READING AND WRITING FROM BELOW – EXPLORING THE MARGINS OF MODERNITY. UMEÅ 2016. PP. 97–113

ANNE HEIMO

Socialist Endeavors, Fist Presses and Pen Wars

Literacy Practices of Early Finnish Migrants in Australia

ABSTRACT. This article is about the short-lived history of Finnish socialist societies in Australia in the first decades of the twentieth century. At the same time, it tells of the first Finnish community in Australia, Finbury, and how the members of this small community represented their life on the pages of O*rpo* (Orphan) in their own words and for their own needs. O*rpo* was a hand-written and single copy newspaper published by the "Asiainedustusseura Erakko" ("The Hermit Society for the Promotion of Affairs") from 1902 to 1904. The society was established to advance the cultural, intellectual and social wellbeing of all of the members of their small community. O*rpo* offers a rare opportunity to study both individual and collective experiences of settling into a new country from the point of view of the migrants themselves as well as the literacy practices of these early Finnish migrants.

KEYWORDS: New history from below, hand-written newspapers, literacy practices, socialism, migration, Finns, Australia

In 1997 a memorial was erected on Finland Road on the Sunshine Coast, Queensland to commemorate the centennial of Finnish migration to Australia. About 40 people of Finnish ancestry still live in the same area of the first Finnish community in Australia, Finbury. Some of these are the descendants of Edvin and Maria Andersson, who were amongst the 200 or so who left Finland at the turn of the twentieth century to seek their fortune in Queensland. Today the Anderssons like other early Finnish settlers in the area are considered local pioneers and remembered for their achievements in sugar cane farming, sports and life-saving activities. The Anderssons' granddaughter Anne Margoc is the former chair of the Bli Bli on Maroochy Historical Society.[1] Her paternal grandparents, the Suosaaris moved to Bli Bli in 1911. Both her grandfathers were keen socialists, and Anne remembers them squabbling over politics in her childhood. In 2013 she was handed a digital copy of the two volumes of the hand-written newspaper *Orpo* and Vilho Niitemaa's article, which includes the minutes of the Erakko society, which published the *Orpo*. Although Anne Margoc had all through her life heard about these and the people behind them as part of her family heritage, she had never taken into account that they still existed.

This article is about the short-lived history of Finnish socialist societies in Australia in the first decades of the twentieth century.[2] At the same time it tells of the first Finnish community in Australia, Finbury, and how the members of this small community represented their life on the pages of *Orpo* (*Orphan*) in their own words and for their own needs. *Orpo* was a hand-written and single copy newspaper published by the "Asiainedustusseura Erakko" ("The Hermit Society for the Promotion of Affairs") from 1902 to 1904. *Orpo* offers a rare opportunity to study both individual and collective experiences of settling into a new country from the point of view of the migrants themselves as well as the literacy practices of these early Finnish migrants.

In the second volume of *A Social History of Knowledge* Peter Burke cautions drawing a sharp distinction between the public and the private

[1] Bli Bli is a small locality by the Maroochy River near where Finbury (now abandoned) was situated. I have interviewed Anne Margoc and other first and second generation Finns in Australia mentioned in October 2013 as part of my project on memories of migration and family history of Finnish Australians funded by the Academy of Finland (2011–2014; Nr. 250307).

[2] This article is related to my study "Socialist endeavors underneath the Southern Cross. Literacy practices of early Finnish migrants in Australia", which is a part of a larger research project "Fragmented visions. Performance, authority and interaction in early twentieth-century Finnish oral-literary traditions" funded by the Academy of Finland (Nr. 2014–2017; 275378).

domains of communication. Although writing is commonly associated with the private sphere, it actually has very much to do with the semi-public sphere. Even intimate genres of writing like letters were commonly read aloud amongst family members or at meetings, and therefore Burke sees the letter as a hybrid genre, which mixes speech and writing. On the Internet this hybridity is even more apparent. Chatting or commenting on social media sites resembles colloquial speech although it is done in writing (Burke 2012:95). Folklorist Kirsti Salmi-Niklander also recognizes the resemblance between reading and writing practices, and refers to those expressive genres which comprise both of these as *oral-literary local tradition* (Salmi-Niklander 2013a:78). Her studies on hand-written newspapers, which combine oral communication with manuscript and print cultures, in Finland and in Finnish migrant communities exemplify this hybrid genre. (See e.g. Salmi-Niklander 2002; Salmi-Niklander 2004:9.)

Hand-written newspapers belong to what book historians call *post-Gutenberg scribal culture*. Scribal culture prospered in various parts of Europe for different reasons until the twentieth century, because it offered both a convenient way to express religious and political, even revolutionary, ideas as well as a means to educate and entertain (Salmi-Niklander 2013a:76). The history of hand-written newspapers in Finland is about a century long, from the 1850s to the 1950s. In the heyday of hand-written papers in Finland, the first decades of the twentieth century, they were produced in the hundreds. Hand-written newspapers were typically produced in small communities, who shared common objectives. The educated used hand-written newspapers as an alternative medium during times of censorship and political oppression. For the self-taught lower classes they offered a way to have their texts known to wider audiences. Student societies and popular movements found them a suitable means to introduce and discuss their ideas and especially for upper- and middle-class families hand-written newspapers were a part of their writing culture alongside letters and diaries (Salmi-Niklander 2013a:77–79; Salmi-Niklander 2013b). Thus it is no wonder that the early Finnish migrants in Australia also found the hand-written newspaper a convenient medium for discussion and self-expression in their new surroundings.

Throughout my research I have had an interest in so called ordinary people's history and the ways they themselves present it, and have therefore found Martyn Lyons's thoughts on "new history from below" very fruitful. With "new" Lyons wants to stress ordinary people as active historical agents and not only the objects of study as the "old" history from below did even if it strived to offer an alternative to conventional history (Lyons 2013:16–18). This is ever the more evident now in the digital era as people do history for

and by themselves and in their own terms on the Internet and social media side by side with history professionals (see e.g. Heimo 2014a; Heimo 2014b).

Early Finnish Migration to North America and Australia

The history of Finnish migration to Australia differs from migration to North America in several significant ways.[3] Mass migration to North America began already in the 1870s, and by the 1920s over 300 000 Finns had migrated to the United States. (Kero 2014:42–43). At this stage migration to Australia was very little. It was only in the 1920s when the United States imposed a quota that Australia began to attract Finnish migrants and about two thousand Finns, mainly men, travelled to Australia (Koivukangas 1986:200; Institute of Migration, Statistics). In the United States Finns were not considered as "white" as Swedes or Norwegians, but were linked to Mongolians and American Indians (Kivisto & Leinonen 2014). In Australia the situation was quite the opposite, and Finns were favoured over many other Europeans, especially those originating from Eastern or Southern Europe, who were not considered "white" enough (Jupp 2007:11–12).[4] All in all only some 24 000 Finns have migrated to Australia in the last hundred or so years, and it is estimated that there are now about 30 000 persons in Australia with Finnish ancestry, whereas in North America the number is much higher, over 700 000 (Statistics of the Institute of Migration).

Many of those who left Finland at the turn of the twentieth century

[3] This difference has also had an effect on research. In both the United States and Canada as well as in Australia, Finns make up only a tiny portion of the population, and therefore the history of Finnish immigrants has aroused hardly any academic interest in these countries. In Finland the situation is different. There is an extensive amount of research on Finns in North America whereas there is much less research on Finns in Australia and most of it has been conducted by one historian, Olavi Koivukangas.

[4] Australian migration history can be divided into three main phases. At Federation in 1901 White Australia Policy was the leading principle, and migration from Great Britain and Ireland was favored to ensure that Australia stayed Anglo-Celtic. In the 1930s assimilation became the main principle of migration policy. And it was only after the Second World War when the country desperately needed more workforces that Australia began taking migrants also from other European countries than Britain, but even then immigrants from certain countries were preferred over others. During 1947 to 1953 Australia took over 170 000 refugees, so called Displaced Persons, from East Europe and the Baltic countries. After this the Assisted Passage Scheme was used to draw especially Western-European and Nordic people, who were believed to be the most capable of adapting to life in Australia. At this point the ideal immigrant was considered to be of "Nordic descent and British culture, of rural background and enterprising character". Finally in the 1970s assimilation was replaced by integration and multiculturalism was introduced as the new official policy of Australia in 1973 (Jupp 2007:11–12).

were active socialists who wanted to free themselves from czarist rule (Kostiainen 2014:132–135). Yet, the Finns in Australia never became as politically active as the "Red Finns" in the United States, who were notorious for their active role in left-wing politics and trade unions (see e.g. Kaunonen & Goings 2013:49–51; Kostiainen 2014). There are several reasons why these two migrant communities chose to follow different paths and this has more to do with the time of migration than with the number of Finns in these countries. Another reason why politics did not interest Finns in Australia was that most of those who migrated there in the early years of the twentieth century were labourers and farmers. The majority of them had little previous experience in politics, and they were more interested in finding work and earning money in hope of returning home to Finland than in getting politically organized. An additional reason was the effect of a certain few individuals on this small migrant community.

High Hopes and Bitter Disappointments

Before the late 1890s migration from Finland to Australia was minuscule. The first permanent Finnish settlement in Australia was founded at the turn of the twentieth century, when some 200 Finns migrated to Queensland, which was at the time recruiting migrants from Scandinavia. "Sturdy and hardworking Finn agriculturalists" were especially welcomed. (*The Sydney Mail* 14.10.1899). Among these were Matti Kurikka[5] and 78 of his followers. Matti Kurikka (1863–1915) was a journalist, author and playwright and a well-known socialist and theosophist. Disappointed about the political situation in Finland, which was at the time under Russian rule, he decided to migrate to Queensland in 1899, which was then still a self-governing colony of Great Britain. There Kurikka planned to establish a socialist utopia "Kalevan kansa" ("People of Kaleva"). His plans attracted a lot of attention at the time and were followed by the press in Finland as well as in Queensland. (Niitemaa 1971:164–177.)

Kurikka arrived to Australia in high spirits, but soon discovered that suitable work was harder to find than what he had been promised by the migration officials of the Queensland Government. Kurikka was furious about the situation and regretted ever coming to Queensland. He wrote a letter full of resentment to *The Worker* (28.7.1900):

[5] See Heimo et al. 2015; Kurikka's attempts to establish socialist utopias in Canada are quite well-known, but his first attempt to found one in Australia is not, though it has been studied by historians Olavi Koivukangas, Vilho Niitemaa and Bill Metcalf, and the Australian author Craig Cormick has even written a novel, *Kurikka's Dreaming* (2000), about it.

> – I have now been here eight months. What did I find here: Disappointments, only disappointments! – Meanwhile I collected some experiences of a worker. I learnt to know that the labourers in Queensland – there are of course exceptions – are too drunk, too vulgar, and too full of hate against all foreigners that are as sober, friendly and honest as the Finns, to think that they could become equals with them striving for the same holy ideals – My friendly hope is only that the people of Queensland will rise to the same level of civilization as the other cultured peoples of the world.

Two months later after his bitter outburst Kurikka decided to leave Queensland for good and continued his journey to Canada. There he and some of his followers first founded a utopian island colony "Sointula" on Malcolm Island, British Columbia in 1901 and another called "Sammon Takojat" ("Forgers of Sampo") in 1905 near Vancouver (Niitemaa 1971:185–187; Koivukangas 1986:91–93). According to Australian historian Bill Metcalf (1995:31–32) Kurikka blamed everyone but himself for not succeeding in his plans to establish a utopia and found a home for thousands of Finns in Queensland, when the actual cause was that he was a poor leader and as a man of the pen he, like most of his followers, was not accustomed to hard labor.

Alone and Abandoned under the Southern Cross

Not all of Kurikka's supporters followed him to Canada; some remained in Queensland and moved to Image Flats, Nambour, where a few Finnish families had settled some years before to grow sugar cane. In December 1902 the population of this small Finnish community of Finbury was 19 Finnish men, 11 women, 25 children and 12 Finnish-Swedes (a total of 67 people). All in all the author "Tolonen" estimates that the population of Finns in Queensland at the time was about one hundred (*Orpo* 1903:2).

In June 1902 ten or so of Kurikka's former supporters saw that it would be important for the community in Finbury to have a society of their own and founded "Asiainedustusseura Erakko" ("The Hermit Society for the Promotion of Affairs"). At the society's first meeting they decided, that:

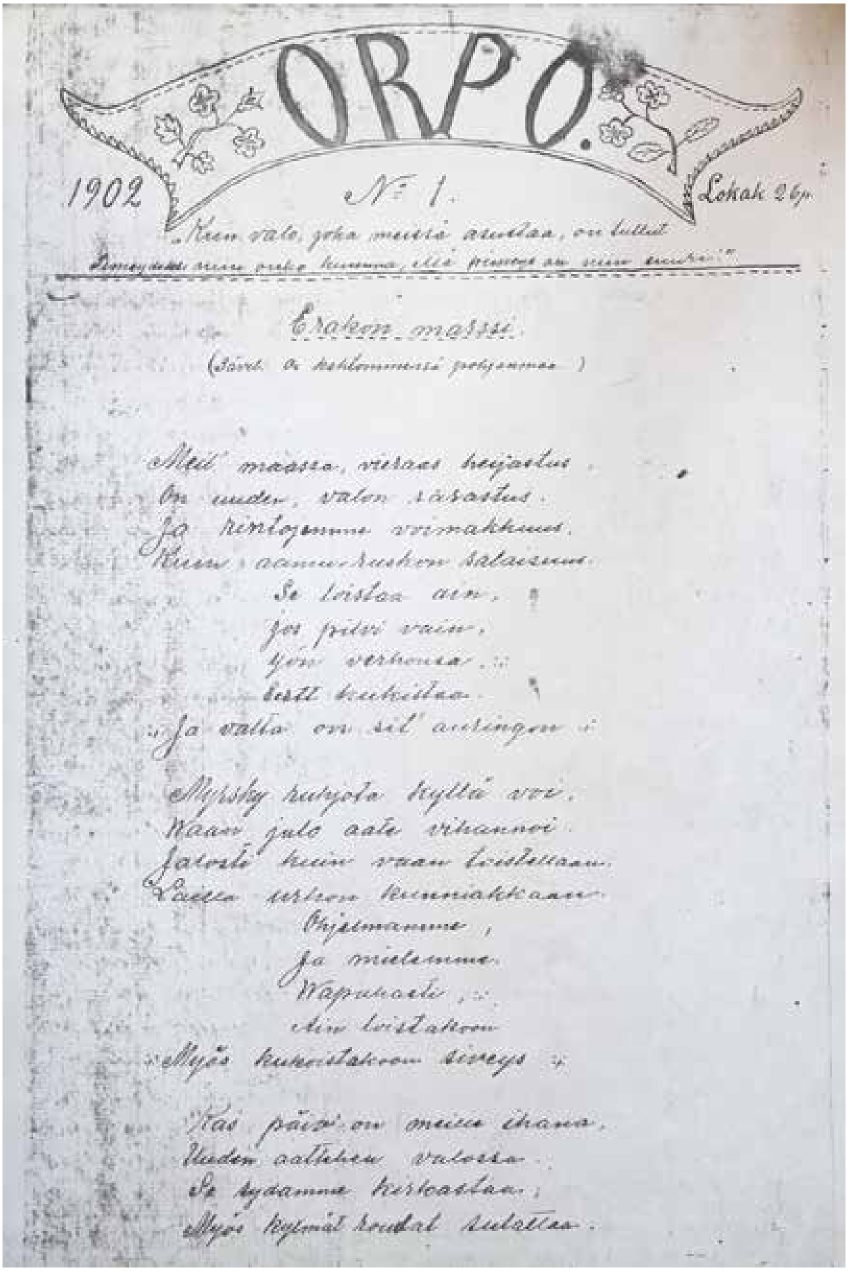
> The purpose of this Society is to gather the Finns of Finbury for joint activities for the improvement of their intellectual and social conditions and the advancement of their material livelihood. The Society shall refrain however from adopting any manifesto, its purpose being to pursue such questions as shall concern improvements within the frame of the existing order. (Minutes of the Erakko society 30.6.1902; transl. Koivukangas 1986:303.)

About a third of the school children at Highworth School in Nambour in 1905 came from Finnish families. Five of these were children of the Anderson family. (Photo: Institute of Migration.)

The minutes of the society also show that the members were constantly discussing and arguing over how and what they should do to advance the welfare of their small community. They planned, for instance, to improve local working conditions, transport and postal services and to start a temperance organization and a Finnish school for the children. The society also organized plays, festivities and other free time activities.

Nearly all the adult members of the small community joined the society, almost thirty people of whom one third were women (Niitemaa 1971:189). Even though the members represented very different, even contradictory views from one another – some were politically active, some were not; some were religious, some atheists; some were keen drinkers and some supporters of the temperance movement – the founders wanted to keep the objective of the society as open as possible and to support the cultural, intellectual and social well-being of all the members of their small community (*Orpo* 1904:9).

In addition to meetings and social events the Erakko society published *Orpo*. The newspaper, like the society, was named to illustrate the feelings of the small community, which felt somewhat isolated, lonely and abandoned in a foreign country and culture. The names aroused heated discussion for and against and were written about many times. Nonetheless, the newspaper demonstrates that the community was in interaction with the larger surrounding community and with other people living in the same



ORPO.

1902 № 1. Lokak 26 p.

[illegible]

Erakon marssi.

([illegible])

Meil' maassa, vieraas heijastus
On uuden, valon sarastus.
Ja rintojemme voimakkuus.
Kuin aamu-ruskon salaisuus.
Se loistaa ain,
Jos pitää vain,
Yön verhoissa,
[illegible]
Ja valta on sil' auringon.

Myrsky hurjota kyllä voi,
Waan julo aate vihannoi.
Jalosti kuin vaan loistellaan.
Lailla urhon kunniakkaan.
Ohjelmamme,
Ja mielemme,
Wapaasti,
Ain loistakoon
Myös kukoistakoon siveys.

Kas päivä on meille ihana,
Uuden aatteen valossa.
Se sydämme kirkastaa,
Myös kylmät [illegible] sulattaa.

The cover page of the first number of Orpo (Photo: Institute of Migration).

area. The programmes of the Erakko society's festivities and other activities were frequently published, and sometimes also reviewed, in O*rpo*. These show that the Finns had contacts with others to the extent that some parts of the program were presented also or only in English, like Words of Welcome, poems and songs. Also inviting their English speaking neighbors to these events was discussed every now and then (O*rpo* 1903:8; O*rpo* 1904:7). A few of the Finnish men had foreign wives, which was sometimes scorned by other men (O*rpo* 1903:2; O*rpo* 1903:10).

O*rpo*, a Collective Enterprise

O*rpo* was published from 1902 until the Erakko society broke up in 1904. All of the numbers were written by hand and read aloud at the society's meetings, and soon the reading aloud became one of the main activities at these meetings. In this way those who did not participate in the actual writing also took part in what Margaret Ezell calls *the process of textual sociability* (Ezell 1999:39–40).

During these two and a half years all in all 26 numbers, and one special Christmas number, were published, each number consisting of 8 or 16 pages. During the first year the paper was published 16 times and according to the editorial board "87 texts, 17 poems, news and even a few advertisements" were published in its pages by 13 different people (O*rpo* 1903:11). In addition to lengthy, often three to four page long, ideological writings on socialism, trade-unions and women's rights, the paper also published news, letters, prose, poems, humorous stories, debates and critiques. Many of the entries were satires or parodies, or ironic in style, which is a common means in handwritten papers to handle both internal matters of small communities and wider political and moral issues (Salmi-Niklander 2013b:404–405).

In the beginning the editorial board consisted of three men, who were all followers of Kurikka, Johan Peurala, Adolph Lundan and Johannes Kotkamies. In addition to writing their own stories, the editors were expected to copy the writings of others literally and without correcting the language or misspellings even that it meant that some of the writings were poorer than the editors strived for. Therefore the editorial board was not always content with the quality of the texts, but the practice was defended, because the society wanted to keep the published writings as "authentic" as possible (e.g. Orpo 1903:11). This practice was exceptional compared to many other hand-written newspapers, which usually edited the texts that they received (Salmi-Niklander 2013b:402). The editorial board would have wished to publish more intellectual and ideological writings, and accused the members of not being committed enough to their cause. The authors came from different social classes, which also caused some strains between

them. For instance one frequent writer, "Tolonen", complained in his column that one of the editors, who himself wore a tailcoat and bowler hat, had laughed at his simple and coarse trousers (O*rpo* 1903:11).

Sugar cane workers at Axel Rönnlund's farm. Johan Peurala, one of the editors of O*rpo*, in the front. (Photo: Institute of Migration.)

All of the members of the society were welcomed to write in the newspaper, but not all of them did. For some authors it was their ever first opportunity to have their texts published. For example "dan",[6] the author of the only science fiction short story published in O*rpo*, describes how nervous he felt about writing although the editors of the paper had been supportive. It seems that his story "Ilmapallolla Marsiin"[7] ("To Mars by Balloon") was first read aloud at the society's meeting and only afterwards published in the newspaper, because in addition to his short story, a critique of the story as well as "dan's" reply were also published in the same number. In his critique "Man, you are a liar!" "Liinus", who was later chair of the Erakko-society and an editor, denounces the whole story as absurd and lacking all logic. In his reply "dan" defends his story, but also comments on his feelings about the reception of his story, and how relieved he felt after seeing how people enjoyed the story when it was read aloud at the meeting (O*rpo* 1902:3).

[6] The orginal is in lower-case.

[7] dan's story is a rare example of Finnish space science-fiction and was published in the journal of the Finnish science-fiction society in 2015. (See Heimo & Koponen 2015.)

Although the society promoted women's rights, this did not mean that women were always treated appropriately. The harassment of women by drunkards and the way women are addressed and mocked in public were discussed several times in *Orpo*. Male authors also accused women of not being active enough in the society or the newspaper. In February 1903 Annaliisa Töppönen promises to begin writing, if in the future women are also allowed to take the floor and are listened to at the meetings of the Erakko society (*Orpo* 1903:2). This seems to have worked, because in his review one of the editors, Johan Peurala states "[At the society's annual meeting] two new people joined the newspaper. One of these is a woman, which means greater tactfulness is added to its former manly stiffness. This has resulted in a woman also expressing her thoughts in *Orpo*" (*Orpo* 1903:16; transl. by author).

Because most members of the society or the community did not read or speak English, the paper provided an important window not only onto the surrounding society, but also on global events and current issues, wars, politics (e.g. attempts to assassinate the Czar of Russia, gossip concerning royalty). The editors preferred to use international newspapers as sources, though these papers tended to focus on war as the editors complained. News was copied and translated when necessary from Finnish, Australian and other newspapers, e.g. *Työmies*, *The Worker* and *The New York Herald*. The local newspaper *Nambour Chronicle* was considered too sectional and "too fixated on ball games" (*Orpo* 1904:5) and therefore not favoured.

The promoting of socialist ideology was the main goal of the newspaper, but the minutes of the society show that it was aware of the newspaper's role as the documenter of the history of the first Finnish settlement in Australia. This was also the reason why the paper was read at the meetings and not lent to the members to read at home, where it might have got lost or damaged (*Orpo* 1904:7). In spite of this acknowledged role of historical documenter very few of the texts were about local affairs or conditions. In some cases it is difficult to be sure whether the authors are referring to local events or writing about Finland, because they frequently use Finnish terms like "torppari" (crofter) and place names were either translated into Finnish or referred to by Finnish substitutes, like "Etukylä", "Keskikylä", "Peräkylä" or "Sydänmaa".

Kirsti Salmi-Niklander (2013a:84; 2013b:406) identifies the *local event narrative* as a typical genre of hand-written papers. A local event narrative consists of a description of an event in a local community – an excursion, a meeting, a social evening or a festival – which often has only current interest. However in *Orpo* there are very few if any of these. J. O. Peurala's story tells about six men – presumably Matti Kurikka and his followers – in

Mareeba, who needed a place to sleep and some of them end up sleeping in a pigsty (*Orpo* 1903:7). There are also some texts that are about local events but these are better defined as gossip or critiques. The only piece that actually describes local life is a description of a typical Saturday evening in Nambour written originally in Finnish by "Salo":

> **Saturday Night in Nambour, August 1903**
>
> A pale moon shines in the cloudless sky. The stars wink their eyes like a maiden, who has just met her loved one. A train whistles in the North, and a moment later it already gallops on the bridge. Here, there a man sways, otherwise it is silent as in a grave on the street.
>
> Clap, clap, clap say the saddle and hoofs of a horse or two. Now also a cart goes by. Idle men in their Sunday suits get together in Central Nambour, but neither do the girls want to stay at home. And who would since there will be a dance, only a dance and nothing else tonight!
>
> It is 8 o'clock. The Salvation Army in the middle of street prays. Negroes have joined them. Men move from one hotel to another, some play pool. Some dance, some tiptoe, the shopkeepers do "business".
>
> There on the bench sits a group discussing the future of Nambour. From two newspapers (The Chronicle) about the selling of Mitchell's and King's land and how the cattle king will get them, also about the new dairy and that the policeman will become a "farmer" in a year's time. It is 9 o'clock and the train whistles in the South, I rush to the station like everyone else. The train arrives in full speed. Lots of hustle and bustle...!
>
> A pale moon shines in the cloudless sky. The stars wink their eyes. The wind blows, and a drunken man nearly falls down while at another place the wind gently touches the hems of skirts and coats. Loose paper... (*Orpo* 16.8.1903; transl. by author.)

Christmas Cheers Turn Sour

In November 1903 the editorial board suggested that because compared to Finland Christmas was so pathetic in Australia, they should publish a special Christmas number to cheer everyone up. The special edition would consist only of prose, poems, and fairy tales and it would be lent to all of the members of the community to read at home. As it turned out, however, instead of circulating for two weeks from house to house, the paper circulated for seven weeks and only at the homes of a few members. After this experience the editors were even more against the borrowing of the newspaper than before. After the society voted for the circulating of the paper in June 1904, the editorial board resigned. The last entry is dated November 5th 1904.

Though the society was open for all, its members continuously had disputes with each other and with non-members of the society. The official

reason for closing the society mentioned in its records was that the members did not show sufficient commitment to the society's objectives, but there were other reasons too. Some of these had to do with personal matters and some with the co-ownership of land (Niitemaa 1971:190–194). In the end the small society had even divided into two parties, the Finnish nationalists ("Tvedis Finnit") and the Socialists ("Suomalaiset", The Finns) (*Orpo* 1904:7). Though the members were former followers of Matti Kurikka, the "Tvedis Finns" had lost faith in him and his ideas, and refused to take part in anything to do with their former leader, whereas the Socialists (Finns) decided to join Kurikka and leave for Canada. In the final number of *Orpo* one of the socialists, William H. Koskinen, wrote about his journey over the Pacific in length. He expresses much sorrow about leaving Finbury and his parents and brother there, but gives no explanation why he is leaving nor his destination: "Oh, is it now, that I have to leave Queensland forever? Farewell. Oh, you children of Finland grow in the cradle of Finbury" (1904:9, transl. by author). For some reason the editors, who must know where Koskinen is heading, present themselves as ignorant and state, that "the story might tell about a journey from Australia to America". Perhaps they felt that he had deserted them and their cause?

A few years later in 1907 when the Finns' seven-year land leases expired the rest of the Finns also left Finbury. Some of them moved to America and a few even returned to Finland. A small number of them moved nearby to Bli Bli, where the land was more suitable for farming sugar cane.

After the disbandment of the society one of the editors, Johan Peurala, took the two volumes of *Orpo* and the minutes of the Erakko society with him to Sointula, Malcolm Island. It is unclear what happened to the volumes of *Orpo* after this, but it seems that they were forgotten about for decades. In the 1970s they were found by chance and donated to the Institute of Migration in Turku in 1976. The papers of the Erakko society were also kept at Sointula until they too were handed over to the Collections of General History at the University of Turku in the same year (Koivukangas 1986:308).

The New Agenda: Sports, not Politics

After the Erakko society and *Orpo* were closed down in 1904, some people suggested that a new society better suited for the whole of the community needed to be founded (*Orpo* 1904:9). But it took nearly 10 years until the "Queenslandin Suomen Heimon Seura" ("Finnish National Society of Queensland") was established in Brisbane in 1914. Some of the founding members were former members of the Erakko society. The aim of this new society was the overall mental and material improvement of the Finns. In the beginning it held back from all ideological issues, but in 1916 the members voted that the

society should be changed into a Labour Club and the plan was to follow the model of the Finnish-American Socialist Society. After the conversion into a labour club, the society was very active and made contacts with Australian and Russian socialists in Australia (Koivukangas 1986:308–310).

However in 1922 a new stage began in the history of the society. After the 1918 Finnish Civil a few dozen former Whites from Ostrobothnia moved to Australia instead of North America, where many of Finnish-Americans were on the Red side. Most of these men were single, came from the same rural area and worked at sugar cane farms in Northern Queensland for some years in order to save money to buy their own farm in Finland (Koivukangas 1986:118–125). Some of them like Nestori Karhula moved later on to Brisbane, where he became an active member of the Finnish community. Though Karhula was a former officer of the White Finnish army, he believed that it was more important to build trust between the former Whites and Reds than to sustain reservations between the former enemies, and decided that the society should focus on social and leisure activities and not political ones. This meant that in 1925 the Finnish National Society of Queensland moved back to its former nonpartisan stance and finally fused together with a new club, The Suomi Athletic Club, led by Nestori Karhula (Koivukangas 1986:114–118, 310–311). In 1927 the Suomi Athletic Club became the Brisbane Finnish Society, and at the same time the first Finnish Society in Australia. (http://brisbanesuomiseura.blogspot.fi/)

Later on as the Finnish population grew, Finns began to establish Finnish societies in all of the major cities and towns. There are still about 15 Finnish societies left and many other clubs and associations around in Australia. Today Finns also meet on the Internet (see e.g. http://www.dundernews.com/),

The Bli Bli on Maroochy Historical Society Inc. Facebook page with a picture of Anne Margoc's parents in the 1920s. (Screenshot 13 04 2016.)

and have several Facebook groups to keep in touch with each other. An interesting feature is that Finns continue to use Finnish on these sites, whereas e.g. Lithuanians and Latvian webpages and social media sites are usually bilingual and the Estonian ones are in English. This is probably to do with the fact that migration from these countries happened earlier and in greater numbers than Finnish migration to Australia.[8]

A Century of Literacy Practices Down Under

Over a decade after the closing of *Orpo* the *Suomi Newspaper* was established in Melbourne in 1926 as an information and news bulletin for the Finns living around Australia and New Zealand. Today it is one of the oldest Finnish language newspapers published outside Finland. Although it has always been printed the *Suomi Newspaper* resembles *Orpo* in many ways. It is a collective enterprise of the Finnish community scattered around Australia. Like *Orpo* it consists of news, letters, prose, poems, humorous stories, debates and critiques, most of which are written by members of the community and only some by the editor-in-chief, and like *Orpo* it also republishes news from other sources.

In the 1970s Finns began to write about their lives in Australia in the local Finnish-language press, *Suomi Newspaper* and *Finlandia News*, and to publish memoirs. Most of these if not all were written in Finnish and directed to the Finnish community in Australia as well as family members in Australia and Finland. However in her study of a hundred or so Finnish-Australian authors Marja-Liisa Punta-Saastamoinen (2010:283–284) noticed that Finnish-Australian literacy has aroused very little interest, and only a few of the authors are known even to the wider community of Finnish readers in Australia. Since the turn of the millennium a few Finnish-Australians have begun to make the efforts of individual Finns and the Finnish community known to the wider Australian audience, and for this reason have published their books in English. One of these authors is Satu Beverley, who moved to Australia in 1970 and has since written two histories of the Finnish Sydney Society (Beverley 1979; Beverley 2011). She is currently writing the history of Finnish societies in Australia beginning with the Erakko Society and the society's hand-written newspaper *Orpo*.

[8] The "Beautiful Balts" were the first group of Displaced Persons to arrive in 1947 to Australia. These first arrivals were carefully selected to ensure that the Australian public would support Minister for Immigration Arthur Calwell's mass migration program. After the arrival of these first "Beautiful Balts" all non-British arrivals were referred to as "'Balts" irrespective of their nationality for some years (Pennay 2010).

SOURCES AND LITERATURE

Archival sources

Institute of Migration, Turku.

University of Turku, Archives of the School of History, Culture and Arts Studies, Collections of General History.

Literature

Beverley, Satu 1979. *50 vuotta värikästä toimintaa. Finnish Society of Sydney 1929–1979 vuonna 1979.* Sydney: Finnish Society of Sydney.

Beverley, Satu 2011. *Following Footprints. A Century in the Life of the Sydney Finnish Community.* Turku: Institute of Migration.

Burke, Peter 2012. *A Social History of Knowledge II. From the Encyclopédie to Wikipedia.* Cambridge: Polity.

Cormick, Craig 2000. *Kurikka's Dreaming. The True Story of Matti Kurikka: Socialist, Utopian and Dreamer.* East Roseville: Simon & Schuster.

Ezell, Margaret 1999. *Social Authorship and the Advent of Print.* Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Heimo, Anne 2014a. The 1918 Finnish Civil War Revisited: The Digital Aftermath. In: *Folklore* 57. Pp. 141–168.

Heimo, Anne 2014b. Pereajalugu internetiajastul: diasporaa-genealoogia ja jätkuv ajalookirjutusprotsess. In: *Mäetagused* 55. Pp. 155–180.

Heimo, Anne & Koponen, Jari 2015. Pankkiholvilöytö Turusta. Ilmapallomatka Marsiin vuodelta 1902. In: *Portti – Science Fiction* 34 (134). Pp. 25–33.

Heimo, Anne, Pollari, Mikko, Rajavuori, Anna, Salmesvuori, Päivi, Salmi-Niklander, Kirsti Seppälä, Mikko-Olavi & Suodenjoki, Sami 2015. Matti Kurikka – Profeetta omalla ja vieraalla maalla. In: *Työväentutkimus Vuosikirja.* Pp. 18–26.

Jupp, James 2007. *From White Australia to Woomera: The Story of Australian Immigration.* 2nd ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Kaunonen, Gary & Goings, Aaron 2013. *Community in Conflict. A Working-Class History of the 1913–14 Michigan Copper Strike and the Italian Hall Tragedy.* East Lansing: Michigan State University Press.

Kero, Reino 2014. Migration from Finland to North America. In: Auvo Kostiainen (ed.), *Finns in the United States. A History of Settlement, Dissent, and Integration.* East Lansing: Michigan State University Press. Pp. 41–53.

Kivisto, Peter & Leinonen, Johanna 2014. Ambiguous Identity: Finnish Americans and the Race Question. In: Auvo Kostiainen (ed.), *Finns in the United States. A History of Settlement, Dissent, and Integration.* East Lansing: Michigan State University Press. Pp. 75–87.

Koivukangas, Olavi 1986. *Sea, Gold and Sugarcane. Attraction versus Distance. Finns in Australia 1851–1947*. Turku: Institute of Migration.

Koponen, Jari 2011. Suuriruhtinaanmaan tieteiskirjallisuus. In: Jari Koponen & Vesa Sisättö (eds.), *Aivopeili. Autonomian ajan tieteiskirjallisuutta*. Helsinki: Avain. Pp. 20–132.

Kostiainen, Auvo 2014. Politics of the Left and the Right. In: Auvo Kostiainen (ed.), *Finns in the United States. A History of Settlement, Dissent, and Integration.* East Lansing: Michigan State University Press. Pp. 131–155.

Lyons, Martyn 2013. A New History from Below? The Writing Culture of European Peasants, c. 1850–c.1920. In: Anna Kuismin & M. J. Driscoll (eds.), *White Field, Black*

Seeds. Nordic Literacy Practices in the Long Nineteenth Century. Helsinki: Finnish Literature Society. Pp. 14–29.

Metcalf, William (Bill) 1995. *From Utopian Dreaming to Communal Reality: Cooperative Lifestyles in Australia.* Sydney: University of New South Wales Press.

Niitemaa, Vilho 1971. Australiansuomalainen Erakko-seura vv. 1902–1904. In: Eripainos teoksesta *Turun Historiallisen Yhdistyksen Julkaisuja* XXV. Turku: Turun yliopisto.

Pennay, Bruce 2010: *Receiving Europe's Displaced. Bonegilla Reception and Training Centre, 1947–53.* Albury-Wodonga: Parklands Albury-Wodonga.

Punta-Saastamoinen, Marja-Liisa 2010. *Australiansuomalaiset etsivät itseään. Kulttuurisen identiteetin määrittyminen australiansuomalaisessa kirjallisuudessa.* Turku: Institute of Migration.

Salmi-Niklander, Kirsti 2002. Crooks and Heroes, Priests and Preachers. Religion and Socialism in the Oral-literary Tradition of a Finnish-Canadian Mining Community. In: Tiiu Jaago (ed.), *Lives, Histories and Identities I. Studies on Oral Histories, Life- and Family Stories*. Contemporary Folklore 3. Tartu: University of Tartu. Estonian Literary Museum. Pp. 131–155.

Salmi-Niklander, Kirsti 2004. *Itsekasvatusta ja kapinaa. Tutkimus Karkkilan työläisnuorten kirjoittavasta keskusteluyhteisöstä 1910- ja 1920-luvuilla.* Helsinki: SKS.

Salmi-Niklander, Kirsti 2013a. Monologic, Dialogic, Collective. The Modes of Writing in Hand-Written Newspapers in 19th and Early 20th-century Finland. In: Anna Kuismin & M. J. Driscoll (eds.), *White Field, Black Seeds. Nordic Literacy Practices in the Long Nineteenth Century.* Helsinki: Finnish Literature Society. Pp. 76–88.

Salmi-Niklander, Kirsti 2013b. Käsinkirjoitetut lehdet. Yhteisöllisen kirjoittamisen ensiaskeleita. In: Lea Laitinen & Kati Mikkola (eds.), *Kynällä kyntäjät: Kansan kirjallistuminen 1800-luvun Suomessa.* Helsinki: SKS. Pp. 384–412.

Suomi Newspaper

The Sydney Mail

Electronic media

Brisbane Suomi-Seura: http://brisbanesuomiseura.blogspot.fi/ (22.10.2015)

Dundernews: http://www.dundernews.com/ (22.10.2015)

Facebook, Bli Bli on Maroochy Historical Society Inc. (13.04.2016)

The Institute of Migration (Turku), Statistics, Emigration to Australia, Canada and the US 1900–2010 http://www.migrationinstitute.fi/en/information-service/statistics#quickset-en_tietopalvelut_tilastot=1 (22.10.2015)