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## Remembering the Finnish Sharp-Shooter Battalion's involvement in the 1831 Polish-Russian War

### The controversial Legacy of Finland's first military Campaign in the Service of Russia

#### Abstract

Among the Russian military units assembled for the suppression of the Polish November Uprising was also the Finnish Sharp-Shooter Battalion. The war in Poland was the first combat experience of Finnish soldiers in Russian service. The service of the unit was hailed as a testimony of Finnish loyalty towards the Empire, but it left a mixed legacy. This article discusses the complicated place of the Polish Uprising and Finnish sharp-shooters in Finnish historical memory during the 19th century.

As a borderland of the Russian Empire, the Grand-Duchy of Finland also became involved in the conflict that flared up in the Congress Kingdom of Poland in November 1830. At the time of the November Rising, Finland had enjoyed an autonomous status within the Empire ever since 1809, more or less comparable to the self-government which was bestowed on Poland in the aftermath of the Napoleonic Wars. However, the differences between Finland and Poland became evident well before the outbreak of the November Rising.<sup>1</sup> Whereas the politics of the *Kongresówka* soon

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<sup>1</sup> For a concise study on the differences and similarities of Finland and Poland under Imperial Russian rule in the 19th century, see Michael Branch, Janet M. Hartley and Antoni

deadlocked with the emergence of an underground opposition in defiance of the Imperial authority, the Grand-Duchy of Finland became a model borderland. Conscious of their position close to the Imperial capital in St. Petersburg and mindful of Imperial concerns, Finnish elites sought to safeguard the volatile position of the Grand-Duchy with pronounced loyalty. On occasion, a concrete demonstration was in order, and the Polish Uprising necessitated such action. The Grand-Duchy proved its loyalty to the Empire by arms, as the Finnish Guard, the sole national military unit of the autonomous borderland, was mobilized and sent to war.

The origins of the Finnish Guard – officially, “Imperial Life-Guard’s Finnish Sharp-Shooter Battalion” (Rus. *Лейб-гвардии 3-й стрелковый Финский батальон*), a force consisting of 800 recruits – lay in a jäger regiment founded in the eastern province of Vyborg in 1812, on the year of the Napoleonic invasion of Russia. Originally intended for the defense of the Russian Baltic provinces, the Finnish soldiers of the Vyborg Regiment ended up performing guard duty in St. Petersburg during the war, releasing Russian units for front-line service. By 1817, the Regiment was divided into two detachments, of which one was re-organized as a drill battalion and eventually left as the only Finnish national unit. Renamed as a sharp-shooter battalion, the unit was elevated to the Imperial Life-Guard in 1829, a year before the outbreak of the Polish Uprising.<sup>2</sup> The Battalion was commanded by Colonel Anders Edvard Ramsay, a scion of an old noble family and a graduate of the Page Corps, who had participated in the suppression of the Decembrist Conspiracy as a young officer in the Preobrazhensky Life-Guards Regiment.<sup>3</sup>

Much as the other national units elevated to the Imperial Life-Guard, the Finnish Battalion served as a measure to integrate the local elites into the Russian Imperial Order, allowing them a pathway to an illustrious career in the service of the Empire. The very existence of the unit was also a symbol of national pride, which effortlessly fused the nascent Finnish patriotic sentiment with Imperial loyalty. The official Russian state motto of “Faith, Tsar and the Fatherland” was echoed in the sermons of Pastor Karl Henrik Ingman, who served as the military chaplain of the Battalion; even though the faith was the Lutheran faith and the fatherland was Finland, the loyalty to the Russian sovereign was beyond question. The service of “Finland’s own sons” was a matter of national honor for the ruling local elites

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Mączak, ed., *Finland and Poland in the Russian Empire: A Comparative Study* (London: School of Slavonic and East European Studies, 1995).

<sup>2</sup> Pertti Luntinen, *The Imperial Russian Army and Navy in Finland 1808–1917*, *Studia Historica* 56 (Helsinki: Societas Historica Finlandiae, 1997), 54–55, 68–69.

<sup>3</sup> Torsten Ekman, *Suomen kaarti 1812–1905* (Helsinki: Schildts, 2006), 77–78.

of the Grand-Duchy, for whom the highest virtue was the steadfast and obedient service for the monarch, for the welfare and the benefit of the nation.<sup>4</sup> Thus, it was no surprise that when the Sharp-Shooter Battalion was assembled for a punitive expedition against Poland in December 1830, the observing Russian Colonel Ivan Chepurnov witnessed the soldiers of the unit answering to the news with “thunderous joy”.<sup>5</sup>

The demonstration of loyalty and the battlefield honors were hard-earned. During the campaign, the Finnish Battalion lost almost half of its effective strength, with most of the casualties resulting from frostbite and disease. A particularly devastating experience was the 1831 cholera epidemic, which was rampant on the battlefields of Poland during the summer months.<sup>6</sup> The few battles where the Finnish soldiers distinguished themselves were significant enough. The Battalion had a taste of combat in May 1831, defending the rear-guard of Grand-Duke Mikhail's Russian Guard during the withdrawal through Mazovia. The Finnish sharp-shooters withstood the attack of Dezydery Chłapowski's Polish cavalry at Wąsewo and Długosiodło on 16 May, during the withdrawal through Mazovia, and sustained losses with 4 of the men killed, 14 wounded and 16 captured. The memoirs of Polish officers who served in the battle subsequently mentioned the service of Finnish sharp-shooters and their “Swedish” officers – a reference to the language, not to the ethnicity – in these particular battles.<sup>7</sup> Eventually, by October, the remains of the Finnish Battalion joined in the final assault on Warsaw with Field-Marshal Ivan Paskevich's forces, participating in the storming of the entrenchments and redoubts of Rakowiec and Szcześliwice in the southwestern outskirts of the Polish capital.<sup>8</sup>

The Finnish Sharp-Shooter Battalion returned to Helsinki in April 1832. The exact number of total casualties is difficult to calculate, but at least 289

<sup>4</sup> Jussi Jalonen, *On Behalf of the Emperor, On Behalf of the Fatherland. Finnish Officers and Soldiers of the Russian Imperial Life-Guard on the Battlefields of Poland, 1831* (Leiden–Boston: Brill, 2015), 35–37, 67–69.

<sup>5</sup> Helge Pohjolan-Pirhonen, *Kansakunnan historia III: Kansakunta löytää itsensä, 1808–1855* (Porvoo–Helsinki–Juva: WSOY, 1973), 461.

<sup>6</sup> Of the total casualties of the Finnish Guard and the effects of cholera, see Jalonen, *On Behalf*, 216–218, 297–298.

<sup>7</sup> For mentions of Finnish soldiers and officers in Polish memoirs, see, for example Dezydery Chłapowski, *Pamiętniki*, Part 2, *Wojna roku 1830–1831* (Poznań: Nakładem synów, 1899), 54; Chłapowski, *Lettre sur les événements militaires en Pologne et en Lithuanie; Seconde Édition* (Berlin: Martin Schlesinger, Libraire et Editeur de Musique, 1832), 23; Ignacy Kruszewski, *Pamiętniki z roku 1830–1831* (Kraków: Drukarnia Aleksandra Słomskiego, 1890), 103–104; Stanisław Jabłonowski, *Wspomnienia o baterji pozycyjnej artylerji konnej gwardyi królewsko-polskiej*, Biblioteczka Legionisty, t. 6 (Kraków: Drukarnia Ludowa, 1916), 78–79.

<sup>8</sup> Jalonen, *On Behalf*, 230–234.

men were officially reported dead, with 110 missing in action; some of the latter, who had spent the war confined in cholera hospitals, did eventually return. The thinned ranks of the Battalion did not escape the notice of the townspeople who had gathered to witness the return of the soldiers. Novelist Herman Avellan, who was a ten-year old boy at the time, later on recalled in his memoirs the sight of the women and children in tears for their husbands, sons and fathers, who had fallen in the campaign.<sup>9</sup> In the top ranks of society, the losses suffered by the families of the fallen rank-and-file sharpshooters went mostly unnoticed, as the service of the Battalion brought new glory to the officers of the elite families. This cohort of young aristocrats that had served in Poland now emerged as the heroes of the Fatherland and the wardens of the Empire. For the Grand-Duchy of Finland, the campaign in Poland epitomized the inevitable contact between the political *status quo* of the Grand-Duchy and loyalty to the Empire, on which the perceived well-being of the nation depended. The war was, above all, a war waged in the context of the *ancien régime*; it was a war which, while safeguarding the autonomous existence of the Grand-Duchy, also inevitably reinforced the existing social order and strengthened the position of the old elites.<sup>10</sup>

The commemoration of the war was consequently fraught with controversies from the beginning. Finnish officers who had served in the war considered the Polish rising as a “rebellion”, which had to be crushed, but many of them were undoubtedly conscious of the fact that they had participated in the suppression of an uprising that had sought to restore national independence. For some people, this was not the kind of war that they could easily fit with their patriotic ideals. Lieutenant Colonel Robert Henrik Lagerborg, the second-in-command of the Battalion, commented how he had “had more than his fill” of the military, and predicted gloomily how the standing armies of ruling Empires would have to “maintain order among the restless nations for a long time to come”.<sup>11</sup> The prediction of continuous unrest and turmoil turned out to be prophetic, as the mid-century witnessed a series of national uprisings and revolutions during the “Springtime of Nations”, once again thrusting Imperial Russia to fulfil its role as “Europe’s policeman”.

While the militarized state-patriotism and loyalty to the Empire would survive in Finland until late in the century, Finland also experienced a changing intellectual and political atmosphere and the more liberal currents of the time.

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<sup>9</sup> “Finska gardets rast i Wiborg,” *Östra Finland*, 7 September 1877.

<sup>10</sup> Jalonen, *On Behalf*, 301–305.

<sup>11</sup> “Lieutenant Colonel Robert Wilhelm Lagerborg’s letter to Johan Albrecht Ehrenström, Köpingen Birschi, 9/21 December 1831,” in *Robert Wilhelm Lagerborgs brev till Anders Edvard Ramsay och Johan Albrecht Ehrenström*, ed. Arto Kirri, *Historiska och litteraturhistoriska studier* 76 (Helsingfors: Svenska Litteratursällskapet i Finland, 2001), 149.

From 1863 onwards, the regular parliamentary politics were restored as Emperor Alexander II allowed the Finnish Diet to convene for the first time since 1809. Two years later, freedom of the press was enacted, and while the publication industry remained regulated, the strict censorship which had reigned under the “political night” of Emperor Nicholas I was lifted. The more relaxed situation and the inevitable re-alignment of politics also meant that the very legacy of the Finnish sharp-shooters and their campaign in Poland in 1831 would be questioned. The purpose of this article is to review how the commemoration of the campaign changed over time, and how the war which once, for a short while, played a key part in the securing of Imperial goodwill became a problematic conflict and eventually a candidate for historical amnesia.

### **Imperial Subservience and Daydreams of Liberty; the attitudes of the Finnish intelligentsia during the 1831 campaign**

The eulogization of the war by the Finnish elites began as soon as the hostilities in Poland were over, in a tacit, but visible manner. Johan Jakob Nervander, a poet and an academic, was one of the intellectuals who decided to adopt a loyalist position. During the promotion ceremonies at the Imperial Alexander University in Helsinki in 1832, Nervander recited a laudatory poem dedicated to General Alexander Amatus Thesleff, the Vice-Chancellor of the University and a career officer who had also commanded a Russian infantry division in Poland. Thesleff's nephew, a young ensign, had died from a direct hit by a Polish cannon shot on the ramparts of Tykocin. Nervander's verses celebrated General Thesleff as a “chivalrous soldier” whose deeds had brought honor to the nation in Polish battlefields, “where the Finnish flag had triumphed”.<sup>12</sup> The laudatory verses were particularly appropriate, given that Thesleff was also appointed as the head of the censorship administration upon his return from the campaign.

Academic intelligentsia in particular was under a watchful eye during the campaign. Both the Russian government officials as well as the local Finnish authorities were concerned that sympathies for the Polish cause, which were demonstrated in Swedish newspapers on regular basis, might trigger unwelcome dissent also in Finland. As a preventive measure, postal connections between Finland and Sweden were severed immediately, and well over a thousand copies of Swedish and other newspapers were

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<sup>12</sup> Max Engman, *Pitkät jäähyväiset; Suomi Ruotsin ja Venäjän välissä vuoden 1809 jälkeen* (Helsinki: WSOY, 2009), 209; Rainer Knapas, “Det akademiska ögonblicket: Aura besöker Helsingfors 1832,” in *Res Publica Litteraria; Scripta ad historiam antiquiorem Universitatis Helsingiensis pertinentia*, ed. Eskö Häkli and Kristina Ranki, Publications of the Helsinki University Library 71 (Helsinki: Bibliotheca Universitatis Helsingiensis, 2001), 62.

confiscated as contraband in December 1830.<sup>13</sup> Occasional expressions of solidarity for Poland nonetheless took place. One famous – or notorious – example was the “Polish toast”, raised in a student celebration in Helsinki on 16 December 1830, only two weeks after the outbreak of the November Rising. Johan Ludvig Runeberg, the future Finnish national poet and a university docent, had attempted to prevent the toast as a “dangerous and demonstrative action.” In the subsequent investigation, Runeberg explained that the informants had misinterpreted the Swedish expression “dricka ut polacken”, which meant drinking the last toast bottoms up, the whole glass in one go.<sup>14</sup>

Runeberg and Nervander were both founding members of the cultural circle known as the “Saturday Society” (*lördagssällskap*). Founded in Helsinki in 1830, this was a free cultural society and a gentlemen’s club dedicated to academic discussions on philosophy and literature. The shared interest in Georg Henrik Friedrich Hegel’s historicism steered the group’s focus towards the questions of nation, people, and culture, and some of the members became subsequently involved with a new association, the Finnish Literature Society, founded in 1831 and operating still today as a cultural institution and a publishing house.<sup>15</sup> By 1832, Runeberg founded the newspaper *Helsingfors Morgonblad* to act as Saturday Society’s gazette. The contents of the paper inevitably reflected the prevailing loyalism. The paper regularly featured translations of Russian works, which enjoyed official sanction. These included historical stories written by Faddei Bulgarin – born Tadeusz Bułharyn, a scion of a family of Polish nobles, who had adopted Russian identity for political reasons – who had served in Finland in 1809 and also in the Russian forces during the campaign in Poland in 1831. A military officer who had formerly been suspected of involvement in the Decembrist conspiracy, Bulgarin had subsequently enlisted in Tsarist service and worked in the “Third Department” – the secret police – as an agent monitoring the literature scene.<sup>16</sup> The loyalist credentials

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<sup>13</sup> K. G. Fellenius, *Några svensk-polska minnen* (Stockholm: Seelig & Co., 1939), 5; Lolo Krusius-Ahrenberg, *Finland och den svensk-ryska allianspolitiken intill 1830/31 års polska revolution; en studie i opinionsbildningens historia*, Särtryck ur Svenska Litteratursällskapets historiska och litteraturhistoriska studier 21/22 (Helsingfors: Svenska Litteratursällskapet, 1946), 321, 328–329; Juhani Paasivirta, *Suomi ja Eurooppa; Autonomiakausi ja kansainväliset kriisit 1808–1914* (Helsinki: Kirjayhtymä, 1978), 104.

<sup>14</sup> Ohto Manninen, “Vapauden marttyyri? Isaac Svahnin surullinen elämä,” *Genos*, No. 48 (1977): 65–87.

<sup>15</sup> Irma Sulkunen, *Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura 1831–1892*. Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seuran Toimituksia 952 (Helsinki: Suomalaisuuden Kirjallisuuden Seura, 2004), 18–20.

<sup>16</sup> *Helsingfors Morgonblad*, 6 August and 13 August 1832; Yulia Ilchuk, *Nikolai Gogol: Performing Hybrid Identity* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2021), 46. Bulgarin had

of *Helsingfors Morgonblad* were enhanced still further when the Swedish translation of Pushkin's *Borodino* was published in a magnificent layout on the front page of the paper on 22 October 1832.<sup>17</sup>

The general mood among the intellectuals of the "Saturday Society" was, however, not adamantly subservient. One of the younger members who were involved also with the Finnish Literature Society was a notable author and poet Fredrik Cygnaeus. At the time 24-year old, later on in his life Cygnaeus became a central figure in the nationally-minded *Fennoman*<sup>18</sup> movement and his acquaintances included such personalities as Victor Hugo and George Sand.<sup>19</sup> In the year of the Polish-Russian War, Cygnaeus wrote a poem in memory of Tadeusz Kościuszko, which appeared under *nom de plume* in the Swedish periodical *Vinterblommor* ("Winter Flowers"). The Polish national hero had stopped in the city of Turku after his release from St. Petersburg in 1797, and the November Rising had actualized the memory of his visit to Finland once again.<sup>20</sup> A daring, but modest commemoration of the Polish cause, *Fragmenter ur Kosciuszko* was the first of the laudatory verses that Cygnaeus wrote to honor European revolutionaries. Later, in 1846, he would write another, dedicated to Arnold Ruge, a German democrat, member of the *Burschenschaft*, and a friend of Karl Marx.<sup>21</sup>

Since the endgame of the Polish Uprising had demonstrated in practice how the defiance against Imperial authority could have fatal results, these daydreams of liberty in Finland were few, even among the intelligentsia. The general sentiment was a combination of patriotism and imperial glory, and the battle honors of the Finnish sharp-shooters were invoked as a testimony of loyalty. Lieutenant Colonel Nils Gylling, the former commander of the Viipuri Sharp-Shooter Battalion, reminded Governor-General

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a remarkably colorful history, and after his discharge from the Russian army in 1811, he had also fought in the Napoleonic forces against Russia in 1812. He was not prosecuted, but instead allowed by Alexander I to return to Russian service after the war.

<sup>17</sup> Matti Klinge, *Poliittinen Runeberg* (Helsinki: WSOY, 2004), 219–221.

<sup>18</sup> *Fennoman movement* was Finnish nationalist movement in the 19th-century. It concentrated on promotion of the Finnish language and culture.

<sup>19</sup> Mikko Lahtinen, "Fredrik Cygnaeus, aristokraatti – demokraatti," *Niin & Näin* 15, No. 3 (2008): 87–91, also available on the Internet, accessed October 10, 2021, <https://netn.fi/lehti/niin-nain-308/Cygnaeus>.

<sup>20</sup> Fredrik Cygnaeus, "Fragmenter ur Kosciuszko; Hjeltedikter i Romancer," in *Samlade Arbeten 7: Lyriska Dikter* (Helsingfors: Hufvudstadsbladets Tryckeri, 1884), 259–272. On Kościuszko's brief residence in Turku, see Sulo Haltsonen, "Tadeusz Kościuszko Suomessa 1796–1797," *Historiallinen Aikakauskirja*, No. 4 (1937): 287–293.

<sup>21</sup> Väinö Voionmaa, *Sosialidemokratian vuosisata, osa II* (Porvoo: Werner Söderström, 1909), 31.

Alexander Menshikov in February 1832 how Finnish officers “had shed their blood for the common good” and were ready to fight for the “beloved and great monarch”, in service of the “Great Russian Empire”.<sup>22</sup> The Grand-Duchy of Finland had not only fulfilled its role as part of the *cordon sanitaire* between Russia and the revolutionary agitation rampant in Scandinavia and Europe, but even made its military contribution to the suppression of the revolutionary plague, and valor was now to be rewarded with honor. Nicholas I recognized these sentiments, and in August 1832, the Finnish Guard was rewarded with the Banner of St. George, embroidered with the figures of the Russian Imperial Eagle and the Finnish heraldic lions, bearing the Cyrillic inscription *За Отличие При Усмирении Польши* – “For distinction in the Pacification of Poland”. At the ceremony, Colonel Ramsay himself called the “future sons of Finland to always perform the highest civic virtues” – namely, military obligations and loyalty towards the Russian Emperor.<sup>23</sup>

The Imperial loyalty was, in part, a predisposition that came naturally in a country where the ruling elites had already in Swedish times appeared as champions of absolute monarchy. The fact that the Evangel Lutheran creed had also cultivated loyalty to the earthly authorities as a virtue also had its effects, and Arch-bishop Jakob Tengström had promptly condemned the Polish uprising as a “political cholera”, underlining the alliance between the Throne and the Altar.<sup>24</sup> But at the same time, since the most ardent demonstrations of loyalty were dictated by the prevailing “Imperial Silence”, they were not the kind of expressions that came naturally. While the loyalist sentiments ran high, this was also obviously because potential dissenting voices were muted.

Undoubtedly even those members of the Finnish elites for whom good relations with the Imperial master were close to heart were not necessarily all that enthusiastic of the destruction of Polish autonomy, let alone the service of the Finnish sharp-shooters on the front, particularly given the high casualty rate. The consensus upheld by the ruling classes of the Grand-Duchy was based on an atmosphere of silence and fear; and this in itself meant that it was based on shaky foundations, which would begin to give way as soon as this silence and fear subsided.

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<sup>22</sup> Kansallisarkisto (Finnish National Archives), Kenraalikuvernöörin Kanslia (Governor-General's Chancery), Salaiset aktit (Secret acts), FC 6, No. 71, Lieutenant Colonel Nils Gylling's letter to Governor-General Aleksandr Menshikov, Helsinki, 8 II 1832, s.p.

<sup>23</sup> Paasivirta, *Suomi*, 109.

<sup>24</sup> Matti Klinge, *Keisarin Suomi* (Espoo: Schildts Förlags AB, 1997), 82–83; see also Klinge, *Poliittinen*, 185.



## Review of the past and reinforced loyalty; post-1863 Finnish civil society and the memory of the Polish Risings

While “the Imperial Silence” continued in Finland for the entire reign of Nicholas I, the national awakening and nation-building began to gain momentum in Finland during the 1830s and the 1840s. Finally, with the end of the Crimean War, the Grand-Duchy of Finland decisively entered a new epoch. Having sustained and successfully defended against an Anglo-French maritime assault during the war, the country had once again survived yet another test of loyalty to the Empire with flying colors. More importantly, while the campaign in Poland in 1831 had been mostly a war where the rank-and-file Finnish sharp-shooters had suffered the losses, but the elites had reaped the rewards in the name of the Fatherland, the war that was fought on the Finnish coastal territories in 1854–1855 was, in many ways, a people’s war. In the coastal towns of Bothnian Bay, local bourgeoisie organized militias, and distinguished citizen-soldiers became legendary personalities.<sup>25</sup> Whereas the campaign in Poland had reinforced the older *status quo*, this time a new war heralded an impending change in politics and society.

The most immediate impact of the Crimean War was the overall “Thaw” in the Russian Empire, which also marked the relaxation in public life in the Grand-Duchy of Finland. As mentioned, the Finnish Diet was once again reconvened by Emperor Alexander II, and Finland thus began its development into a modern, constitutional state. Several of the high-ranking officers who had fought in the campaign in Poland in 1831 were still active in public life. Colonel Ramsay, now promoted lieutenant-general, had been placed in the charge of defense of the Grand-Duchy during the Crimean War, and as the Finnish Diet convened in 1863, decorated veteran officers of the Finnish Guard, such as Achatés Ferdinand Gripenberg and Mauritz Ferdinand von Kothen, showed up as representatives of the noble estate.<sup>26</sup> Many of the wardens of the old order were still present; but they were now faced with a changing situation, where liberal ideas were freely disseminated in public discourse, and where the former *status quo* was not subjected to new review.

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<sup>25</sup> Jalonen, *On behalf*, 306. For a full portrayal of Anglo-French naval assault on Finland, see Andrew Rath, *The Crimean War in Imperial Context, 1854–1856* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015).

<sup>26</sup> Kansallisbiografia (Finnish biographies), Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura; *Suomalaiset kenraalit ja amiraalit Venäjän sotavoimissa, 1809–1917*: Achatés Ferdinand Gripenberg, accessed on October 10, 2021, <https://kansallisbiografia.fi/kenraalit/henkilo/161> and Mauritz Ferdinand von Kothen, accessed on October 10, 2021, <https://kansallisbiografia.fi/kenraalit/henkilo/222>.

Not surprisingly, the campaign in Poland was not spared. One of the politically significant matters discussed in 1862–1863 was the possible demilitarization of the Grand-Duchy, which had become a topical issue with the Crimean War, and gained even more traction with the outbreak of the Polish January Rising. The Treaty of Paris had effectively forbidden Russia from maintaining fortifications in the Åland islands, and the neutralization of all Finland was politically appealing among liberally-minded Finnish commentators. Edvard Bergh, the editor of *Helsingfors Dagblad*, publicly demanded that the Grand-Duchy of Finland should officially declare itself neutral in the new conflict between Poland and Russia.<sup>27</sup> The suggestion also entailed a prohibition on the deployment of Finnish troops outside the national borders of the Grand-Duchy, a clear reference to the earlier campaign in Poland. *Åbo Underrättelser*, a liberal Turku-based newspaper, was particularly outspoken in a column published in May 1863, recalling how Finnish troops were sent to Poland “to participate in her subjugation in 1831” and stating even more provocatively “we do not know what benefits the Finnish people recovered from all this; and even less can we understand why Finland should have suffered any disgrace if she could have remained neutral”.<sup>28</sup>

Three decades had passed since the triumphant return of the Finnish Guard, which had supposedly brought glory to the nation and allowed autonomy to be reinforced by imperial favour, but now one of the leading newspapers in the country was openly questioning whether the war had been worth it. What’s more, these questions were raised in defiance against the generation of veteran officers who were still holding positions of power in the Grand-Duchy. These changing attitudes reflected the process which was taking place both in Finland as well as the rest of Europe. The star of the educated middle class was on the rise, and the traditional order upheld by the old aristocracy was challenged; and in Finland, sons of this very same social class that had once served the Emperor in Poland, regarding themselves as the vanguard and the champions of their Fatherland.<sup>29</sup>

The fact that Poland was once again ravaged by another, in many ways even bloodier, uprising against Russian rule, and a far more violent Russian

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<sup>27</sup> Raimo Savolainen, *Sivistyksen voimalla – J. V. Snellmanin elämä* (Helsinki: Edita, 2006), accessed October 10, 2021, <http://snellman.kootutteokset.fi/fi/luvut/valtiop%C3%A4ivien-pelastajana-puolan-kapinan-olosuhteissa>.

<sup>28</sup> “Helsingfors Tidningar och Finlands neutralitet,” *Åbo Underrättelser*, 9 May 1863. See also Paasivirta, *Suomi*, 229.

<sup>29</sup> Marja Vuorinen, *Kuviteltu aatelismies. Aateluus viholliskuvana ja itseymmärryksenä 1800-luvun Suomessa*, *Bibliotheca Historica* 128 (Helsinki: Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura, 2010), 169, 393–395.

repression, did not escape Finnish attention. With censorship lifted, *Helsingfors Dagblad* now openly called the Polish struggle by the name *frihetskrig*, “war of liberation”, and extended the same epithet also to the 1831 Uprising. The newspaper published reports from French newspapers on the Polish situation, as well as memoirs of Swedish volunteer doctors who had served in Polish military hospitals in 1831.<sup>30</sup> This time, the Finnish Sharp-Shooter Battalion was spared from the action, but instead, the suppression of the Polish uprising was reserved completely for the officers. Practically the entire graduate class of the Hamina Cadet School was dispatched to Poland, and Anders Edvard Ramsay, as the General of Infantry, briefly served as the Commander-in-Chief of the Russian forces attempting to quell the insurrection.<sup>31</sup> The fighting continued until 1864, until the uprising was finally crushed by Russia, but this time, Finnish civil society was no longer marching in one step with the Imperial military music.

Changing times had also brought forth new heroes who had fought abroad. Already in 1861, Herman Liikanen, who had made a brief stint in the coastal militia during the Crimean War, had volunteered to fight in Garibaldi's forces in *Il Risorgimento* and gained some fame in Finland. Liikanen became a professional freedom fighter, and in 1864, he travelled to Denmark and enlisted in the Danish Royal Army in the war against Prussia and Austria over Slesvig-Holstein. The war and the Order of Dannebrog, which he received, made him a national celebrity.<sup>32</sup> Significantly, Liikanen was evidently inspired by the example of another, earlier freedom fighter, August Maximilian Myrberg, a Finnish philhellene who had fought in the Greek War of Independence and also participated in the Polish Uprising of 1830–1831. Fighting on the Polish side, at the time when the Grand-Duchy of Finland was busily proving its loyalty to Russia by sending its sharp-shooters to battle, Myrberg risked the fate of a traitor. Myrberg's time in Poland was, and still is, shrouded in mystery, but his presence among the insurrectionists was well-known at the time. By the 1860s, this part of his story was also openly mentioned in the newspapers, which recalled the exploits of the old freedom fighter. Myrberg was by then living in retirement in Stockholm, and his death in 1867 prompted obituaries that

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<sup>30</sup> “Öfversigt af den polska frihetskampen,” *Helsingfors Dagblad*, 11 March 1863; “Minnen från polska frihetskriget 1831,” *Helsingfors Dagblad*, 1 April 1863.

<sup>31</sup> Veli-Matti Syrjö, “Haminan kadetit maailmalla,” in *Keisarillinen Suomen kadettikoulu 1812–1903: Haminan kadetit koulussa ja maailmalla*, ed. J.E.O. Screen and Veli-Matti Syrjö (Helsinki: Tammi, 2003), 237–238.

<sup>32</sup> Jalonen, *Vapaaehtoiset – Viisi tarinaa vieraisiin sotiin osallistuneista suomalaisista* (Somero: Amanita, 2015), 52, 56–58, 78–82.

reiterated his adventurous life and romantic idealism, specifically pointing out the Polish Rising of 1831.<sup>33</sup>

The new era of citizen-soldiers and freedom fighters, and the public fascination with the revolutionary struggles in Italy and Poland, both past and present, did not mean that the Finnish Guard was relegated to obscurity. Very few liberal advocates questioned the primacy of the Russian Empire, let alone suggested that Finland should separate from Russia or rise against the Empire. The liberalization of society and politics was consciously linked to the good graces of the sovereign, and Alexander II was lauded as a just monarch whose reign had allowed liberty to flourish. While the campaign in Poland in 1831 now occupied a somewhat ambiguous, even vexed position in the Finnish historical memory, the very existence of the Finnish Guard was nonetheless a source of national pride, and the deployment of the Finnish Guard's Battalion in foreign campaigns remained an integral part of the loyalty towards the Empire. These feelings reached their peak as the Guard's Battalion was summoned to fight in the Balkans in the war against the Ottoman Empire in 1877–1878. By this time, newspapers and telegraph reports made the conflict the first truly modern war in Finnish history, an exotic and trans-cultural conflict in the heyday of imperialism, and now, at least, war in the service of the Empire could be portrayed as a matter of national liberation, for Bulgaria and other Balkan nations.<sup>34</sup>

By the time of the war against the Ottomans, the last Finnish veterans of the Polish battlefields had departed from the scene, but the memory of the 1831 campaign was still invoked in the patriotic indoctrination of the new generation of Finnish soldiers. Starting in 1881, the Grand-Duchy enacted conscription based on a draft lottery, forming new native Finnish military units, which also necessitated the publication of educational material for the soldiers in their native language. This was done in the form of a Finnish-language publication named *Lukemisia Suomen sotamiehille* (“Readings for Finnish soldiers”). The periodical regularly published memoirs and stories of past campaigns fought on behalf of Russia, including a full historical article on the participation of the Finnish Sharp-Shooter Battalion in the war against Polish insurrectionists in 1831.<sup>35</sup> While the breakthrough

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<sup>33</sup> “Den gamle frihetskampen Major Myrberg,” *Helsingfors Tidningar*, 16 January 1863; “Matts August (Maximilian) Myrberg,” *Hufvudstadsbladet*, 24 April 1867.

<sup>34</sup> On the expedition of the Finnish Guard to the war against the Ottomans, see 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*, Humaniora 324 (Helsinki: Academia Scientiarum Fennica, 2003).

<sup>35</sup> “Henkivartijäväen Suomen tarkkâmpujapatäljoona Puolan sodassa v. 1831,” *Lukemisia Suomen sotamiehille*, No. 3/4 (1895): 115–137.

to civil society had resulted in the re-assessment of the war, the campaign nonetheless remained, beyond any doubt, one part of the military history of the Finnish fatherland, which the military establishment cherished.<sup>36</sup> And whereas in the 1820s and 1830s, the Russian imperial authority had mostly sought to integrate the elites of Finland and ensure that the ruling classes would safeguard the Russian interests in the Grand-Duchy, this time the authorities sought to reach out directly to the wider populace, in the majority language, utilizing the new institution of conscription. Thus, the former imperial loyalty had by no means departed from the scene and was in many ways even reinforced.

### Accusing voices and faded remembrance at the turn of the century and independence

Although the general liberalization of politics and society in Alexander II's reign allowed a re-harmonization and re-affirmation of Finnish patriotism and Imperial loyalty, this turned out to be a temporary phase. By the *fin-de-siècle*, the Russian imperial reaction gradually began to turn against the autonomy of the Grand-Duchy. The new Imperial policy required a more uniform administration and a greater integration of those borderlands which still retained their former privileges. From the Russian perspective, this was an important part of the modernization of the Empire. From the Finnish perspective, where autonomy was considered as a reward for loyalty to the Empire, this appeared as a betrayal of confidence. The re-assessment of the Imperial relationship once again prompted a review of the history under Russia, including the service of Finnish soldiers in the wars of the Empire.

Novelist August Schauman, the founder of the leading Swedish-language newspaper *Hufvudstadsbladet*, once again pointed out the Finnish service in the campaign in Poland in 1831. Schauman's memoirs, *Från sex årtionden i Finland* ("From six decades in Finland"), written in 1892–1894, recalled his childhood memories of amputated and crippled men of the Finnish Guard, veterans of the Polish battlefields, who had begged for money or a pension from his father Carl Schauman, a former soldier who had served as an administrative official in the military affairs department of the Finnish Senate.<sup>37</sup> Schauman leveled the harsh accusation against the Russian pan-Slavists who were now talking of how the union between Russia

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<sup>36</sup> G. Aminoff, "Lukemisia Suomen sotamiehille," *Lukemisia Suomen sotamiehille*, No. 1 (1888): 1–6.

<sup>37</sup> August Schauman, *Från sex årtionden i Finland; Levnadsminnen, Förra delen, Ny illustrerad upplaga* (Helsingfors: Holger Schildts Förlagsaktiebolag, 1922; first ed. 1892), 20.

and Finland had been forged with Russian blood, and reminded these “pathetic ultra-patriots” how “an occasional drop of Finnish blood was also shed for that same union.”<sup>38</sup> The choice of words reaffirmed Finnish loyalty, even took pride in it, but also reminded the Russian Empire of the debt of honor which the Empire owed to the Grand-Duchy for the demonstrations of this loyalty. The statement could not have been more political.

The memory of the Polish November Rising and the participation of the Finnish Guard in the hostilities was also recalled by another Swedish-speaking Finnish author, Johan Jacob Ahrenberg. Ahrenberg’s grandfather, Erik Johan Bäck, had worked as a provincial clerk in the eastern district of Vyborg, as one of the bureaucrats who was involved in the attempts to resolve the question of peasant rights in the donation lands ruled by Russian and Baltic German landlords. The harsh situation of the farmers who had to defend their rights against their landlords had left Bäck angered with Russian policies, and he resigned from his office in 1831. He was known for walking out of the Church as a protest during prayers for Emperor Nicholas I.<sup>39</sup> Bäck had also expressed sympathies for the Polish insurgents, and Ahrenberg recalled in his memoirs how his grandfather had always felt “grieved and troubled” over the participation of Finnish officers in the suppression of the Polish risings.<sup>40</sup>

Ahrenberg also portrayed the 1831 campaign in a fictional novella, titled *Anor och ungdom* (*Heritage and Youth*, 1891). The protagonist of the story, a young officer and nobleman Carl Alexander Stjernstedt, is portrayed as an archetypical example of a dedicated young gentleman ready and willing to do his duty in the service of Russia, exactly the kind of idealistic youth whom Ramsay and other officers of the Finnish Guard had praised. As a newly-minted ensign, the young Stjernstedt joins the Finnish Sharp-Shooter Battalion, and during the campaign, his idealism dies, bit by bit. The young aristocrat records in disdainful tones the experience of marching through “lousy Jewish villages” and “dirty Polish towns”. The first experience of combat leaves him “petrified with horror”, but eventually he notices his own emotions slowly dying and the sight of death leaving him cold, without his “heart making a beat”.<sup>41</sup> Finally, after the conquest of Warsaw, he is ordered to command a firing squad, and the memory of the executed Polish insurgents – two noblemen and a Catholic bishop, and an

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<sup>38</sup> Schauman, *Från*, 21.

<sup>39</sup> Woldemar Backman, “En nykarlebyättling,” *Österbottniska Posten*, No. 39 (1942).

<sup>40</sup> Johan Jacob Ahrenberg, *Människor som jag känt; personliga minnen, utdrag ur bref och anteckningar*, Vol. 4 (Helsingfors: Söderström & C:o Förlagsaktiebolag, 1909), 186.

<sup>41</sup> Ahrenberg, *Samlade Berättelser; Anor och Ungdom, två berättelser* (Helsingfors: Söderström & C:o Förlagsaktiebolag, 1922), 57.

old man who rips off his blindfold shouting “*Vivat Poloniae*” – leaves him physically ill. Delusional from fever, he continues to hear the shouts of the old Polish patriot echoing in his ears every night.<sup>42</sup>

Ahrenberg's novella captured the fundamental ambivalence of Finnish participation in the 1831 campaign. Whatever benefits had resulted from the campaign, they were all based on the crushing of another nation fighting for its freedom, and the sense of pride in Imperial loyalty had required the deliberate suppression of the sense of guilt. The dedication, the will to serve, and all the civic virtues once extolled by elites, had all been a lie, and the only thing left was the traumatic realization of the futility of the war. This was mirrored by the fact that the very relationship with the Russian Empire was now fraught with the same futility. The famous February Manifesto, issued by Emperor Nicholas II in 1899 and aimed for greater integration of Finland in the Russian Empire, dealt the final blow to the old *status quo*, ushered in a process which in Finland would become known as “russification” and “oppression”, and severed the remaining ties which had held the Imperial loyalty and patriotism together. By 1905, even the Finnish Guard was disbanded by Nicholas II, as a result of a complicated process that left the Grand-Duchy of Finland completely without national military units but also released Finns from the threat of Russian conscription. The Banner of St. George, once awarded by Emperor Nicholas I for the meritorious service of the Finnish sharp-shooters in Poland, was returned to the Emperor.<sup>43</sup> Later on, the Banner vanished during the Revolution.

As far as the memory of the Polish risings was concerned, the last shot of the old Finnish loyalists was fired in 1903, when conservative statesman Yrjö Sakari Yrjö-Koskinen published a treatise on the “Polish rebellions”, as he called them. In the aftermath of the February Manifesto, most of the conservative *Fennoman* politicians and intellectuals still advocated a conciliatory stance and appeasement towards the Russian Empire, and the one example which they could rely on was the fate of Poland, which could be pointed out as a sad example of counterproductive defiance. As a professional historian, Yrjö-Koskinen painted a picture of a failed resistance that had only provoked harsh Russian repressions. He condemned the November Rising eloquently as a “pointless gamble undertaken at the instigation of mad agitators, whom the true patriots were unable to constrain”, while

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<sup>42</sup> Ahrenberg, *Samlade*, 63; see also Max Engman, “Landsmännens dubbla lojaliteter,” *Finsk Tidskrift*, 7/8 (2002), 377–378.

<sup>43</sup> Mikko Bonsdorff and Kati Winterhalter, *Kaartin kasarmi. Suomalaisen pataljoonan upseerirakennus* (Helsinki: Arkkitehtitoimisto Okulus, 2007), 53. Review of the history of the Finnish Guard's barracks building for the Finnish Defense Administration, 3 October 2007.

damning the January Rising simply as “wild insanity”.<sup>44</sup> But something was missing, permanently gone. Not even the conciliatory statesmen praised the involvement of the Finnish soldiers in the campaign any longer.

The memory of the campaign of 1831 would still resurface even after the Russian Revolution. By November 1917, when the Bolsheviks were taking over in Petrograd, the Finnish Parliament was preoccupied with the question of organizing a national military for defense. The country had not yet declared formal independence, but the deterioration of the Russian Provisional Government and the potential threat posed by the leaderless Russian troops stationed in Finland had re-ignited the question of state security. With the ongoing political polarization between the left and the right, the Finnish labor movement was fearful of the possibility that the new defense units would be also used against organized labor. This fear was articulated by Edvard Valpas-Hänninen, a socialist member of Parliament and one of the most notable left-wing politicians, who reminded the Parliament of how Finnish military units had been used during Russian rule. Valpas-Hänninen mentioned how “the Finnish Guard participated in one war, in Poland, assisting the Russian tyrannical government to crush the Polish uprising”, and how “the bourgeoisie in Helsinki loved this so much that they held balls celebrating the bravery of the Guard for crushing the Polish desire for freedom”.<sup>45</sup> The memory of the Imperial war had become an anathema, which the socialists, who saw themselves free of the past, could throw on the face of the bourgeois politicians.

With national independence, the memory of the campaign of 1831 gradually faded. At least partly, this amnesia was deliberate. The Guard's Battalion was re-established in the aftermath of the Civil War as the “Finnish White Guard's Regiment”. The name emphasized the victory of the White forces in the Civil War of 1918, but as the successor of the old Finnish Guard, the unit also retained the battle honors from the Russian times. Nonetheless, the suppression of the November Rising was difficult to fit in the military history of a newly independent nation that had separated from Russia. As the centennial of the Guard was celebrated in the newly independent Republic of Finland in 1927, the Polish campaign was glossed over in newspapers by a simple statement “it is not pleasant today to remember that Finnish soldiers were helping to suppress a people fighting

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<sup>44</sup> Yrjö Sakari Yrjö-Koskinen, *Puolan kapinat vuosina 1831 ja 1863* (Porvoo: Werner Söderström, 1903), 31–32, 59.

<sup>45</sup> Kansalliskirjasto (National Library of Finland), Suomen eduskunta (Finnish parliament), pöytäkirjat [memoranda], valtiopäivät (convention of the legislature on the year) 1917, No 2, istunnot (sessions) 1–48, 1 XI 1917, accessed October 10, 2021, <https://digi.kansalliskirjasto.fi/aikakausi/binding/1357352?page=805&ocr=true>.



for its liberty, but one has to take into account that opinion was different back then.”<sup>46</sup>

By the year 1936, the campaign was already distant history. The leading newspaper *Helsingin Sanomat* published a series of two articles on the Finnish Guard and the Polish Rising. Written by professional historian Gabriel Rein, the treatment was now detached, academic and impartial, showing how the campaign had passed firmly to history, and how it should be judged by the standards of its time. The loyalty towards the Russian Emperor was considered “typical for the era” and the desire to demonstrate this loyalty on the battlefield, against the Polish insurgents who threatened the imperial order, was “self-evident in the conditions of the period.”<sup>47</sup>

The contrast to the other 19th century military campaigns, such as the Balkans campaign of 1877–1878, could not have been starker. The participation of the Finnish Guard in the battles in Bulgaria was commemorated and celebrated, and to this day, the Embassy of Bulgaria in Helsinki regularly lays a wreath on the monument of Finnish Guardsmen. The campaign of 1831 could not be commemorated, because there was no one to commemorate it with, and the campaign had no longer any significance for Finland. The war in Poland occasionally featured in short military histories, such as in the 1966 issue of *Kylkirauta*, the publication of the Finnish Cadet Corps, which lamented how the memory of the 1831 campaign had been overshadowed by the Balkans War.<sup>48</sup> But otherwise, the war was allowed to fade into the past, only as a matter of occasional antiquarian interest.

### Conclusions; a problematic sacrifice

The campaign of the Finnish Guard in Poland in 1831 was never an easy war to remember. The war was initially a war of the elites, a war waged in the established social order of the early modern era, and it could never be regarded as a people's war. Even though the elites of the Grand-Duchy considered the war – perhaps with some justification – as a necessary demonstration of loyalty in accordance with national interests, it was still a war that was fought on foreign soil and did not directly involve the homeland or the wider Finnish populace. The war was never a national rallying-point,

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<sup>46</sup> “Finska Gardets minnen,” *Hufvudstadsbladet*, 18 September 1927; Laitila, *The Finnish Guard*, 83.

<sup>47</sup> “Suomalaiset sotilaat vieraalla maalla: Suomen kaarti Puolan sodassa v. 1831,” *Helsingin Sanomat*, 30 September 1936.

<sup>48</sup> Niilo Lappalainen, “Suomalaiset soturit vierailla taistelukentillä,” *Kylkirauta*, No. 2 (1966): 19.

precisely because in the early decades of the Grand-Duchy, the ruling elites saw no reason to rally the people. The loyalty and obedience of the people were enough, as the elites decided what the national interests required, and within this established order, the Finnish Guard was sent into battle.

Even still, the war could have been recovered by posterity, had there not been a suppression of the national uprising. In the “Age of the Nation”, in an era when national revolutions, national independence, and national self-determination were gradually becoming the dominating ideals, a campaign fought on behalf of the Russian Empire could no longer be presented as a great patriotic undertaking. At most, it could only be considered as dirty work which had to be done, even if it had to be done for the sake of the nation; this was, in fact, something that a few of the officers, such as Lieutenant Colonel Lagerborg, had seemingly understood already at the time. The new ideals called for new wars which could be commemorated, and where the Finnish martial glory would appear in a more suitable context. This happened during the Crimean War, when the Finnish homeland was defended, and during the war against the Ottoman Empire, when the Finnish Guard arrived in the Balkans in a campaign that could be presented as a war of liberation. The memory of both these wars was of the kind which could be easily recalled even after the relationship with Russia had turned at first bitter, and then hostile.

The legacy of the Finnish Guard’s campaign in Poland in 1831 was not long-lived. The very nature of the conflict in service of Imperial Russia, and the idea that Finnish national interests had somehow necessitated participation in the destruction of Congress Poland, made the war a prime candidate for amnesia from the beginning. This was no doubt aided by the fact that the commemoration had been mainly limited to the upper echelons of society to begin with. After time had passed, overwriting this part of the past happened by default. As all the other features which had formed the old order of the early nineteenth century began to recede – the aristocratic rule, and the unquestioned loyalty to the Empire – the same also happened to the already-faded memory of the Polish campaign. With the modernization of society and new national ideals, some sacrifices to the nation were best left, if not forgotten, at least without public commemoration.

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## STRESZCZENIE

### Jussi Jalonen, Wspomnienie o udziale fińskiego batalionu strzelców wyborowych w wojnie polsko-rosyjskiej 1831 roku. Kontrowersyjna spuścizna pierwszej kampanii wojskowej Finlandii w służbie Rosji

Wielkie Księstwo Finlandii, stanowiące autonomiczne pogranicze Imperium Rosyjskiego, zaangażowało się w stłumienie polskiego powstania listopadowego w 1831 r. Fińscy biurokraci, świadomi słabej pozycji Wielkiego Księstwa, zaaprobowali twarde środki zastosowane wobec Polski. 3 Strzelecki Fiński Batalion Gwardii Cesarskiej został zmobilizowany i wyróżnił się w trakcie działań w Polsce. Jego służba została okrzyknięta przez elity Wielkiego Księstwa przykładem patriotyzmu państwowego, w którym nie było sprzeczności między lojalnością wobec fińskiej ojczyzny a lojalnością wobec Imperium Rosyjskiego.

Wojna ta pozostawiła po sobie skomplikowaną spuściznę. Wraz z liberalizacją polityki w Imperium Rosyjskim i postępującą za tym liberalizacją społeczeństwa w XIX w. idea, że Wielkie Księstwo zachowało swoją autonomię poprzez udział w tłumieniu powstania polskiego, nie była rzeczą łatwą do pamiętania. Sympatie do Polski wśród inteligencji fińskiej były widoczne już w 1831 r., a w latach sześćdziesiątych XIX w. rewidowano poglądy dotyczące wojny polsko-rosyjskiej 1831 r. Gdy stosunki między Finlandią a Rosją pogorszyły się w wyniku imperialnej reakcji przeciwko fińskiej autonomii z 1899 r., pamięć o wojnie w Polsce została zatarta.

Na początku XX w. wszystkie cechy, które uformowały stary porządek, zanikły; panowanie arystokratów, lojalność wobec Cesarstwa, a w konsekwencji także została zatarta pamięć o wojnie w Polsce. Wraz z modernizacją społeczeństwa i nowymi

ideałami narodowymi tę ofiarę dla narodu najlepiej było pozostawić w większości zapomnianą.

Słowa kluczowe: Wielkie Księstwo Finlandii, 3 Strzelecki Fiński Batalion Gwardii, wojna polsko-rosyjska 1831 r., pamięć historyczna

## SUMMARY

### **Jussi Jalonen, Remembering the Finnish Sharp-Shooter Battalion's Involvement in the 1831 Polish-Russian War. The controversial Legacy of Finland's first military Campaign in the Service of Russia**

As an autonomous borderland of the Russian Empire, the Grand-Duchy of Finland engaged in the suppression of the Polish November Uprising in 1831. Conscious of the vulnerable position of the Grand-Duchy, Finnish bureaucrats approved of the tough measures taken by Russia towards Poland. The Finnish Sharp-Shooter Battalion of the Imperial Guard was mobilized, and served with distinction in Poland. Their service was hailed by the elites of the Grand-Duchy as an example of militarized state-patriotism, in which there was no contradiction between loyalty to the Finnish Fatherland and loyalty to the Russian Empire.

The war left behind a complicated legacy. With the liberalization of politics and society during the 19th century, the idea that the Grand-Duchy had preserved its autonomy by participating in the suppression of the Polish uprising was not an easy thing to remember. Sympathy for Poland was already visible among the Finnish intelligentsia in 1831, and by the 1860s a re-assessment of the Polish-Russian war was underway. Subsequently, when relations between Finland and Russia soured as a result of the latter's reaction to Finnish autonomy in 1899, recollections of the war in Poland were signed into oblivion.

By the early 20th century, features which had formed the old Finnish order such as aristocratic rule and loyalty to the Russian Empire had been replaced by an independent modernized society with new national ideals, and its involvement in the Polish-Russian war was considered to be best left forgotten.

Keywords: Grand Duchy of Finland, Finnish Guard Sharp-Shooter Battalion, Polish-Russian War of 1831, historical memory

## АННОТАЦИЯ

### **Юсси Ялонен, Вспоминая участие финского стрелкового батальона в польско-русской войне 1831 года. Спорное наследие первой военной кампании Финляндии на службе России**

Великое княжество Финляндское, будучи автономной пограничной территорией Российской империи, приняло участие в подавлении польского

Ноябрьского восстания в 1831 году. Финские бюрократы, осознавая слабую позицию Великого княжества, одобрили жесткие меры против Польши. Был мобилизован 3-й стрелковый батальон финской имперской гвардии, который отличился во время своих операций в Польше. Его служба была воспринята элитой Великого княжества как образец государственного патриотизма, в котором нет противоречия между лояльностью в отношении как к финской родине, так и к Российской Империи.

Война оставила после себя сложное наследие. Вместе с либерализацией политики в Российской Империи и последующей либерализацией общества в XIX веке идею о том, что Великое княжество сохранило свою автономию, участвуя в подавлении польского восстания, было идеей, которую было не так уж и легко помнить. Симпатия финской интеллигенции к Польше была заметна уже в 1831 году, а в 1860-х годах взгляды на польско-русскую войну 1831 года были пересмотрены. Когда отношения между Финляндией и Россией ухудшились в результате реакции Империи на финскую автономию в 1899 г., память о войне в Польше была утрачена.

В начале XX века все черты, которые формировали старый порядок, исчезли; правление аристократов, верность Империи и, как следствие, утраченная память о войне в Польше. С модернизацией общества и появлением новых национальных идеалов об этой жертве для народа лучше всего было забыть.

Ключевые слова: Великое княжество Финляндское, 3-й стрелковый финский гвардейский батальон, польско-русская война 1831 года, историческая память