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## Women's Agency in Finnish Population Policy 1941-1971: A Maternalist Policy

The American cultural anthropologist Ellen Marakowitz, who researched the Finnish women's movement, proposed that women in Finland played an exceptionally central role in the project of writing the national narrative.<sup>1</sup> Marakowitz bases her claim on the fact that women were actively involved in the mass associational development at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> and in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, which resulted in the birth of the nation state, women got suffrage in national elections at the same time as men, and they won seats in the first elected Parliament in 1907. She also refers to the division of labour in the agrarian society, in which the work of both sexes was highly valued. Women built the welfare state in the areas familiar to them. Marakowitz describes especially the *Martha Organisation* which was an essential agent of so-called social motherhood since the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Finnish feminists deny Marakowitz's »strength interpretation« and emphasise women's otherness in national projects.

Population politics in which women participated as both bodily and political agents offers an arena for a closer analysis of women's contributions. Population politics was a central nationalist project in Europe in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>2</sup> If nationalism is defined as a movement claiming a group's right to a nation state, it can also imply that the state has to have sufficient population guaranteed by its professionals and the movements of civil society. In Finland at the time of the Second World War the population question was regarded as a question of the nation's fate, because the size of the population threatened to decrease. The size of the population caused concern already in the 1920s and this resulted in professional and political action to remedy the situation. A central actor was the *Population and Family Welfare Federation of Finland*, which was founded by different NGOs in 1941 to promote population increase and to control »the quality« of the population. Representatives of the nationalist movement, different political parties and professional organisations took part in the activities of the *Population and Family Welfare Federation*; it was joined both by women and by men.

It is claimed that along with population policy, the mothers' welfare and well-being became national property. Nira Yuval-Davis<sup>3</sup> argues that one of the most important tasks of women in nationalist projects is to act as biological reproducers and generators of new population. Population policy also concentrates on women as giving birth even to the extent that one can

talk about nationalising the female body.<sup>4</sup> Population policy also includes a strong idealisation of motherhood and glorification of the value of motherhood. The mother is the key person when decisions about population increase are made.

There are two ways to interpret gender and women's activities: first, by revealing the relatively timeless discursive (male) structures and women's subordinated role in them, or second, making known women's activities, aspirations and active input (like Marakowitz). Neither of these interpretation methods provides information about which is ›more true‹ than the other, but their combination possibly gives a more complex picture of reality. At the same time, however, they give differently tinged pictures of women. The former, disclosing and simplifying the gendered hegemonic discourses, colours the picture of women with submission and regulation, and the latter, concentrating on the activity of women, makes women's voices stronger. In combining these extreme viewpoints I have adopted the approach of Seth Koven and Sonya Michel and a group of researchers<sup>5</sup> towards a maternalist discourse of women. While studying the early stages of child protection in England Seth Koven found a transformable maternalist discourse.<sup>6</sup> He points out that the study could have concentrated on presenting the rhetoric of the heroic male politicians, doctors and reformers, whose voice is first heard in the data, but he ended up emphasising the women's agency.

In this article I seek to answer the question of what the influential Finnish women of the *Population and Family Welfare Federation* and the women's movement thought, how they acted and how they made their policies heard. I investigate whether they had a discourse of their own in maternity and population policy and what its content and form was. I write a kind of a »great women's« history instead of great men's, which has already been told as a masculine hero story. Influential women's difference(s) are best told by individual stories. Based on biographical information and (auto)biographical data I also ask what kind of feminist issues they promoted, how they lived (for example mothering, working and studying), in which issues can they be considered pioneers and which traditions they continued. I draw new lines between the 1930s and the so-called extended 1960s, and occasionally I even return back to the beginning of the century when I look for the origins of the thinking and policy of these politically active women. I concentrate on the years 1941 to 1971: from the founding of the *Population and Family Welfare Federation* to the coming into force of the new, relatively free abortion law which ended the epoch and changed the direction of the women's movement. The abortion issue was a negation of the entire population policy, says Riitta Auvinen,<sup>7</sup> and a threat to its success.

## What Is Maternalism?

The decades from 1920 to 1960 were characterised as intermediary years or a slack period in the women's movement, as at that time the significance of motherhood and women's specialness was emphasised. These decades of the women's movement were also characterised as welfare feminism or relative feminism, because at that time women were active in professionalis-

ing reproduction work and in issues concerning the subsistence and welfare of families. Women's policy is also characterized as conservative or reactive.<sup>8</sup> Riitta Jallinoja,<sup>9</sup> the author of the first dissertation on the Finnish women's movement, says that »the feminist movement« (i. e. the suffrage movement, women's rights movement) abated in the 1920s and she interprets this as the end of the activities of the women's movements. In her opinion »the feminist movement« did not resume its activities until the 1960s. At the turn of the century women concentrated on gaining the right to vote, and in the 1960s on establishing equality by attempting to abolish the division of labour between the sexes.

Many researchers moderately agree that the Western welfare states have a maternalist root or origin; Seth Koven and Sonya Michel also call it »the shadow welfare state«.<sup>10</sup> I notice two different emphases in the analyses: the European and the American. The American perspective<sup>11</sup> stresses the activity of women in the civil movements and especially in charity and voluntary work, and at the same time it gives the (centralised) government a negative meaning as it limits women's activities. The British analyses<sup>12</sup> are similar. The continental European perspective<sup>13</sup> values the parliamentary activity of women and their work in the state structure. The background of the different interpretations may be found in the different social situations and cultures of the two continents – the different relations of civil movements and the state – and also their interpretation in the present situation. According to Gisela Bock and Pat Thane, maternalism appeared in the parliamentary activity of women in most European countries, and it lost its significance in the 1960s. It was often connected to population policy or pronatalist policy which aims at increasing the birth rate. The question is whether women's maternalist policy was an active force claiming, for example, that family allowances and other welfare services will be paid directly to women/mothers unlike the authoritarian welfare states which were protecting mens/fathers' rights, or whether it was only a complementary policy to the pro- and anti-natalism of (male and sometimes totalitarian) population policies of European nation states. I claim that maternalist policy cannot be identified with them.<sup>14</sup>

Despite the controversial interpretations I am attracted to maternalism as a perspective of maternity and gender policy and the women's movement. I define maternalism as a political movement and a way of thinking that binds together women and children and their interests in (welfare)politics. Maternalism does not presuppose bodily motherhood. In my opinion maternalism is an excellent concept for describing a focal point of policy in the women's movements that surpasses class conflicts and runs through both the working-class and the middle-class women's movement. It is also excellent for avoiding a state interventionist interpretation that is too simple. At the beginning of my research process I thought of all population policy as relatively simple state propaganda. Little by little the picture became more complex with the concept of maternalism and the method of discursive struggle.

The Finnish women's movements can also be described as maternalist based on the activities of working class and peasant women. Irma Sulkunen,<sup>15</sup> a historian who worked on Finnish women's movements, especially on temperance movements, claims that the upper or middle class women's movement, the women's rights organisations, were an extremely small part of

the Finnish women's movement. She bases her argument on the number of members in the women's organisations at the turn of the century, for example. The *Martha Organization* – a Home Economics Extension Organization – recruited the largest number of women members in its ranks and next came the temperance organisations and religious charities.

When making comparisons to other European or American women's movements, for example, the limited urban culture in Finland and the low degree of industrialisation at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century must be taken into consideration. At the same time, however, international trends were also conveyed to Finland where they were shaped to fit into Finnish conditions. The question of whether the analysis of motherhood and maternalism presented by Anglo-American or European feminist research can be transferred to Finland as such is still relevant. Surely the answer must be no. Paid work, collectivity and social influences were also parts of the image of the mother in Finland more than in the other countries of Europe or America, where motherhood is more closely connected to the middle-class family defined as private. The institution of the male breadwinner has remained rather weak in Finland, in keeping with everyday- reality in a poor and sparsely populated country. Maternalism among working-class women was fighting, offensive, as it presented demands for society on the one hand and, on the other, it was defensive as it conversed with the middle-class women's movement.

## Women of the Finnish Nationalist Movement

That Finnish women are hard-working and the male breadwinner institution is weak can partly be explained by the wars fought on Finnish soil (the Civil War in 1918, the war of ›reds and whites‹, and the wars against the Soviet Union in 1939 and from 1941 to 1945), the heavy casualties and sparse population. According to the war-time and post-war population propaganda there were ›too few of us‹; the country had to be both reconstructed and repopulated. Every family should produce four to six children so that the Finnish population would not decrease. The baby boom generations were born at the end of the 1940s. The nationalistic emphasis on uniting the surviving population was strong at that time, and it can be regarded as the life force of the welfare state that developed later.

The *Population and Family Welfare Federation*, which conjoined various public organisations, was founded in 1941 in the name of the Finnish nationalist movement.<sup>16</sup> It was the same year Finland started the Continuation War (1941-1944) and joined Germany in its attack on the Soviet Union. Finland had previously won the Winter War (1939) but now lost the Continuation War, and thus had to surrender large parts of eastern and southern Karelia to Soviet Union.

The maternity welfare system which operates under local or municipal health authorities was largely developed by this Federation. At that time maternity welfare was renewed to cover all population groups and was placed under the control of health authorities. The network of municipal child welfare clinics was established at that time, for example, and a Finnish spe-

ciality was created, the maternity bag, which contains the basic clothes and care things for the baby's first few months.

Especially Dr. Elsa Enäjärvi-Haavio, who represented both the *Association of Academic Women* and the *Finnish Alliance*,<sup>17</sup> demanded that the programme of the *Federation* should include a statement that in order to secure the population of Finland »the ideal Finnish family should have at least six children«. However, this was too wild an objective to be recorded in the programme of the *Federation*, and the target of four children was often discussed. The ideal numbers of children were based on calculations with which the population of Finland was predicted to remain the same or grow, but not to diminish. When the *Federation* was founded, the various trends of the women's movement and active women found each other. The history of the *Population and Family Welfare Federation* describes how the issue of mothers united the female members in the administration.

The enthusiasm of the members in the administration is aptly described by a late night walk that Martta Salmela-Järvinen, the Member of Parliament, took with Dr. Elsa Enäjärvi-Haavio after a meeting of the *Federation*. Martta Salmela-Järvinen tells how the two women coming from different environments and »living on different sides of the Pitkäsilta bridge« accompanied each other between Siltasaari and Katajanokka without noticing the passage of time. As they walked and talked, all the presumed boundaries fell. There were only two mothers who were united by the responsibility for the present times and the responsibility for all the homes of the country and the mothers and children in them.<sup>18</sup>

In her history of the *Population and Family Welfare Federation* Marjatta Hietala<sup>19</sup> says that this »shared walk« has become »a legend«. The gap between the different public circles and political organisations had been so deep between the wars that its narrowing was thought to be legendary. Also the promotion of the mothers' cause in the dramatic conditions brought an unforgettable nuance to the work. War created a shared experience, for example for the *Women's Association of Work Readiness* and for the *Finnish Welfare Organisation*, in which women very practically joined their forces. The same also occurred in the *Population and Family Welfare Federation*, in which the representatives of both the middle-class and the working-class women's movements (its legal part above ground, i. e. the Social Democrats) promoted the issues of mothers and children of large families and the so-called home improvement programme, which was introduced by the *Martha Organization*. The first task of the women's organisations in the *Federation* in 1942 was to collect clothes in town and recycle them to the large families living in the countryside.

## Rakel Jalas: Moral Education, Maternity and Child Protection

When the *Women's Organisation of Finland* battled against prostitution at the beginning of the century and tried to prevent venereal disease, there were debates on the need for female doctors concentrating on moral issues. Rakel Jalas (1892-1955), one of the founders of the *Population and Family Welfare Federation* and a long-time member of its administration, later

became this kind of doctor. She continued the work of Laimi Leidenius, the first female Professor of Gynaecology in Finland, in establishing sexual morals and maternity welfare. Laimi Leidenius has been characterised as »the mother of the maternity allowance«, Rakel Jalas as »the mother of the maternity bag«.

Rakel Jalas took her doctor's degree in medicine and specialised in neurology and mental disease in 1930. In 1929 she became inspector of poor relief in the Ministry for Social Affairs, and in 1937 she was elected inspecting doctor in the Welfare and Population Department, which position she held until retirement. During and after the war she was a Member of Parliament in the *National Coalition Party*, a member of several committees and a teacher of hygiene, psychiatry and welfare work in the training programme of social workers. She was one of the founders of the *Population and Family Welfare Federation*, and she served as its board member until her death.<sup>20</sup>

Of the many organisations in which she worked one example is the *Finnish Women's Nationalist Movement* where she was the chairwoman of the morality committee. The morality committee had begun its work in 1917, when the women's organisations (*Unioni*, the *League of Finnish Feminists* and the *Finnish Women's Association*, the *Martha Organization*, the *White Ribbon* i. e. *Women's Christian Temperance Union*, etc.) gathered together to address moral issues: prostitution, the founding of a female police force, helping »fallen women«, and resisting the double standard of men. According to a history of the morality committee<sup>21</sup> the First World War had loosened sexual morals in a way which was harmful to women, children and young people. At the turn of the century the women's organisations, together with the clergy, had opposed regulated prostitution. Regulated prostitution, which means prostitution under the control of health authorities and thus a form of legalized prostitution, was formally abolished in 1907, though the phenomenon continued until 1918. The morality committee worked between the wars to raise »the sexual moral attitude« and also to protect women and children.<sup>22</sup> Later the morality committee was joined to the *Finnish Women's Nationalist Movement*, into which also the *Finnish Women's Association* was merged.

In her book *Sukuelämä terveeksi (Making Sexual Life Healthy)*<sup>23</sup> Rakel Jalas says that she examines the phenomena of sexual life »as a woman, a mother and a doctor«<sup>24</sup> and in the book she clearly aims at reforming some viewpoints. Instead of moral considerations (which had characterised the middle-class and partly also the working-class women's movements and the activities of the church and professionals at the turn of the century and during the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century) the book posits »health« as the condition to be strived for. Rakel Jalas talks about »healthy married life« and »family homes«. With »health« she means a state in which an individual (female or male) »controls and restrains« her or his sexual energy for the benefit of the community (family and nation). It is worth noting that in Rakel Jalas' opinion sexual intercourse was to be confined to marriage and mainly to reproduction; she did not promote contraceptives.

Replacing the morality rhetoric with health talk reflects the weakening of the hegemony of the Christian moral discourse and the rise of a new medicalised discourse. I interpret the medicalised attitude to be educating from the women's perspective, as it attempted to abolish the

shamefulness connected to sexuality, giving birth and conception. In talking of health, Raket Jalas regarded these as »natural« biological facts. In the book one can also clearly see the aim of breaking the sexual taboo which affected the definition of immorality.

Raket Jalas was especially concerned about the spread of venereal disease in Finland and tried to fight it with legal and medical methods. Venereal disease was much more common in the 1930s and during the war in Finland than in any other Nordic country. Jalas compared Finland to Sweden where a »lex veneris« was enacted as early as in 1918. Her health thinking, e. g. the fight against venereal diseases, was analogous and traceable to society as well. In Raket Jalas' theory individual hygiene corresponded to mental and social hygiene in society and a healthy individual to a healthy society. She talked about weak and strong individuals, even about »the dregs of society« who share an uncontrollable sexual instinct. She promoted, for example, the sterilisation of weak individuals. Based on this she wrote about the challenges of rebuilding post-war Finland in *Huoltaja (Guardian)* magazine in 1948: »Individuals who are mentally or physically poorly developed, warped and atrophied are not suitable for constructing a healthy society.«<sup>25</sup>

In Raket Jalas' race hygiene »evil« appeared in uncontrolled sexual energy and in social groups which did not »control and restrain« this energy. However, in her article in *Huoltaja* magazine she did not promote compulsory sterilisation in order to »improve the quality of the population« (although she did not exclude it totally, either), but she was in favour of maternity care, education, training for parenthood and a health certificate as prerequisites of marriage and, above all, the prevention of venereal disease.<sup>26</sup>

The strong idealisation of motherhood and the definition of women's tasks in the propaganda of the *Population and Family Welfare Federation* was partly because of Raket Jalas. »Woman is the greatest of God's miracles,« she wrote and meant especially motherhood. Obligatory motherhood was the consequence of the demands of war. She promoted marriage for women and having babies when young, in order to secure »the growth of the nation.«<sup>27</sup> I wonder if she was more like a familist than a maternalist, because she saw woman's place in the family as a very natural entity. Despite the nature allegories – which sound rather conservative – Raket Jalas tried, however, to change the image of motherhood as confined exclusively to the family. The comparison of mothers and soldiers meant public recognition of motherhood. The population committee that gave its report in 1945 asked her to provide a statement about the protection of mothers, which meant in this case the arrangements made because of giving birth. In her statement she endorsed the objective of the *Population and Family Welfare Federation* on the general system of paid maternity leave and she additionally stressed the necessity of the home help system.

I also wonder whether she was a conservative or a reformist. From the present perspective I see very conflicting elements in Raket Jalas' thinking: on the one hand the militant health analogies concerning society and on the other hand openness in talking about sexual issues. The conflict I see is also because of later developments, which Raket Jalas was unable to see. In present Finnish society the sexual taboo has been abolished and openness has increased, but race hygiene and the segregation and classification of the population have not received support. The effect of the race improvement theory (eugenics) of the 1930s and the survival



challenges caused for the Finnish people by the Winter War can be seen in her book and other writings. However, she wasn't a propagandist but a neurologist, »a servant of science«,<sup>28</sup> and race hygiene/eugenics was a scientific and professional mode in the time she lived.

### Elsa Enäjärvi-Haavio: Professionalising the Work of Housewives

Dr. Elsa Enäjärvi-Haavio (1901-1951) who was one of the founders of the *Population and Family Welfare Federation* and its first deputy chairperson, was also a researcher but she worked actively in public, too. For me she is additionally a scholar who was able to combine the care of her own small children and scientific work and she proclaimed this model for others as well.

Elsa Enäjärvi-Haavio came into the *Federation* as a representative of the *Finnish Alliance* in which the idea of founding the *Federation* was born. In her youth she also worked in the *Academic Karelia Society* and promoted the idea of kinship among the Finno-Ugric nations. Later she worked in the *Association of Academic Women* and in the *Finnish Women's National Movement*. In the 1940s she became the *National Coalition Party's* city counsellor and a parliamentary candidate.

Having a large family was a conscious political act for her.<sup>29</sup> In accordance with the spirit of the times Elsa Enäjärvi-Haavio wanted, together with her husband Dr. Martti Haavio (later Professor of Folklore), to have six children – just what she proposed as the ideal number of children in Finland generally when the *Population and Family Welfare Federation* was founded – and after several miscarriages she managed to give birth to five children. In order to guarantee the vitality of the Finnish nation and to unite the people in the name of the Finnish ideal, the educated classes had to set an example to the nation.

The task of the educated classes is to be an example in this matter also; not because it would be significant in numbers, but in principle. We cannot tell other classes to procreate, if »the gentlefolk« themselves take special liberties in this issue. In addition, hereditary perspectives must be taken into consideration. As energy and talent have been required in order to get into the educated classes, it is important that these qualities can be inherited.<sup>30</sup>

Enäjärvi-Haavio was aware that the turn-of-the-century women activists, such as Lucina Hagman (the first chair of *Unioni*), her teacher and idol, thought it best for women who wanted to educate themselves to forget about marriage. Being unmarried was an active and radical choice at the turn of the century. Even though it was believed that Lucina Hagman had a great influence on Elsa,<sup>31</sup> she did have a different opinion in the matter of women combining academic work and family life. In Elsa Enäjärvi-Haavio's opinion there was no reason for a woman not to have a family because of her studies or career. »Studying does not change the pelvis,« she answered those who demanded in the spirit of population policy that women leave their studies in order to concentrate on motherhood.



In her articles written for *Suomalainen Suomi* (*The Finnish Finland*) magazine called *Naiset ja tieteellinen työ* (*Women and Academic Work*)<sup>32</sup> Elsa Enäjärvi-Haavio lists with pleasure the experience that Finnish women had had of studying at university for the past seventy years and of academic higher education for the past fifty years. Especially in the 1930s women's university studies and academic activity had increased even in proportion to men. To counter-balance all the suspicions about women, Elsa Enäjärvi-Haavio said that »perhaps academia does not need women, but women need academia. For women too academia is one way to freedom, understanding and learning about life.« Even though this assessment is slightly defensive and seems to be in accordance with the male norm which recognised the constancy of academic work, it was radical in its own time. »However, if financial conditions are favourable, if household work can be rationalised and if there is help at hand at home, even a housewife has the possibility of doing research.« In addition to the aspirations towards equality (between genders in the field of scholarship and family life) the articles also have a strong population policy rhetoric typical of the period.

In her own academic work (e. g. studies on Helkavirret/Whitsuntide hymns<sup>33</sup>) Elsa Enäjärvi-Haavio noticed that independent scholarly work and taking care of her lectureship could easily be combined with the care of small children. However, she had considerable difficulties in getting a lectureship in the academic community, as she was characterised as an amateur, for example. There may be several reasons for the disparagement, such as her desire to blaze new trails. The existence of small children does not often raise the status of a woman in the academic community, even if she was capable of organising her work herself. It was not so much the academic work, but the compelling (population etc.) policies that threatened to create a crisis in Elsa's schedules.<sup>34</sup>

In the *Population and Family Welfare Federation* Elsa Enäjärvi-Haavio at first worked as a programme planner and a speaker at Mother's Day parties. She was also an exemplary person in publicity work.<sup>35</sup> She realised that she could become the »director of propaganda« in the *Federation*, if such a post existed, and she served as the *Federation's* vice chairwoman. A distinguished woman was needed as a figurehead beside V. J. Sukselainen, the great man of population policy who was also a minister of the *Centre Party*: »V. J. Sukselainen, the chairman, was a politician who had more urgent and important tasks than giving welcoming addresses at the functions of the *Federation* or writing articles on the issues of housewives.«<sup>36</sup> The *Federation* clearly had separate women's and men's issues; above all the training of home help belonged to the women's issues. Elsa Enäjärvi-Haavio supported the training of home help which was started by the *Federation* in 1945. Home help became an important women's profession in the welfare state.<sup>37</sup>

## Martta Salmela-Järvinen: Defending Unmarried Mothers

Martta Salmela-Järvinen (1892-1987) represents a rare species among the women working in the *Population and Family Welfare Federation*. She was a member of the working-class

women's movement and had not gained formal professional or educational qualifications. She had become qualified through the organisational activities of the Social Democratic working-class movement. Also her work as the mother of five children in extremely difficult conditions may be considered as a population policy qualification. She gave birth to seven children, two of whom died. She brought up and supported her children, especially the eldest ones, alone or with the help of relatives. Her mother was of great help in the care of the children.<sup>38</sup>

Martta Salmela-Järvinen's first husband fought in the Civil War (1918) as a member of the *Red Guard* and ended up in a prison camp after the war. Soon after he was released he was arrested again for making plans for high treason. He was released in 1922. Martta said that at the time she had to raise the children »as if their father did not exist«. Her second husband was a reporter for a working-class magazine; she writes in her diaries that he became an alcoholic.

As the wife of a »red prisoner« Martta Salmela-Järvinen suffered greatly, because she had to face the accusations made to »red widows« and she defended herself with patriotic arguments. Together with her children she went to see her husband in the prison camp. After the Civil War it was also extremely difficult for Martta to tell the children that there was no food. She remembers how the hungry children looked at the »whites« feeding sugar to the Germans' horses.<sup>39</sup>

Martta became friends with Elsa Enäjärvi-Haavio at the *Population and Family Welfare Federation*, and they discovered common political objectives which aimed at improving the position of mothers. I cannot but wonder at the power of maternalist thinking, as despite the huge class differences the two women found common interests. A history written from the class perspective or the perspective of state politics would characterise the co-operation between the Social Democrats and the right wing as »the axis of brothers-in-arms«. I myself am not convinced of the sufficiency of the class explanation, so I would characterise the co-operation among feminist researchers as »the axis of welfare sisters«.<sup>40</sup>

Before the birth of her children Martta Salmela-Järvinen had worked in a book bindery. She became a professional politician in 1932 when she was the mother of three children. She toured as a speaker in the various functions of working-class organisations. She also wrote plays, magazine articles and the manuscript for the educational film on population policy *Tuhottu nuoruus (Destroyed Youth)*. In 1941 she was elected a Member of Parliament for the *Social Democratic Party*.

She was nominated the deputy chairwoman in the *Population and Family Welfare Federation* and the chairwoman of the home help committee after Elsa Enäjärvi-Haavio in 1951. In her diaries Martta says that she »cannot do as much as Elsa did« and that according to V. J. Sukselainen »a new figurehead was needed«.<sup>41</sup> I cannot claim that Martta Salmela-Järvinen reformed some branch of science or profession, nor did she open up new discussions or change the meaning of a term. Instead I can say that she laudably defended the position of unmarried mothers and their children and the right of poor women to motherhood. In this respect she

continued the tradition of Miina Sillanpää, the first female minister in Finland, and the Social Democratic working-class women's movement. There are not many entries about the *Population and Family Welfare Federation* in her diaries, instead there are entries about other welfare organisations connected to the *Social Democratic Party*.

The emphasis on motherhood and the social policy reforms connected to mothers were of utmost importance in the activities of the Social Democratic working-class women's movement. The mother-and-child home was one of the most important of these. In the discussion on the position of unmarried women and their children the aim of the working-class women's movement had been to secure the rights of poor women and the same attitude still prevailed in the abortion issue in the 1960s.<sup>42</sup> Martta was a member of the abortion committee in the 1960s.

In 1970 Martta Salmela-Järvinen wrote in the *Lääkäri ja yhteiskunta (Doctor and Society)* magazine, published by the *Federation*, that allowing abortion for social reasons may lead to the denial of unmarried motherhood. Thus the legislature had added to the old prejudices against unmarried mothers, and society feared the costs caused by this.

I am afraid that after this an unmarried mother who, despite everything, wants to have her child is seen as a stupid member of society, if she defiantly refuses to accept ›help‹ offered by society in destroying the child. (...) It is forgotten that giving birth to a child is a biological event in a woman's life, and no-one has the right to deny it to her, after all, no-one can make her become a mother against her will, either.<sup>43</sup>

Unlike the younger, more radical generation of women, Martta Salmela-Järvinen was not in favour of free abortion without restrictions, but she did not actively oppose it either. The representatives of the Social Democratic working-class women's movement promoted activities protecting motherhood, such as paid maternity leave, to be enacted at the same time as the abortion reform. They did not want to prohibit abortions on social grounds, but in addition to abortion rights they paid attention to social support measures of motherhood and contraceptive advice. Abortion was seen to work in unequal conditions against poor working-class women, especially if they were not married. The doubts about the effects of abortion on working-class women is thus explained with the previous struggle about the reproductive rights of unmarried mothers. The arguments were both maternalist, against anti-natalism and favourable to working-class women.

In relation to abortion Martta Salmela-Järvinen had quite the same opinion as the *Federation*, but she did not defend housewifery like the rest of the Federation, especially male actors. A conflict and tension between the »housewife-ministers«, women of the *Centre Party* (who concentrated on mothers' wages), and the »working-class woman ministers« (who concentrated on maternity leave and children's day care) coloured both the Finnish maternity policy and the construction of the welfare state in general. Universal paid maternity leave was delayed by many decades because of the conflicting housewife politics of the *Centre Party* and the

Social Democrats' policy on gainfully employed mothers.<sup>44</sup> Social Democrats, such as Martta Salmela-Järvinen and Tyyne Leivo-Larsson, used different maternalist arguments than the representatives of the Centre Party.

### Leena Valvanne: Maternity Welfare and Family Planning

Leena Valvanne (born in 1920), the Health Care Counsellor, was characterised as the »state midwife« because her most important work concerns developing Finnish maternity welfare. She was also a trade union activist and a well-known public figure.

Leena Valvanne became a registered midwife in 1944 and worked as a hospital midwife for a few years. In 1949 she began working as a secretary in the Public Health Office of the *Population and Family Welfare Federation* and as a social worker in the first Social Welfare Office. In addition to being a health care professional, Leena Valvanne gained a lot of social scientific knowledge and skills. In order to become »socially« qualified she specialised in social work at the School of Nursing in 1952 and received her Master's degree in Political Sciences in 1962. She says that the turning point in her life was the moment when she began her studies in Political Sciences in 1956.<sup>45</sup> I interpret the above-mentioned social scientific qualification as a part of midwives' criticism of medicalisation. The solutions offered by medical science were too narrow for maternity policy and midwives themselves, whose institutional position was also threatened at the end of the 1950s. Thus Leena Valvanne did not develop health and maternity care in a narrow medical way, but also included a broader social aspect in her activities.

Leena Valvanne wrote guidebooks and magazine articles on maternity welfare and she was the editor of *Kätilölehti (Midwife Magazine)*. She served as the chairwoman of the *Midwives' Union* from 1970 to 1983. Her dedication to the *Population and Family Welfare Federation* is part of her social qualifications, which also continued after her retirement. She was nominated in the administration of the *Federation* in 1977 and has worked as its deputy chairwoman since 1982.

The *Population and Welfare Federation* delegated by the National Board of Health issued statements on abortion, in which it interpreted the first 1950 law on abortion, but granted abortion usually only on medical grounds or denied it. The *Federation's* »work against abortion« was very prominent and abortion was regarded almost an unpatriotic act. Abortion was granted in extreme cases only, that is to about one fifth of the applicants.<sup>46</sup> When Leena Valvanne started as a social worker in the Social Welfare Office of the *Federation* she soon faced very difficult social issues. In the 1950s the Social Welfare Office tried to solve the difficult situations of single mothers, married women and those seeking abortion by the means of social work. Leena Valvanne describes her work as being very hard:

When I finished my work on Friday nights, after having listened non-stop to the troubles of sometimes as many as twenty crying women who came to apply for an abortion, I felt that there was no room in the world for anything else but alcohol abuse; for

violent, often sexually disturbed behaviour; financial difficulties and squalid housing conditions.<sup>47</sup>

Leena Valvanne says that when the work of the Social Welfare Office was planned it was thought that those most in need of help were single pregnant women. But it became evident later that they were only a fraction of the clients. Appointments were mostly made by married women who applied for the termination of their pregnancies.<sup>48</sup>

The large number of those applying for abortion and their situation was a shock to someone dedicated to population policy, who had also been trained in health care to »protect life«. Her work in the Social Welfare Office as the person receiving abortion applications and as the social worker solving conflicts proved to be a test of her professional ethics as a midwife, but it was not easy for her as the mother of small children either. After working there for some time, Leena Valvanne adopted the profession of a housewife. She had three children. However, she soon took the post of teaching midwives and after that she worked as the city midwife.

Since the beginning I enjoyed working in the Child Welfare Clinic. When I compared it to the times at the Social Welfare Office of the Population and Family Welfare Federation, it felt as if I had ascended from the darkness of a ravine to sunshine. I was like a sower who was allowed to throw all her seeds onto readily tilled fertile soil. Soon everything began to flourish.<sup>49</sup>

Due to her professional ethics as a midwife, working in a Child Welfare Clinic with mothers and babies was more rewarding than solving conflicts. She describes her work as a midwife there: »To be able to work with babies every day! To bathe, swathe and take care for them!«<sup>50</sup>

In many of the memoirs written by midwives<sup>51</sup> abortions are hardly mentioned, even though it is known that they were rather common in Finland. The efforts of giving birth to new life and cherishing it suffuse the midwives' stories; the dark side of life with abortions seems to be excluded and rejected. For her own part Leena Valvanne made the abortion issue an issue of family planning; she never promoted free abortion. Feminist arguments highlighting women's rights to their own bodies were not used in this debate.

The interrelation of Finnish midwives, such as Leena Valvanne, and male authorities was mostly one of consensus and co-operation.<sup>52</sup> The relation of Leena Valvanne to the great men of population policy was based on the art of paying attention to one's co-workers, too. Midwives seem to have the same kind of attitude to male doctors. The memoirs and histories of midwives talk about male doctors with praise and esteem, or at least they emphasise partnership with them. Histories have largely been outlined according to the dominant periods of leading male doctors. The voice of midwives cannot be heard outside their own practical sector and area of competence. They were not supposed to present their own opinions on abortion or birth control, for example, before the male authorities in specialised journals, not even in *Kättilölehti* (*Midwife Magazine*) until the 1960s.

But Leena Valvanne was critical about other directions. With her work she propagated the ideas of »gentle birth« and »active labour«. In the 1960s she worked to admit fathers into the delivery room and to promote shared and equal parenthood. She participated actively in the discursive struggle in specialised journals. At first fathers were thought to make the women feel better and the delivery quicker; it was not until later that the importance of the father-child relationship was discussed. She fought »a battle for admitting fathers in the delivery room«, as she puts it, against the leading male doctors and rigid public attitudes.<sup>53</sup> Later female professionals also started paying attention to the disadvantages caused to mothers and babies of the excessive medicalisation of giving birth at hospitals.

## The Maternalist Discourse and Polyvocality of Women

The influential women in Finnish population policy and the *Finnish Nationalist Movement* all represent the maternalist trend of the women's movement and its emphasis on motherhood. If the women's movement is understood broadly – as defending women's rights and working in the non-governmental organisations and trade unions which are differentiated according to gender – the women's movement can be talked about in connection to the female activists in the *Population and Family Welfare Federation*. At the same time as one discovers the maternalist emphasis of their policy, one can see the large number of subject positions in which the maternalist arguments arise.

Above I addressed the vast class distinctions which existed between Elsa Enäjärvi-Haavio and Martta Salmela-Järvinen, but which did not stop them from becoming friends and finding shared political objectives. I considered the strength of the maternalist policy as it brought women together across class divisions. But it was also political rhetoric aimed at uniting the nation.

The generation gaps were considerable. The period of the women's movement which I researched covers several generations of female professionals and actors. Rakel Jalas and Leena Valvanne were from totally different generations, the products of different times, even though both of them were socially oriented health care professionals. They had different relationships to medicalisation and medical discourse, for example.

The maternalist discourse does not exist in a discursive vacuum; it is indicated in the numerous discussions, ideas and ideologies in which the active women in the *Population and Family Welfare Federation* exercised influence. Sometimes the maternalist discourse is almost completely subsumed in both the Christian moral discourse and the population policy and medical discourse. That happened especially during the war. At that time it was very difficult to distinguish maternalist and population policy discourses. Alisa Klaus noticed this, too, when she studied the welfare programmes for mothers and children in France at the turn of the century.<sup>54</sup> This is also true in Finland. When the Finnish nation was threatened by the Soviet Union, women, nationalists and population activists had a common voice.

However, the aims of the maternalist trend of the women's movement cannot be totally identified with the aims of population policy, even though both of them emphasised the significance of motherhood. Active women had their own reasons for promoting pro-natalist policy. The emphasis on motherhood had been very strong in the women's movement at the turn of the century, and the population policy challenges caused by the Second World War brought up the maternalist discussions again. Many reformatory efforts for improving women's positions and the way they were treated, which had originated at the turn of the century, took a step forward. On one hand population policy was a possibility for the women's movement and on the other it was an obstacle. Women thought that population policy would raise women's value as the ones giving birth and hoped that it would help improve their position.

The wars fought on Finnish soil make the Finnish population policy and women's activities completely unique. The population issue in Finland appeared such a fateful national cause for the women activists, too, that they adopted it. I cannot assess how conscious the women's political »strategy and tactics« were. Naturally, the women's activities and objectives were shaped according to the opportunities available in each period.<sup>55</sup>

Discursive settings change greatly in time. Some discourses had long cycles and some had short ones. The racial-hygienic discourse had the shortest cycle as it belonged to militant nationalism and was defeated in the Second World War. Maternity welfare seems rather clearly to have had a racial-hygienic root, and maternalist arguments were occasionally merged with racial-hygienic arguments in the speeches of some women pioneers of maternity welfare. If the women's action, such as the sexual moral protection of motherhood, were not taken into account, active women (like Rakele Jalas) would later be seen in an unfavourable light and condemned by history. Similarly in the health services undertaken by child welfare clinics (which in the definitions of the contemporaries represented positive racial hygiene), the side which refines, controls and represses the bodies of women would be emphasised. After the Second World War the protection of motherhood was continued in a new discursive composition and a new political situation.

The hegemony of the Christian moral discourse was replaced by the medical and population political discourses in the studied period. The most active challenger of the hegemonic discourse over time has been the socialist equality discourse, which partially transformed into social scientific equality discourse in the 1960s. By this I mean that without wanting to emphasise the class narrative, Finnish society appears, from the perspective of maternity and gender politics, as a class society in the researched period. The educated younger generation of women, who promoted free abortion, were clearly different from the women who represented maternalist politics and were against abortion. In the abortion debate they talked about equality between the sexes, but mostly they appealed to equality between the different social groups and regions of the country.<sup>56</sup>

When one thinks about women's agency in population policy one notices that women clearly had their own positions, own voices and influence over the substance of politics; women were actively involved in matters related to the family. Women and men seemed to have com-



plementary tasks in the national project. Apart from complementariness there was also struggle. When population politics made the mother and child political and raised their welfare to the core of building the nation, men defined these »women's issues« more and more through the discourses of medicalisation and familialism. Women have resisted excessive medicalisation.

But what about familism which is very close to the maternalist policy? On one hand maternalism itself expresses women's effort to break free of the nationalist family concept (e. g. of Hegel and Snellman), in which women are situated in the private and protected core of the nation and family, to widen their scope into public arenas and to individualise the mother and the child. Women have used motherhood and family values as calling cards, in a sense, in order to gain influence over the substance of politics and presence where politics is really made. Familism offers women a place in the private sphere of life, whereas maternalism simultaneously also breaks free of it into the public arenas. Women's way of defending family values has, apart from times of national crisis, included the aim of the right to self-definition, for example to reproductive choice.

## Notes

- 1 Ellen Louise Marakowitz, *Gender and Nationalism in Finland: The Domestication of the National Narrative*, Columbia University 1993.
- 2 See Eric Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalisms since 1780. Programme, Myths, Reality*, Melksham 1990.
- 3 Nira Yuval-Davis, *Gender & Nation*, London 1997.
- 4 On Swedish population policy see Ann-Katrin Hatje, *Befolkningfrågan och välfärden. Debatten om familjepolitik och nativitetökning under 1930- och 1940-talen*, Stockholm 1974; on the Finnish one see Ritva Nätkin, *Kamppailu suomalaisesta äitiydestä. Maternalismi, väestöpolitiikka ja naisten kertomukset*. Helsinki 1997, my social policy dissertation at the University of Tampere; Finnish critical viewpoints on gender and nationality are expressed in Tuula Gordon, Katri Komulainen u. Kirsti Lempiäinen, eds., *Suomineitonen, hei. Kansallisuuden sukupuoli*, Tampere 2002.
- 5 Seth Koven and Sonya Michel, eds., *Mothers of a New World: Maternalist Politics and the Origin of the Welfare States*, New York and London 1993.
- 6 Seth Koven, *Borderlands: Women, Voluntary Action, and Child Welfare in Britain, 1840-1914*, in: Koven and Michel, eds., *Mothers*, as in note 5, 94-135.
- 7 R. Auvinen is a representative of the younger generation of influential women of the Federation and a researcher who writes about the protection of motherhood and health education in the history of the fifty-year-old Federation; Riitta. Auvinen, *Äitiyssuojelusta terveystieteeseen*, in: Ritva Taskinen, ed., *Perheen puolesta. Väestöliitto 1941-1991*, Helsinki 1991, 205-242.
- 8 Gisela Bock and Pat Thane, eds., *Maternity and Gender Policies: Women and the Rise of European Welfare States 1880s-1950s*, London and New York 1991.
- 9 Riitta Jallinoja, *Suomalaisen naisliikkeen taistelukaudet. Naisasialiike naisten elämäntilanteen muutoksen ja yhteiskunnallis-aatteellisen murroksen heijastajana*, Helsinki 1983.
- 10 Seth Koven and Sonya Michel, *Introduction: »Mother Worlds«*, in: Koven and Michel, *Mothers*, as in note 5, 1-42.
- 11 Theda Skocpol, *Protecting Soldiers and Mothers. The Political Origin of Social Policy in the United States*, Harvard 1992; Koven and. Michel, *Mothers*, as in note 5.
- 12 Koven, *Borderlands*, as in note 6.
- 13 Bock and Thane, *Maternity*, as in note 8; also Alisa Klaus, *Depopulation and Race Suicide: Maternalism and Pronatalist Ideologies in France and the United States*, in: Koven and Michel, *Mothers*, as in note 5, 188-212; and

- Barbara Hobson, *Feminist Strategies and Gendered Discourses in Welfare States: Married Women's Right to Work in the United States and Sweden*, in: *Ibid.*, 396–430.
- 14 See also Klaus, *Depopulation*, as in note 13.
- 15 Irma Sulkunen, *Retki naishistoriaan*, Helsinki 1991.
- 16 The national awakening began in the 1870s when Finland was an autonomous part of Russia. It included the national romanticism engaged in by intelligentsia, (old and young) Fennoman politics, temperance movements, popular education and promoting Finnish language. The Hegelian nation concept was represented by senator J. W. Snellman. Finnishness was constructed from heterogeneous cultural elements; one threat was the russification the eastern parts of Finland, Karelia. Women's and workers' questions were part of the discussions. See Ilkka Liikanen, *Fennomania ja kansa*, Helsinki 1995. The *National Coalition Party*, founded in 1918 after the civil war and the independence of Finland, was a successor to the Fennomans.
- 17 The *Finnish Alliance* is an NGO which was founded in 1906 to celebrate the 100<sup>th</sup> birthday of J. W. Snellman. Its purpose was to strengthen the sense of national identity and to promote Finnish education and culture. One of its achievements was the mass fennication of family names.
- 18 Mari Rauttamo, ed., *Valistusjärjestöstä toimeenpanevaksi väestöpoliittiseksi elimeksi. Väestöliiton syntyhistoria ja liiton toimintaa vuosina 1941-1960*, Helsinki 1980, 20. Rauttamo's volume is the first history of the *Federation*.
- 19 Marjatta Hietala, *Kotisisar äidin sijaisena*, in: Taskinen, *Perheen*, as in note 7, 128–176.
- 20 Her career is documented in Mirja Satka's article on the ideals of female citizens during the war, *Sota-ajan naiskansalaisen ihanteet naisjärjestöjen arjessa*, in: Anneli Anttonen, Lea Henriksson and Ritva Nätkin, eds., *Naissten hyvinvointivaltio*. Tampere 1994, 73–96, which is a book by a women's research group concerning women's agency in the construction of Finnish welfare state; see also Mirja Satka, *Making Social Citizenship. Conceptual Practices from the Finnish Poor Law to Professional Social work*, University of Jyväskylä 1995.
- 21 *Naiset ja siveellisyys. Selostus naisjärjestöjen siveellisyyskokouksesta v. 1917*, Helsinki 1919.
- 22 Aina Lähteenoja, *Neljännesvuosisata yhteiskunnallista valistustyötä. Suomen naisten kansallisiiton siveellisyyskomitean 25-vuotinen toiminta*, Helsinki 1943.
- 23 Rakel Jalas, *Sukuelämä terveeksi*, Porvoo and Helsinki 1941.
- 24 My knowledge of Rakel Jalas is less biographical and more professional than that of Elsa Enäjärvi-Haavio, Martta Salmela-Järvinen and Leena Valvanne. It's known that she belonged to the first generation of female officials who were married and had children.
- 25 Rakel Jalas, *Terve yksilö – terve yhteiskunta*. in: *Huoltaja* 6 (1948), 97–98.
- 26 Rakel Jalas, *Miten väestöpolitiikkamme nykyoloissa voidaan huomioida väestön laadullinen parantaminen*, in: *Huoltaja* 13–14 (1943), 327–331 and 343–347. Dr. Markku Mattila from the University of Tampere has recently counted from archives that 4.435 persons were ordered to be sterilized against their own will between the years 1935–1970 according the Sterilization Law 1935. He wrote his Finnish history dissertation concerning race hygiene in Finland and the preparation of the law; Markku Mattila, *Kansamme parhaaksi. Rotuhygienia Suomessa vuoden 1935 sterilointilakiin asti*, Helsinki 1999.
- 27 Rakel Jalas, *Nainen ja yhteiskunta*, in: *Huoltaja* 22 (1941), 404–407; Rakel Jalas, *Nainen uuden sukupolven äitinä*, in: *Huoltaja* 24 (1941), 444–445.
- 28 Lähteenoja, *Neljännesvuosisata*, as in note 22, 92–93.
- 29 Based on Elsa Enäjärvi-Haavio's diaries Ritva Sievänen-Allen wrote a biography in which the politics and the spirit of the times are merged with private destiny. Sievänen-Allen documented Elsa's career as well as the everyday life in the Federation: Ritva Sievänen-Allen, *Tyttö venheessä. Elsa Enäjärvi-Haavio elämä 1901–1951*, Helsinki 1993.
- 30 *Ibid.*, 290.
- 31 Her daughters wrote an article on her as one of the influential women in Finland; Marjatta Koskijoki and Elina Haavio-Mannila, Elsa Enäjärvi-Haavio, in: *Suoma Pohjanpalo, Tuulikki Jääsalo and Irma Rantavaara*, eds., *Suomalaisia vaikuttajanaisia*, Helsinki 1977, 240–241.
- 32 *Suomalainen Suomi, I and II*, (1947), 174–182 and 237–241.
- 33 *Whitsuntide Hymns* are a mediaeval tradition where maidens sing together in the early summer. They are known as a religious tradition, but they can also be seen as pagan sacrifices and a fertility rite; Elsa Enäjärvi-Haavio was

- interested in Whitsuntide Hymns as a part of national poetry presented by women, Sievänen-Allen, Tyttö, as in note 29, 247-249.
- 34 Koskijoki and Haavio-Mannila, Enäjärvi-Haavio, as in note 31; Sievänen-Allen, Tyttö, as in note 29, 336.
- 35 In 1930s and 1940s she was in public more like a mother and population policy activist. Nowadays she is in public as the first wife of professor Martti Haavio (known also as a poet named P. Mustapää). Their daughter has now edited four books concerning their diaries and letters between the years 1920-1942. The latest is titled »Towards east«; Katarina Eskola, ed., Itään. Elsa Enäjärvi-Haavion ja Martti Haavion päiväkirjat ja kirjeet 1941-1942. Helsinki 2002.
- 36 Sievänen-Allen, Tyttö, as in note 29, 317-318.
- 37 Hietala, Kotisisar, as in note 19, 128-176; see also Leila Simonen, Contradictions of the Welfare States, Women and Caring, Acta Universitatis Tamperensis ser. A, vol. 295, Tampere 1990.
- 38 See her memoirs: Martta Salmela-Järvinen, Alas lyötiin vanha maailma. Muistikuvia ja näkymiä vuosilta 1906-1918, Helsinki 1966; her career is also documented in a dissertation: Maria Lähteenmäki, Mahdollisuuksien aika. Työläisnaiset ja yhteiskunnan muuttos 1910-1930-luvun Suomessa, Bibliotheca Historiaca 2, Helsinki 1995.
- 39 Salmela-Järvinen, Alas, as in note 38, 145.
- 40 See Anttonen et. al, Naisten, as in note 20.
- 41 Työväenarkisto/Workers' Archives, Helsinki.
- 42 At the beginning of the century female social democrat MPs concentrated on the position of unmarried mothers and introduced initiatives in parliament. They saw them as victims of class oppression and sexual abuse by a rich seducer. The upper class women did not show much sympathy to unmarried mothers, as it was often their own servants and perhaps husbands as well that were involved. Finally, in the 1940s the mother-child homes (so called First Homes founded by social democrats) got financial support from the state.
- 43 Martta Salmela-Järvinen, Ensi Kotien Liitto 25 vuotias, in: Lääkäri ja yhteiskunta, 4 (1970), 76-77.
- 44 Jaana Kuusipalo, Emännät ja työläisnaiset 1930-1950 – lukujen politiikassa – oppaina Tyyne Leivo-Larsson ja Vieno Simonen, in: Anttonen et al., Naisten, as in note 20, 157-178.
- 45 See her memoirs Leena Valvanne, Rakkautta pyytämättä. Valtakunnankättilö muistelee, Helsinki 1986, 163.
- 46 Auvinen, Äitiyssuojelusta, as in note 7, 205-242.
- 47 Valvanne Rakkautta, as in note 45, 118.
- 48 Ibid., 116.
- 49 Ibid., 160.
- 50 Ibid.
- 51 See for example the memoirs of a municipal midwife from the 1940 to the 1960s Anna Luoto, Kun ei ollut rahaa tehtiin lapsi, Helsinki 1991.
- 52 Leena Valvanne read my dissertation (Nätkin, Kampailu, as in note 4) where I analysed the agency of the four influential women of Finnish population policy, and she was also there when I defended my dissertation at the University of Tampere. She seemed to be satisfied with the analysis, but a bit confused because I had characterised the policy of the midwives as »co-operative and consensus-minded« especially towards the male doctors.
- 53 Valvanne, Rakkautta, as in note 45, 222.
- 54 Klaus, Depopulation, as in note 13, 188-212.
- 55 The Finnish and Swedish population policy discussions have similar characteristics, but perhaps the war fought in Finland made the population issue and threat a more fateful national cause and central motive for active women in Finland. Yvonne Hirdman says in her study on Alva Myrdal that the population threat was actually instrumental for her other aspirations to improve the position of women. Alva Myrdal fell into opposition to population policy, as she was not elected to the population committee of Sweden, where her husband Gunnar Myrdal actively worked. Yvonne Hirdman said also that it was hard to »capture« Alva Myrdal's feminism and world view in a specific framework, and that she is not sure whether Alva Myrdal herself would be satisfied; Yvonne Hirdman, Alva Myrdal – En studie i feminism, in: Kvinnovetenskaplig Tidskrift 4 (1988), 15-31.
- 56 The most active group of women lobbying politicians to accept a social indication of abortion were the Communist women (*Finnish Women's Democratic League*). This group was not active in the large NGOs doing family and population policy (like the *Population and Family Welfare Federation*), because at the time those organisations started, the Communists were illegal and underground. However, after the war they had parliamentary influence.