

Chapter 3

Elsa Puolanne (1906-1996): A Finnish Gymnast and a Dancer

The culture historian Hanna Järvinen claims in her article 'Performance and Historiography, the Problem of History in Dance Studies' that

dance writing still veers towards the formalist argument whereby all that matters is the artwork, that is, the dance. Thus, the cultural context of a dance work is always-already secondary to the formal qualities of the dance, i.e. the step sequences on stage and how these reflect other sets of step sequences, namely the previous dance works that have been evaluated as masterworks.

Järvinen 2005 [2002], p 139.

Later Järvinen (2005 [2002], p 141) argues that, "even if the dance work would not change, the meanings attached to it do". The changing meanings are not captured by repeating the formal qualities of the dance work, that is reconstructing the dance work, but by studying the cultural context of the dance. Her points are maybe overly cutting, but important. The situation in dance studies and dance history is perhaps not as biased as Järvinen claims. Nowadays there are also dance writers and historians, such as Ramsay Burt (1998), Mark Franko (1993, 1995), Lena Hammergren (2002) and Susan Manning (1993), who would not rank formal qualities of the dance before to the cultural context of the dance; instead, they seek ways to articulate how they are intertwined. That is also the aim of my research on *Loitsu* in the context of dance in Finland. My experience of the absence of cultural context in Betsy Fisher's recreation of Wigman's *Hexentanz II* pushed my task even further. This is to explore and experiment with how and to what extent the cultural context of *Loitsu*, which has been understood and articulated with words in the thesis, can be situated, choreographed or expressed in new danced versions of it.

The linear history of events in dance art in Finland and discourses relating to it, sketched in the previous chapters, locates *Loitsu*, at the first glance, in early modern dance, called in Finland free dance. A more careful look at its past performances reveals three differently biased contexts. Each of these contexts

suggests a different meaning and evaluation of *Loitsu*, although the performer, movements and steps have not perhaps changed much.

Originally, *Loitsu* was composed as a solo dance for the repertoire of the Esteri Suontaa Movement School (Appendix 12, p 240, programme leaflet 4 December 1933) and was performed among other dance numbers after the gymnastics session. The first reading of *Loitsu* happens in the context of a movement school that is a combination of women's gymnastics, early European modern dance and a healthy free time activity for women and children. During the late 1920s and 1930s private movement schools became common alongside women's gymnastics clubs. Movement schools were "a shot in the arm" for the gymnastics writes Elna Kopponen (1983, p 378), gymnastics teacher and owner of the Elna Tamminen Movement School in the 1930s. Movement schools offered more dance and improvisation classes beside gymnastics classes than the clubs, and they included a dance section as part of their annual school performances. The small size of training groups also enabled a more individual and personal approach towards movement and expression and in private movement schools one's political opinion, "White" or "Red", was not inquired. However, new dance trends among women's gymnastics created vivid discussions and arguments about the real aims and essence of women's gymnastics. Therefore, the first performances of *Loitsu*, from 1933 to 1935, happened in the context of physical education (Appendix 13, p 241, performances of *Loitsu*), in which gymnastics had the major role and dance the minor. Nevertheless, the role of dance was challenging and even transformative in women's gymnastics in Finland.

The context of *Loitsu* changed in 1938 when Elsa Puolanne was invited to dance it in the first performance of the Union of Finnish Dance Artists (Appendix 14, p 242, programme leaflet 25 April 1938). On that occasion *Loitsu* was not performed after women's gymnastics in a student performance, but among other dances that represented what Finnish dance art was in 1938. It can be said that it participated in the legitimating process of dance art in Finland. The programme of the UFDA was divided into three sections. The first section included dances performed by movement schools and ballet schools as well as

some oriental dances. However, *Loitsu* was not part of the first section, but part of the second section contained dance solos that were located between three of Maggie Greenberg's group dances that won the International Choreographic Competitions in Brussels in 1939. The third and last section of the programme in 1938 consisted only of the ballet numbers performed by the dancers of the Finnish National Ballet. Perhaps the order of sections revealed how the organiser of the performance, the Board of the Union, appreciated and ranked different dance genres - first student performances, then modern dance and the icing on the cake, ballet presented by the Finnish National Ballet. The appreciation and evaluation of *Loitsu* changed when it was selected as a representative of Finnish dance art. It was no more merely a dance in the repertoire of movement school, but also a solo among the repertoire of Finnish dance art, and it was appreciated as art, not as an artistic appendage to gymnastics.

Five years later, in 1943, it was self-evident that Elsa Puolanne chose *Loitsu* as the cornerstone of her own repertoire as an independent dance artist. Now it was performed among her other dances, for example in the summer tour of 1945 (Appendix 15, p 243, programme leaflet of the summer tour 1945), and became her most performed solo during her career. It would be easy to continue the narrative of *Loitsu* in an evolutionary and progressive way by stating that now, finally, *Loitsu* could be considered in the context of an independent art genre, Finnish free dance.

Indeed, the existing histories of dance in Finland and my own data tempt me to present such clear and definite distinctions, but when the contexts of *Loitsu* are examined more closely, distinctions become problematic. The same dance work existed in various contexts. In the first context it can be appreciated as a dance work that participated in the change process of Finnish women's gymnastics, and discourses around it, such as the health and well-being of women and the relationship between gymnastics and dance. In the second context *Loitsu* was integrated in dance art in Finland and in the third context it partly constructed features and qualities that are related to Finnish free dance. This thesis and research actually produces the fourth context in which *Loitsu* appears. It works as a vehicle for interpreting, understanding and experiencing the past of dance in

Finland, although its 'original' formal qualities in our constructions are unattainable.

It might be possible to distinguish dance and gymnastics based on their different purposes (e.g. Jalkanen 1924 and Kärkkäinen 1932), but still many performers and composers of gymnastics exercises and dances during the 1920s and 1930s were the same women. They were both physical educators and dancers who I call 'double agents'. There has not yet been enough discussion and research concerning these women. They are not acknowledged clearly as 'double agents' either in dance histories or gymnastics histories. Both gymnastics and dance have wanted to present themselves as distinctive and independent areas of activity and included 'double agents' as part of their own activity without paying much attention on their other activities outside gymnastics or dance field. Proper consideration of the intertwined areas has been inadequate. Although this thesis is concerned with dance history, it does not want to push aside physical education and women's gymnastics. Instead, it seeks ways to understand how women's gymnastics and dance art shared some ideological views and practical exercises, and how the existing and developing structures and organisations of women's gymnastics, such as publications, clubs, summer courses and festivals, actually were forums for discussing, practicing and performing new forms of both gymnastics and dance. As discussed in previous chapters, during the 1920s and 1930s dance art in Finland had started to legitimate itself but it was not yet organised. It did not offer adequate frameworks for dancers to present their works and discuss their views. The Finnish Opera and private ballet schools offered some work for ballet dancers, but it was poorly paid even at the Opera. In modern dance the situation was even more difficult; private dance schools and private performances were the only work possibilities for modern dancers. In 1937 dancers and dance art organised themselves under the Union of Finnish Dance Artists in order to improve and develop Finnish dance art and the position of the dance artist. Some physical educators and 'double agents' were also invited to found the Union.¹

Elsa Puolanne, choreographer and the dancer of *Loitsu*, was one of these 'double agents', an embodiment of gymnastics and dance. She was active both in

women's gymnastics and early modern dance during the late 1920s and 1930s, when any genre of dance art in Finland had not yet clearly emerged. Elsa Puolanne studied gymnastics and dance in Finland, Germany and Austria; saw most of the gymnastics and dance performances in Finland; read and wrote gymnastics and dance articles; participated in the work of the Finnish Women's Federation of Physical Education (FWFPH, Suomen Naisten Liikuntakasvatusliitto); was one of the founding members of the Union of Finnish Dance Artists; participated in discussions in dance and gymnastics; taught gymnastics and dance both in gymnastics clubs and in movement schools; and choreographed and performed gymnastic displays and dances. As a dance artist and gymnastics teacher, she was typical case of early modern dance artists in Finland and in Europe, but exceptional if we compared her to Finnish citizens during the 1920s and 1930s. A microhistorian might call Elsa Puolanne "a typical exception" (Peltonen 1999, p 63).

In this chapter Elsa Puolanne's life serves, on the one hand, as a case to add one marginal narrative to the history of dance in Finland in the 1920s and 1930s. On the other hand, it tries to capture, with the help of Elsa's life, what it might meant for her to be a Finn, a woman, a gymnast and a dancer. Discourses relating to these concepts are as essential to our new constructions of *Loitsu* as its formal components, such as poses, steps, floor patterns, visual outlook and use of music. The chapter progresses as a chronological narrative of Elsa Puolanne's life that integrates, to some extent, microhistory and macrohistory. On the micro level I present sometimes in great detail Elsa Puolanne's life story and on the macro level I point to some general political, social and cultural events, ideas, values and discourses in Finland before and during her lifetime. Thus, the scope and precision of the narrative varies from very detailed documentation of her life and views to the presentation of wider discourses that may have affected the formation of her life and views. The focus is on the first four decades of Elsa's life, particularly on her gymnastic and dance career. The material for the biographical material on Elsa Puolanne as well as for the political and cultural history of Finland has been collected from various sources and publications.²

The existing sources for Elsa Puolanne's life are limited and almost all detailed traces of her life that are found are used. When I first met Elsa Puolanne and Mirri Karpio in 1990 they told me that they had just destroyed a lot of material of their past: letters, books, manuscripts, scores, musical instruments and dance dresses related to their work in gymnastics and in dance. Only three scrapbooks, photographs and some German dance books were left. Elsa Puolanne and Mirri Karpio had become the followers of Krishnamurti during the late 1940s. As the followers of Krishnamurti they believed that there is no need to preserve objects of the past, only the present matters. However, they appreciated my desire to research on their past in dance and shared with me their memories and remaining remnants of their past. Later, in 1995, they even donated their scrapbooks, dance photographs and dance books to me.

As for Finnish history, the situation is the opposite. As a Finnish citizen, I already have a lot of knowledge of Finland's history. In addition, there are many books and academic studies on it. It is impossible to verify all sources and their combinations in my presentation of the history of Finland. Furthermore, references appearing too frequently would disturb the fluidity of the text. Therefore, only the most relevant and important references are noted and included in the bibliography.

CHILDHOOD: ROOTS IN A YOUNG NATION

Elsa Puolanne was born on 11 July 1906 in Finland then an autonomous Grand Duchy of the Russian Empire. She passed her childhood in an agricultural parish, Orimattila, one hundred kilometres to the Northwest from Helsinki. Her parents were Johan Spolander (1855-1917) and Maria Alexandra Spolander (1863-1946). Johan Spolander was the first owner of the local pharmacy in the centre of Orimattila, established in 1901. There were nine children in the family - six girls and three boys - of whom Elsa was the youngest.

As pharmacist Spolander was a prominent figure and opinion leader, beside local doctor, police chief and minister, in a small Finnish parish at the turn of the 20th century. The logo of Spolander's pharmacy, the lion of Finland on the eagle of Russia, expressed Spolander's strong nationalistic views. The family had

Swedish roots. In spite of the Spolander name the language spoken at home was Finnish. After independence of Finland in 1917 most of its members, Elsa among them, changed their surname from Spolander to Puolanne. The changing of language and Swedish surnames to Finnish ones was a common sign of nationalism in Finland. Elsa Puolanne's parents appreciated national culture and education and sent all nine children, both boys and girls, to the Finnish secondary school in the nearest town, Lahti. Higher education for girls had started to become more common in Finland among the upper and middle classes at the turn of the 20th century.

The idea of a nation, Finland, constructed - as recent research has shown - during the 19th century. For example Tuija Pulkkinen states clearly: "When the Finnish territory was annexed to Russia in 1809, there was no notion of a Finnish people as an ethnic, linguistic or cultural entity" (1999, pp 122-23). The entity 'Finland' did not originally exist. The territory that is now known as Finland was divided among several tribes and had no special status within the Kingdom of Sweden. However, most of its inhabitants spoke their own non-Indo-European language, Finnish, with different dialects. During the 19th century, this linguistic feature became important for the Finnish nationalist movement that was led not by the Finnish-speaking folk but by Swedish-speaking elite who wanted to learn the Finnish language.

In his book *Nationalism and Modernism* (1999) Anthony D. Smith summarises the attributes of the nation as defined by perennialists and modernists. Perennialists saw the nation as a cultural community, immemorial, rooted, organic, seamless and popular and based on the ancient past while modernists regarded it as a political community, which was modern, created, mechanical, divided, elite-constructed and communication-based. Smith adds that nationalists themselves often

wanted to have things both ways: seeing nation as organic and rooted in history and territory, but at the same time as created and engineered by nationalist elites.

Smith 1999, p 23.

This was the case also in Finland during the first decades of the 20th century. Finland and its people were rooted in the ancient community of *Kalevala* that used Finnish language. However, nationalist movement was created and engineered by Swedish-speaking elite. *Kalevala* became a main source of inspiration for Finnish art, music, design and architecture. The remarkable flowering of national romantic art in Finland from 1890 to 1910 is known as the Golden Age of Finnish art.

Finland was part of Sweden for 650 years, but in 1809 after the Russo-Swedish war, it became an autonomous Grand Duchy of the Russian Empire. However, the Tsar of Russia Alexander I, in order to create a buffer between Sweden and Russia, allowed many privileges for the poor, agricultural and sparsely populated Finland. It was allowed to keep the Lutheran religion, the old Swedish laws and form of government, and even the Swedish language continued to be the official language of the country. According to Matti Klinge (1999, p 64) "the Tsar proclaimed Finland's elevation to the national status" in the Diet in Porvoo in 1809, and the national identity of Finland developed under the shelter of Russia. However, by the end of the 19th century, nationalism in Finland had adopted such forms that Russia wanted to bring Finland back to the Russian fold. Governor General Nikolai Bobrikov, nominated in 1898, became the executive of the first russification in Finland.

The atmosphere was tense in Finland during the russification at the turn of the 20th century. The situation culminated in the murder of Governor General Nikolai Bobrikov in 1904. Russia lost the war against Japan in 1905, and the general strike that was organised by the labour movement in Russia spread to Finland. However, the Finnish strike was less directed against the management - employers even paid to the strikers - than against Russian oppression in Finland. The general strike forced the Tsar to retreat. He cancelled most of the oppressive measures, and in Elsa Puolanne's year of birth, 1906, the single-chamber Parliament replaced the Four-Estate Diet in Finland. A parliamentary reform increased the number of voters ten times, and Finland became the first country in Europe to extend the franchise to women. The Social Democratic Party got a 40 per cent mandate in the first Parliamentary elections. However,

Finnish Parliamentary reforms were not put into effect without ratification of the Tsar and the Russian Government.

The Russian Revolution in March 1917 restored Finland's autonomy and Finland became independent in December 1917 when the Finnish Parliament ratified the government's declaration of independence, and the Bolshevik Council of Russia accepted it. Many Finnish historians argue that the Bolsheviks accepted Finland's independence, as they believed that Finnish workers would soon join the revolution and adhere to the new Marxist state. The Civil War began in January 1918 when the Reds Guards took over Helsinki and southern Finland, and White Guards controlled central and northern Finland. The Soviet Union supported Reds Guards and Germany the White Guards. The 'Whites' won the War and the 'Reds' surrendered in Tampere in April 1918. There were plans to elect German Prince Friedrich Karl of Hessen as a King of Finland. Nevertheless, Germany's defeat in the First World War prevented it, and Finland became a republic. The Civil War was bloody and approximately 35 000 Finns - 30 000 'Reds' and 5 000 'Whites' - died in battle, and 12 000 'Reds' were executed or starved to death in camps after the war. At that time the population of Finland was about 3 millions. The Civil War created bitterness and tension between Finns and divided them for decades. This division was evident in almost all areas of social life in Finland, not only in politics but also in culture and sports.

The issue on the national and international features of Finnish culture has had and still has various interpretations. From the 19th century onwards the promotion of Finnish education, culture and art was an essential part of Finnish nationalism. The idea of Finland as a separate national unit was to a large extent conveyed through stories, myths, paintings and pictures as well as national cultural institutions.³ The strong desire to create, construct and promote national culture and art continued during the first decades of independence. It is only in the recent decades that scholars and writers have started to underline and recognise international features in the history of Finnish culture more openly. This change of emphasis was crystallised in the subtitle 'European Finland' in the newest edition of *Suomen Kulttuurihistoria 3 - Oma maa ja maailma* (Cultural History of Finland 3 - Our Country and the World,

Kervanto & others 2003). Finland, a member of European Union, is no more seen as a nation cherishing its original and authentic art and culture, but more as a nation that shares artistic and cultural trends with other European countries.

For the members of the Puolanne family the joy felt for independent Finland at the end of the year 1917 mingled with sorrow. Elsa's father Johan Spolander was paralysed and died at the age of 62, only two and a half months before Finland's independence. Elsa was then 10-years-old. The history of the pharmacy of Orimattila (Hosiaisluoma-Karppinen 2001) tells that Elsa's mother and the youngest children stayed in Orimattila for three years. The older sisters Tilia and Anna, educated pharmacy assistants, took care of the pharmacy. At the beginning of 1921, the pharmacy passed to Waldemar Roine, and Alexandra Spolander and the youngest children moved to Helsinki. Elsa's brother, Leo, stayed in Orimattila and worked as an office manager in the Orimattila Wool Factory. He married the daughter of a minister in 1921 and became leader of Civil Guard in Orimattila established by the "White" winners of the Civil War.

Elsa Puolanne's childhood was spent as a member of a family that on the basis of its social status and political opinions clearly belonged to the upper middle class and nationalist, right-wing "White" Finns. The majority in the Puolanne family consisted of women and girls. All daughters were educated as independent professional women: Tilia as a chemist's assistant, Anna as a chemist, Siiri as a notary, Aili as a head cashier, Kirsti as a insurance officer and Elsa first as a notary and later as a gymnastics teacher and dance artist (Hosiaisluoma-Karppinen 2001). In Finland working outside the home became common for woman in all social classes at the turn of the 20th century. However, it was still rare to combine marriage with working outside the home (Ramsay 2003), and four of the six Puolanne daughters, Tilia, Anna, Kirsti and Elsa, did not marry.

YOUTH: CHOICES AND CHALLENGES OF A MODERN WORLD

The death of Johan Spolander weakened the economy of the family, but the inherited property and the economic support from the elder children provided an adequate living for the mother and the youngest children in Helsinki. The family

first lived in a flat at the corner of Eerikinkatu and Lapinlahdenkatu, only half a kilometre from the centre of Helsinki. Elsa continued her schooling in the Finnish Girl's School, (Suomalainen Tyttökoulu), matriculated in 1924 and started law studies at the University of Helsinki according to her family's wishes. In 1929 the family - the mother, Elsa and two of her sisters - bought a new flat with three bedrooms in a newly built block of flats on Eerikinkatu 26. It remained Elsa Puolanne's home until her death in 1996.

Elsa's move from the small agricultural parish into the capital and perhaps the only city of Finland happened at a time when modern times were reaching agricultural Finland. Helsinki was not by any means Paris or Berlin, but the modernist movement of the 1920s and its phenomena, such as jazz music, films, new trends in arts, technological inventions, city life, body culture, nudity and changing gender roles, were familiar and commented also in Finland, especially among some cultural and literary groups. The most famous of these groups was *Tulenkantajat* (Fire-bearers). The group was not politically united; among its members were supporters of both left- and right-wing politics. The group published a cultural periodical also called *Tulenkantajat* that presented and discussed various phenomena of the modern world, culture and art, dance and body culture among them. Young theatre and dance critic Raoul af Hällström and gymnastic and dance teacher Helvi Salminen were among the editors of *Tulenkantajat*. However, the leading figure of the group was the young author, Olavi Paavolainen (1903-1964), who promoted the idea that Finns did not really understand the transition going on in the world at the turn of the 20th century. In his famous collection of essays, *Nykyaikaa etsimässä* (In Search for Modern Times, 1929), Paavolainen wanted to act as a mediator, who would awaken Finns and especially Finnish artists to awareness of the modern in Europe. He used the metaphor of 'virginal Aino' to symbolise conservative and stagnated Finnish culture and its artists. The virgin Aino was one of the most portrayed characters of *Kaleva* in the works of the artists of the Golden Age of Finnish art.

Paavolainen can be seen

as an interpreter of his time, who searched for and explained the distinctive features of modern

life...Paavolainen can be seen as a part of a wider tradition of cultural thinking and of the European cultural discourse. Paavolainen found the signs of change in big cities. He did not, however, look only for changed surroundings, for metropolis, and for modernism in art but also for modern man and for a modern way of life, which according to him were born or about to be born with the change.

Hapuli 1995, p 243.

In *Nykyaikaa etsimässä* Paavolainen paid a lot of attention to body culture as a manifestation of modern life. He considered body culture, gymnastics and dance, and nudity movement and sport vehicles for man for adjusting to the demands of the new technological world. Paavolainen was also aware of the appearance of new dance and gymnastic trends in Finland. The various forms of German body and movement culture were already known in Finland in the 1920s and during the early 1930s through Finnish newspapers and sport and culture magazines with plenty of photographs. The press also paid much attention to the work of Finnish movement schools.⁴

The changing status of women was another big issue in *Nykyaikaa etsimässä*. Women's liberation and modern times had challenged and changed the relationship between the sexes, as Hapuli (1995) explains in her research on modern times and Olavi Paavolainen. Women had a right to vote, they were able to earn their own living and to participate in social events without men. Women also had their own activities and organisations, and above all the First World War in Europe and the Civil War in Finland had pushed most - not only few - women to act equally with men. After the War women were not only living without men, but they were also different from what they were supposed to be. They started to decide their own path and construct a life of their own, and they had a life outside the family and marriage. The models for women changed, and the prominent symbol of the new woman after the First World War became a *garçonne*, who danced and smoked, cut her hair short, demanded her rights at home and created a career of her own (Paavolainen 1928). The growing women's gymnastics movement was a popular opportunity for women to experience and take care of their bodies, to spend time together 'outside' the male-dominated society. Olavi Paavolainen and his contemporary writers, e.g.

theatre and dance critic Raoul af Hällström, were conscious of these changes and fascinated by them, but also threatened by the new models of women. According to Hapuli (1995) both Paavolainen and af Hällström also sought ways to repel the threat of new women for men by explaining and reasoning that the change in women was caused by women's competition for men.

The slogan of *Tulenkantajat*, "opening windows to Europe", clashed with the national-conservative atmosphere in Finland after independence and the Civil War. The new modern man and woman and the changing world created a possibility but also threat to a young independent nation that had to assert itself and to create profile among other nations. Various tensions and contradictions emerged between the national and the international, rural areas and cities, agriculture and industry, Christianity and secularisation, and different gender roles. Elsa Puolanne must also have experienced tensions that modern times created for the young generation.

In Finland, as in other parts of Europe, it is generally accepted that the ideas of modern and international culture were during the 1930s buried under the strong right-wing politics, which constructed and appreciated national, traditional and conservative values. Political unrest in Finland culminated in the year 1930 when the extremist right-wing Lapua Movement kidnapped the former president Ståhlberg and his wife. This incident turned the general opinion against the Lapua Movement. In February 1932, the armed Lapua activists interrupted a Social Democrat meeting in Mäntsälä, this is known as the Mäntsälä Rebellion. The participants of the Rebellion were sentenced to prison, and the Lapua Movement was banned by the Finnish Government. The extreme fascist movement did not get an official position in Finland, although Finland maintained close political and cultural relationship with Nazi Germany until 1944, when the peace treaty with the Soviet Union forced Finland to expel German groups from Finland.

Life in Helsinki opened new possibilities for young Elsa Puolanne to attend various cultural events, concerts, theatre and dance performances, art exhibitions as well as to follow the discussion on culture. Her interest in dance

was aroused in 1922 when she saw *Swan Lake* at the Finnish Opera and Estonian Ella Ilbank's dances at the National Theatre.⁵ Her urge to move and dance was fulfilled when she started gymnastics and dance studies in the Esteri Suontaa School in 1926 among the first students of Suontaa. Elsa was at the time twenty-years-old.

Esteri Suontaa (1896-1973) owned a private gymnastics and dance school.⁶ She kept the school alongside her full-time work as a civil servant in the Ministry of Education. Suontaa had studied both gymnastics and dance, but had not taken a degree in physical education. She joined the women's gymnastic club Sakenet at the age of sixteen. In addition, she was for many years a dance student at the Maggie Gripenberg School and also studied briefly at the Hertta Idman School. During the early 1920s Suontaa gave gymnastics lessons in the women's gymnastics clubs, e.g. Sakenet and Gymnastics Association for Female Students (Naisylioppilaiden Voimisteluseura, founded in 1912). In the autumn of 1925 Esteri Suontaa went to Dresden to study for two months at the Mary Wigman School. The next autumn she opened a school of her own in Helsinki. Mary Wigman performed in Helsinki in October 1926, and it is probable that Elsa, as a student of Suontaa, was among the sparse, but enthusiastic audience at the Finnish Opera (Jalkanen 1926). Later, Esteri Suontaa continued her gymnastics and dance studies at the Hellerau-Laxenburg, Palucca and Günther Schools. The following quote describes a class at the Suontaa School in 1931.⁷

The class is almost over. Improvisation is served as the last titbit. The accompanist is playing a melody that gradually charms everyone. The power, depth and tone of music keep changing and movements of gymnasts follow it. The expression is individual, but shared music combines all into a coherent whole. Suddenly the music stops. Bodily tired but spiritually opened gymnasts say their thanks and disappear into the changing room to become again ordinary clothed citizens... A new group enters the hall. The class begins with running exercises in different tempos. After limbs have warmed up, the work starts. Young ladies count their fingers many times in the tempo of music. One, two, three, four, five and they turn their palms around, and the counting starts again. Physical exercises give way to rhythmical exercises. The teacher writes a rhythm on the board, everyone is given an instrument, and the given rhythm is played as

“hälymusiikki”.⁸ The feet join the rhythm and gradually the whole body. It is even more fun to follow expression exercises. Students play tag. The other group escapes the time of a few bars, but then they have to stop and look terrified when the other group catches them. Finally, the group improvises movements to the music.

Siellä on tunti juuri päättymässä. Viimeisenä makupalana tarjotaan ryhmälle improvisointia. Soittaja soittaa sävelmän, joka vähitellen vie kaikki mukaansa. Musiikin voima, syvyys ja sävy vaihtelee, voimistelijain liikunta muovautuu sen mukaan. Ilmennys on yksilöllistä, mutta yhteinen musiikki liittää kaiken kiinteäksi kokonaisuudeksi. Juuri silloin katkeaa musiikki. Ruumiillisesti ehkä hieman väsähtäneinä, mutta henkisesti avartuneina voimistelijat sanovat iloisen kiitoksensa, katoavat pukuhuoneeseen ja muuntautuvat taas tavallisiksi “verhotuiksi” kansalaisiksi...Uusi ryhmä tulee saliin. Tunti alkaa juoksuharjoituksella vaihtelevalla tempolla. Kun jäsenet on verrytely, alkaa muokkaus. Siinä saavat neitokset musiikin tahdissa moneen kertaan laskea omat sormensakin. Yks’, kaks’, kolme, neljä, viisi - taas käännetään kämmentä ja laskenta alkaa uudestaan. Muokkauksesta joudutaan rytmiharjoituksiin. Opettaja kirjoittaa rytmin taululle, jokaiselle annetaan oma soittimensa, jonka hälymusiikilla ilmennetään kirjoitettu rytmi. Samaan rytmiin otetaan mukaan vielä jalatkin, vähitellen koko ihminen. Vielä hausempaa on katsella ilmaisuharjoitusta. Leikitään “hippasilla”. Toinen ryhmä saa juosta pakoon määrättyillä tahdeilla, mutta sitten on pysähdyttävä ja kauhun vallassa katseltava, kun toiset juoksevat kiinni. Lopuksi saa ryhmä taas improvisoida liikunnan soitettuun musiikkiin.

Lii (pseudonym) 1930 in HS 15.11.

In the summer of 1927 Esteri Suontaa taught *plastique* (plastiikka in Finnish) at a course arranged by the Finnish Women’s Federation of Physical Education in Varala near Tampere. Ainikki Kivi, one of the participants, described *plastique* to the readers of *Kisakenttä*. Her description of Suontaa’s *plastique* includes the same sort of elements as the quote above. On the basis of these descriptions the main elements of Suontaa’s teaching seem to have been physical exercises that shape the body, rhythmic exercises performed with the body and played with musical instruments, and movement improvisation to piano music guided by the teacher’s instructions, such as “think of slow motion in film or your nightmare” (Kivi 1927, p 227). In ordinary gymnastics classes all exercises were carried out in unison in straight lines according to the teacher’s spoken

commands, but plastique classes were more individual and creative in the use of body, space and imagination. Movement forms and patterns in space were different from the gymnastics classes. Kivi (1927) cites the space pattern of the number eight as the elementary spatial form of movement in plastique. In general the straightness of arms and the back in gymnastics were in plastique replaced with curved forms of arms and back. Physical exercises were motivated not only by physical commands, such as “stand on your toes and bend your knees”, but also by creative images, such as “pick up something slowly from the floor and let it fall down again”. The descriptions of classes of plastique or rhythmic gymnastics (*rytmiikka* or *rytminen voimistelu* in Finnish) in gymnastics clubs, private movement schools and courses of gymnastics are very similar with dance classes. The terms plastique and rhythmic gymnastics were borrowed and adapted from the terms used for different dance trends of early modern dance in Finland. The most common term during the three decades of the 20th century was plastic dance (*plastinen tanssi*). The rhythmic gymnastics of Èmile Jaques-Dalcroze was also a well-known and widely used method in Finland; for example Maggie Gripenberg and Hertta Idman applied it at their schools.

In the summer of 1928 Elsa Puolanne participated in the course of rhythmic gymnastics arranged by the Finnish Women’s Federation of Physical Education’s in Tanhuvaara. The teacher was Aira Pyykönen (1906 - 1987), gymnastics teacher and dance student of Helvi Salminen. Elsa Enäjärvi, famous female intellectual of her own time, a member of the literary group *Tulenkantajat* and Aira Pyykönen’s cousin, was also with her sister Kaisa Enäjärvi in Tanhuvaara. Elsa Enäjärvi comments on the course in her letters to her future husband Jaakko Haavio. She wrote to that in Tanhuvaara the daily programme of the students - around fifty women - was as follows.

8.30 - 9 a.m. a morning coffee
 9 - 10 a.m. gymnastics
 10 - 11 a.m. folk dances, games with songs
 11 a.m. lunch
 1 - 2 p.m. rhythmic gymnastics
 2 - 2.30 p.m. coffee
 2.30 - 3.30 p.m. rhythmic gymnastics with music
 3.30 - 4.30 p.m. swimming and sports (voluntary)
 5 p.m. dinner
 8 p.m. evening tea

10.30 p.m. silence

Enäjärvi 1928 cited in Eskola 2000, pp 87-88.

Elsa Enäjärvi and especially her sister Kaisa, who became gymnastics teacher, enjoyed their stay in Tanhuvaara. "The huge amount of physical exercise and constant outdoor life make me feel good", Enäjärvi writes (in Eskola 2000, p 89) and encourages her skinny and intellectual boyfriend to take care of himself. Yet, in this letter she also complains twice that concentrating on physical exercise has largely prevented her from using her brain. Elsa Enäjärvi's excursion to women's physical education resulted in several articles. In *Urheilijan joulu* Enäjärvi (1928b) suggests that women's gymnastics and dance are representations of the special nature of the female body in modern times, and in *Suomen Kuvalehti* (1928a) she also underlines that Finnish women have special inclination to study new forms of gymnastics and dance. We do not know to what extent Elsa Puolanne shared Enäjärvi's feelings and thoughts on women's gymnastics and dance, but at least Elsa Puolanne (1990) mentioned that Tanhuvaara was an important place to her, first as a student and from 1931 as a teacher.

In Helsinki Elsa Puolanne continued her gymnastics and dance studies as Suontaa's student. After three years of training - probably only twice a week - she performed for the first time in a public performance in the spring of 1929. The Suontaa School arranged a student performance on the stage of the House of Theosophy in Helsinki. The programme leaflet is the first document that Elsa included in her first scrapbook. The programme was divided to two - excerpts from training classes and dance compositions. The training contained stretches and swing movements as well as muscular tension and release exercises performed by the class 1, balance exercises and jumps performed by the class 2 and jumps and body movements performed by the class 3. Students created and performed all the dance compositions. Elsa had the honour to being the last performer. She danced a solo, *Petite marche*, to the music of the most famous Finnish composer, Jean Sibelius. The programme shows that there were 32 students and that each student, with some exceptions, had only one training session per week.

Elsa Puolanne's first public performance was followed by her first study trip to Austria and Germany during the summer of 1929. She studied Körperbildung, rhythmic gymnastics and music and dance at the Hellerau-Laxenburg school for one month. On her way back to Finland she also attended some dance classes at the Wigman School in Berlin. Elsa Puolanne described her training experiences abroad in *Kisakenttä* (Puolanne 1930). Puolanne compares the teaching at the Hellerau-Laxenburg, the Wigman School and the Suontaa School. During the classes at the Hellerau-Laxenburg she noticed that

more attention was paid to the external forms of dance than to the inner motifs. In Finland music, atmosphere or usually a state of mind give form to the expression; in Germany dance composition seemed more superficial.

ulkonaiseen muotoiluun pantiin huomattavasti enemmän painoa kuin sisäisiin vaikuttimiin. Mehän olemme tottuneet siihen, että joko musiikki, joku tunnelma tai yleensä sieluntila hakee ilmaisumuodon, siellä tanssisommittelu tuntui pinnallisemmalta.

Puolanne 1930, p 395.

Teaching at the Wigman School was close to what Elsa had experienced at the Suontaa School. The notions of music and its role for the dance seem to differ, however.

These training classes had music, but its purpose seemed to be to give the rhythm not to evoke a certain spirit or feeling as it is here.

Näillä treenaus tunneilla oli musiikkia, mutta sen tarkoituksena tuntui olevan vain rytmin antaminen eikä, kuten meillä, myös määrätynlaisen hengen herättäminen.

Puolanne1930, p 396.

Interestingly, the above statement and the expression "to evoke a certain spirit" echo Hegelian nationalism, although it was referred to music and dance and not to the world spirit or the national spirit. The great Finnish philosopher J.V. Snellman supported Hegelian philosophy of state that argued the world spirit expressing itself through the national spirit, and an individual also had to serve national objectives (Relander 2006). Music was one of the essential art forms of national romanticism of the Golden Age that constructed emotions and images

of Finland. Finnish nature and its sounds were especially heard in the music of the great Finnish composer, Jean Sibelius. Finnish dance, both ballet and early modern, was often linked to national ideas by the use of Finnish music. It created impressions that were favourites of Finnish choreographers and dancers, and this strong alliance with the appreciation of Finnish music surely also legitimated dance art as part of Finnish culture. The strong nationalism of the 1930s can be seen in the repertoire of the Finnish National Ballet, which performed various ballets by Finnish composers (**Chart 8**, p 64). Dance programmes show that the music of Finnish composers was also widely used in free dance. For example, more than half of the solos of Elsa Puolanne were performed to Finnish music (Appendix 16, p 244, Elsa Puolanne's solos in 1929-1945).

In 1929 Elsa Puolanne graduated as a notary, an undergraduate degree in law, at the University of Helsinki. However, she did not seek a job but decided to continue her studies, this time at the Institute of Physical Education at the University of Helsinki. Elsa Puolanne said in 1990 that she wanted to be a dancer, but her family was against it. Dance was a suitable and healthy hobby for young women during the 1920s, not yet by any means a proper profession. Studying at the Institute of Physical Education was a compromise. On the one hand, studies there offered a proper profession, to become a gymnastics teacher, which was what her family expected. On the other hand, the Physical Institute gave her the possibility to concentrate on physical training and to stay in Finland. Elsa did not want to join the gymnasts and dancers that had studied and stayed in Central Europe. Her article in *Kisakenttä* ends in a patriotic view.

As my modest opinion I would say that the Finns interested in dance need not go abroad thinking that there you can learn more fabulous and better rhythmic gymnastics than in our country... I am happy to continue my studies under a good leader in Finnish school, in which the work is advanced, the aims determined and the teaching artistically well-balanced.

Vaatimattomana mielipiteenäni sanoisin, ettei suomalaisten asiainharrastajien tarvitse lähteä ulkomaille luulossa, että siellä voi saada oppia ns. rytmillisen voimistelun alalla jotain ihmeellistä ja parempaa kuin kotimassa... Omalta kohdaltani olen iloinen saadessani

edelleenkin jatkaa opiskeluni ehjän johdon alaisena kotimaisessa koulussani, missä työmuodot ovat korkeaa tasoa, pyrkimys määrätietoista ja opetus taiteellisesti täysipainoista.

Puolanne 1930, p 396.

Elsa Puolanne combined studies at the Suontaa School with studies at the Institute of Physical Education. During her study time the Institute of Physical Education did not teach or use new German gymnastics and dance trends that were by then already being discussed and used in Finland, but Elli Björkstén's adaptation of Ling's gymnastics. Later, in 1938, when Hilma Jalkanen became the director of the Institute, new women's gymnastics were integrated as part of the curriculum.

DANCE AS PART OF PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Elsa Puolanne studied gymnastics and dance during the late 1920s when important changes occurred in Finnish women's gymnastics. By the end of the 1920s the women's gymnastic movement had already had a long and remarkable history in Finland, starting from obligatory gymnastic teaching for girls in the secondary school in 1872 and the foundation of the first Nordic women's gymnastic club, Gymnastic Association for Women in Helsinki (Gymnastikförening för Fruntimmer i Helsingfors), in 1876. From the beginning the women's gymnastic movement in Finland was connected to the feminist movement. The first gymnastic clubs did not only offer physical exercises to women but also opportunities to hear lectures and discuss issues relating to the health and well-being of women and women's position in the society. According to Leena Laine women's gymnastics

fought against the double standard and extremely restricted embodiment and sexuality of women. The aim was to liberate the female body.

kävi taistoon kaksinaismoraalia ja naisten äärimmilleen kahlittua ruumiillisuutta ja seksuaalisuutta vastaan; oli lähdetty liikkeelle tarkoituksena vapauttaa naisen ruumis.

Laine & Sarje 2002, p 18.

However, the first two pioneers of women's gymnastics in Finland, Elin Kallio (1859-1927) and Elli Björkstén (1870-1947), did not take woman's body as a

starting point for their gymnastics methods, but constructed and based their systems of women's gymnastics on the Swedish Ling system originally created for men.

The women's gymnastics clubs in Finland were organised in 1896 under the bilingual Finnish Women's Gymnastics Federation (Finska Kvinnors Gymnastikförbund - Suomen Naisten Voimisteluliitto). Later, the Finnish gymnastic movement divided not only by the gender (men and women) but also by language (Finnish and Swedish), and by the class (right- and left-wing).⁹ Elin Kallio was the first chair of the Finnish-speaking Finnish Women's Federation of Physical Education and Elli Björkstén was the first chair of the Swedish-speaking Swedish Federation of Physical Education for Women in Finland. Björkstén, the first lecturer in educational gymnastics at the Institute of Physical Education (1915-1938), was a dominant and controversial figure in women's gymnastics in Finland during the first decades of the 20th century.

Gymnasts noticed the early trends of modern dance in the 1910s. *Kisakenttä*, journal of the Finnish Women's Federation of Physical Education founded in 1911, introduced dance art to its readers. The most frequently mentioned names were Isadora Duncan, her Finnish contemporary Maggie Gripenberg and the Swiss music educator Émile Jaques-Dalcroze. In her lecture, for a post at the Institute of Physical Education at the University of Helsinki, Laura Tanner stated:

During the last two decades the influence of Isadora Duncan and Émile Jaques-Dalcroze has created more grace and softness to the movements of gymnasts.

viimeisten parin vuosikymmenen aikana Isadora Duncanin ja Émile Jaques-Dalcrozen vaikutuksesta on naisvoimistelijoiden keskuudessa herännyt halu luoda liikkeisiin enemmän pehmeyttä ja suloa.

Tanner 1920 [1919], p 63.

During the 1920s the ideas of German gymnastics and dance started to reach Finland. Some young gymnastics teachers and students of Maggie Gripenberg, Hertta Idman and Helvi Salminen visited German gymnastics and dance schools. New ideas and teaching methods diversified and even challenged the existing

views and teaching in Finnish women's gymnastic clubs, especially in the Finnish Women's Federation of Physical Education.¹⁰ The FWFPE organised an international gymnastics festival in Helsinki in the summer of 1929. The performances at the festival presented quite exhaustively various trends in gymnastics in Scandinavia and the rest of Europe.¹¹ Most Finnish performances were still dominated by gymnastics that used Elli Björkstén's adaptation of the Swedish Ling system, but at least performances of the Helvi Salminen School and The Society of Finnish Women Gymnastics (Suomalainen Naisvoimisteluseura) led by Hilma Jalkanen presented new trends in gymnastics. The pseudonym Laicus (1929) obviously a promoter of new women's gymnastics and Hilma Jalkanen and a critic of the old women's gymnastics and Elli Björkstén commented on the festival in the cultural magazine *Aitta*. For Laicus the confrontation of old and new gymnastics was not only a matter of different kinds of movement forms, but also ideas of femininity. The early feminist movement at the end of 19th century adapted masculine forms in its fight for women's rights. According to Laicus, women had not had real freedom, which could be seen at the festival of the FWFPE. The stiff, tense and straight bodies and arms without movements of the torso represented the old Lingian gymnastics that had been borrowed to women's gymnastics from men. The new women's gymnastics took its starting points from the female body and character, and employed curved and bent backs and arms, and high and elastic jumps.¹²

Differences between the old women's gymnastics and the new women's gymnastics were often defined by referring on female nature and characteristics. For example, *Kotilieden Lääkärinkirja* (1929), a popular medical book in Finland, includes an article 'Voimistelu ja Urheilu' (Gymnastics and Sports), in which the male writer, Lauri Tanner, not only describes these two trends in gymnastics but determines what kind of qualities belong to the woman's nature.

The other represents, I would say, gymnastics with masculine and more angular movements, the other gymnastics that underlines aesthetic, plastic and rhythmic qualities and comes close to dance. It is obvious that there is no point for women to compete with men in force, strength and difficulty of movements. Women's gymnastics must be suited the character and nature of

woman - that is, it must consist of soft, beautiful and graceful movements.

Toinen edustaa sanoisinko miehekästä, voimakkaita ja enemmän kulmikkaita liikkeitä sisältävää voimistelua, toinen taas painostaa esteettisiä ja plastillisia ja rytmillisiä puoli voimistelussa ja lähentelee sen tähden tanssia. On aivan selvää, että naisten on turha koettaa kilpailla miesten kanssa voimassa, kestävyudessa ja liikkeiden vaikeudessa ja että naisvoimistelun tulee soveltua erikoisesti naisluonteelle, siis sisältää pehmeätä, kaunista ja siroa liikehtimistä.

Tanner 1929, p 140.

However, if I look at gymnastics and dance photos of women gymnasts in the late 1920s, for example at the Helvi Salminen School (Appendix 17, p 245), they did not actually fulfil Lauri Tanner's wishes for soft, beautiful and graceful women. They rather looked quite rebellious and firmly rooted to the ground. But shortly afterwards, during the 1930s, when nationalist and Aryan values promoted clear and separate images of men and women, women's gymnastics started to look more beautiful, soft and graceful - for example Finnish Gymnasts at the Berlin Olympics in 1936 (Appendix 17, p 245).

During the late 1920s the number of articles related to dance increased in *Kisakenttä* as well in other sport and culture magazines, such as *Urheilija*, *Työläisnaisen Urheilulehti*, *Tulenkantaja* and *Aitta*. *Kisakenttä* also started to publish critics of dance performance regularly, beside articles relating to dance and gymnastics in Germany and interviews of Finnish dancers and dance teachers in Finland and Central Europe. It would not be an exaggeration to claim that *Kisakenttä* was the leading magazine to promote early modern dance in Finland. However, it was almost entirely interested in the early trends of modern dance. Ballet was mentioned seldom and then mainly with negative remarks.¹³

Gradually some German influences were included under the name *plastique* or rhythmic gymnastics as part of the curriculum in women's gymnastics clubs of the FWFPE and its summer courses in the course centres Tanhuvaara near Viipuri and Varala near Tampere. The first teachers of *plastique* and rhythmic gymnastics to gymnasts were Helvi Salminen and Esteri Suontaa, both students

of Gripenberg.¹⁴ Hilma Jalkanen, who became the leading figure of the new women's gymnastics, wrote already in 1924 as follows.

Our gymnastics is gradually beginning to free itself from the old and stiff straitjacket, and it is replaced by liberation, movement isolation, rhythm, vividness and soulfulness. It seems that gymnastics and plastic dance have taken a step towards each other. And so it is. The question is: how close to each other can they come so that each will keep its own goals, or perhaps they will integrate in the future.

Kun voimistelumme nykyään alkaa vähitellen päästä vapaaksi vanhasta, jäykästä pakkopaidasta, vapautuneisuuden, lihaseeristykseen, rytmin, eloisuuden ja sielukkuuden astuessa tilalle, tuntuu siltä kuin voimistelun ja plastillinen tanssi olisivat astuneet pitkän askeleen toisiaan kohti. Ja niinhän se onkin. Herää kysymys: miten lähelle ne voivat päästä toisiaan siinä tapauksessa, että kumpikin säilyttävät omat päämääränsä tai sulatuvatko ne kenties tulevaisuudessa yhteen.

Jalkanen 1924, p 3.

My opinion is that plastique and gymnastics did not take only a step toward each other as Hilma Jalkanen (1924) said, but that teaching of plastique or rhythmic gymnastics in gymnastic clubs brought dance directly into women's physical education in Finland. Surprisingly, I found a similar interpretation in John Martin's dance column for *the New York Times* in 1935 (Anni Collan collection). Miss Clara Stocker had sent a letter to John Martin in reply to his remark that the physical education movement had done little to dance education outside pre-Nazi Germany. John Martin's column (1935) quotes Miss Stocker who visited Finland during the summer of 1934 and took part in the festival of the FWFPE in Turku. She writes:

I call your attention to Finland because of the universal interest not only in physical education, but in the trend in movement which transforms the old Swedish gymnastics into a vital activity related at least to the art of dance.

Stocker cited in Martin 1935.

The fluid borderlines between dance and gymnastics (voimistelu in Finnish) had been problematic, and the need to distinguish gymnastics and dance has been

evident in Finland. The American researcher Madalynne Solomon Lewis writes in her PhD dissertation that

Finnish women's educators have always made a clear distinction in their thinking between voimistelu and dance, recognizing that although the means may be the same, the goals and purposes are different. Voimistelu prepares the body to be responsive to the mind for many kinds of movement, including dance.

Lewis 1970, p 454.

Lewis' conclusion needs some reconsideration and adjustment. The basic question - "how close could gymnastics and plastic dance come to each other so that each would keep up its own purposes or do they integrate in the future?" - was asked by Hilma Jalkanen (1924, p 3). She answered immediately: "My opinion is that they need to be two different things (1924, p 3)." It seems that this article of Jalkanen created and articulated the basic principles for the distinction between gymnastics and dance, which have been repeated at various occasions until the present time (Kärkkäinen 1932, Gripenberg, Jalkanen, Hougberg & Varmaala 1949, Kleemola, 1976 & 1996, Vilenius 2003). The starting point for a distinction was of course the different purposes of gymnastics and dance. Jalkanen put it as follows:

The physical purpose of gymnastics is to develop a healthy, well-proportioned and freely moving human being. The emotional purpose of gymnastics limits to develop positive qualities, such as self-control, bravery, determination and self-confidence. Gymnastic movements are always more like physical exercises than expressions of inner experiences... The purpose of plastic dance is artistic expression. A well-proportioned body and skill together with inner views are creative components of artistic expression. We are rarely able to see dance artists who in their dances combine movements of the body and soul to create great art.

Voimistelun ruumiillinen päämäärähän on ihmisen kehittyminen terveeksi, sopusuhtaiseksi ja liikkeiltään vapautuneeksi. Voimistelun henkinen päämäärä rajoittuu luonteen hyvien ominaisuuksien, kuten itsensä hillitsemisen, rohkeuden, päättäväisyyden, itseluottamuksen ym. kehittämiseen sekä liikkeiden suorittamiseen henkevällä vapautuneisuudella ja eloisuudella...Plastillisen tanssin päämäärä on taiteellinen

ilmaisu. Ruumiillinen sopusuhtaisuus ja taitavuus yhdessä sisäisten näkemysten kanssa ovat siinä taiteellisen ilmaisun luovina aineksina. Harvoin olemme tilaisuudessa näkemään tanssitaiteilijoita, joiden esityksissä ruumiin ja sielun liikunnot yhtyvät suureksi taiteeksi.

Jalkanen 1924, pp 3-5.

However, the definition of the different purposes of gymnastics and dance did not prevent both new gymnastics and dance using the same sort of exercises and ideas. In her book *Uusi naisvoimistelu* (New women's gymnastics, 1930) Jalkanen actually states that the clear distinction between gymnastics and dance is not correct concerning new gymnastics and she refers to schools of Kallmayer, Laban, Wigman, Laxenburg and Loges. According to Jalkanen both dance and gymnastics have changed and come closer to nature, and now they have a deeper meaning and form. Therefore, she suggests there are no genre borderlines between dance and new gymnastics, but only a quality difference. Dance grows from the base of gymnastics and is the higher grade of gymnastics.¹⁵ Jalkanen did not want to step into the area of dance in her own teaching. She never choreographed dances for her students in gymnastics clubs or in her own school, but presented only new forms of gymnastics. Some of Jalkanen's colleagues and contemporaries, such as Helvi Salminen, Esteri Suontaa and Elsa Puolanne, worked in both gymnastics and dance. Helvi Salminen even acknowledged the difference between her work and Jalkanen's work. She states: "Hilma Jalkanen aims at harmony of body and movements, but I try to combine art in that" (cited in Enäjärvi 1928a, p 868). This meant that the women's gymnastics movement also produced some dancers, but not so many, although it did not consider this as its aim.

There was not such a strong conjunction between art and physical culture in Finland as in Weimar dance, although Finnish physical education was comparable with German one, as Clara Stocker wrote to John Martin (1935), and it absorbed many influences from Germany. The evident foreign influences raised also a comparison between Finnish and German physical education, and requests for more patriotic tones started to emerge in Finland. Gymnastics teacher Liisa Vanne-Nylund did not want to be old-fashioned and studied in Germany in 1930, as it was "fashionable among gymnastics teachers and dancers" (Vanne-Nylund

1930, p 17). She also participated in the German Dancers' Congress in Munich and presented her observations of German physical education in *Urheilijan joulu*, under the title 'Tanssi Liikuntakasvatuksen kukka' (Dance as a Pearl of Physical Education). At the beginning of her article Vanne-Nylund writes that German physical education was based more on dance than Finnish physical education. Dance was 'a lonely flower' in Finnish physical education; gymnastics, non-competitive sport, folk dances and games were in the major roles. Vanne-Nylund explains that the Germans' have two words for gymnastics, Turnen and Gymnastik. The latter, Gymnastik, was very close to dance and a basic subject of study at dance schools. She continues that individuality flourished in Germany in both physical education and art. There were various federations and schools, and it was hard to form a clear picture of the situation, beside two remarkable names, Rudolf Laban and Mary Wigman. Vanne-Nylund then introduces Laban's ideas of layman's movement choirs and the performance of Wigman's *Totenmal* in Munich. At the end of the article she returns to the situation in Finland. There were only few dance artists in Finland; they could be counted with five fingers according to Vanne-Nylund, and yet Finnish dance talents had gone abroad. It was useful to be acquainted with German physical education, but not to borrow directly from German forms and ideas or to stay there, since

the physical education, carried out by amateurs or by artists, is attached perhaps more closely to the character of Finnish people than any other activity.

Liikuntakasvatus olkoon se maallikon tai taiteilijan viljelyksessä liittyy ehkä kiinteämmin kuin moni muu ala kansan luonteeseen.

Vanne-Nylund 1930, p 20.

GYMNASTICS AND DANCE CAREER IN PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Elsa Puolanne started to work in gymnastics and dance alongside her studies at the Institute of Physical Education. She became an assistant teacher at the Suontaa School in 1930, where she was at first responsible for children's classes. Elsa did not apply for a vacancy for as a school gymnastics teacher after her graduation in 1932, but continued her work at the Suontaa Movement

School, in gymnastics clubs and in the courses of the FWFPE throughout the 1930s. As a matter of fact it can be said that most of Elsa's career, both as a gymnast and a dancer during the 1930s, was connected with physical education.

Esteri Suontaa encouraged her students to compose and perform their own dances, as Elsa did when she danced her first solo *Petite Marche* in 1929. It was followed by *Crescendo-ostinato* in 1930, *Preludi* in 1931 and *Loitsu* in 1933 (Appendix 16, p 244, solos by Elsa Puolanne). At the Suontaa School dance was considered as an art of the performer, as was usually the case in early modern dance (Huxley 1999). However, also some texts on composition existed. Elsa Puolanne had in her possession a leaflet of Mary Wigman's *Composition* (originally 1925, published in English in Sorell 1984). She had probably found the leaflet at the Wigman School in Berlin during her 1929 study trip. Her papers include a notebook titled Mary Wigman - Sommittelu (Composition) and dated 1 - 3 January 1930.¹⁶ It includes Elsa's translation of Wigman's article into Finnish. This text was well known and significant for young dancers in Finland as well as in Sweden.¹⁷ Obviously, Wigman's views of composition influenced on *Loitsu* and Puolanne's other dances, and I return to the connections between Mary Wigman and *Loitsu* in Chapter 4 (pp 157-160).

The Suontaa School arranged annually student performances that included both gymnastics and dance sections. Performances were often reviewed with photographs in various newspapers and magazines. The school performed many times also outside Helsinki, and some advanced students, Elsa Puolanne as the leader of the group, even made a visit to Sweden in 1935. Most of the owners and teachers of private movement schools were also active in the Finnish Women's Federation of Physical Education as teachers of rhythmic gymnastics and choreographers of gymnastic displays. Private movement schools did not have any official position in the FWFPE, but they were accepted as unofficial activity, and their performances were included as part of the program at the festivals of the FWFPE in the 1930s. For example, the choreographers of mass gymnastic displays in Grand Festivals of Finnish Gymnastics (Suomen Voimistelun Suurkisat) in 1938 were all representatives of new gymnastics or

dance - Hilma Jalkanen, Mary Hougberg, Airi Koskimies, Elsa Puolanne and Elna Tamminen. In addition, the movement schools of Gripenberg, Suontaa, Tamminen and Hougberg participated in the performances at the Finnish National Theatre during the Festivals.

Elsa Puolanne worked among women gymnasts as well as at the Suontaa School. She taught rhythmic gymnastics in three different women's gymnastic clubs - Women Gymnasts of Helsinki (Helsingin Naisvoimistelijat, 1930-1932), gymnastics club Säkenet (1931-36) and OTK's Women Gymnasts (OTK:n Naisvoimistelijat, 1932-39) - and on various courses of the FWFPE in Tanhuvaara and Varala (1931-1939). The first two above-mentioned gymnastic clubs belonged to the Finnish-speaking and right-wing organisation of women's gymnastics, the FWFPE, but the OTK's Women Gymnasts belonged to the left-wing organisation, the Workers' Sports Federation. The OTK was the biggest leftist co-operative store in Finland and it arranged various activities for its workers. Members of OTK's gymnastics club were the staff of the main office of OTK in Helsinki. The history of Elannon Isku (Mannonen 1961) tells that some of its women gymnasts had classes at the Suontaa School, and Suontaa taught some classes in women gymnast clubs of the WSF.¹⁸ Elsa's connection with the left-wing gymnasts was probably aroused at the Suontaa School. It seems that the distinction between right- and left-wing women gymnasts was not absolute. Elsa, as many other gymnastics teachers of the FWFPE or representatives of early modern dance, such as Hilma Jalkanen, Elin Kallio, Elna Kopponen, Maija Varmaala and Esteri Suontaa, had cooperated with gymnasts of the Workers' Sports Federation as teachers and choreographers (Laine 2000). The language quarrels and the Civil War had divided the Finnish women's gymnastics movement into three separate organisations, as discussed earlier, but language and political views did not prevent cooperation between individuals and organisations of women gymnasts.

Although Elsa Puolanne was known and used as teacher among leftist gymnasts, she was more committed to the work of the FWFPE. Starting from the late 1920s Elsa held various positions of trust in the FWFPE (Kleemola 1986): at first as a representative of the FWFPE at the Sport Library (1928-29, 1932-1945),

then as a member of the gymnastic division (1934-1945) and the girls division (1937-1946). In 1935 Elsa Puolanne was voted vice member of the Board of the FWFPE (1935-1941) and then member of the Board (1942-44). From 1932 to 1934 she contributed articles to *Kisakenttä* and in 1935 she was asked to join the editorial staff (1935-39). Elsa's main concern in *Kisakenttä* was dance, especially dance in Germany. She presented the work of her teachers in Germany, such as Mary Wigman, Gret Palucca and Jutta Klamt, wrote dance criticism, commented on her study trips abroad, told about the birth of dance work, outlined German gymnastics and new writing in dance books, instructed in the use of rhythmical instruments in gymnastics as well as introduced the Aryan doctrine of race to Finnish readers. In addition, some of her dances and gymnastics programs for children were published in *Kisakenttä*.

In the summer of 1933 the FWFPE sent fourteen gymnasts - Elsa Puolanne among them - to Sweden. The Nordic Gymnastic Federation (Nordisk Gymnastik Forbund) arranged an international summer camp in Malmköping for 230 gymnasts from eleven countries. Each country had an opportunity to present their gymnastics and its working methods. The Finnish group gave their performance on the first night of the camp. The performance included gymnastics exercises, dance solos by Elsa Puolanne, Finnish folk dances and a gymnastic display created by Elna Tamminen for the forthcoming festivals of the FWFPE. The new trend of Finnish gymnasts and their performance raised discussions relating to its physiological, psychological and aesthetic principles. Finnish gymnasts were proud to defend a new form of gymnastics that had "wider movement paths, looser joint work and freer and more lively emotion", as Bertta Reiho and Toini Stenfors told for *Aamulehti* (undated article in Elsa Puolanne's scrapbook). In the summer of 1934 Swedish gymnastics teachers Sam and Greta Adrian invited Elsa Puolanne to teach Swedish gymnastics teachers in Malmahed near Eskilstuna. Next spring, in 1935, Sam Adrian even arranged gymnastics and dance performances for the Suontaa School in the concert halls of Örebro and Eskilstuna. Local newspapers praised the performances and commented on the new Finnish gymnastics with enthusiasm under such titles as 'Light Comes from the East' (Elsa Puolanne's scrapbook). It seems that Swedish physical education and women's gymnastics had not

adapted as readily new gymnastics and dance trends as Finnish physical education had, in Sweden new dance trends probably were more integrated to dance art.

VISITOR IN THE THIRD REICH

Most of Elsa Puolanne's dance studies in Germany took place under the Third Reich. She made at least three study trips to Germany in the middle of the 1930s. In the summer of 1935 she visited Vienna, Berlin and Dresden and studied in the Hellerau-Laxemburg, Pallucca and Wigman Schools. Next year, in 1936, Elsa took part in the Berlin Olympics as an assistant leader of the Finnish women's gymnastics team, and finally in 1937 she studied for three and a half months at courses of the German Institute for Dance (Deutscher Meister-Stätten für Tanz).

The situation in modern dance in Germany changed radically when Hitler and the National Socialists rose to power. The Cultural Ministry took control of all dance affairs and divided the dance community to two: professional theatre dancers who performed on the stages in theatres and free creative dancers who worked as dance pedagogues and directors of movement choirs (Karina & Kant 2003). The Nazi regime also offered jobs for unemployed German dancers teaching Tanz-Gymnastik either in girls' schools or in the youth and leisure organizations of the Nazis. The German Institute for Dance was founded in 1936, in a sense meeting the demands for a conservatory for dance proposed by the 1930 Dancers' Congress in Munich. However, the curriculum of dance education had changed; its primary concern was not modern dance as was planned in Munich; instead, modern dance, ballet and national dances were taught equally. Jewish dancers were not tolerated, of course, among the Germans, but two Finns, Elsa Puolanne and Hagar Lehtikanto, were accepted in the courses in 1937. According to Manning actions of Nazis "resolved the crisis of besetting modern dance in the last years of the Weimar Republic" (1993, p 170). Therefore, dance was more or less in a state of ferment when Elsa Puolanne visited Germany, moving from Ausdruckstanz to German dance and from modern to fascist, or maybe it was not so straightforward.

The alliance between Ausdruckstanz and National Socialism has been interpreted in various ways in dance histories. All interpretations implicitly theorise on the relations between ideology and artistic form. Susan Manning (1995) articulates four possible relations between form and ideology from dance histories explaining the alliance between Ausdruckstanz and National Socialism in the Third Reich. The first one assumes one-to-one correspondences between ideology and form, the second posits the total independence of artistic form from ideology and the third possibility assumes that form remains partly independent of ideology. Finally, Manning suggests that all these accounts fail to present an adequate picture of the alliance between Ausdruckstanz and Nazis because

they all assume a static and unchanging relation between ideology and form, whether that relation is dependent or independent.

Manning 1995, p 170.

And as a fourth relation she present her own argument which

posits a complex and shifting interplay between ideology and form in response to the changing social, economic and political organization of the dance world. To summarize my argument: Ausdruckstanz underwent an institutional crisis around 1930, a crisis resolved by the National Socialist "reorganisation" of cultural life. In my telling this is what led so many modern dancers to collaborate with the Third Reich.

Manning 1995, p 170.

But as Susan Manning at the end of her articles notices also her

model assumed a single, fixed position from which the spectator (or historian) could follow the constantly evolving dance of ideology, form and context...The model I envision would set in motion not only the relations between ideology and form but also the viewing perspective of the historian. With both the observer and the observed changing places, what a complicated dance would result.

Manning 1995, p 174.

Next, I try to keep in mind all the variables that Manning has articulated and examined the question that has been on my mind throughout my research of *Loitsu* and Elsa Puolanne. What was her relationship with the National Socialists? How did she collaborate with the Third Reich? Moreover, to what extent did Finnish physical education, especially in the FWFPE, share fascistic ideas and manipulation of body. Apart from the fact that Elsa Puolanne visited the Third Reich three times, her relationship to National Socialists is mainly examined through her participation in the Berlin Olympics but with reference to other links to Germany as well as to German dance and gymnastics. I made this choice for three reasons. Firstly, there are various existing traces concerning to the Finnish gymnasts' participation in the Berlin Olympics, but not many relating to Elsa's other journeys to Germany. Secondly, the participation in the Olympic Games integrated the individual Elsa Puolanne, the team of the FWFPE and Finnish nation at various levels. Thirdly, this choice enables me to examine an evident and extremely complex shifting interplay between ideology and form in response to a specific social, political, economic and institutional context and from my own perspective as a historian.

FINNISH GYMNASTS IN THE 1936 BERLIN OLYMPICS

Idealism connected with a strong personal desire to find absolute and true ways of living makes human beings open for different kinds of experiences and influences, as the following quote under demonstrates.

Yesterday night - a danced evening festival on the stadium - it had a deep effect on me. That is, I found my life career there, and it is always serious matter for a human being. Isn't it? When I saw how that woman...I do not remember her name. Yes, it was Palucca. She moved, staggered and suffered in her long skirt at the centre of the stadium, and she did so beautifully that it hurt me at the bottom of my soul. And I realised that my future career is not to be a gymnastics teacher. Father and Mother, I want to be a dancer, like the Pallucca, whose mere presence and movements make hundred of thousands people cry and suffer with her. May I, May I?

Eilinen ilta - tanssillinen iltajuhla stadionilla, se sentään syvimmin vaikutti minuun. Löysin nimittäin sieltä elämänurani, ja se on ihmiselle vakava asia. Eikös olekin? Kun katselin kuinka se nainen - en muista nimeä, juu,

Pallukka se sentään oli - kulki, horjui ja kärsi pitkässä hameessaan siellä keskellä kenttää, ja teki sen niin julman kauniisti, että ihan sieluun asti koski, koska huomasin minä, että minun alani ei olekaan jumppaopettajan. Isä ja äiti! Tanssijattareksi minä tahdon tulla, suureksi Pallukaksi, joka pelkällä olemuksellaan ja liikehtimisellään saa sadattuhannet ihmiset itkemään ja kärsimään kanssaan. Voi, saanhan minä, saanhan minä?

Kivi 1938, p 106.

This quote is from Ainikki Kivi's novel for youths *Olympiatyttö* (An Olympic Girl, 1938).¹⁹ Riti, a nineteen-year-old gymnast and member of Finnish women's gymnastic team, describes her feelings to her parents after seeing Gret Palucca dancing on the stadium as part of dance spectacle *Olympic Youth* (Olympische Jugend) in the Berlin Olympics. Although the quote is part of the novel, the experience might have been true for someone among the two hundred members of Finnish team that the FWFPE had sent to represent Finland in the Berlin Olympics by guiding them with following words.

It is not possible overemphasise the meaning of a correct inner view and commitment for the realisation of movements. These inner states of the soul can not, in fact, be taught as a technique of movements, but they presuppose inborn intuitive abilities. However, they can to a certain extent be awakened in gymnasts with proper teaching. All pretending has to be avoided in this respect. Performances must above all seek natural, living movements.

Kyllin ei voida korostaa oikean sisäisen näkemyksen ja antaumuksen merkitystä liikkeiden suorituksessa. Näitä sisäisiä sieluniloja, ei voida tietenkään varsinaisesti opettaa, kuten liikkeiden tekniikkaa, vaan edellyttävät ne synnynnäisiä intuitiivisia kykyjä, joita kuitenkin voi jossain määrin sopivalla opetuksella herättää voimistelijoissa. Kaikkea teennäistä on tässä suhteessa kartettava. Suorituksissa on ennen kaikkea pyrittävä luontevaan, elävään liikuntaan,

Kisakenttä 1936, p 29.

The above subjective descriptions of experiences of embodiment in dance and gymnastics are connected to the performances in the Berlin Olympics usually associated with the National Socialists' eugenic policies. How should I understand Finnish gymnasts' urge to fulfil their inner need and commitment to

movement? Does it refer to a desire to become part of a fascist body? Answers to these questions are complicated. Ramsay Burt (1998) exposes the complicity related to mass performances in the Berlin Olympics.

What is at issue is the degree of complicity that connects participation in and pleasure at viewing presentation of this mass performance with the eugenic policy of the Nazis. Were other related kinds of performances of such mass spectacles also complicit? The answer to these questions lies in understanding continuities between the subjective experience of embodiment and politics as ethics.

Burt 1998, p 105.

As Burt (1998) undeniably argues and my own research relating to dance and gymnastics in Finland supports, women's gymnastic displays and exercises were very similar in all parts of the world. They were not only German and associated with the National Socialists and right-wing politics. For example in Finland very similar performances and exercises were shared by right-wing and left-wing circles during the late 1920s and 1930s. Thus, it is not right to relate "all images of healthy white bodies involved in body culture that date from the 1920s and 1930s to a generic notion of a fascist body", as Burt (1998, p 110) remarks. Numerous liberating philosophical ideas about nature, the body and women were associated with practices of body culture. It was possible for various ideologies in different countries to use and interpret them according to their own needs and aims. This happened also in Finland, and the crusade of the Finnish team of women's gymnastics was one expression of it. Elsa Puolanne, whom Hilma Jalkanen asked to become the assistant leader of the team (minutes of the Board of the FWFPE 29.1. 1936), can be supposed to have stood behind actions, opinions and values related to the team.

Leena Laine's (2003) article 'The Promised Land of Olympic Sports' gives a good overall view of the participation of Finnish team in the Berlin Olympics. She tells that the initiative to send a large performing gymnasts' group to the Olympic Games came from the FWFPE.²⁰ It proposed participation to the Finnish Olympic Committee, and the Committee sent the proposal forward to the organisers of the Berlin Olympics. Finland, a candidate for the following Olympic Games, was eager to have a large representation in Berlin, and women gymnasts, who had

already a close relationship with Germany, were a good addition to the Finnish team. The gymnastics team received a positive answer from Berlin in the summer of 1935. Finnish gymnasts had already performed in the Stockholm Olympics in 1912, but that was under the leadership of Swedish-speaking Elli Björkstén. This time the Finnish-speaking FWFPE received permission to represent Finland. In my opinion, the participation in the Olympic Games was not only a promotion of Finland, but also a comment on women's competitive sport that had been the centre of discussion in Finland for years. That is, what kind of physical exercise suits women, and constructs and defines the essence of a woman. Finland had successfully used sports as an instrument to create national pride, for example the long-distance runner Paavo Nurmi had 'run Finland into the world map' with his twelve Olympic medals. The Berlin Olympics were the first time when Finland decided to send nine competitive sportswomen to the Olympics. The FWFPE, which considered competitive sport unsuitable for females and unhealthy for women's bodies, did not attack competitive sport directly, but by sending two hundred gymnasts to perform a gymnastic display and some Finnish folk dances, it perhaps wanted to present an alternative to women's competitive sport. Participation in the Olympic Games with two hundred gymnasts offered a good opportunity to get public attention for the FWFPE and for issues and values that it thought suitable for women. The training of the team was followed by several radio broadcasts in 1935 and 1936 as well as by many newspapers around Finland.

Kisakenttä, magazine of the FWFPE, followed and advised in detail the preparation of the team in Finland and its performances and reception in Germany. The following summary below paraphrases the way in which gymnasts were informed, prepared and instructed for the Olympic Games in *Kisakenttä*.

The decision to send a team to Berlin was first announced to the members of the FWFPE in *Kisakenttä* (14/1935) in September 1935. Gymnastics clubs were asked to suggest gymnasts for the team by 1 November 1935. The costs were estimated at 3 500 marks by participant in *Kisakenttä*, and participants were also supposed to pay for themselves.²¹ Hilma Jalkanen, forthcoming leader of

the team and the choreographer of the gymnastic display, presented in *Kisakenttä* (14/1935) the venues in which dance and gymnastics performances were to be performed. She proudly writes that the Finns' performance was originally planned for the Dietrich Eckhardt theatre that was reserved for gymnastics, dance and music, but it had been decided to transfer the Finnish performance to the big Olympic Stadium, on 6 August 6 p.m., after the athletics meeting. Jalkanen also introduced the forthcoming mass spectacle *Olympic Youth* as follows.

All German dance art schools will assist in this performance. It will be an appraisal of youth, beauty and strength, both physical and spiritual. No other country is able to organize anything like this. We women can learn many things from the Games. These Games are in the country in which women's physical culture is artistically most advanced.

Kaikki Saksan taidetanssikoulut avustavat tässä näytöksessä. Se tulee olemaan nuoruuden, kauneuden sekä henkisen ja ruumiillisen voiman ylistyslaulu. Ei mikään muu maa kuin Saksa voi pystyä tällaista järjestämään. Näissä kisoissa on erikoisen paljon sellaista, josta me naiset voimme oppia. Ovathan kisat tällä kertaa maassa, jossa naisten liikuntakulttuuri on korkeimmalle kehittyneet taiteellisessa mielessä.

Jalkanen 1935, p 229.

Kisakenttä (18-19/1935) gave detailed instructions on basic movements, which gymnast were expected to know by the gymnasts when they came to participate in the Christmas course in Helsinki. For example, the placement of the standing body and the motion of the body during the walk were described in a detail. Much attention was also paid to the mobility of the shoulder, hips and knee joints and skeleton as well as to the swing movement of the whole body, diving and waving movements and the height of jumps. The selection for the team was to be done during the course, but it was not stated who would do it.

At the end of the Christmas course the gymnastic display was almost finished, and *Kisakenttä* (2/1936) presented a rough timetable for rehearsals in clubs. In February and March gymnasts were expected to concentrate to preparative exercises, but they were also allowed to try the final movements. In April and

May the final program had to be taken under rehearsal. *Kisakenttä* also gave instructions to movement exercises and advice for performing them with “a correct inner view and commitment” (2/1936, p 29, the writer is not given, but she probably was Hilma Jalkanen).

The physical condition and lifestyle of the team were controlled with detailed instructions. Team members were asked to rehearse the program not only in their gymnastics clubs but also in front of a mirror at home. It was also important to improve their physical condition in order to give them capacity to perform movements. A good physical condition affects the nervous system. *Kisakenttä* (5/1936) gave team members advice on the support of the nervous system as follows.

1. The weight should not go down. A diet is either good for the skin and the nerves. Eat well.
2. Sleep enough and leave the window open. Cold night air is good for your nerves.
3. Take care of your skin. Do not forget to wipe your skin daily with a rough towel.
4. Coffee can stimulate nerves. You should perhaps drink less coffee.
5. Sunbath when possible, but do not exaggerate and burn your skin.
6. Outdoor recreation strengthens the nerves and calms you down. However, do not exhaust yourself.

The next *Kisakenttä* (6/1936) announced the Easter courses in Helsinki, Tampere, Turku and Viipuri, in which the gymnastic display was to be rehearsed. All the members of the team were required to attend. The rehearsals of folk dances were postponed to the summer. The programme in Berlin was to start with a gymnastic display and to continue with folk dances, and gymnasts were to join folk dancers after the change of costumes. The exact days of departure and return days were announced. The departure from Helsinki was to take place on 29 July and return from Berlin on 11 August. The team was to stay in Berlin for ten days, and it was possible to stay for an extra week in Berlin and to participate in gymnastics courses at the Günther and Medau Schools.

Practical information also reached the team gradually. *Kisakenttä* (7/1936) told that the team would be accommodated in army barracks called Döberritz, seven

kilometres from the Stadium. The barrack facilities included a kitchen and bathrooms. *Kisakenttä* also gave a detailed list of clothes and other items that were to be taken along in one suitcase. Beside normal clothing and shoes, all participants had to have a national costume, a black training suit, a light blue performance suit, college trousers and a handbag or a rucksack. The following schedule for the team was published in the April in *Kisakenttä* (8/1936).

- 31 July Arrival
- 1 August Opening Ceremonies at the Stadium
- 2-3 August Tours in Berlin and competitions at the Stadium
- 5-6 August Rest for the performance on 6 August
6 p.m.
- 7-8 August Tour Leipzig-Weimar-Dresden
- 9 August Competitions at the Stadium
- 10 August Shopping in Berlin
- 11 August Departure

The care for the team also contained tips on cheap restaurants and cafés in Berlin (*Kisakenttä* 9/1936) and useful facts on Finland (*Kisakenttä* 11/1936). The latter article also dealt with racial issues that were popular in Germany and Finland. As for issues relating to the origin and race of the Finns, *Kisakenttä* advised gymnasts to underline that the Finns were not Mongolians and that the Finnish Academia was exploring if there were two distinct races among light-skinned Scandinavians, a Nordic race and a Baltic race.

Twenty-four gymnasts performed the gymnastic display in Helsinki in May 1936. The performance was defined in *Kisakenttä* (11/1936) as pure gymnastics. It succeeded to combine individuality and movement in unison. This was considered an improvement compared to the previous years. The statement in *Kisakenttä* implies that individuality had to be controlled by a common united form. Ellen Svinhufvud, the wife of the Finnish president, was present at the performance of the team, and Kaarina Kari, chairwoman of the FWFPE, made a public speech (published in *Kisakenttä* 11/1936). In it she mentioned that in Berlin many countries intended to promote their countries with gymnastic displays, not least Germany. A gymnastic display was planned to perform at the Stadium each night after the athletics meeting. Beside Finland, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia and Germany were allowed to have one

hour to perform their program. The performance of Finnish team was to include the gymnastic display and Finnish folk dances expressing original Finnish nationality. This was a typical combination of perennial and modern views of a nation (Smith 1999). Folk dances, considered as ancient forms and a basis of a nation, were to be celebrated at the same time with a modern gymnastic display, a new and evolutionary form of movement.

After the Olympics, a whole issue of *Kisakenttä* (12/1936) was dedicated to the varying experiences of the gymnastic team in Berlin. The team attended at the opening ceremony, but it was not allowed to march with the Finnish sports team. During the opening of the Olympics gymnasts stood in national costumes by the side of the sports field. Later that evening the team saw the spectacle *Olympic Youth* described for *Kisakenttä* by Elsa Puolanne (1936). According to Susan Manning (1993) the spectacle simultaneously reflected the international spirit of the Olympics and staged the body politics of the Third Reich, amateur gymnastics and dance art appearing side by side. It "explicitly celebrated a mythology on display while implicitly celebrating the presence of the monarch, the Führer who reviewed the work from stands"(Manning 1993, p 195). The article of Elsa Puolanne (1936) presented *Olympic Youth* as a harmonious art work that elevated the spirit of the 100 000 spectators with its visual appearance. Elsa Puolanne did not interpret the message of the spectacle at all. Obviously the spectacle had made a great impact on her, since the minutes of the board of the Union of Finnish Dance Artists (1938, TeaMA 1025) show that she proposed that the Union arrange a dance spectacle as part of the Helsinki Olympics in 1940. The Board of the Union accepted the idea and asked Maggie Gripenberg to adapt her dance tableau *Metsolan tanhuvilla* (In the Woods, 1924) as a mass spectacle. It was supposed to be performed at the Olympic Stadium by students of different movement schools. The Finnish Olympic Committee took *Metsolan tanhuvilla* as part of the official program in the Helsinki Olympics, but the outbreak of the Winter War in 1939 cancelled the Olympics of 1940.

In my opinion, the team of the FWFPE was a perfect quest for the Third Reich and receptive to its propaganda. The common foundation of German and Finnish gymnasts in the Berlin Olympics was acknowledged in both Germany and

Finland. For example the article of the German magazine *Der Angriff*, cited in *Kisakenttä* (13/1936), mentioned the group of beautiful and healthy-looking women bodies with blonde hair. Their dance-like movements and their light blue dresses in the darkening night of the Olympic Stadium inspired the writer to call the performance "a blue moment". Two members of the German Organisation Committee even praised Finnish gymnasts to Hilma Jalkanen by stating that Finnish gymnastics was 30 years ahead of other Scandinavian countries (HS 14.8. 1936). The private coffee parties with Goebbels and Hitler after the Games flattered the gymnasts so much that they made a Nazi salute, although the official sports team of Finland had not done this at the opening ceremony. A team member was so overwhelmed by Hitler's charisma that her praise of Hitler in *Kisakenttä* attracted national attention (Laine 2003). The Jewish question and National Socialist politics had been discussed also in Finland, and the leftist press had especially criticized the politics of the Nazis. *Kisakenttä* never hinted to any critical discussions on Germany and its politics. On the contrary, towards the end of the 1930s, it published articles that straightforwardly presented National Socialist ideas. For example, Ilona Telajoki (1939) described the physical education of National Socialism with quotes from Hitler's *Mein Kampf*, and Elsa Puolanne (1938) introduced the racial views of Jo Fischer-Klamt that she got to know when studying at the courses of The German Institute for Dance in 1937.

The modernist movement had expressed the idea of a new free and individual human being, who with the help of his/her strong and healthy body could meet the challenges of the modern world. The representations of body culture became known and popular even on the Northern frontier of Europe, Finland. There was wide interest in new gymnastics and dance trends, especially within women's physical education. However, the new and individual healthy body was not able to represent itself without ideological demands. Different social and even political groups wanted to define and control the healthy body for their own purposes. Individuality and various choices and challenges in the modern and international culture of the 1920s were soon controlled and put to use by right-wing politicians, who appreciated national, traditional and conservative values, shortly afterwards labelled in Finland with the phrase "koti, uskonto ja isänmaa"

(home, religion and the native country). The political and ideological differences between gymnasts of the FWFPE and the WSF increased during the 1930s, although the forms of gymnastics were still similar.²² In the FWFPE strong nationalist and right-wing views and relationships to Germany and the Baltic countries gained a lot of attention during the 1930s (*Kisakenttä*, Annual reports of the FWFPE, Laine & Sarje 2002). The participation of the FWFPE in the Berlin Olympics was part of this process.

There are evident similarities between Finnish and Nazi gymnastics and dance in the Berlin Olympics if they are studied through the instructions and comments in *Kisakenttä* and Ramsay Burt's (1998) Foucaultian analysis of mass gymnastic displays. They both "directed their focus internally" (Burt 1998, p 102) in articulating the individual experience of gymnast. On the other hand, they both were also "allowing their bodies to be habituated to just such external regulation, subjection and transformation in mass gymnastics displays" (Burt 1998, p 117). However, this does not mean that they invested in the same ideology. Finnish gymnasts, Elsa among them, collaborated and pleased the Nazi regime not for the sake of the Nazis, but above all for their own homeland. The individual, rebellious and emancipated women gymnasts of the late 1920s were replaced in Berlin by a group of women that represented gymnastics in unison that was above all intended to serve their nation. The Finnish education system and media have taught me that Finnish nationalism of the 1930s was not channelled into extreme non-democratic right-wing totalitarianism as in Germany and some other countries in Europe, but it still brought Finns politically to an official alliance with Nazi Germany after the victory over the Soviet Union in the Winter War (1939-1940). This alliance perhaps also encouraged Finns to start the Continuation War (1941-1944) against the Soviet Union, and probably the alliance and armed support of Nazi Germany partly helped Finland to maintain its independence in the Second World War. After the defeat in the Continuation War the Soviet Union forced Finns to fight against its former ally, Germany, in the Lapland War (1944-45). However, Finland remained the only independent country that was counted under the sphere of interest of the Soviet Union in the secret Ribbentrop agreement between Germany and the Soviet Union in 1939.

These political and nationalist interpretations and assumptions that justified Finland's actions during the World War in order to maintain its position as an independent nation also influence on my perspective on Elsa Puolanne, and perhaps they even relate me to her story. It is evident that Elsa Puolanne collaborated with the Nazis. She accepted and even spread some racial ideology of Nazis (Puolanne1937a/b, 1938), admired their spectacles (Puolanne 1936) and took part in dance education arranged according the regulation of National Socialists. She never hinted at the dark side of the Nazi politics and eugenics during the 1930s or during the war. Still, it is impossible for me to consider her dance totally degenerated by the touch of National Socialism. Ramsay Burt ends his chapter 'Totalitarianism and the Mass Ornament',

the smiling young woman, featured in the film extract, invites the spectator to make a connection between her or his own subjective experiences of embodiment and her enjoyment of physical exercise. Such connection is easily made: more difficult is to recognise that just as power has been invested in her body in socially and historically specific ways, so, in different ways, has it been invested in one's own.

Burt 1998, p 120.

It has been easy to share Elsa's and her contemporaries inner commitment to the movement, but it has been, and still is, more difficult to recognise and capture the social and political forces that are integrated in her experience of movement and to my understanding of it. By applying Burt's view, I would state that Elsa's body and dance was an investment in Finnish nationalism and it has been invested, but in different ways, also in me.

FOUNDATION OF THE UNION OF FINNISH DANCE ARTISTS IN 1937

The phone rang at Elsa Puolanne's home in the spring of 1937 (Puolanne 1990). It was Raoul af Hällström who explained that he was inviting people to found a union for dance artists. The intention was to gather for the first time on the Easter Friday 26 March, at 4 p.m. in Cafe Primula's meeting room, Heikinkatu 14, in the centre of Helsinki (TeaMA 1025). Elsa Puolanne was surprised and pleased to get the invitation. The prominent dance writer and critic Raoul af Hällström had noticed her dance activities, and of course she wanted to go.

The history of the Union of Finnish Dance Artists (Arvelo & Räsänen, 1987) tells the story that the idea to found the Union for dancers came up during dancers' smoking break at the Finnish Opera, but surely the idea that dancers should combine their forces - as actors, musicians and visual artists had done before - was in the air more widely. Maggie Gripenberg, perhaps the best-known Finnish dance artist of the time, was aware of the need and suggested in the theatre magazine *Naamio* (1932) that dancers should found an organisation of their own to promote dance art economically, educationally and artistically. She even mentioned her own dream to have a venue that would arrange only dance performances. However, it seems that in 1937 the idea of the organisation was brought up by ballet master Alexander Saxelin and dance critic Raoul af Hällström but representatives of early modern dance were also invited to the meeting.²³ Saxelin opened the first meeting, and af Hällström gave a speech and sketched the outlines for the Union. According af Hällström (HS 28.3. 1937) the aims were to promote the development of Finnish dance art, to boost the appreciation of dance and to improve the position and status of dance artists. As concrete actions he mentioned a foundation of dance fund, a library and archives of dance and control of the artistic level of dance performances in restaurants. The first meeting decided to found the Union of Finnish Dance Artists and to set up a committee to take care of the formal foundation of the Union for the next meeting. Raoul af Hällström was nominated as chairman of the committee. The other members were older representatives of dance in Finland: Alexander Saxelin, Maggie Gripenberg, Ukko Havukka, Toivo Niskanen, Helvi Salminen, Edith von Bonsdorff, Mary Paischeff, Toini Karto, Tuukka Soitso acted as secretary. The vice members Irja Koskinen, Ilta Leiviskä, Elo Kuosmanen and Elsa Puolanne were the representatives of the younger generation.

The official founding meeting of the Union was held in the restaurant Billiard on Sunday 11 April in 1937. Most names on the list of the 57 founder members of the Union were representatives of ballet, mainly working full or part-time at the Finnish Opera. Twelve women represented early modern dance and two men were dance critics. The composition of the first Board of the Union did not match directly above figures. It included both dance critics, Raoul af Hällström (chairman) and Ukko Havukka; three representatives of modern dance, Maggie

Gripenberg, Helvi Salminen and Toini Karto; and seven representatives of ballet, Alexander Saxelin, Toivo Niskanen (vice-chairman), Elo Kuosmanen, Tuukka Soitso (secretary), Edith von Bonsdorff, Mary Paischeff and Airi Säilä. It is understandable that the most famous names of dance in Finland at that time were elected to the Board in order to get publicity and legitimation for dance art.

The meeting approved the by-law of the Union with some minor alternations. The first by-law articulated the main purpose of the Union to be promoting dance art in Finland by

improving the artistic level and material well-being of dance artists with all possible means; by maintaining and developing the spirit between dance artists and devotees of dance art and by acting to develop the understanding of dance art among the audience.

kohottaa kaikin mahdollisin keinoin tanssitaiteilijoiden taiteellista ja aineellista tasoa; ylläpitää ja kehittää yhteishenkeä tanssitaiteilijoiden ja tanssitaiteen harrastajien kesken sekä toimia tanssitaiteen ymmärtämisen kehittämiseksi yleisön keskuudessa.

By-law of the Union 1937, 2 §.

The purposes were to be put into practice

1. by arranging for the members opportunities to study dance in practice and theory;
2. by organising joint performances and days of dance;
3. by keeping a dance studio, a library and archives, and by publishing a magazine;
4. by founding funds to give grants.

1. järjestämällä jäsenilleen tilaisuuksia käytännöllisiin ja tietopuolisiin opintoihin;
2. toimeenpanemalla yhteisnäytäntöjä ja tanssipäiviä;
3. ylläpitämällä tanssistudioita, kirjastoa, ja arkistoa sekä julkaisemalla omaa äänenkannattajaa;
4. perustamalla rahastoja, joista jaetaan apurahoja

By-law of the Union 1937, 3 §.

The sections 2 and 3 tell a lot about dance art in Finland - what there was and what was missing. There were three groups connected with dance: dance artists, devotees of dance (perhaps a more accurate translation for them is amateurs of dance art) and dance audience. What was missing was an

organised infrastructure that could support the work of dance artists, that is, the education of dancers, performing possibilities, rehearsing and performing spaces, a dance library and archives, a magazine and funding for dance. As discussed in Chapter 2, there are various criteria for professionalism in dance. The foundation of the Union of Finnish Dance Artists meant the creation of a new remarkable association that could set criteria for being a dance artist - that is to be a member of the Union. Actually, the by-law itself did not set the criteria; instead it gave the authority to do this to the Board of the Union. The board had to take as members of the Union

creative or performing dance artists, dance pedagogues, dance writers, composers and researchers whose ability and interest in dance art is well-known.

luovia tai esittäviä tanssitaiteilijoita, tanssipedagoogeja, tanssikirjailijoita, tanssisäveltäjiä ja tanssitedemiehiä, joiden kyky tai harrastus tanssitaiteen alalla on tunnettu.

By-law of the Union 1937, 5§.

The Union of Finnish Dance Artists gathered the scattered dance people together, the famous Finnish pioneers of dance, dancers of the Finnish Opera, ballet and modern dance teachers and physical educators. This was of course essential and significant for the development of dance art. The Union wanted to see itself as a connecting force - representatives of different dance genres could get to know and appreciate each other (HS 9.5. 1937). However, the organisation of dance art also created an institution that gradually became an important embodiment of the power to define dance art in Finland. This quite soon meant, contrary to wishes and expectations, a clearer distinction and ranking between different dance genres and dance artists as suggested by the performing order of the first performance of the UFDA presented at the beginning of this chapter (pp 78-79).

TRANSITION FROM PHYSICAL EDUCATION TO DANCE ART

The first context of Elsa Puolanne's solo *Loitsu* was as part of physical education, but the foundation of the Union of Finnish Dance Artists opened up new opportunities for Puolanne and her work. During the first years of the UFDA Elsa Puolanne was an active member, danced in performances of the

Union and made proposals for the Board. However, after the Second World War, her and some others' contribution, according to the criteria set by some dance artists and dance critics in Finland, was labelled as unprofessional and not developing. One extreme example of this is Raoul af Hällström's article in *Taiteen maailma* in 1946. Af Hällström, who during the 1920s had been quite open to modernist ideas and a member of the modernist movement *Tulenkantajat*, doomed in sharp language the work of Finnish as well as German and Swedish 'amazons' and 'valkyries' of early modern dance.²⁴

A modern world, the liberated Europe, can not just like that base its artistic credo on mouldy and often completely rotten German museum pieces.

Moderni maailma, vapautettu Eurooppa, ei niin vain rakenna taiteellista uskontunnustaan homehtuneen ja usein suorastaan mädän saksalaisen museotavaran varaan.

af Hällström 1946, p 13.

This certainly did not only refer to what they had performed but also to what they had been associated with, that is Germany, and especially the Nazi Germany. For af Hällström the relation between ideology and form was direct (Manning 1995) and almost absolute.

The Germans have again lost a war they had provoked, and the level of their withered, hysterical and repulsive mass-produced art is lower than ever.

Nyt ovat saksalaiset taas hävinneet uuden provosoivansa maailmansodan, ja heidän näivettynyt, hysteerinen ja tympeä sarjataiteensa on entistäkin matalammalla.

af Hällström 1946, p 13.

The guilt and shame felt for the Germans were used also to despise free dance in Finland; only Maggie Gripenberg was excluded. Af Hällström did not want to accept the fact that there were two equal dance styles, classical and free dance. For him, real modern dance has always based on classical ballet. Otherwise, it belonged to B-category art that might have artistic ideas but no technical abilities for expressing them artistically. For af Hällström real representatives of modern, contemporary dance were choreographers of the Ballets Russes de Serge Diaghilev and its heirs: Serge Lifar, Ninette de Valois, Robert Helpmann, Fyodor

Lopukhov, Vasily Vainonen, Julian Algo, and in Finland George Gé and Alexander Saxelin . They “put women to dance in a womanly fashion and men in a manly one, and do not tolerate soldier women nor pretentious men” (af Hällström 1946, p 21). In other words, modern women dancers who had composed their own dances had failed not only to create real dance art but also to express qualities of different gender correctly.

The close study of the first decades of Elsa Puolanne’s life has brought physical education and especially women’s gymnastics into relationship with dance, and part of the past of dance art in Finland. Different kind of features and tensions of being a woman, a Finn, a gymnast and a dancer has brought Elsa Puolanne part of complex interplay of the modern and the national in the 1920s and 1930s in Finland. These features and tensions are central and present also in her dance solo *Loitsu* that gets its meanings not only from the movements of dance but also from the context and time in which the dance is performed. So far the discussion has focused on Elsa Puolanne and dance as part of women’s gymnastics. In the next chapter my attention will be directed to dance art by examining how some particular dance writings in Finnish newspapers and magazines presented the modern and the national in dance and how these concepts appear in *Loitsu*.

NOTES

- ¹ Six founder members of the Union, Mary Hougberg, Anitra Karto, Elsa Puolanne, Esteri Suontaa, Helvi Salminen and Maija Varmaala were active in the Finnish Women’s Federation of Physical Education, and Suontaa, Puolanne and Varmaala also taught women’s gymnastics and dance for the women in the clubs of the Workers Sports Federation (The list of founder members in TeaMA 1025, *Kisakenttä* 1930-1939, Laine 2000).
- ² Concerning Elsa Puolanne’s life the text uses the interviews of Elsa Puolanne and Mirri Karpio (1990, 1992) and Mirri Karpio (2001, 2003, 2004), Elsa Puolanne’s scrapbooks, Hosiaisluoma-Karppinen (2001), Kleemola (1976, 1986, 1996), Kopponen (1983). Notes on the history of Finland are mainly based on Klinge (1999), Lehtonen (1999), Virtanen (2001), Jutikkala & Pirinen (2003) and Kervanto-Nevanlinna & Kolbe (2003).
- ³ The Finnish Literature Society 1831, the Finnish epic poem *Kalevala* 1835, the Finnish Scientists Association 1839, the first political newspaper *Saima* 1844 published by J.V. Snellman, the first Finnish Secondary School in Jyväskylä 1858, Finnish currency, mark, 1860, the Finnish National Theatre 1872, the Finnish National Opera 1911.
- ⁴ Articles appeared for instance in *Suomen Kuvalehti*, *Aitta*, *Kisakenttä*, *Urheilija*, *Helsingin Sanomat* and *Uusi Suomi*.

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- ⁵ The information related to the first dance performance that was meaningful for Elsa is confusing. Elsa Puolanne (27.2. 1990) named *Swan Lake* as the first dance performance that she had seen, but in an unnamed and undated interview in her scrapbook the honour was given to the performance of the Estonian dancer Ella Ilbak in 1922.
- ⁶ From 1926 to 1932 the school was called the Esteri Suontaa School and from 1933 the Esteri Suontaa Movement School. Elna Kopponen (1983) states her school being the first one to be called Movement School; this was in 1930. At the beginning of the 1930s movement school became a widely-used term referring to private schools that based their teaching on various German models of gymnastics and dancing
- ⁷ This article was published in 1931 when Elsa Puolanne was already an assistant teacher in the Suontaa School and not anymore among students. However, she had probably participated in similar training.
- ⁸ Hälymusiikki - "noise music", a term used for the music that gymnastic and dance students of the Suontaa School played on different percussions, such as tambourines, triangles, castanets, plates and drums, by.
- ⁹ **The Finnish Women's Gymnastics Federation** (Suomen Naisten Voimisteluliitto) founded in 1896 and divided to two separate federations, the FWFPE (39 clubs and 2440 members in 1921) and the SWPE (1100 members in 1921) in 1921.
- The Finnish Women's Federation of the Physical Education, FWFPE** (Suomen Naisten Liikuntakasvatusliitto, SNNL), a right-wing Finnish speaking women's organisation for physical education – including gymnastics, folk dances, games, camping and non-competitive sports. It joined the Finnish Gymnastics and Sports Federation in 1947.
- The Swedish Federation for Physical Education for Women in Finland, SWPE** (Svenskt förbund för fysisk fostran för Finlands kvinnor, FFF), a right-wing Swedish speaking women's organisation for physical education.
- The Finnish Gymnastics and Sports Federation, SWPE** (Suomen Voimistelu ja Urheiluliitto, SVUL founded in 1906), originally a right-wing Finnish speaking men's organisation for gymnastics and sports.
- The Workers' Sports Federation, WSF** (Työväen Urheiluliitto, TUL), a left-wing Finnish speaking organisation for gymnastic and sport, separate divisions for men and women, founded in 1919. The Civil War in 1918 reorganised women's gymnastics. Many working-class gymnasts changed their clubs and became members of the WSF.
- ¹⁰ The change of style in women's gymnastics happened first in the FWFPE, but it soon spread to the women's gymnastics clubs in the WSF, because many of their first gymnastics educators were actually members of the FWFPE, e.g. Hilma Jalkanen, Elna Kopponen and Esteri Suontaa (Laine 2000). In the Swedish speaking SWPE Elli Björkstén's old system of gymnastics remained dominant.
- ¹¹ The programme included both mass and small scale performances in gymnastics as well as games and group sports events. Among the foreign visitors were
- the Günther and Mentzler Schools from Germany, Rudolf Bode had cancelled the performance of his group at the last moment.
 - the Gymnastics Federation of Sweden, led by Lilly Dufberg
 - the Agnete Bertram School from Denmark
 - the Ollerup Institute from Denmark led by Nils Bukh
 - the Laban school of Gerd Neggo from Estonia
 - the Sokol group from Czechoslovakia
- ¹² The new women's gymnastics underlined the feminine character of body. Thus, the term 'new female gymnastics' would perhaps be a more accurate translation of Finnish concept 'uusi naisvoimistelu' than 'new women's gymnastics' generally used in English texts.

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- ¹³ For example Hilma Jalkanen, who clearly wanted to distinguish gymnastics and dance, did not hesitate to criticise dancer Cleo Nordi who performed both ballet and plastic dance in her performance in *Kisakenttä* (1924).
- ¹⁴ Helvi Salminen started to teach plastique in women's gymnastics clubs in Helsinki in the autumn of 1923 and gave summer courses in Tanhuvaara in 1924 (*Kisakenttä* 8/1923, Mäkelä 1984). Esteri Suontaa taught plastique in the gymnastic club Säkenet during the early 1920s as well as in Tanhuvaara and Varala. Both Salminen and Suontaa also opened their own private schools for gymnastics and dance in Helsinki, Salminen in 1924 and Suontaa in 1926.
- ¹⁵ According to Manning (1993) Mary Wigman made similar distinction between gymnastics and dance. An experience of movement was open for all (in gymnastics), but only the artist could transform movement into dance. The artistic talent was considered an intuitive and inborn ability to create dance.
- ¹⁶ Elsa Puolanne had given the notebook to her student Vappu Kitti (née Kitti), who has passed it to her son's wife Marjo Kuusela. Both the son Tommi Kitti and his wife Marjo Kuusela are well-known dance artists in Finland.
- ¹⁷ The private archives of Hagar Lehtikanto (TeaMA 1070), another Finnish gymnastics teacher and dancer artist of the 1930s, contain Finnish draft of the same text, and Birgit Boman (2001) has included the summary of Wigman's text in her book *Amasoner och Trollpackor* that presents four representatives of free dance between the World Wars in Sweden.
- ¹⁸ Elanto was a big store in Helsinki and member of the OTK. Elanto had its own sport and gymnastics club called Elannon Isku.
- ¹⁹ Ainikki Kivi travelled with the team but was not a member of the team. She probably used her experiences of the journey in her novel *Olympiatyttö*.
- ²⁰ The FWFPE had both official and unofficial connections with Germany. It knew that gymnastics and dance performances were planned to integrate in the Olympic Games. Finland was a candidate for the 1940 Olympics, and the decision on the host for 1940 was made in Berlin. That is why Finnish authorities established many connections with the host of the 1936 Olympic Games. A representative of the FWFPE had also escorted the delegation of the excursion board of the Ministry of Education in 1934 (Laine 2003).
- ²¹ 3 500 marks in 1936 is equivalent to 1 100 euros. It was a considerable investment for a student or even for a working woman in 1936. The FWFPE and gymnastics clubs collected some money to support the participants, but still participation was not economically possible for all.
- ²² Actually, the Finnish women's gymnastic movement would be a good case to examine how shared forms of gymnastics were used for different kinds of political and ideological purposes, as it happened in the right-wing organisation FWFPE and in the left-wing WSF.
- ²³ There seems to be some sort of confusion relating to the participants of the two first meetings of the Union of Finnish Dance Artists. On the one hand, the history of the Union (Arvelo & Räsänen 1987) mentions that the first meeting had 43 participants and the official founding meeting 47 participants. On the other hand, the archives of the Union include both a list dated 26 March 1937 with 57 signatures and another typewritten list including the same names as the handwritten list. The typewritten list has been dated 11 April 1937 and titled as the founder members of the Union. The list of founder members is given on the next page. I have arranged the list in the alphabetical order. I have also marked the lifetime and professional status of the founding members, and dancers marked with an asterisk* were permanent dancers at the Finnish Opera.
1. Apostoli Elisabeth (1903-1980), Russian ballet teacher, own ballet school in Helsinki
 2. von Bonsdorff Edith (1890-1968), originally Dane, dance artist, former member of the Ballet Suedois

3. Bröyer Martta (1897-1979), dance teacher and artist, former student of Hertta Idman, own school, **free dance**
4. Böök-Forsell Ulla, dancer at the Finnish Opera
5. Corander Bertha (1864-1955), teacher in ballet and social dances, own school, the first Finn to present ballet on points
6. Gripenberg Maggie (1861-1976), dance teacher and artist, own school, **free dance**
7. Eronen, Mira, former student of the Helsinki Dance Institute?
8. Gundborg Sage (1905-2001), dancer at the Finnish Opera
9. Havukka Ukko (1890-1959), dance critic
10. Hiltunen Kaarlo (b. 1910), actor and dancer at the Finnish Opera
11. Hjelt Dolly, dancer at the Finnish Opera, former student of Gripenberg, **free dance**
12. Hougberg Mary(1898-1964), dance teacher and artist, former student of Gripenberg, own school, worked also as dancer in Germany and Austria, **free dance**
13. Hülphers Cecilia, former student of the Helsinki Dance Institute
14. af Hällström Raoul (1899-1975) dance critic
15. Isaksson-Oksanen Ragnhild, former student of the Helsinki Dance Institute
16. Jankelow Sari (1895-1972), dancer and dance teacher, former student of Gripenberg, worked as dancer in Germany, own school, **free dance**
17. Jasinski Armas, dancer at the Finnish Opera
18. Karto Anita (1913-1960), graduated as physical educator, gymnastics and dance teacher, **free dance**
19. Karto Toini (1889-1970), gymnastics and dance teacher, own school, **free dance**
20. *Kilpinen Sofi (1911-1953), dancer at the Finnish Opera
21. Kinnunen, O. former student of the Helsinki Dance Institute??
22. *Koskinen Irja (1912-1978), dancer at the Finnish Opera
23. Kosonen Ferdinand (1884-1947), dancer at the Finnish Opera
24. Kuosmanen Elo (1883-1980) dancer at the Finnish Opera and ballet teacher, own school
25. Leiviskä Ilta (1907-1979), dance teacher at the Gripenberg School, former student of Gripenberg, **free dance**
26. Michelson Hjalmar, dancer at the Finnish Opera
27. *Nelskylä-Lindroth Sonja (b. 1918), dancer at the Finnish Opera
28. Niemi Terttu, dancer at the Finnish Opera?
29. Nieminen Greta, dancer at the Finnish Opera?
30. *Nikko Robert (1908-1941), dancer at the Finnish Opera
31. Niskanen Toivo (1887-1961), dancer and teacher in ballet, character and social dances, own school, the first male dancer in Finland
32. Paananen Tuulikki, actor and dancer
33. Paavola A. ?? = * Paavola, Nastja (b. 1913), dancer at the Finnish Opera
34. Paischeff Mary (1899-1979), dancer and ballet teacher, the first Odile-Odette in Finland
35. Pavlova Zoie, dancer at the Finnish Opera
36. Puolanne Elsa (1906-1996), graduated as physical educator, gymnastics and dance teacher at the Suontaa School, own school, **free dance**
37. Roose Irma, ??
38. Rönqvist Eugenia (1918-1949), dancer at the Finnish Opera
39. Saxelin Alexander (1899 - 1959), dancer and ballet master at the Finnish Opera
40. Salakari, Enne, former student of the Helsinki Dance Institute, dancer at the Finnish Opera?
41. *Salin Alf (1913-1973), dancer at the Finnish Opera
42. Salin Klaus (1919-1973), freelancer dancer, later a dancer at the Finnish Opera
43. Salin-Kuosmanen Iris (1906-1991), dancer at the Finnish Opera, a ballet teacher
44. Salminen Helvi (1892-1961), graduated as physical educator, gymnastics and dance teacher, own school, **free dance**
45. Sarko (former Wahlström) Edith (1907-1976), dancer at the Finnish Opera
46. Siponen Orvokki (1915-1978), dancer and dance partner of Klaus Salin
47. Soitso Tuukka, actor and dancer at the Finnish Opera
48. Suontaa Esteri (1896-1973), dance teacher, former student of Gripenberg and Idman, own school, **free dance**
49. Sederholm Mary, dancer at the Finnish Opera?
50. *Säilä Aira (1907-1991), dancer at the Finnish Opera and ballet teacher
51. Säilä - Erto Liisa (1908-1977) dancer at the Finnish Opera
52. Tähtinen Ida, former student of the Helsinki Dance Institute?

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53. Valto Elisabeth, dancer at the Finnish Opera
 54. *Varma Impi (1913-1989), dancer at the Finnish Opera
 55. *Varma Meri (b. 1910)
 56. Varmaala Maija, dance teacher, former student of Gripenberg, **free dance**
 57. Vuori Airi, former student of the Helsinki Dance Institute?

²⁴ Af Hällström pitied only on Maggie Gripenberg and Kurt Jooss. The former was the pioneer of Finnish dance and the latter combined ballet and free dance.