

SCHOOL OF NATION. THE CONCEPT AND PRAXIS OF THE SOLDIER'S EDUCATION IN THE ESTONIAN NATIONAL ARMY IN THE INTERWAR PERIOD (1920–1940)

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Abstract

Estonia was a post-imperial country where the question of how to develop a citizen loyal to the new nation-state arose after the First World War. Seen by some as being composed of the 'best part of the Estonian nation', the army was considered to be a good tool for the effective training of citizens. In order to fulfil the idea of the army as a 'school of nation', the crucial issues were the creation of its own military traditions, language policy, and the education of personnel. The leadership of the army tried to eliminate the influence of the former Imperial Russian army, invented new military traditions in the national spirit, and actively cultivated nationalist ideas. The article analyses the education of Estonian military personnel in this regard, discussing how nationalism, language policy, cultural training and history lessons helped to embody the vision of the army as the school of nation.

KEY WORDS: Estonian army, nationalism, military education, cultural training, language policy.

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Anotacija

Po Pirmojo pasaulinio karo Estija tapo viena tų poimperinių šalių, kuriose kilo klausimas, kaip išugdyti naujajai tautinei valstybei lojalų pilietį. Kariuomenė, kurią, kai kurių manymu, turėjo sudaryti „geriausiaji estų tautos dalis“, buvo suvokiama kaip galimas įrankis efektyviai ugdant piliečius. Siekiant įgyvendinti kariuomenės, kaip „tautos mokyklos“, idėją, svarbiausiais klausimais tapo savų karinių tradicijų kūrimas, kalbinė politika ir karių ugdymas. Kariuomenės vadovybė mėgino išgyvendinti buvusios Rusijos imperijos kariuomenės įtaką, kūrė naujas tautinę dvasią skatinusias karines tradicijas ir aktyviai puoselėjo nacionalizmo idėjas. Straipsnyje analizuojamas Estijos karių ugdymas šiuo požiūriu, aptariant, kaip nacionalizmas, kalbos politika, kultūrinis ugdymas ir istorijos pamokos padėjo įgyvendinti kariuomenės, kaip tautos mokyklos, viziją.

PAGRINDINIAI ŽODŽIAI: Estijos kariuomenė, nacionalizmas, karinis švietimas, kultūrinis ugdymas, kalbos politika.

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What is a national army, and what is its basic concept? How can it be built, and what is an effective education for recruits to become loyal soldiers and citizens? These were problems that had to be resolved by the Estonian army 100 years ago.

The national self-organisation of Estonians into national units in the Russian army during the First World War was an important part of the struggle for national sovereignty.¹ Many Estonian politicians took part in the movement for building national military units.² But the issues of how to build a national army and on what ideological basis were of interest only in the last phase of the war of independence.

The Estonian national army was created in 1918 for pragmatic reasons, to defend the young Republic of Estonia from foreign enemies, and at that critical time it was not possible to discuss the thorough education of recruits. Despite this, General Johan Laidoner, the commander-in-chief of the Estonian army, and other military leaders spoke basically about the character of the Estonian army. It was especially topical at the end of the war in November and December 1919. When soldiers of the defeated Northwest Army of the Russian White Guard joined the Estonian army *en masse*, General Laidoner said that the Estonian army should stay national and 'not let yourself be spoiled by Russians'.³ This showed the ethnic character of the Estonian national army, because foreigners were unwelcome in it. An exception was using foreign military specialists from Russia to teach cadets in the Military School, or who occupied positions in technical branches of the army and the navy. When Estonia acquired its own specialists, who had graduated from foreign military schools, most former Russian officers were dismissed from the service.⁴

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Nationalism

Discussions about the concept of the Estonian national army started among senior Estonian officers and the general staff in the early 1920s, and continued until the mid-1930s.⁵ They came to the conclusion that the Estonian army should comprise the best part of the

¹ About 100,000 Estonians were called up into the Imperial Russian army. In April 1917, Estonian national forces began to form in the Russian army. During the process of their formation, more than 30,000 soldiers of Estonian origin were brought together in Estonia. In December 1917, an Estonian infantry division was formed without the direct permission of the Russian government: KURVITS, Oskar. *Eesti rahvusväeosade loomine 1917–1918. 1. Eesti polk*. Tallinn, 1930, lk 82; LOKK, Vitali. *Eesti rahvusväeosad 1917–1918. Formeerimine ja struktuur*. Tallinn, 2008, lk. 121–123.

² For example, the famous Estonian politician and later president Konstantin Päts took part in the creation of a national force in 1917 as an ensign: *Eesti Vabadussõda*. 2. Kd. Toim. August TRAKSMANN. Tallinn, 1996, lk. 63–64.

³ ROSENTHAL, Reigo. *Loodearmee*. Tallinn, 2006, lk. 558.

⁴ KOPÕTIN, Igor. *Rahvuslus ja lojaalsus Eesti sõjaväes vähemusrahvuste näitel 1918–1940*. Doktoritöö. Tallinna Ülikool, Ajaloo Instituut. Tallinn, 2018, l. 239–247.

⁵ The discussion was mostly in the magazine *Sõdur* (Soldier), which circulated among the army: KOPÕTIN, I. Op. cit., l. 125–126.

Estonian nation.⁶ All soldiers at conscription were to be educated to be loyal to the national army and the state, and officers were all expected to be devoted nationalists, and to act as 'teachers of the nation'.⁷ In the opinion of the general staff, good recruits for the army were firstly Estonian youth from rural areas with only a basic education.⁸ Recruits from national minorities, communists, etc, who did not fulfil these requirements, were not wanted. The army was to form different social and national elements into a unified nation.⁹ The aim of soldiers' education in the national army was not only to carry out military operations, but also to educate citizens to be loyal to the nation-state.¹⁰

The most active thinkers among officers saw Estonia as an ethnic nation-state, and deemed it necessary to build the Estonian army based on the principle of a national army. Estonian nationalism was to be cultivated during military service by educating soldiers, which was to be a logical continuation of the personal education received at home, at school and in society.¹¹ The national spirit was seen as an important motivating factor, which was to help the soldier become victorious in battle.¹²

The officer corps of the Estonian army, which, in the opinion of the leadership, was to become the Estonian national elite, was expected to fulfil a key role in the process of national assimilation. Each and every Estonian officer was to be a faithful nationalist and the embodiment of nationalism, and was expected to be able to light the flame of patriotism in the hearts of soldiers.¹³

The leaders of the Estonian army always viewed the organisation as a national elite. The army was not intended to represent a cross-section of society, but to be formed from the physically and mentally healthiest members of the nation.¹⁴

⁶ 3. diviisi tegevuspiirkonna ülevaade, dateerimata, ilmselt pärast 1926. a. *Eesti Rahvusarhiiv Tallinnas (National Archives of Estonia, Tallinn, hereafter RA ERA)*, f. 521, n. 2, s. 99, l. 12.

⁷ [JAAKSON, Aleksandr] A. J. Rahvusline aade meie kaitseväe kasvatuses. *Sõdur*, 1926, nr. 14/15, lk. 306–308. KASEKAMP, August. *Sõjapedagoogika. Loengukonspekt Sõjakooli kadettide vanemklassis 1930/31. a.* Tallinn, 1931, lk. 38–39.

⁸ REEK, Nikolai. *Sõjateaduslik testament. Artiklid.* Tartu, 2015, lk. 65. AUL, Juhan. Eesti sõduri kasvust ja raskusest. *Sõdur*, 1938, nr. 18–19, lk. 461–463.

⁹ *Üldine õppekava sõduri aastaseks ettevalmistamiseks. I osa: Noorte 4-kuuline ettevalmistamine.* Tallinn, 1928, lk. 28–29; 10. jalaväerügement ranna- ja õhukaitse staabi ülemale, 15.03.1927. *RA ERA*, f. 505, n. 1, s. 53, l. 55–56; LAIDONER, Johan. Meie riigi julgeolek ja rahvasteliit. *Sõdur*, 1926, nr. 12/23, lk. 258–260; HABER, Mart. *Eestlane sõdurina. Järeldusi kaitseväe komplekteerimiseks, väljaõppeks ja juhtimiseks* (KVÜÖA toimetised, nr. 9). Toim. Andres SEENE. Tartu, 2008, lk. 269; TÖRVAND, Juhan. Riigikaitse muredest. Mõnda meie vähemusrahvustest riigikaitse seisukohalt. *Sõdur*, 1930, nr. 19/20, lk. 577; REEK, N. *Sõjateaduslik...*, lk. 65.

¹⁰ KOPÖTIN, I. Op. cit., l. 354.

¹¹ MASING, Richard. *Moraal ja sõda.* Tallinn, 1926, lk. 57; TRAKSMANN, August. Rahvuslik kasvatus. *Sõdur*, 1927, nr. 1/2, lk. 16; HO. Riigikaitse ja isiku huvid. *Sõdur*, 1934, nr. 14/15, lk. 389–392.

¹² TRAKSMANN, August. Sõjalise kasvatus põhijooni. Kas on ideeliselt võimalik sõjaline kasvatus koolides? *Sõdur*, 1927, nr. 33, lk. 791–796; REEK, N. *Sõjateaduslik...*, lk. 65; HABER, M. Op. cit., lk. 252–253, 258, 264, 269–272; VILLEMI, Paul. X Vabaduse Risti päev 12. juunil 1938. *Sõdur*, 1938, nr. 24–26, lk. 604.

¹³ [JAAKSON, Aleksandr] A. J. Rahvusline aade meie kaitseväe kasvatuses. *Sõdur*, 1926, nr. 14/15, lk. 306–308; MASING, R. Op. cit., lk. 46–48.

¹⁴ KOPÖTIN, I. Op. cit., l. 145. O. J. Vaja traditsioone. *Sõdur*, 1924, nr. 13, lk. 2. Rohkem tähelepanu kaitsevälaliste välimusele ja viisakusele. *Sõdur*, 1924, nr. 40, lk. 15.



Figure 1. Cadets during the lecture at the Estonian Military School.
An Estonian flag hangs on the wall. Tallinn, 1919.

Source: Rahvusarhiivi filmiarhiiv (National Archives of Estonia, Film Archive), Tallinn

The use of the theory and praxis of eugenics in recruitment to the Estonian army is interesting. Research was conducted among young soldiers and recruits by the Estonian eugenicist Juhan Aul in the mid-1930s. On the basis of research, in 1938, it was decided to change the recruitment to different branches of the Estonian army and navy regarding the physical character of youth. The value of youth varied according to areas. Young people from the northwest of Estonia were evaluated higher, because they were ethnically the purest, less mixed with another race, and physically healthier. Youth from the southeast of Estonia, who were mixed with Russians and were not in such good a physical and psychological condition as the men from Estonia's other regions, were evaluated as the worst. Therefore, youth recruited from Petchory were sent to infantry units only, while the technical branches and the navy were recruited from the northern and northwest regions.¹⁵ General Nikolai Reek, the head of the Estonian headquarters, wrote in 1923: 'Infantryman belong to a certain race.'¹⁶ Reek's idea meant that the infantry, as the main branch of the army, always depended on a soldier's ethnic origin.

¹⁵ AUL, Juhan. Eesti sõduri kasvust ja raskusest. *Sõdur*, 1938, nr. 18–19, lk. 461–463; HO. Op. cit., lk. 96. Väeüksuste komplekteerimise rajoonid, Kaitseväge Steabi V (mobilisatsiooni) osakond, 1931. a., kaart, täiesti salajane. *RA ERA*, f. 495, n. 12, s. 366, l. 52.

¹⁶ REEK, N. *Sõjateaduslik...*, lk. 65.

Language policy

One expression of Estonian nationalism was the language policy in the army. The Estonian language was not only considered one of the most important aspects in identification with Estonian nationality, but was also declared an important aspect in the construction of the Estonian national army. The period 1922 to 1924 was especially important in constructing the Estonian national army, as changes were enforced in this period that were designed to liberate the Estonian national army from foreign influences. Since most elements of the Estonian military culture had been adopted from officers who had transferred from the Russian army, the changes focused on eliminating 'the Russian spirit' from Estonian military service. These changes were not just an internal phenomenon in the Estonian military, but were expressed in the pages of the media as an angry wave against anyone with ties to the old Russian army, or who were related to the Russian language or mentality.¹⁷

The requirement to have Estonian (official national) language skills, which was soon imposed in the military, allowed the rooting out of the 'non-Estonian-speaking' and 'foreign' element from the Estonian officer corps, mainly former officers in the Russian army of Russian or Baltic German origin. As a result of this, 335 officers were demoted to the ranks, that is, more than 16% of the Estonian officer corps during the war of independence.¹⁸ In spite of the strict language requirements, some officers remained as regular officers in the 1920s and were used as specialists in military areas (general staff service, military education, mapmaking, etc). It is important to point out that the Estonian language skills of officers of Estonian nationality left a lot to be desired in the 1920s. Therefore, Estonian language courses were organised for Estonian officers: language specialists from the teacher training colleges and recognised schools in Tallinn were engaged as teachers.¹⁹

Estonian language skills were not only considered important for coping in military service, but also for the successful cultivation of the national ideology of Estonia, within the framework of educating soldiers as citizens.²⁰ Thus, every line officer was tasked with determining the national inclination prevailing among their young recruits, as well as the number of soldiers from ethnic minorities (officially called aliens). Time for teaching the Estonian language was allocated within the framework

¹⁷ O. J. Miks suundume läände. *Sõdur*, 1928, nr. 9/10, lk. 410-411; ABISOGOMIAN, Roman. *Rol' russkikh voennykh deiatelei v obshchestvennoi i kul'turnoi zhizni Estonskoi Respubliki 1920-1930-kh gg. i ikh literaturnoe nasledie*. Magisterskaia rabota. Tartuskii universitet, Filosofskii fakul'tet, Kafedra russkoi literatury. Tartu, 2007, s. 45; P. U. Eesti ohvitserkonnast ja tema keelest. *Sõdur*, 1924, nr. 40, lk. 2-3; Rohkem lugupidamist riigikeelele ja Eesti meelele sõjaväes. *Päevaleht*, 1920, nr. 83, lk. 2.

¹⁸ KOPŌTIN, I. Op. cit., l. 153-154.

¹⁹ Pioneeripataljoni ülema päevakäsk nr. 261, 07.11.1925. *RA ERA*, f. 636, n. 1, s. 75, l. 214.

²⁰ JALAJAS, Oskar. *Kultuur-selgitustöö metoodika käsiraamat*. Tallinn, 1925, lk. 7-10; 1. soomusrongirügemendi ülem 1. diviisi ülemale, täiesti salajane, 14.08.1924. *RA ERA*, f. 515, n. 1, s. 676, l. 255.

of the cultural training programme that was provided in addition to military training. Taking into consideration the fact that military units were usually compiled based on a territorial principle, there were quite a few non-Estonian-speaking soldiers from ethnic minorities in some units.²¹ Due to the limited duration of military service and the lack of other resources, it was deemed too difficult to teach the Estonian language efficiently to aliens, and this problem could not be solved until 1940.²²

Cultural training

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To implement the aims of soldiers' education, a programme of cultural and educational work was created which included many different events. After the basic training, recruits were trained by officers who gave lectures on different topics, such as rural questions, national history, the Estonian language, and foreign and domestic policy. The cultural and educational work was supported by military ceremonies in the national spirit and by sports.²³ In addition, officers monitored the behaviour of soldiers during conversations and events, and identified politically unreliable soldiers. This information was immediately communicated to military counter-intelligence.²⁴

Cultural training in the patriotic training programme for soldiers was launched centrally, designed by the general staff, as a reaction to the difficult socio-economic situation in the barracks in 1924.²⁵ It was difficult to control the morale of soldiers in overcrowded and neglected barracks. Since it was also difficult to change the location conditions due to the lack of financial resources, it was probably accepted as a cheaper method of preventing dissatisfaction among the soldiers and influencing their behaviour. Influenced by ideas of the purpose, nature and manner of patriotic education discussed by the military leadership, the cultural training programme was gradually designed as an efficient methodological addition, for the purpose of educating soldiers as citizens.²⁶ In general, we can presume that the methodology for cultural education was borrowed from the experience of the Polish military, which

²¹ 1. diviisi 1938/39. a. tegevusaruanne, täiesti salajane. *RA ERA*, f. 495, n. 3, s. 626, l. 220.

²² 1. jalaväerügemendi ülem 1. diviisi ülemale, salajane, 11.02.1930. *RA ERA*, f. 539, n. 1, s. 865, l. 14; Märkmeid olukorrast ja rahva meeleolust Petsrimaa piiriäärses osas, kooliolud, salajane, 21.05.1940. *RA ERA*, f. 495, n. 11, s. 40, l. 59; TÕRVAND, J. Riigikaitse muredest..., lk. 60–62; LÕUNA, Kalle. *Petsrimaa integreerimine Eesti Vabariiki 1920–1940. Loodus, aeg, inimene*. Tallinn, 2003, lk. 54.

²³ 1. diviisi sõjaväe vastuluure ülema Hugo Maasiku salajane ringkiri 1. diviisi väeosadele, veebruar 1924. *RA ERA*, f. 515, n. 1, s. 676, l. 56–57; Kindralstaabi VI osakonna salajane ringkiri, 04.06.1924, ja ajutised juhendid kultuurselgitustöö tegemiseks kaitseväes, kultuurselgitustöö organisatsiooni skeem. *RA ERA*, f. 1560, n. 1, s. 322, l. 66–77; KOPÕTIN, I. Op. cit., l. 185–191.

²⁴ JALAJAS, O. Op. cit., lk. 8–13; KOPÕTIN, I. Op. cit., l. 281.

²⁵ 1. diviisi ülema kindr.-mjr. Heinze salajane ettekanne kindralstaabi ülemale, mai 1924. *RA ERA*, f. 515, n. 1, s. 676, l. 101.

²⁶ *Üldine õppekava...*, lk. X–XIV; Selgitustöö tarvidusest meie sõjaväes. *Sõdur*, 1925, nr. 3, lk. 49.



Figure 2. 'Teacher of the Nation.' A lecturing officer in front of the conscripts, 1930s.
Source: Igor Kopõtin's private collection

organised an educational programme of the same title, with very similar substance and purpose, in the period between the wars.²⁷

Cultural training was a set of educational methods used in a military organisation, designed to minimise the amount of free time a soldier has, to shape the soldier's view of the world, to form his thoughts, and thereby to influence his attitudes. Young men were perceived as clean sheets of paper, raw material for the military, which officers were supposed to shape into what were deemed proper citizens, loyal and faithful to the nation-state.²⁸ Cultural training also had a monitoring role: to identify and monitor the behaviour and attitudes of 'nationally indifferent' (i.e. disloyal) and actual aliens (i.e. the potentially disloyal risk group), and, if possible, to retrain them in the patriotic spirit.²⁹

Officers responsible for cultural training applied a selection of measures to fill the soldiers' free time and introduce 'the national attitude'. It should be highlighted that almost all means available at the time were used to spread the national ideology among soldiers, including periodicals, the celebration of holidays, tours, lectures,

²⁷ WYSZCZELSKI, Lech. *Wojsko II Rzeczypospolitej. Armia utanów, szarej piechoty i serca w plecaku. Od odzyskanej niepodległości do tragicznego września*. Warszawa, 2014, s. 276–277; KOPÕTIN, I. Op. cit., l. 213.

²⁸ Kindralstaabi VI osakonna salajane ringkiri, 04.06.1924, ja ajutised juhendid kultuurselfitustöö tegemiseks kaitsevâes, kultuurselfitustöö organisatsioon skeem. *RA ERA*, f. 1560, n. 1, s. 322, l. 66–77.

²⁹ JALAJAS, O. Op. cit., lk. 8-13; KOPÕTIN, I. Op. cit., l. 281.

physical training, theatre and art. After the rapid spread of film and radio, these too were immediately employed and proved quite efficient.³⁰

In general, it should be said that, while there were initially difficulties with launching cultural training in the Estonian military, it had become much more efficient by the 1930s, based on previous experience. The fact that mechanisms for cultural training were employed successfully in the introduction of communist ideology during the sovietisation of the Estonian military after the June coup of 1940 may be taken as proof of their efficiency.³¹ This shows the universal nature of the cultural training programme developed in the Estonian military for the transmission of ideology to soldiers through entertainment and centrally organised mass events.

History lessons as a method of educating soldiers

The Estonian military paid a lot of attention to history lessons in educating soldiers. The narrative of the national history was taken from academic historians at the time, who helped to construct the nation-state's narrative of history and the collective memory of the people.³² The patriotic training of soldiers was not limited to lectures in history given by officers, but a national war history was invented, which was intended to strengthen the internal consolidation of the Estonian military. This purpose was, among other things, to be achieved by storing the national war traditions of Estonia based on experience from the war of independence. The narrative of history from the war of independence required for educational purposes was not only captured in the printed word, but also by creating various monuments and ceremonies. To bring the national history as close to soldiers as possible, educational literature was purchased for barracks, and dwellings were decorated with pictures from the war of independence. The desired behavioural model of a soldier was taught based on the example of 'war of independence heroes' elevated to a heroic status.³³

In general, Estonian war history was presented in an ideologised manner, and only based on the ethnic interests of Estonians in justifying sovereignty and national defence. Estonian war history designed for the masses of soldiers was presented in a simplified manner, in which the ancient struggle for freedom (1208 to 1227) was

³⁰ JALAJAS, O. Op. cit., lk. 3–5, 10; ALLIKAS, Allikas. *Sõjaväepedagoogika tekkimine Eesti kaitseväes 1920. aastate II poolel*. Lõputöö. Kaitseväe Ühendatud Õppeasutused. Tartu, 2003, l. 29, 34–35.

³¹ KOPÕTIN, I. Op. cit., l. 208–209.

³² *Üldine õppekava...*, lk. 35–36. Sõdurite üldharidusliku taseme tõstmiseks kompaniides läbiviidud üritused, veebruar ja märts 1924. a. *RA ERA*, f. 1560, n. 1, s. 322, l. 15, 24.

³³ TAMM, Marek. History as Cultural Memory: Mnemohistory and the Construction of the Estonian Nation. *Journal of Baltic Studies*, 2008, vol. 39, no. 4, pp. 506–508; D.R. Traditsioonide loomisel. *Sõdur*, 1928, nr. 30, lk. 906–908; TÕRVAND, Juhan. Loogem rohkem rahvuslikke traditsioone. *Sõdur*, 1928, nr. 27/28, lk. 825–826.

logically followed by the Estonian War of Independence (1918 to 1920), even though there were 700 years between the conflicts. In the narrative of history cultivated, the external enemies of Estonians were always highlighted, mainly Germans and Russians.³⁴ Understandably, the presentation of this history as the most important element in the process of educating soldiers would not have motivated conscripts from ethnic minorities, but was more likely to foster deep defiance rather than awe. Even though no reports of the opinions of Estonian servicemen from ethnic minorities on the teaching of history in the army have been preserved, this is partly compensated for by the general attitude of Estonian conscripts. Although the teaching of history was deemed very important, history lessons often failed to inspire Estonian soldiers. By the end of the 1930s, the knowledge of Estonian soldiers of Estonian geography, national traditions and history was still extremely poor, and did not meet the requirements of the curriculum. Young soldiers did not know much about the events of the war of independence, or the battle histories of their home units.³⁵ Soldiers only attended events because they had to; instead of patriotic marching songs, however, they wanted to sing simple ribaldry. One obstacle was the educational background of the officers, which remained meagre, as a result of which the officers were unable to teach history to the soldiers in an attractive and interesting way.³⁶

Conclusions

National ideology in the Estonian army came to the fore at the end of the war of independence and in the following years. At the end of the war of independence, the ethnically monolithic structure and the nation-state mentality of the Estonian military were stressed. An ideological basis was invented on these grounds in the 1920s, which transformed into a patriotic ideology by the 1930s, which in turn was based on the principle of Estonia as a nation-state. Attempts were made to introduce ideas which were referred to as 'the patriotic mentality' to conscripts within the framework of compulsory military service. Both the study time prescribed in the curriculum and the cultural training programme specifically designed for educating soldiers were used for this purpose. In general, the leadership of the Estonian army cultivated the idea of the important task of the military to train citizens who were loyal to the country, in addi-

³⁴ *Üldine õppekava...*, lk. 27–28; KUKK, Kristi. *Väiakerhuvuste ajalookäsitluste genees ja narratiivid: Eesti võrdluses teiste Põhjala ja Baltikumi mittedominantsete rahvustega 19. sajandist kuni Teise maailmasõjani* (Dissertationes Historiae Universitatis Tartuensis, 32). Tartu, 2013, l. 59; SIIR, Johannes. *Konspekt kodumaa ajaloo esimesest tunnist noorsõduritele kaitseväes. Sõdur*, 1926, nr. 46/47, lk. 995.

³⁵ *Akt katsete läbiviimisest*, 04.03.1927. *RA ERA*, f. 505, n. 1, s. 53, l. 42.

³⁶ REEK, Nikolai. *Meie kaitseväge juhtiva koosseisu – ohvitseride kasvatuse ja väljaõppe alalt. Sõdur*, 1926, nr. 29, lk. 610; *Kaitseväge ülejuhataja kindral Laidoneri salajane kk. nr. 263*, 08.11.1934. *RA ERA*, f. 499, n. 2, s. 14, l. 334–335.

tion to teaching military skills, as this was also associated with the ability of a soldier in battle. Therefore, the army was to become the school of the nation, in which the role of the teacher was filled by officers. This philosophy was taken from the army of Poland, a perceived ally, as well as from the experience of the Imperial Russian armed forces, from which the authorities always publicly distanced themselves.

It should be stated that cultural training proved to be an efficient element in influencing personalities and subjecting them to the collective goals of the organisation. The cultural training programme was so efficient that it was even used in the sovietisation of the Estonian military in 1940. The ideology was different, but the methods remained the same. However, it should be highlighted that this educational work had little impact on ethnic minorities. On one hand, many members of ethnic minorities were able to learn the official language while doing military service, but their loyalty to the nation-state and the army remained questionable. This is evidenced, among other things, by the actions of Estonian Russians during the June coup of 1940, and even in the Summer War of 1941. The difficult integration of Estonian Russians into Estonian society through military service was noticed by officers as well, who blamed the insufficiencies of the regular educational system, which was unable to educate schoolchildren as loyal citizens of Estonia. It seemed impossible to change this situation during the short period of military service.

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TAUTOS MOKYKLA. KARIO UGDYMO SAMPRATA IR PRAKTIKA ESTIJOS KARIUOMENĖJE
TARPUKARIU (1920–1940 METAI)

Igor Kopõtin

Santrauka

1918 m. pradėjus kurti Estijos nacionalinę kariuomenę, turint pragmatinį tikslą – ginti ką tik paskelbtą Estijos Respubliką nuo išorės priešų, kilo klausimų, susijusių su naujokų išsilavinimu, tačiau nebuvo galimybių juos išsamiai išdiskutuoti. Kaip sukurti tautinę kariuomenę? Šis klausimas darėsi vis aktualesnis, kai į Estijos ginkluotąsias pajėgas 1919 m. pabaigoje stėjo šimtai buvusių Rusijos baltųjų Vakarų savanorių armijos karių. Gen. Johanas Laidoneris manė, kad Estijos kariuomenės sudėtis turi likti tautinė, kad negalima jai leisti „pašvinkti nuo rusų“. Tuo remiantis, rusai iš tarnybos buvo atleidžiami.

3-iajame dešimtmetyje Estijos kariuomenėje prasidėjo carinės Rusijos kariuomenės tradicijų išstūmimo kampanija. Estijos karinėje vadovybėje tuomet prasidėjo diskusija dėl to, kokia turi būti Estijos tautinė kariuomenė. Apskritai laikytasi nuomonės, kad Estijos kariuomenėje turi tarnauti tik geriausioji estų tautos dalis. Visi tie, kuriems buvo taikoma karinė prievolė, turėjo būti išlavinti kaip lojalūs tautinės valstybės ir tautinės kariuomenės piliečiai, o iš karininkų tikėtasi, kad jie bus pasišventę nacionalistai ir veiks kaip „tautos mokytojai“. Estijos generalinio štabo nuomone, Estijos kariuomenę tinkamiausia papildyti jaunais naujokais iš kaimišųjų vietovių, kurių gyventojams buvo prieinamas elementarinis mokslas. Visi iš tautinių mažumų kilę naujokai, komunistai ir t. t., kurie šių reikalavimų neatitiko, buvo nepageidautini. Kariuomenė skirtingus socialinius ir tautinius sandus turėjo sujungti į vieną tautą.

Viena estų nacionalizmo išraiškų buvo kalbos politika kariuomenėje. Manyta, kad estų kalba ne tik taps viena svarbiausių jungčių, leisiančių tapatintis su estų tauta, bet ir bus reikšmingiausias bruožas konstruojant Estijos tautinę kariuomenę. Reikalavimas mokėti estų (oficialią valstybinę) kalbą, greitai įvestas Estijos kariuomenėje, leido su šaknimis išrauti „ne estiškai kalbantį“ ir „svetimą“ elementus iš karininkų korpuso – pirmiausia tai palietė buvusius Rusijos kariuomenės karininkus, kurie buvo rusų arba Baltijos vokiečių kilmės. Dėl šios veiklos 335 karininkai buvo pažeminti į eilinius. Šis skaičius sudarė daugiau kaip 16 proc. viso Estijos nepriklausomybės karo laikotarpio karininkų korpuso.

Siekiant įgyvendinti karių ugdymo tikslus, buvo sukurta vadinamojo kultūrinio ir ugdymo darbo sistema, kurią sudarė daugybė įvairių lygmenų. Gavę parengimo pagrindus, naujokai buvo mokomi karininkų, kurie jiems skaitydavo paskaitas įvairiausiomis temomis, pradedant agrariniais klausimais, šalies istorija, estų kalba, baigiant vidaus ir užsienio politika. Kultūrinį ir ugdomąjį darbą rėmė tautine dvasia vykusios karinės ceremonijos ir sportas. Be to, karininkai turėjo nustatyti potencialiai nepatikimus karius, tikrindami karių elgseną per pokalbius ir įvairius įvykius. Šiuos duomenis jie nedelsdami pranešdavo karinei kontržvalgybai.

Ugdydama karius, Estijos kariuomenė daug dėmesio skyrė istorijos pamokoms. Kariams buvo skleidžiamas tautinės istorijos naratyvas, kurį formavo tuometiniai akademiniai is-

torikai ir kuris padėjo konstruoti tautinės valstybės istorijos pasakojimą ir žmonių kolektyvinę atmintį. Patriotinis karių auklėjimas apėmė ne vien karininkų vedamas istorijos pamokas; buvo sugalvota ir tautinė karo istorija, kuri turėjo sustiprinti Estijos kariuomenės vidinį sutelktumą. Be kita ko, siekta kaupti faktus apie estų karo tradicijas, remiantis Nepriklausomybės karo patirtimis. Ugdomaisiais tikslais formuotą istorinį pasakojimą apie Nepriklausomybės karą įamžino ne tik spausdintas žodis, bet ir daugybė įvairių paminklų bei ceremonijų. Siekiant kuo labiau priartinti tautinę istoriją prie karių, kareivinių bibliotekoms buvo perkama būtina ugdomoji literatūra, o karių gyvenamosios erdvės dekoruojamos Nepriklausomybės karo vaizdais. Ugdytas herojinis kario elgesio modelis, pagrįstas „Nepriklausomybės karo didvyrių“ pavyzdžiais.

XX a. 3–4-uoju dešimtmečiais šios idėjinės nuostatos tapo patriotine ideologija, kuri savo ruožtu rėmėsi Estijos, kaip tautinės valstybės, principu. Karinė vadovybė stengėsi įgyvendinti idėjas, kurios privalomosios karinės tarnybos naujokams per jų ugdymą buvo pristatomos kaip „patriotinis mentalitetas“. Tuo tikslu naudotasi tiek tvarkaraštyje numatytais pamokomis, tiek ir kultūrinio rengimo programa, specialiai sukurta kariams ugdyti. Apskritai Estijos karinė vadovybė puoselėjo idėją, kad kariuomenė ne tik formuoja karių įgūdžius, bet ir įgyvendina svarbią šaliai lojalių piliečių lavinimo užduotį, nes visa tai buvo siejama su kario pajėgumu mūšyje. Todėl kariuomenė turėjo tapti tautos mokykla, kurioje mokytojo vaidmenį vaidina karininkas. Tokia filosofija buvo perimta iš valstybės, kuri laikyta sąjungininke, kariuomenės – Lenkijos, bet ją taip pat veikė Rusijos imperijos kariuomenės patirtis, nors viešumoje valdžia nuo jos vis atsiribodavo.