackat mån om sitt oberoende och avogt inställd till formell disciplin.

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