FROM RACIAL SELECTION TO POSTWAR DECEPTION

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THE NAPOLAS AND DENAZIFICATION

By TIM MUELLER, M.A., B.A. (Hon.)

A Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies in Partial Fulfilment
of the Requirements for the Degree Doctor of Philosophy

McMaster University DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY (2016), Hamilton, Ontario (History)

TITLE: From Racial Selection to Postwar Deception: The Napolas and Denazification

AUTHOR: Tim Mueller, M.A., B.A. (Hon.) (McMaster University) SUPERVISOR: Professor Pamela Swett NUMBER OF PAGES: xiii, 273

Lay Abstract

This investigation examines the legacy of the Third Reich through the prism of education. After the collapse of the Nazi regime in 1945, the United States, Great Britain, the Soviet Union and France divided Germany into four zones of occupation and introduced a wide-ranging program of denazification. Former administrators, teachers and pupils of the Napolas, boarding schools for the Third Reich's future elite, were among those affected by the purge. The Napolas had enjoyed an intimate relationship to Heinrich Himmler's SS between 1936 and 1945, due in large part to the schools' emphasis on racial purity and premilitary training. Yet Napola apologists responded to postwar prosecution by denying the schools' role in Nazi plans for European domination. Their constructed memories rehabilitated the Napolas' postwar image and successfully reintegrated alumni into West German society. The Napolas' "postwar legend" has since become the defining characteristic of Napola alumni associations' collective identities.

Abstract

This investigation examines the origins and function of the Napolas, boarding schools for the Third Reich's future elite, before 1945 and demonstrates how those connected to the schools rehabilitated their experiences as students and teachers in the early postwar period and in the years since reunification. Between 1933 and 1945, the Napolas recruited racially valuable children and prepared them for leadership roles in Nazi Germany's Thousand-Year Reich. The schools' emphasis upon racial purity and premilitary training caught the attention of Heinrich Himmler and the SS. The appointment of August Heißmeyer, a high-ranking SS official, to the position of Napola inspector in 1936 opened the door for closer relations between the two organizations. Although the Napolas remained formally under the auspices of the Reich Education Ministry for the entirety of the Nazi dictatorship, the schools were gradually absorbed into the SS' sphere of influence after 1936. The Napolas ceased to exist with the defeat of Nazi Germany in 1945. Due to the Napolas' past ties to the SS, one of seven organizations deemed criminal by the International Military Tribunal at Nuremberg, former administrators, teachers, and pupils of the schools were caught in the crosshairs of the Allied denazification program. Legal changes in the U.S. Occupation Zone in March 1946 gave Napola apologists an opportunity to challenge Allied accusations regarding the Napolas' past as Nazi sites of indoctrination. As a result, a collective defense of the Napolas began to emerge, growing in repute and complexity as the denazification process continued. By 1949, the Napolas' "postwar legend," an exonerative tale of the schools' history during the Third Reich, had not only stalled prosecution indefinitely, but also

successfully reintegrated alumni into West German society. The postwar myth that exonerated the schools survived challenges during the Bonn Republic more or less unscathed. The willingness of former Napola pupils to recast their experiences as Nazi elite students in a positive light indicates that the Napolas' postwar legend has lost none of its persuasiveness in unified Germany.

Acknowledgements

I owe a tremendous amount of gratitude to many individuals who have directly and indirectly supported this project over the past five-years. To begin with, I would like to thank my parents, Klaus and Carmen. Their unconditional love and support made me the person I am today. My parents have dedicated their entire lives to helping their children achieve their dreams and for that I will forever be grateful. Without them, I would never have played soccer, learnt to play the piano or saxophone, let alone moved across the world to complete three degrees at a Canadian university. I am also grateful to have the support of a wonderful sister, Eva, who, despite being five-years younger, already has more publications to her name than I. Applying to Graduate School at McMaster University turned out to be the best decision I have made in my life for both professional and personal reasons. During my M.A. year, I met my best friend and life partner, Brittany, who has since foolishly agreed to marry me. As a fellow European historian, her academic expertise and emotional support through the many ups and downs of a Ph.D. program were vital to the success of this project.

I could not have completed Graduate Studies at McMaster University without the support of my M.A. and Ph.D. supervisor Dr. Pamela Swett, who always went above and beyond the call of duty to help me succeed. Dr. Swett believed in me and this project from Day 1, but was also not afraid to let me make my own mistakes along the way. Five years later, I can confidently say that her professionalism and patience have made me a better historian. I am also grateful for the mentorship of my committee members Dr. Martin Horn and Dr. Tracy McDonald. Their extensive feedback on chapter drafts made

me a better writer and researcher. Moreover, their help with administrative matters (eg. scholarships, professionalization opportunities, research ethics applications) was indispensable. Lastly, I would like to thank Wendy Benedetti and Debbie Lobban for their friendship and support throughout my undergraduate and graduate degrees at McMaster University.

I could not have completed my research in Germany without the assistance of my local contacts in Weierhof and Neubeuern, Reinhard Käsinger and Steffen Wagner. Without their help, I could not have recruited interview participants, accessed original source materials, or personally toured former Napola sites. I owe a special thanks to Dr. Laurence Mussio, whose friendship and mentorship over the past four years have shown me the utility of a history degree beyond the realm of academia.

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List of Abbreviations

AHS	*Adolf Hitler Schulen* (Adolf Hitler Schools)
BDM	*Bund Deutscher Mädel* (League for German Girls)
BEA	*Bundeserziehungsanstalten* (Austrian Federal Boarding Schools)
CDU	*Christlich Demokratische Union* (Christian Democratic Union)
ETOUSA	European Theater of Operations, United States Army
FRG	Federal Republic of Germany
GDR	German Democratic Republic
GESTAPO	*Geheime Staatspolizei* (Secret State Police)
HJ	*Hitlerjugend* (Hitler Youth)
JCS	Joint Chiefs of Staff
KLV	*Kinderlandverschickung* (Evacuation of Children to the Countryside)
KPD	*Kommunistische Partei Deutschlands* (German Communist Party)
MCC	Mennonite Central Committee

NPEA	*Nationalpolitische Erziehungsanstalten* (National Political Education Institutes)
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NSDAP	*Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei* (National Socialist German Workers' Party)
NSDStB	*Nationalsozialistischer Deutscher Studentenbund* (National Socialist German Students' League)
NSLB	*Nationalsozialistischer Lehrerbund* (National Socialist Teachers' League)
OKW	*Oberkommando der Wehrmacht* (Supreme Command of the Armed Forces)
OMGUS	Office of Military Government, United States
REM	*Reichserziehungsministerium* (Reich Ministry of Education)
RM	*Reichsmark* (German Currency)
RuSHA	*SS-Rasse- und Siedlungshauptamt* (SS Race and Settlement Office)
SA	*Sturmabteilung* (Storm Troopers)
SED	*Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands* (Socialist Unity Party of Germany)
SHAEF	Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force
SOPADE	German Social Democratic Party in Exile

SPD	*Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands* (Social Democratic Party of Germany)
SS	*Schutzstaffel* (Protection Squadron)
Stabilas	*Staatliche Bildungsanstalten* (State Boarding Schools during the Weimar Republic)
UN	United Nations
UNRRA	United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Agency
USAREUR	United States Army Europe
VVN	*Vereinigung der Verfolgten des Naziregimes* (Association of Victims of the Nazi Regime)

Declaration of Academic Achievement

Tim Mueller is the sole author of this dissertation.

Introduction

On the morning of September 14, 1935, Adolf Hitler spoke before 54 000 Hitler Youth members on the Nazi party rally grounds in Nuremberg. His speech gave birth to the often-cited phrase Aryan youth had to be as "swift as greyhounds, tough as leather, and hard as Krupp steel."[1] On May 28, 1936, the *Schwarze Korps*, the weekly newspaper of the SS, used Hitler's slogan to publish an illustrated, full-page spread about the National Political Education Institutes (*Nationalpolitischen Erziehungsanstalten*, or Napolas), the regime's most prominent elite schools. The article's opening sentences read, "Nowhere has Hitler's appeal [from September 14, 1935] found more resonance than in the education program of the National Political Education Institutes."[2]

In this dissertation, I seek to add to our knowledge about the origins and function of the Napolas before 1945 and demonstrate how those connected to the schools sought to rehabilitate their experiences as students and teachers in the early postwar period and in the years since reunification. I will demonstrate that the schools not only contributed to the militarization of youth, as has been long assumed, but that they also fit into larger Nazi goals of empire, as schools in the Altreich built on German and European traditions of elite education, sought ties with schools beyond German borders, and contributed to the Nazis' Germanization project through the establishment of new schools and recruitment of boys with 'Aryan' traits in the occupied territories.

[1] Adolf Hitler, Speech of September 14, 1935, Nuremberg.
[2] Universitätsbibliothek Mannheim, Das Schwarze Korps, "Flink wie Windhunde, zäh wie Leder, hart wie Kruppstahl!," Folge 22, 28. Mai 1938, 8.

The schools also provide evidence that the regime did take seriously its proclaimed aims of developing a *Volksgemeinschaft*.[3] Boys from all social classes were recruited to the Napola and assisted with fees. Race was paramount in recruitment. Graduates were encouraged to pursue careers in a variety of occupations so as to integrate the ideology and leadership skills provided into all areas and regions, in an attempt to unite society behind the state and its goals. However, the SS was attracted to the schools and played a larger role over time, subverting the original intentions for the Napolas toward serving as a training ground for the SS by the time the war came to an end.

While popular memory about the SS connection has faded, this reflects the great, and ultimately successful, efforts undertaken in the immediate postwar years by the former staff to dissociate themselves from this tainted organization. Heavily scrutinized during denazification, Napola alumni formulated a collective memory of the Nazi past that depicted the schools in a positive light. The result, a distortion of historical reality and everyday life under the swastika, has left a lasting impact on public and academic discourses on Nazi elite education. Moreover, former Napola teachers were beneficiaries

[3] Since the 1990s, the Nazi idea of building a racial community (*Volksgemeinschaft*) has made a comeback in the historiography on the Third Reich. Historians have presented new research on ideological and practical factors, as well as material benefits that drew Aryans into the *Volksgemeinschaft*, and excluded those the regime deemed racially inferior. More recently, historians have also launched investigations into the different facets of cultural life inside the *Volksgemeinschaft*. For syntheses of the existing literature on Nazi social and cultural history, see Lisa Pine, *Hitler's 'National Community': Society and Culture in Nazi Germany* (London: Hodder, 2007) and Geoff Eley, *Nazism as Fascism: Violence, Ideology, and the Ground of Consent in Germany 1930-1945* (London: Routledge, 2013). For a selection of works that have provided fresh insight into the experiential reality of the Nazi *Volksgemeinschaft*, see Götz Aly, *Hitler's Beneficiaries: Plunder, Racial War, and the Nazi Welfare State*, trans. Jefferson Chase (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2005), Michael Wildt, *Volksgemeinschaft als Selbstermächtigung: Gewalt gegen Juden in der deutschen Provinz 1919 bis 1939* (Hamburg: Hamburger Edition, 2007), Peter Fritzsche, *Life and Death in the Third Reich* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008), Martina Streber and Bernhard Gotto, eds.,*Visions of Community in Nazi Germany: Social Engineering and Private Lives* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014).

of a process of selective remembrance that plagued West German society during the first postwar decades. The interruption to their professional careers caused by denazification was a temporary measure. Many Napola teachers resumed teaching in West German schools prior to the end of military occupation, thus suggesting a high degree of fluidity between the Nazi and postwar periods.

Former Napola students, on the other hand, had a tougher row to hoe after 1945, given restrictions that interrupted many young men's education for a time. However, one can speculate that perhaps these restrictions fueled their desire to succeed, if indeed this generation was shaped by their experience. Whatever the case, since reunification, more former Napola pupils have felt able to come forward and speak for the first time positively about their experiences, which indicates perhaps that the postwar myth that exonerated the schools still stands today, fed by a growing openness since reunification to remember the past without shame.

The Napolas: Schools for the Third Reich's racial elite

The Napolas were boarding schools for Aryan pupils from the age of ten and upwards. Graduates were awarded the *Abitur,* the secondary school diploma necessary for university admission. Founded on April 20, 1933 by Prussian Education Minister Bernhard Rust, the Napolas remained formally under the auspices of the Reich Education Ministry for the duration of the Third Reich. Due to the paucity of reliable data, the exact number of Napola pupils remains unknown. In 1939, the Napolas educated 4500 students.[4] In the summer of 1942, the number of pupils had risen to 7362.[5] By the end of

[4] Stefanie Flintrop, "'Wir sollten intelligente Mütter werden': Nationalpolitische Erziehungsanstalten für

the war, approximately 10,000 Napola pupils were attending Napolas across the Reich.[6] The Napolas enjoyed growing popularity among party and army leaders after the SS claimed patronage over the schools in 1936. Supported by SS funds and coercive measures, the Napola inspectorate - the ministerial agency responsible for the administration of the schools - established Napolas across Germany and starting in 1939 in present-day Austria, Czech Republic, France, Poland, and Slovenia. By the end of the Second World War, the Napolas were not only training the Third Reich's future elite, but also aided the regime's Germanizing mission in annexed and occupied territories.

The expansion of the Napolas between 1933 and 1945 can be divided into three waves. Prussian Education Minister Bernhard Rust's inaugural announcement on the occasion of Hitler's 44th birthday on April 20th, 1933 set off the first wave. It lasted until Joachim Haupt, the Napolas' first inspector, was arrested on charges of homosexuality in October 1935. In a matter of two and a half years, the Napola network expanded from three schools in 1933 to fourteen by 1935. Additional openings would have followed had Prussian Finance Minister Johannes Popitz not declared a stop to the Napolas' expansion in Prussia on November 29th, 1935.[7]

Mädchen" (PhD Dissertation, Heinrich-Heine Universität Düsseldorf, 2008), 179.

[5] IfZ München-Berlin, ED 735, Band 12, "Potsdamer Kameradschaft: Blätter der Nationalpolitischen Erziehungsanstalt Potsdam," "Gesamtübersicht – Stand am 1.7. 1942 – Bearbeitet von Zugführer Rudolf Weiß." Chapter 4, "The Napola am Donnersberg," addresses the issue of enrolment in greater detail.

[6] Helen Roche, *Sparta's German Children: The Ideal of Ancient Sparta in the Royal Prussian Cadet Corps, 1818-1920, and in the Nationalist Socialist Elite Schools (the Napolas), 1933-1945* (Swansea: Classical of Wales, 2013), 181.

[7] The expansion of the Napolas came to a temporary halt at the end of 1935 because Haupt and Rust had converted the prestigious boarding school Schulpforta near Naumburg into a Napola in the summer of 1935 without securing Popitz's consent. Klaus Schmitz, *Militärische Jugenderziehung: Preussische Kadettenhäuser und Nationalpolitische Erziehungsanstalten zwischen 1807 und 1936* (Köln: Böhlau Verlag, 1997), 266.

The appointment of August Heißmeyer as head of the Napolas' inspectorate in April 1936 sparked a renewed push for growth and increased centralization. Under Heißmeyer's leadership, the inspectorate opened a Napola in Rottweil, Wurtemberg. After the annexation of Austria in March 1938, Heißmeyer also planned the transformation of all Austrian Federal Boarding Schools (*Bundeserziehungsanstalten,* BEA) into Napolas. After transforming the BEA in Traiskirchen into a Napola in March 1939, the inspectorate opened its first Napola for girls (*Nationalpolitische Erziehungsanstalt für Mädchen,* NPEA f. M.) in the same month. The Napola in Hurbertendorf-Türnitz became the first of three NPEA f. M. that opened during the Third Reich.[8] Most importantly, the period after 1936 witnessed the gradual takeover of the Napolas by Heinrich Himmler's SS. In order to supply his General SS and *Waffen-SS* formations with racially valuable young recruits, Himmler, and his protégée Heißmeyer began to increase the presence of the SS inside select Napola institutes.

The third and final wave of Napola development occurred during the war. On April 22, 1941, Heißmeyer visited the Napola in Backnang and announced that "the planning, financial administration, and leadership for all Napolas of the Greater German Empire lie [exclusively] with the inspectorate of the Napolas, which is headed by Reich [Education] Minister Rust."[9] Heißmeyer's announcement effectively encroached on the

[8] Two additional NPEA f. M. opened in 1941. The NPEA Colmar-Berg was founded on April 22, 1941. It remained operational until August 1944. The third and final NPEA f. M. was founded in Achern in October 1941. The school's fate was, however, short-lived. It was transformed into a *Reichsschule* for ethnic Germans in the spring of 1942. Flintrop, *'Wir sollten intelligente Mütter werden*', 27.

[9] BA Berlin, R 187 Sammlung Schumacher, R 187/270b, Nationalpolitische Erziehungsanstalten (1934-45), *Völkischer Beobachter*, 23.4.1941, "Nationalpolitische Erziehungsanstalten in unmittelbare Reichsverwaltung genommen." Prior to Heißmeyer's announcement, two Napolas, the NPEA Sudetenland and NPEA Reisen (Wartheland), were founded in occupied territories in 1940.

states' sovereignty over educational matters. The Napolas, and education more generally, were now considered "Reich affairs."[10] Heißmeyer, who was joined on stage by Rust and Wurttemberg Premier Mergenthaler, also announced the opening of ten additional Napola institutes in Putbus, Loben, Seckau, Vorau, Spanheim, St. Wedel, Reichenau, Rufach, Achern, and Colmar-Berg.[11] In the months following Heißmeyer's speech, two additional Napolas became operational near Marnheim and Lambach. 1941 marked the year of the single largest expansion in Napola history. Only five new schools opened thereafter, raising the final total of Napolas to 38.[12]

The Napolas' legacies in Postwar Germany

The Napolas ceased to exist with the fall of the Nazi regime. During the early months of occupation, former Napola employees were removed from public life by summary proceedings because of their alleged ties to the SS. On December 20, 1945, the Allied Control Council introduced Law No. 10, which provided the legal basis for the establishment of denazification tribunals within the four occupation zones. These tribunals prosecuted members of Nazi organizations that the International Military Tribunal had declared criminal. Former Napola officials and teachers, who awaited trial in Allied internment camps or whose employment histories were about to be exposed, faced the very real threat of being condemned as lesser war criminals.

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[10] Ibid.

[11] Ibid. See also, LHA Koblenz, 662, 008, Nationalpolitische Erziehungsanstalt Oranienstein, 2, "Der Jungmann," 6. Kriegsnummer (Juli 1941), 5.

[12] According to Claude Diebolt's calculations, 1635 higher secondary schools (*Höhere Schulen*) existed in Germany in 1941. This meant that 38 Napolas made up approximately 2% of all higher secondary schools in Nazi Germany. Claude Diebol, Economies et Societes, Histoire quantitative de l'economie francaise, Serie A.F. no. 23, 1997, p. 195, Tableau 72 "Les écoles en Allemagne." (Schools in Germany).

After U.S. military government officials introduced the Law for Liberation from National Socialism and Militarism on March 5, 1946, Napola defendants were able to mount a defence against Allied accusations before the newly empowered German courts. While members of the Napola community had downplayed and rejected their SS affiliations since the start of the denazification program, the Law for Liberation enabled the introduction of exculpatory evidence.[13] Napola supporters exploited the reintroduction of due process protections in the Western zones of occupation. Legal testimonies vindicated the schools of all wrongdoing. Throughout this study, I refer to the arguments made by Napola supporters during the immediate postwar period as the Napolas' 'postwar legend.' Former Napola teachers did not have to await the passing of West Germany's amnesty laws.[14] Some re-entered the professions before Konrad Adenauer's government effectively ended denazification in 1949.[15]

The Napolas' postwar legend did not come under attack during the first two postwar decades. Historians have recently made the argument that German society in the 1950s began the long process known as *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*, or coming to terms

[13]Although Control Council Directive No. 38 from October 12, 1946 recommended many of the Law for Liberation's provisions and clauses to British, French, and Soviet Zone Commanders, a common policy in Germany quadripartite government was never established.

[14] The first amnesty law under the newly formed West German parliament was introduced on December 20, 1949. David Art, *The Politics of the Nazi Past in Germany and Austria* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 53.

[15] Mary Fulbrook reminds us that the Western Allies failed to restructure Germany's education system in a radical manner. She is especially critical of the extent to which the postwar education system "managed to inculcate much in the way of democratic attitudes." The re-introduction of Napola teachers into postwar classrooms may be one of many examples of how conservative, right-wing, and nationalist values survived and diffused among West German society after 1945. Mary Fulbrook, *A History of Germany, 1918-2014: The Divided Nation*, Fourth Edition (Oxford: Wiley Blackwell, 2015).

with the past.[16] The latest historiographical consensus points to the fact that the *1968er*, Germany's first postwar generation, did not trigger public debates about the legacies of Nazism. Instead, student protests merely radicalized an intensive discourse that had originated in the 1950s.[17] There was no public discourse about the Napolas during the chancellorship of Adenauer. On the contrary, the Napolas' postwar legend was reaffirmed and strengthened when August Heißmeyer, the man responsible for the high level of SS influence in the schools, was pardoned and released from prison in November 1951. It was only after the student protests had reached their climax in the spring of 1968 that the Napolas' constructed history came under closer scrutiny.

The uprising of the 1968 generation sparked a re-examination of Nazi legacies. Sons and daughters questioned their parents' involvement in Nazi Germany. Students pointed to teachers, professors, judges and other government employees who had been re-employed after 1945.[18] Many Napola alumni were at the height of their professional careers when Germany's student movement rallied against the remnants of the Nazi past in the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG). Fearing detection and further prosecution, former Napola officials and pupils dealt with their politically tainted past in an unusual way. Instead of waiting for the unrest and demands for political change to subside, Horst Ueberhorst, a former Napola pupil, sparked the first wave of revisionist scholarship in

[16] For a proponent of the view that the German public actively engaged with the Nazi past during the 1950s, see Peter Steinbach, "Nationalsozialistische Gewaltverbrechen in der deutschen Öffentlichkeit nach 1945," in *Vergangenheitsbewältigung durch Strafverfahren? NS-Prozesse in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland*, ed. Jürgen Weber and Peter Steinbach (München: Olzog, 1984), 13-39.
[17] Ruth Wittlinger, "Taboo or Tradition? The 'Germans as Victims' theme West Germany until the early 1990s," in *Germans as Victims: Remembering the Past in Contemporary Germany*, ed. Bill Niven (Houndmills: Palgrave, 2006).
[18] Caroline Schaumann, *Memory Matters: Generational Responses to Germany's Nazi Past in Recent Women's Literature* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2008), 139.

West Germany.[19] Ueberhorst, who completed his PhD in Modern and Medieval History at the University of Bonn in 1953 and later became one of West Germany's most prominent sport historians, published an edited primary source collection on the Napolas in 1969. *Elite für die Diktatur* remains a standard in the literature on the schools to this day. In the preface to his study, Ueberhorst explains that the selection of documents was intended to provide "an objective and just" portrayal of the Napolas.[20]

Yet Ueberhorst's commentary fell silent when it mattered the most. On March 11, 1968, Ueberhorst interviewed former Napola inspector August Heißmeyer. A transcript of this interview was included in the final pages of *Elite für die Diktatur*. Over the course of the interview, Ueberhorst confronted Heißmeyer several times about the relationship between the SS and the Napolas. Heißmeyer's answers, which at times appear purposely evasive, demonstrated his unwavering commitment to the Napolas' postwar legend. Heißmeyer argued that the Napolas had been exclusively under the control of Rust's Education Ministry. He denied outright that Himmler had influence on Napola openings in occupied territories. When asked about the confiscation of Napola sites by the SS during the war, Heißmeyer deflected the question and instead discussed the efforts of state authorities to secure suitable accommodations. Heißmeyer also claimed that Napola teachers did not have to be party members to teach at the schools.[21] Overall, Heißmeyer

[19]Devin O. Pendas, *The Frankfurt Auschwitz Trial, 1963-1965: Genocide, History, and the Limits of Law* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 21.
[20] Horst Ueberhorst, *Elite für die Diktatur: Die Nationalpolitischen Erziehungsanstalten 1933-1945, Ein Dokumentarbericht* (Düsseldorf: Droste Verlag, 1969), 13.
[21] Ueberhorst, *Elite für die Diktatur*, 426-435. While it is true that not every Napola teacher was a card-carrying member of the NSDAP, the overwhelming majority, if not all, Napola teachers were registered with one or several of its auxiliary organizations, most commonly the National Socialist Teachers League, SA, or SS.

did not show any remorse for his past actions, nor did he acknowledge the Napolas' complicity in Nazi crimes. Ueberhorst's failure to critically engage with Heißmeyer's testimony allowed the Napolas' postwar legend to endure.[22]

With the exception of Harald Scholtz's publication in 1973, West German scholarship on the Napolas during the 1970s and 1980s was virtually non-existent.[23] Although Ueberhorst and Scholtz had chipped away at the falsified postwar image of the Napolas, the schools' postwar legend survived its first challenge relatively unscathed. A new readiness to critically examine the Napolas' history and postwar legacies did not manifest itself until after Germany reunified in 1990. Bill Niven has argued that confrontations with the Nazi past after 1990 have to be understood as a result of the

[22] Otto Calliebe, Heißmeyer's right-hand man inside the Napola inspectorate, took offense to Ueberhorst's partial exposé and decided in 1969 to publish his own thoughts on the Napolas' history. Calliebe considered former Napola pupils, like Ueberhorst, unqualified to write an 'objective' account of the schools. He also detested that Ueberhorst travelled the country to "interrogate" surviving Napola headmasters and teachers, whose memories had become "murky." Calliebe made several attempts to restore the Napolas' postwar legend to its original state. For instance, he denied that race had been played a deciding factor in the recruitment of Napola pupils. He remembered only one instance when the racial health of Napola pupils had been tested, "not as part of an entrance exam, but for statistical purposes."
IfZ München-Berlin, ED 735, Band 1, Otto Calliebe, "Gedanken zur Entwicklung der Nationalpolitischen Erziehungsanstalten (NPEA)," Juni-August 1969.

[23] Harald Scholtz was a former Adolf Hitler School pupil who examined the Nazi regime's influence over youth via the Napolas and Adolf Hitler Schools. His contributions to the literature were twofold. As a professor of pedagogy at the Freie Universität Berlin from 1971 until 1995, Scholtz felt compelled to discuss the development of Nazi elite schools – to which he refers to as *Ausleseschulen* – on a highly theoretical level; sometimes at the expense of analytical clarity. Although *NS-Ausleseschulen* has remained a standard in the literature, Scholtz also furthered his own political agenda. On the one hand, he distanced the Napolas and Adolf Hitler Schools from Nazi sites of indoctrination, such as the *SS-Junkerschulen* and *NS-Ordensburgen.* On the other hand, he tried to correct the negative postwar image of the Adolf Hitler Schools by aligning it more closely with that of the Napolas. Harald Scholtz, *NS - Ausleseschulen: Internatsschulen als Herrschaftsmittel des Führerstaates* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1973). For more information about the Adolf Hitler Schools and other Nazi elite schools, such as the National Socialist Order Castles (*NS-Ordensburgen*) and the Reich School of the Party (*Reichsschule der NSDAP*) at Feldafing in Bavaria, see Dirk Gelhaus and Jörn-Peter Hülter. *Die Ausleseschulen als Grundpfeiler des NS-Regimes* (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2003), 98-104; ; I.P. Vogelsang,*"Fackelträger der Nation": Elitebildung in den NS-Ordensburgen* (Köln: Böhlau, 2010), Franz Albert Heinen, *NS-Ordensburgen: Vogelsang, Sonthofen, Krössinsee* (Berlin: Ch. Links Verlag, 2011), Rainer Hülsheger, *Die Adolf-Hitler-Schulen 1937-1945: Suggestion eines Elitebewusstseins* (Weinheim: Beltz Juventa, 2015).

newly unified German state. For much of the FRG's and GDR's existence, guilt for the rise of Nazism had been "passed back and forth over the German-German border."[24] According to Niven, German society now has a greater awareness of the true extent of Nazi atrocities and of the range of victims.[25]

Although a definitive account of the Napolas and their history remains forthcoming, academic interest in the schools has increased since 1990. References to the schools' SS connections have sporadically found their way into general histories of the Third Reich.[26] Helen Roche and Klaus Schmitz have traced the Napolas' antecedents to classical and Wilhelmine times.[27] Roche shows that the Napolas used politicized portrayals of Ancient Sparta to reinforce Nazi worldviews. Schmitz, on the other hand, examines the continuities between Prussian cadet institutes, Weimar Stabilas, and Napolas during the early years of the Nazi regime. His investigation ends in 1936 with the

[24] Bill Niven, *Facing the Nazi Past: United Germany and the Legacy of the Third Reich* (London: Routledge, 2002), 2.
[25] Ibid., 5. This awareness has also translated in a revival of tropes of German victimization. Gilad Margalit shows that the "German public's preoccupation with its own suffering during and after World War II enjoyed a renaissance after reunification." Victims of Allied air raids, expellees from former Nazi-occupied territories, and German prisoners of war have figured prominently in this public discourse. Gilad Margalit, *Guilt, Suffering, and Memory: Germany Remembers Its Dead of World War II* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2010), 221. For a concise summary of the controversies surrounding the public commemorative culture in Unified Germany, see Robert G. Moeller, "Germans as Victims? Thoughts on a Post-Cold War History of World War Il's Legacies." *History & Memory* 17.1/2 (2005). For an emotionally charged account of Allied "terror bombings" of German cities during World War II, see Jörg Friedrich, *Der Brand: Deutschland im Bombenkrieg 1940 - 1945*. (München: Ullstein, 2002). In 2006, Friedrich's work was also translated into English. See, Jörg Friedrich, *The Fire: The Bombing of Germany, 1940-1945*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006).
[26] Wolfgang Keim, *Erziehung unter der Nazi-Diktatur Band II, Kriegsvorbereitung,Krieg und Holocaust* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1997), 107-110. Richard J. Evans, *The Third Reich in Power* (New York: Penguin, 2006), 285; Lisa Pine, *Education in Nazi Germany* (Oxford: Berg, 2010), 75-79.
[27] Klaus Schmitz, *Militärische Jugenderziehung: Preussische Kadettenhäuser und Nationalpolitische Erziehungsanstalten zwischen 1807 und 1936* (Köln: Böhlau Verlag, 1997), Helen Roche, *Sparta's German Children: The Ideal of Ancient Sparta in the Royal Prussian Cadet Corps, 1818-1920, and in the Nationalist Socialist Elite Schools (the Napolas), 1933-1945* (Swansea: Classical of Wales, 2013).

start of SS patronage, which, according to Schmitz, broke with cadet school traditions. While the Napolas figure prominently in the titles of their works, Roche and Schmitz primarily focus on the history of the Prussian cadet institutes in Imperial Germany.

The Napolas have also been a popular subject for academic theses by undergraduate and graduate students.[28] However, only Stefanie Flintrop's doctoral dissertation has made an original contribution to the literature. Her work investigates the history of the Napolas for girls that were founded in 1939. Flintrop argues that the schools had not simply been one of the regime's propaganda ploys. She insists that Napola officials had introduced a comprehensive curriculum that prepared young women for their roles as mothers in Nazi Germany's racial community.

The intertwining of history and memory has become a staple of recent historical work on Nazi Germany.[29] Most studies of Nazi elite schools were, however, not written by professionally trained historians, but by former students who may have come forward due to their advanced ages.[30] Their personal recollections of the Napolas can deepen

[28] Alexander-Martin Sardina, "Die Nationalpolitischen Erziehungsanstalten (NAPOLAs) als Beleg für widersprüchliche NS-Erziehungskonzeptionen im Dritten Reich: Diskurs und Zeitzeugenbefragung" (Staatsexamensarbeit, Universität Hamburg, 2002), Andreas Förschler, "Die Nationalpolitische Erziehungsanstalt Backnang: Eine Eliteschule im Dritten Reich" (Magisterarbeit, Universität Stuttgart, 2002), Stefanie Flintrop, "'Wir sollten intelligente Mütter werden': Nationalpolitische Erziehungsanstalten für Mädchen" (PhD Dissertation, Heinrich-Heine Universität Düsseldorf, 2008).

[29] Work around the legacy of the Second World War and the Holocaust in the divided Germanys and the Berlin Republic has been the single largest growth area in the field since 1990. See, for instance, Jeffrey Herf, *Divided Memory: The Nazi Past in the Two Germanys* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997), Klaus Neumann, *Shifting Memories: The Nazi Past in the New Germany* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2000), Robert G. Moeller, *War Stories: The Search for a Usable Past in the Federal Republic of Germany* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), Dagmar Herzog, *Sex after Fascism: Memory and Morality in Twentieth-century Germany* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), Wulf Kansteiner, *In Pursuit of German Memory: History, Television, and Politics After Auschwitz* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2006), Christopher R. Browning, *Remembering Survival: Inside a Nazi Slave-Labor Camp* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2010).

[30] For further reading, see Hans Müncheberg, *Gelobt sei, was hart macht: Aus dem Leben eines Zöglings der Nationalpolitischen Erziehungsanstalt Potsdam* (Berlin: Morgenbuch-Verlag, 1991),Klaus Montanus,

historians' understanding of everyday life at the schools and the Third Reich more generally. Yet like all post-World War II memories they must be used with caution. At crucial moments in their narratives, former Napola pupils frequently seemed to abandon their individualized childhood memories and relied on the Napolas' postwar legend of innocence to fill in gaps in memory, to embellish the schools' historical records, or to retroactively bestow meaning on their lost youth. Examples of how individual memories have been altered by or absorbed into the collective are abundant in the literature. Harald Schäfer, a former pupil at the Napola in Oranienstein, insisted that the founders of the Napolas had intended to instill liberal values in the students. He also claimed that by 1936 the Napolas had not been more or less National Socialist than public schools.[31] Rüdiger Bauer argued that during his time at the NPEA Sudetenland the destruction of the European Jews was never specifically mentioned to pupils.[32] Klaus Montanus, a former student at the NPEA Rügen, suggested that August Heißmeyer tried to limit, not increase the SS influence in the Napolas.[33] Apart from the selective memories of former Napola

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Die Putbusser: Kadetten unter dem Hakenkreuz (Frankfurt Am Main: Fischer Rita G. Verlag, 1995), Harald Schäfer, *Napola: Die letzten vier Jahre der Nationalpolitischen Erziehungsanstalt Oranienstein bei Diez an der Lahn 1941-1945* (Frankfurt/Main: R.G. Fischer, 1997), Walter Becker, *Erinnerungen an die Napola Naumburg* (Neustrelitz: Lenover Verlag, 2000), Hans Günther Zempelin, *Des Teufels Kadett: Napola-Schüler von 1936 bis 1943: Gespräch mit einem Freund* (Frankfurt/Main: R. G. Fischer, 2000); Rüdiger Bauer, *Wie und warum wir so waren? Erinnerungen an Damals, Schicksalsjahre 1925-1945* (Gelnhausen: Wagner Verlag, 2009).

[31] Schäfer, *Napola*, 16, 24.

[32] Rüdiger Bauer was born in 1925 and volunteered for the *Waffen-SS* in 1943. He served on the Eastern Front. In the spring of 1944, he participated in a 3-month training course at the *SS-Junkerschule* in Prague. Despite his extensive SS service record, Bauer claimed that he had never met anyone who worked inside a concentration camp. He also argued that the Holocaust had not been discussed during his time at the *SS-Junkerschule.* Considering that the majority of Bauer's cohort joined the SS, it seems likely that Nazi ideology had played a major role in the education of NPEA Sudetenland pupils during the war. Bauer, *Wie und warum wir so waren?*, 49, 56, 73.

[33] Montanus, *Die Putbusser*, 214.

pupils, the schools have also captured the imagination of German and American novelists.[34]

Reconstructing the Napolas' trajectory from racial selection to postwar deception

Many Napola-related documents were lost during the final years of World War II. The central documentation held by the Napola inspectorate in Berlin, located on *Unter den Linden*, fell victim to the Allied bombing campaign between 1943 and 1945. A lack of coordination between departments that shared administrative responsibility over the Napolas meant that few documents had been duplicated.[35] Moreover, some Napolas destroyed their holdings toward the end of the war, because they refused to let incriminating evidence fall into enemy hands. To allow for a reasonable reconstruction of the Napolas' history during the Third Reich and the early stages of the occupation period, this study draws on the archives of Germany and the United States. An extensive collection of official Napola documents - formerly known as *Sammlung Schumacher*- from the Federal Archives in Berlin proved to be an invaluable resource to explore the policymaking process within the Napola bureaucracy. Napola student newspapers and autobiographical accounts from the *Institut für Zeitgeschichte* in Munich aided discussion of daily life inside the schools. Archival materials, including student dossiers and administrative records from the *Gymnasium Weierhof am Donnersberg*'s private holdings allowed for an accurate reconstruction of the former Napola am Donnersberg's institutional history. Nine eyewitness accounts by former Napola pupils provided further

[34] References to the Napolas were added to the subplot of the following novels. See, for instance, Rudolf Braunburg, *Hinter Mauern. Eine Jugend in Deutschland* (Reinbeck bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1989), Manfred Peter Hein, *Fluchtfährte* (Zürich: Amman Verlag, 1999), Anthony Doerr, *All the light we cannot see* (New York: Scribner, 2014).
[35] Roche, *Sparta's German Children,* 8.

evidence about the experiences of Napola students during the final months of the war and immediate postwar period. The University of South Carolina and Mannheim University's newspaper collections provided a general overview of the Nazi regime's press coverage of the Napolas between 1936 and 1945. Budget reports and correspondence between the Prussian Ministry of Finance and Napola inspectorate, which can be consulted in the Prussian Secret State Archives, shed light upon the Napolas' convoluted financial arrangements. Moving into the postwar period, digitized documents from the Yale Law School Lillian Goldman Law Library informed, at least in part, the chronology of Allied denazification directives. Sworn statements from the denazification trials of Napola teachers originated from the holdings of the provincial archives in Koblenz. Investigative records from the Baden-Wurttemberg state archives and the National Archives Record Administration in Maryland were crucial in examining August Heißmeyer's life and postwar trial.

All but a handful of terms have been translated from the original German to English in this study. Exceptions have been made when dealing with technical language that historians of Nazi Germany are intimately familiar with (e.g. *Führer*, *Freikorps*, *Gauleiter*, *Reich*, *Volksgemeinschaft*, *Volkssturm*, *Wehrmacht*). While Nazi-era documents commonly refer to the National Political Education Institutes by their full title or the acronym 'NPEA', this study follows established conventions in both English and German scholarship. For the most part, the popularized abbreviation 'Napola (plural: Napolas)' has been used to describe the Third Reich's most prestigious elite schools. Apart from the Adolf Hitler Schools (*Adolf Hitler Schulen*, AHS), other Nazi elite schools

such as the *Deutsche Heimschulen*, *Reichsschulen*, *SS-Junkerschulen* and *Ordensburgen*, are explained on their first appearance and left in the original German. Similarly, I have opted not to translate Nazi military and paramilitary ranks (e.g. *SS-Obergruppenführer*) for authenticity purposes.

Chapter 1 offers a general overview of the formation and rationale behind the Napolas as they developed from 1933 until 1945. It presents some aspects of daily life at the schools and demonstrates the difficulties Nazi pedagogues had formulating their ideas and implementing them during the years of the dictatorship. While the curriculum and vision behind the schools remained incomplete, the Napolas' broad objectives were *sui generis* and remained consistent throughout the Third Reich.[36] Only Aryan boys at first were admitted into the Napolas. Aryan girls began to attend special female Napolas in 1939. Napola policymakers envisaged that matriculated Napola pupils would form the Thousand-Year Reich's future leadership cadre.

Some historians have downplayed or ignored the Napolas' importance during the Third Reich because of low enrolment numbers. This chapter demonstrates that the Napolas provided a perfect fit for the dreams of Nazi empire builders. SS patronage catapulted the schools into the national spotlight. Nazi propaganda depicted Napola pupils as the epitome of ideologically zealous and battle-ready youth between 1936 and 1939. During the war, the Napolas played a small but vital role in Hitler's quest for European domination. Napolas across the Reich assisted the regime's Germanizing mission. In

[36] Napola pedagogues were reluctant to define the Napolas as an alternative to Germany's traditional school system**.** They saw the schools as a break from Germany's past. Unlike Wilhelmine and Weimar schools, the Napolas were not destined to follow a formal curriculum that promoted academic specialization. Elite education under the swastika meant that political exigencies dictated learning inside Napola classrooms.

coordination with the SS Race and Settlement Office, the schools identified racially valuable children and sent them for reeducation to Napolas in the Altreich.

Chapter 2 examines Allied denazification efforts from December 1944 until the founding of the FRG on May 23, 1949. Germany lost its sovereignty after the collapse of the Nazi regime at the end of the Second World War.[37] After the Potsdam Conference ratification of the division of Germany in the summer of 1945, the United States, Britain, the Soviet Union, and later France established zones of occupation and began to purge Nazis from public life. The International Military Tribunal at Nuremberg indicted and convicted the SS as a criminal organization. Due to the Napolas' ties to the SS, former Napola employees were initially found guilty of war crimes by virtue of association. Denazification directives were, however, pursued with varying levels of efficiency by Germany's quadripartite government. The Office of Military Government, United States (OMGUS) carried out the most ambitious denazification and reeducation program of all four-occupation zones.[38]

[37] For more information about the events that led to Nazi Germany's capitulation during the final months of World War II, see Ian Kershaw, *The End: The Defiance and Destruction of Hitler's Germany, 1944-45* (New York: The Penguin Press, 2011).

[38] Tony Judt argues that the United States did not want to repeat the failures of the Versailles Treaty in the aftermath of World War I. U.S. policymakers opted for a more interventionist approach during the immediate post-World War II period and aimed to demilitarize, denazify, and deindustrialize Germany. Although Giles MacDonogh and Rebecca L. Boehling have touched on the uneven results of U.S. denazification efforts, historians, such as Michael R. Hayse and S. Jonathan Wiesen generally agree that the United States pursued denazification more stringently, especially in regard to the prosecution of nominal Nazi party members, than British, French, and Soviet occupiers. Moreover, the issue of democratic reeducation was, according to James F. Tent, at the heart of the German Occupation. Tony Judt, *Postwar: A history of Europe since 1945* (New York: Penguin Books, 2005), 105; Giles MacDonogh, *After the Reich: The Brutal History of the Allied Occupation* (New York: Basic Books, 2007), 342-350; Rebecca L. Boehling, *A Question of Priorities: Democratic Reforms and Economic Recovery in Postwar Germany: Frankfurt, Munich, and Stuttgart under U.S. Occupation 1945-1949* (New York: Berghahn Books, 1996); S. Jonathan Wiesen, *West German Industry and the Challenge of the Nazi Past, 1945-55* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2001), 42-43; Michael R. Hayse, *Recasting West German Elites: Higher Civil Servants, Business Leaders, and Physicians in Hesse between Nazism and Democracy, 1945-*

This chapter demonstrates that Napola alumni in the U.S. occupation zone responded to prosecution and internment in unexpected ways. After the introduction of the Law for Liberation from National Socialism and Militarism on March 5, 1946, a shift in the burden of proof allowed former Napola teachers and ministry officials to testify against Allied accusations. By the time denazification had run its course in 1948, Napola advocates had not only successfully deflected allegations regarding the schools' relationship to the SS, but had also rewritten history. Indicted Napola teachers constructed an exonerative tale to pressure courts into downgrading or dropping the original charges as "Major Offenders." The case of Otto Brenner shows that former Napola teachers were even able to resume their teaching careers in West Germany. While this chapter sheds light on some of the shortcomings of denazification in occupied Germany, the success of the Napolas' postwar legend was predicated on Napola staff's ability to manipulate the law. One result was that the rehabilitated image of the Napolas delayed scholarly work on Nazi elite schools for several decades after the war.

Chapter 3 challenges the validity of the Napolas' postwar legend. Napola defendants repeatedly downplayed the relationship between Himmler's SS and the Napolas when questioned by denazification tribunals. As described in Chapter 2, former Napola bureaucrats famously claimed that SS patronage of the Napolas kept the party at bay. Prominent suitors, including Hitler Youth Leader Baldur von Schirach and German

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1955 (New York: Berghahn, 2003), 148; James F. Tent, *Mission on the Rhine: Reeducation and Denazification in American-Occupied Germany* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1982), 3. For further reading on the reeducation program in the U.S. Zone of Occupation, see also Richard L. Merritt, *Democracy Imposed: U.S. Occupation Policy and the German Public, 1945-1949* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995) and Brian M. Puaca, *Learning Democracy: Education Reform in West Germany, 1945-1965* (New York: Berghahn, 2009).

Labor Front leader Robert Ley, could not challenge the combined authority of Heinrich Himmler's SS and Bernhard Rust's Education Ministry and abandoned plans of absorbing the schools into their organizations. As a result, von Schirach and Ley founded the Adolf Hitler Schools in 1937 to challenge the Napolas' authority over educating the regime's future elite. Postwar apologists claimed that Himmler's timely intervention was not motivated by self-interest. According to their interpretation, he had no interest in converting the Napolas into preparatory schools for the SS. Instead, the thwarted takeover attempt should be seen as proof that the Napolas remained under the control of the Reich Education Ministry for the remainder of the Third Reich. In *Hitler's Children*, Gerhard Rempel examines the relationship between the SS and the Hitler Youth. He demonstrates that the SS manipulated and exploited the Hitler Youth in order to increase recruitment for its numerous programs, tasks, and functions.[39] A similar coalition formed between the SS and the Napola administration. Between 1936 and 1945, the SS gradually established a recruitment monopoly of Napola graduates in select Napola institutes.

The man responsible for transferring administrative oversight of the Napolas from the Reich Education Ministry to the SS was August Heißmeyer. Chapter 3 examines the career of Heißmeyer, whose dual role as a senior SS official and Napola inspector exemplified the close-knit SS-Napola relationship. Surviving budget reports demonstrate that Heißmeyer and other leading Napola functionaries were on the payroll of the SS. Napola teachers who had not claimed membership in party organizations prior to Heißmeyer's arrival at the inspectorate were required to join the General SS after 1936.

[39] Gerhard Rempel, *Hitler's Children: The Hitler Youth and the SS* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1989), 4.

Teaching and administrative vacancies during the war were often filled with SS personnel. Contrary to postwar claims, the SS also tried to influence Napola pupils' career choices. Schools in Nazi Germany, including the Napolas, forced students to read and watch Nazi propaganda materials. But unlike students at day schools, Napola pupils could not escape further ideological indoctrination after the end of the regular school day. During the war, SS ideologues frequently visited the Napolas and lectured to students about the 'heroics' of SS units, especially on the Eastern Front. Napola pupils also visited SS training facilities and attended maneuvers and parades. In some instances, Napola students shared their accommodations with visiting SS officer candidates. In 1943, Heißmeyer added career information services to the Napola administration's long list of responsibilities. SS recruiters travelled to Napolas across the Reich in order to entice pupils into choosing careers with the SS. Although Heißmeyer's recruitment methods did not always meet Himmler's lofty expectations, Chapter 3 leaves no doubt that the Napolas were slowly shaped into SS preparatory schools during the war.

Chapter 4 examines the findings of the first three chapters through the prism of the Napola am Donnersberg and its pupils. Prior to its founding in 1941, the Napola am Donnersberg, located in the present-day German state of Rhineland-Palatinate, had been an elite boarding school under the auspices of the party. Former *Gau-Oberschule* pupils who continued to attend the institute after its transformation into a Napola often did not live up to the Napolas' wartime standards. Napola am Donnersberg pupils had to prove their racial worth throughout the war by scoring high grades, excelling in sports, and partaking in all aspects of communal life. Those who did not left the Napola in favor of

public schools. My findings, of course, are necessarily limited to a small sample from this one school. The wartime experiences of Napola am Donnersberg pupils often conformed to specific, local conditions. But student records that show frequent departures from the school indicate that historians may have to adjust the total number of boys who had come in contact with the Napolas between 1933 and 1945 upward.

The Napola am Donnersberg was confiscated by U.S. troops in the early months of 1945 because of its SS connections. What could have been, and should have been, the final chapter in the school's tumultuous history became the subject of a lengthy legal controversy after the war. The former owner of the school, a not-for-profit association called the *Verein für die Anstalt am Donnersberg*, petitioned Allied occupation authorities for the release of the property from military requisition. Claims that the former Napola am Donnersberg had not been affiliated with the party or the SS, however, fell on deaf ears. In the 1950s, members of the association changed the rhetoric of their restitution claim. According to their interpretation, the Nazi regime had expropriated the association's property because of its and the school's Mennonite character and traditions. This fictitious tale of prosecution garnered the support of West Germany's Christian Democratic government, the Pennsylvania-based Mennonite Central Committee, and high-ranking U.S. politicians. The property was ultimately returned to the school association in 1958. The protracted legal battle between the *Verein für die Anstalt am Donnersberg* and U.S. military authorities demonstrated that the contents of the Napolas' postwar legend did not remain static.

According to Richard Evans, "it is now almost impossible to write about the Third Reich in the years of its existence, 1933-45, without also thinking how its memory survived, often in complex and surprising ways, in the postwar years."[40] The final section of Chapter 4 makes a preliminary attempt to contribute to post-unification debates about the public memory of the Napolas. Christian Schneider, Johannes Leeb, and most recently Helen Roche have responded to the culture of remembrance in Unified Germany in specialized ways.[41] Christian Schneider, a trained sociologist, claimed that the effects of a Napola education reverberated into first, second, and even third generations. Johannes Leeb, a Munich-based journalist, provided a compilation of twenty interview transcripts and written responses by Nazi elite students, twelve of whom attended Napolas. Leeb's objective was to let the eyewitness testimonies speak for themselves, in order to create an "objective portrayal" of the schools.[42] In the absence of editorial commentary, Leeb allowed some of his interviewees to reiterate postwar claims that the Napolas were not ideologically driven. Helen Roche, on the other hand, is interested in how former Napola pupils who experienced the collapse of the Third Reich as adolescents have remembered the past. She discovered that recurring themes in Napola pupils' narratives might have constituted "the basis of the former pupils' own miniature master narrative (*Meistererzählung*) -- which could perhaps if disseminated widely enough, form the basis

[40] Richard Evans, *The Third Reich in History and Memory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), ix.
[41] Christian Schneider, Cordelia Stilke, and Bernd Leineweber, *Das Erbe der Napola: Versuch einer Generationengeschichte des Nationalsozialismus* (Hamburg: Hamburger Edition, 1996); Johannes Leeb, *'Wir waren Hitlers Eliteschüler': Ehemalige Zöglinge der NS-Ausleseschulen brechen ihr Schweigen* (München: Wilhelm Heyne Verlag, 1998); Helen Roche, "Surviving 'Stunde Null': Narrating the Fate of Nazi Elite-School Pupils during the Collapse of the Third Reich," *German History* Vol.33, No.4 (2015).
[42] Leeb, *'Wir waren Hitlers Eliteschüler'*, 15.

of a specific form of collective identity."[43] Chapter 2 will demonstrate that a master narrative of this kind, the Napolas' postwar legend, had formed during the immediate postwar period. The accounts by former Napola am Donnersberg pupils used here, however, also show that it mattered where Napola pupils attended school and which occupation zone they found themselves in after the war. This chapter suggests that restrictions on former Napola am Donnersberg pupils in the French Occupation Zone may have fueled their desire to succeed professionally in early postwar West Germany.

Inevitably there are some elements of the Napolas' history that have not been explored in depth in this thesis. Brief discussions about the Napolas for girls are scattered throughout this study. Founded in 1939, three Napolas for girls operated during the war in seven different locations.[44] Stefanie Flintrop estimates that a total of 486 girls attended the schools between 1939 and 1945, only 138 of whom graduated.[45] In the late 1980s, the *Historikerinnenstreit* between Gisela Bock and Claudia Koonz revolved around the complicity of Aryan women in Nazi crimes.[46] It caused historians to reexamine the experiences of women during the Third Reich. The debate has since inspired a wave of investigations into the history of the League for German girls (*Bund Deutscher Mädel*, BDM), Nazi family policy, sexuality, marital status, and the recruitment of women into

[43] Roche, "Surviving 'Stunde Null,'" 586.
[44] Flintrop, "Wir sollten intelligente Mütter werden," 26.
[45] Ibid., 133.
[46] The dispute originated with the publication of Claudia Koonz's *Mothers in the Fatherland* in 1987. Bock responded with a scathing review of Koonz's findings in 1989. The ensuing back-and-forth between the two historians has since been labeled the *Historikerinnenstreit*, in reference to the (male) historians' dispute (*Historikerstreit*) that began in 1986. For further reading see, Claudia Koonz, *Mothers in the Fatherland: Women, the Family, and Nazi Politics*, (New York: St. Martin's, 1987); Gisela Bock, "Die Frauen und der Nationalsozialismus: Bemerkungen zu einem Buch von Claudia Koonz." *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 15, No. 4 (1989); Claudia Koonz, "Erwiderung auf Gisela Bocks Rezension von "Mothers in the Fatherland"" Trans. Susanna Nitzschke. *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 18, No. 3 (1992); Gisela Bock, "Ein Historikerinnenstreit?" *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 18 (1992).

the war effort.[47] While the Napolas for girls have not figured prominently in English-language scholarship, a recent surge of scholarly interest signals that Nazi elite education for both boys and girls is likely to play a more central role in future historiographical debates.[48] The Napolas for girls did not assume a prominent role in this dissertation because the limited expansion of the schools between 1939 and 1945 may have caused Allied prosecutors to dismiss their importance as sites of indoctrination after the war. The schools may have also been disregarded because what the Allies knew about Nazi ideology led them to believe that women had played a very limited role in the dictatorship. In any event, former teachers and pupils did not face the same legal and societal pressures as their male counterparts during denazification and thereafter.

This study also omits discussion of the relationship between the Hitler Youth and the Napolas. Although membership in the Hitler Youth became compulsory with the

[47] For more information, see Dagmar Reese and Gertrud Pfister, "Gender, Body Culture, and Body Politics in National Socialism," *Sport Science Review* 4 (1995); 91-121, Dagmar Reese, " Mädchen im Bund Deutscher Mädel," in Elke Kleinau and Claudia Opitz, eds., *Geschichte der Mädchen- und Frauenbildung*. Vol 2: *Vom Vormärz bis zur Gegenwart* (Frankfurt, 1996), 271-82, Lisa Pine, *Nazi Family Policy, 1933-1945* (New York: Berg, 1997), Elizabeth Heineman, *What difference does a husband make? Women and Marital status in Nazi and Postwar Germany* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), Elizabeth Harvey, *Women and the Nazi East: Agents and Witnesses of Germanization* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), Dagmar Herzog, *Sex after Fascism: Memory and Morality in Twentieth-century Germany* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), Dagmar Reese, *Growing up Female in Nazi Germany* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2006).

[48] For the most current and authoritative study on the Napolas for girls, see Stefanie Flintrop, "'Wir sollten intelligente Mütter werden': Nationalpolitische Erziehungsanstalten für Mädchen" (PhD Dissertation, Heinrich-Heine Universität Düsseldorf, 2008). For edited primary source collections on the schools, see Robert Krantz, *Luxemburgs Kinder unter dem Nazi-Regime. Ein Dokumentarbericht. Band I: Der Versuch der Ideologischen Umerziehung* (Luxemburg: Editions Saint Paul, 1997), 445-529, and Edith Marpoder, "Zur Geschichte der Nationalpolitischen Erziehungsanstalten für Mädchen im NS-Staat – Ein Literatur- und Quellenbericht" (Magisterarbeit, Kassel Universität, 2005). For scholars who have incorporated eyewitness testimonies into their investigations, see Sarah Hülser, "Eliteschulen im Nationalsozialismus – Schwerpunkt: Napola Reichenau" (Arbeit für den Geschichtswettbewerb des Bundespräsidenten zum Thema Junge und Alte, 2007); Arnulf Moser, "Nationalsozialistische Mädchenschulen in der ehemaligen Heil- und Pflegeanstalt Reichenau (1944/45)" *Hegau – Zeitschrift für Geschichte, Volkskunde und Naturgeschichte des Gebietes zwischen Rhein, Donau und Bodensee* 63 (2006), 197–212, or Priska Wieser, "Nationalsozialistische Mädchenerziehung in der Reichsschule für Volksdeutsche in Achern (Diplomarbeit, Universität Innsbruck, 1990).

enactment of the First Hitler Youth Law on December 1, 1936 Napola pupils maintained nominal ties to the regime's largest youth organization.[49] The Napolas' demanding schedule prevented Napola students from performing regular Hitler Youth duties. Nevertheless, it is wrong to assume that the Hitler Youth did not have any influence on the *Jungmannen*'s (Napola students') education. When upper-year students were assigned to work with German farmers during the summer months, they were supervised by Hitler Youth officials. Similarly, Napola pupils who aided the regime's evacuation of children to the countryside (*Kinderlandverschickung*, KLV) fell under the jurisdiction of Hitler Youth camp leaders.[50] Generally speaking, the Napolas appropriated elements from the programs of the Hitler Youth and other youth groups that predated the coming of the Third Reich.[51] Future scholarly investigations could situate Nazi boarding schools more firmly within the wider currents of Germany's youth movements.[52]

I have also chosen not to examine the experiences of Napola teachers and pupils in the Soviet Occupation Zone (*Sowjetische Besatzungszone,* SBZ). Between 1946 and 1947, Soviet military authorities and the Socialist Unity Party of Germany (*Sozialistische*

[49] The Second Hitler Youth Law on March 25, 1939 tightened the requirements of 1936.
[50] Ueberhorst, *Elite für die Diktatur,* 33.
[51] For more information about the history of the Hitler Youth, see Werner Klose, *Generation im Gleichschritt: Ein Dokumentarbericht* (Hamburg: Gerhard Stalling Verlag, 1964), Peter D. Stachura, *Nazi Youth in the Weimar Republic* (Santa Barbara, CA: Clio Books, 1975), H.W. Koch, *The Hitler Youth: Origins and Development 1922-1945* (New York: Barnes & Noble Books, 1975), Gerhard Rempel, *Hitler's Children: The Hitler Youth and the SS* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1989), Michael H. Kater, *Hitler Youth* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004)
[52] For more information on German youth movements, in particular the *Bündische Jugend*, see Peter D. Stachura, *The German Youth Movement, 1900 - 1945: An Interpretative and Documentary History* (London: Macmillan, 1984), Mathias von Hellfeld, *Bündische Jugend und Hitlerjugend: Zur Geschichte von Anpassung und Widerstand 1930-1939* (Köln: Verlag Wissenschaft und Politik, 1987), Hermann Giesecke, *Hitlers Pädagogen: Theorie und Praxis nationalsozialistischer Erziehung* (Weinheim: Juventa, 1993), Christoph J. Eppler, *Erziehung im Nationalsozialismus: Bündische Jugend, Hitlerjugend, Reformpädagogik* (Beltheim-Schnellbach: Lindenbaum Verlag, 2012).

Einheitspartei Deutschlands, SED) implemented Allied Control Council Directive 24, which governed the removal of Nazis from employment in all four-occupation zones. On August 17, 1947, the Soviet Military Administration implemented Order 201. According to Timothy Vogt, Order 201 marked "the point at which denazification was recognized as both a purge and a means of rehabilitating nominal PGs [*Parteigenossen*; former NSDAP members not accused of severe crimes]." [53] Order 201 also intended to bring denazification to a swift conclusion. In February 1948, denazification in the SBZ formally ended when the Soviet Military Administration introduced Order 35, which allowed nominal Nazis to return to low-level positions within the public administration [54] Although denazification in the Soviet zone was flexible and subject to local variation, historians generally agree that denazification was closely bound up with sovietization.[55] Since Soviet practices differed significantly from that of the Western Allies, I expect that Napola alumni's reactions to the pressures of denazification in U.S., British, and French zones of occupation may have been different from those in the Soviet zone.[56] While Mary Fulbrook claims that members of the second war youth generation - those born from the mid-1920s through to the early 1930s – contributed extensively to public life in both East

[53] Timothy R. Vogt, *Denazification in Soviet-Occupied Germany, Brandenburg 1945-1948* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000), 97.
[54] Liesbeth van de Grift, *The Reconstruction of Coercive Institutions in the Soviet Zone of Germany and Romania, 1944-1948* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2012), 62.
[55] J.K.A. Thomaneck and Bill Niven, *Dividing and Uniting Germany* (London: Routledge, 2001), 58; Konrad H. Jarausch, *Out of Ashes: A New History of Europe in the Twentieth Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2015), 432. For further reading on the history of denazification in the Soviet Occupation Zone, see also David Pike, *The Politics of Culture in Soviet-Occupied Germany, 1945-1945* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1992) and Norman M. Naimark, *The Russians in Germany: A History of the Soviet Zone of Occupation, 1945-1949* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995)
[56] Richard Bessel, *Germany 1945: From War to Peace* (New York: Harper Perennial, 2009), 191-194. For a discussion on the "antifascist democratic school reform program" that former Napola pupils were subjected to in the Soviet Occupation Zone, see Benita Blessing, *The Antifascist Classroom: Denazification in Soviet-occupied Germany, 1945-1949* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2006).

and West Germany, the postwar fates of former Napola pupils in the GDR warrant an independent investigation.[57]

In conclusion, this dissertation makes an original contribution to the growing field of Nazi elite education. By drawing on a wide range of sources, this study rejects the possibility of a 'Zero Hour (*Stunde Null*).'[58] The suggested erasure of the past rang especially hollow in the ears of former Napola teachers and pupils. For most of the Third Reich, the schools had kept close relationships to the SS and aided the regime's Germanization project in occupied territories. The specific legal conditions within the Western occupation zones, however, allowed Napola defendants to overturn Allied accusations regarding the schools' criminal past. The Napolas' postwar legend, which may stand until this very day, exonerated former Napola teachers and encouraged Napola alumni to reframe their schooling during the Third Reich in a positive light.

[57] Mary Fulbrook, *Dissonant Lives: Generations and Violence through the German Dictatorships* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 8.
[58] Lutz Niethammer refered to the *Stunde Null* as "wishful thinking." Lutz Niethammer, "Privatwirtschaft: Erinnerungsfragmente einer anderen Umerziehung," in *'Hinterher merkt man, dass es richtig war, dass es schiefgegangen ist' Nachkriegserfahrungen im Ruhrgebiet*, ed. Lutz Niethammer (Berlin: Dietz, 1983), 28. Detlev Peukert even referred to it as the "fiction of *Stunde Null*." Detlev Peukert, *Inside Nazi Germany: Conformity, Opposition, and Racism in Everyday Life* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987), 183. For a critical summary of the literature on the German *Sonderweg* that gave rise to the argument of a rupture in 1945, see David Blackbourn and Geoff Eley, *The Pecularities of German History: Bourgeois Society and Politics in Nineteenth-Century Germany* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984).

Chapter 1: Visions for the Napolas

Introduction

During its short lifespan of twelve years, Nazi education was dominated by ad hoc decision-making. Despite reforms, which included the shortening of secondary schooling, the centralization of educational administration, the institutionalization of racism and anti-Semitism, and the founding of Nazi elite academies, Nazi policymakers did not introduce a comprehensive educational program prior to the outbreak of World War II. Long-term educational policies were discussed only when Nazi Germany's military fortunes took a downward turn in 1943. By then the demands of total war had brought education to a virtual standstill in many parts of the Reich.

In his classic study of everyday life inside Nazi Germany, Detlev Peukert stated "National Socialism remained much too vague to function as a self-sufficient educational objective."[1] The educational philosophy advocated by Adolf Hitler in *Mein Kampf* provided the backdrop to Nazi education policy and was characterized by its overt anti-intellectualism.[2] Hitler associated intellectualism with Judaism and decadence.[3] To combat the weakening of the Aryan race, the goal of Nazi education was to produce healthy and strong bodies. Rigorous physical education and character training often came at the expense of academic rigour.

Founded in April 1933, the Napolas were the first Nazi-era schools responsible for preserving and enhancing the nation's racial health. The Napolas recruited racially

[1] Detlev Peukert, *Inside Nazi Germany: Conformity, Opposition, and Racism in Everyday Life* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987),145.
[2] Lisa Pine, *Education in Nazi Germany* (Oxford: Berg, 2010), 3.
[3] Pine, *Education in Nazi Germany*,13.

valuable boys and girls from different social milieus. As such the institutes became the purest embodiment of Nazi racial ideology within Germany's secondary school system. The racial elitism of the schools attracted many suitors, especially Heinrich Himmler's SS, as will be discussed in Chapter 3. Napola graduates were expected to assume leadership positions in political, military, business and social realms in order to strengthen and expand Germany's racial community.

For most of the Third Reich, Napola policymakers struggled to develop an educational theory that captured the inherent contradictions, inconsistencies, and ambiguities of Nazism. The *völkisch* worldview, in other words, provided little instruction on how to mold children into ideal leaders for Germany's Thousand-Year Reich. This chapter investigates the difficulties faced by the Napola bureaucrats and pedagogues who attempted to implement Hitler's vision of education. While the curriculum and vision behind the schools remained incomplete, given the short timespan the schools were in existence and the chaos of war and defeat, by examining the intent behind the schools and how life changed at these institutions over these years, we can get a sense of what the long-term goals were for the Napolas and how they fit into the dreams of Nazi empire builders.

This chapter is divided into three chronological parts. Each part is highlighted with examples from prominent, contemporary educational treatises, followed by a discussion of Napola ideals in practice. The juxtaposition of the theoretical and practical demonstrates that visions for the Napolas were influenced by political circumstances of the Third Reich and legacies of the past, and thus subject to constant change. The first

part, which spans the years 1933 to 1935, examines the Napolas' development during the revolutionary phase of the Nazi regime. The founding of Napolas on the sites of former cadet schools was a by-product of Hitler's policy of *Gleichschaltung* and the exigiencies of limited resources. Plans to transform the Napolas into a viable alternative to Germany's traditional trinomial school system took shape after the schools had already carved out a foothold in Prussia. By 1935, fourteen Napolas had been founded under the auspices of Bernhard Rust's education ministry.

From the time of their inception, the Napolas taught an improvised blend of Wilhelmine and Weimar-era traditions, premilitary training, and racial politics. While Ernst Krieck's, a prominent Weimar pedagogist turned Nazi supporter, discourse on national political education fuelled policymakers' desire to abandon formal schooling in the Napolas, the schools never relinquished their formal educative function, or implemented a wholly unique academic curriculum. Napola teachers repeatedly stressed this point to denazification tribunals after the war. Claims made in court that the Napolas followed the requirements of the Ministry of Education with respect to curriculum and teacher qualifications, however, were only partially true. The racial selection and ideological indoctrination of Napola pupils, which will be discussed in greater detail in Chapters 3 and 4, proved that Nazi ideology pervaded life at these institutions more than at public schools. The training that converted young boys into political soldiers for the regime revealed the fallacy of postwar claims that the Napolas had only been partially Nazified.

The second part covers the years from the appointment of August Heißmeyer as Napola inspector in 1936 until the outbreak of war in 1939. The appointment of Heißmeyer, a high-ranking SS official, had far-reaching consequences for the Napolas. SS patronage protected the schools from suitors within the Nazi party, yet also installed Himmler as the real power behind the scenes. During the war, the Napolas and their teaching staffs adopted key tenets of Himmler's worldview, which resulted in a radicalization of educational policy. Prior to the outbreak of war, however, Heißmeyer gradually centralized the administration of the Napolas and extended its influence outside its original Prussian nucleus. Exchange programs with English prep schools and the founding of the first Napola for girls in annexed Austria in 1939 exemplified Heißmeyer's willingness to promote the Napolas beyond German borders. The period between 1936 and 1939 also signaled an end to educational experimentation. Rust decreed in 1937 that Nazi Germany's secondary schools had to adopt the curriculum of the *Deutsche Oberschule*. Only Napolas in Ilfeld, Schulpforta, Neubeuern and Haselünne thereafter followed the curriculum of the humanistic *Gymnasium*.[4] Discussions about making significant modifications to academic instructions inside the Napolas were delayed indefinitely. Instead, Napola pedagogues occupied themselves with more immediate concerns of preparing youth for war.

[4] Helen Roche suggests that Napolas' discretion in curriculum was a temporary measure. Schulpforta, for instance, was permitted to retain only those parts of its classical curriculum that promoted Aryan superiority. Since Neubeuern was initially conceived as a branch of Schulpforta, it also maintained its humanistic traditions. Ilfeld, on the other hand, was almost completely assimilated with Napolas that followed the *Deutsche Oberschule* curriculum during the war. For more information, see Helen Roche, "'Wanderer, kommst du nach Pforta…': The tension between Classical tradition and the demands of a Nazi elite-school education at Schulpforta and Ilfeld, 1934–1945," *European Review of History* 20, 4 (2013): 581-609.

The third and final part of this chapter shows that the Napolas' military culture paid dividends during the war years. As total institutions, which sought to isolate youth from social networks such as family and church, the perceived ideological tenacity and fitness for military service of Napola graduates sparked interest among the upper echelons of the Nazi party. In the fall of 1940, Heißmeyer received orders from Hitler to increase the number of Napolas to 100 in coming years.[5] Despite never reaching this goal, new Napola institutes opened in countries under Nazi occupation and participated directly in the regime's racial imperialism. On December 7, 1944, Hitler decreed that all officer candidates would henceforth require training in Napolas, Adolf Hitler Schools, *Heimschulen* or the *Reichsschule* in Feldafing prior to joining the military.[6] It is fair to assume that had Nazi Germany emerged victorious from its war of conquest and become the preeminent political, military, and cultural power in Europe, the Napolas would have become the regime's preferred secondary school type.

Putting the 'National Political' in National Political Education Institutes, 1933-35

Ernst Krieck became one of the most respected and widely read Nazi educational thinkers during the early years of the Third Reich. Prior to joining the NSDAP in 1932, Krieck's Weimar teaching career had brought him into close contact with right-wing writers and pedagogues such as Arthur Moeller van den Bruck and Alfred Rosenberg. In 1932, he published his second bestseller ten years after the release of *Philosophie der Erziehung*. With a total print run of 80 000 copies between 1933 and 1945,

[5] Horst Ueberhorst, *Elite für die Diktatur: Die Nationalpolitischen Erziehungsanstalten 1933-1945, Ein Dokumentarbericht* (Düsseldorf: Droste Verlag, 1969),174.
[6] BA Berlin, R 187 Sammlung Schumacher, R 187/270b, Nationalpolitische Erziehungsanstalten (1934-45), Der Führer, Hauptquartier, den 7. Dezember 1944.

Nationalpolitische Erziehung became a standard reference work for Nazi pedagogy. After his appointment as rector of the prestigious Johann Wolfgang Goethe University in Frankfurt in 1933, Krieck taught at the university in Heidelberg from January 1934 until 1945. He died in an U.S. internment camp in Moosburg, Bavaria in 1947.[7]

Despite his many contributions to the Nazification of German schooling, Krieck's political influence diminished rapidly after 1936. His later works could not replicate the success of *Nationalpolitische Erziehung*. With Nazi Germany's preparations for war in full swing, Krieck's theoretical, philosophical, and distinctly revolutionary writings on fascist education found little resonance within the party. Yet Krieck outlived his political relevance, because his ideas attracted the attention of Education Minister Bernhard Rust and Undersecretary Joachim Haupt, the principal founders of the Napolas. Rust and Haupt paid tribute to Krieck by naming the boarding schools 'National Political Education Institutes' in honor of his discourse on national political education.[8]

Krieck believed that the National Socialist revolution provided an unprecedented opportunity to reform Germany's education system.[9] Experiencing the failure of Weimar's liberal democracy firsthand, Krieck wanted to revitalize education by letting "the national-revolutionary movement flow through German classrooms."[10] Many of Krieck's observations and ideas in *Nationalpolitische Erziehung* were predicated on the assumption that the transition from liberalism to fascism could not happen overnight.

[7] Wolfgang Keim, *Erziehung unter der Nazi-Diktatur: Band I Antidemok*ratische Potentiale, Machtantritt und Machtdurchsetzung (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1995),165-166.
[8] Dirk Gelhaus and Jörn-Peter Hülter, *Die Ausleseschulen als Grundpfeiler des NS-Regimes* (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2003), 50.
[9] Ernst Krieck, *Nationalpolitische Erziehung*, 14. Auflage (Leipzig: Armanen Verlag, 1936), 122.
[10] Krieck, *Nationalpolitische Erziehung* 144.

Since political, economic, and social conditions were in constant flux during this transitional period, Krieck envisioned a school system that could adapt to changing circumstances quickly. Schooling could not be bogged down by theory. It needed to be grounded in the exigencies of the day.[11]

Krieck was in favor of reducing the "senseless variety" of higher secondary schools to a single school type.[12] Schools also had to provide students with a well-rounded education. Krieck's blend of general education and vocational training prepared pupils for future challenges in the service of the *völkisch* state. He stressed the urgent need to improve German language instruction in schools. According to Krieck, a good grasp of the German language was a marker of a civilized and confident society.[13] His appeal was somewhat prophetic. Brian Puaca shows that extreme nationalism, xenophobia, expansionism, and militarism found their way into Nazi curricula and textbooks.[14] Instruction in traditional subjects, such as history and German language, was modified to promote Nazi notions of Aryan superiority. Although schools assigned more hours to subjects that promoted German culture, academic standards plummeted. By the end of the Second World War, the situation seems to have deteriorated further. On June 3, 1944, Himmler contacted Heißmeyer about a particularly poorly written military communiqué. To improve proficiency in German, he ordered Heißmeyer and the Napolas

[11] Ibid., 148.
[12] Ibid., 152.
[13] Ibid., 147.
[14] Brian M. Puaca, *Learning Democracy: Education Reform in West Germany, 1945-1965* (New York: Berghahn, 2009), 22.

to place greater emphasis on language training. He also acknowledged that this plan might not come into fruition until after the war was won.[15]

Nationalpolitische Erziehung launched an attack on individualism and the dispersion of knowledge into specialized fields of expertise. Because of his hatred for liberal, pacifist and individualist ideas, Yvonne Sherratt has argued, "Krieck drew up a notion of an 'organic' community built upon nationalist, ethnic lines."[16] Youth, in other words, should learn as part of a community, the *Volk.* In 1933, Joachim Haupt, the Napolas' first inspector, underscored the value of Krieck's radical populist approach to education. Haupt considered Krieck's educational model a suitable alternative to Western liberal-humanist traditions.[17] Helen Roche has demonstrated that high-ranking members of the Napola bureaucracy often invoked examples from Ancient Greece to legitimize their youth programs.[18] Haupt argued that both Athens and Sparta had promoted national political education, not for the benefit of the individual but for that of the collective and the state.[19] The Third Reich similarly aimed to bind those it deemed racially desirable closer to the community.[20] Unlike Krieck, Haupt valued the work of boarding schools in strengthening the "inner unity between people and the state." [21]He singled out the recently founded Napolas in Plön, Köslin, and Potsdam, "of which more will surely follow."[22]

[15] BA Berlin, R 187 Sammlung Schumacher, R 187/270b, Nationalpolitische Erziehungsanstalten (1934-45), Der Reichsführer-SS, Persönlicher Stab an SS-Obergruppenführer Heißmeyer, 3. Juni 1944.
[16] Yvonne Sherratt, *Hitler's Philosophers* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013), 38.
[17] Joachim Haupt, "Nationalerziehung," *Fr. Manns Pädagogisches Magazin* 1377 (1933): 6.
[18] Roche, *Sparta's German Children*, 1.
[19] Haupt, "Nationalerziehung,"5.
[20] Ibid., 7.
[21] Ibid.
[22] Ibid., 7-8.

Haupt belonged to the NSDAP's 'old guard'. He had joined the party in 1922 and became a leading functionary of the National Socialist German Students' League (NSDStB) in 1926. Before he was dismissed from the party and his position as Napola inspector in 1935 due to allegations of homosexuality, Haupt personified the Nazi movement's revolutionary and militant spirit within the Prussian education ministry. He was adamant about the fact that National Socialism did not require its own educational theory. He argued, "at the beginning of National Socialism there was no theory, no book, no doctrine, only a fighting association *(Kampfbund*)."[23] Revolutionary ideals had to be passed on to society by early leaders of the Nazi movement, particularly those who had gained practical experiences during the so-called 'time of struggle (*Kampfzeit*).' One of Haupt's primary objectives was to transform the Napolas into miniature fighting associations that could one day bring the National Socialist revolution to completion.[24]

While Hitler was committed to Nazifying Germany's traditional bureaucracies, he did not see eye to eye with SA leaders about the coming of a "second revolution."[25] Prior to the purge of the SA during the Night of the Long Knives in 1934, many Napola officials, including Rust and Haupt, held ranks within the SA. According to surviving documentation from 1933, the SA had even formulated plans to absorb all Napola teachers and pupils into their ranks.[26] The Röhm Purge on June 30, 1934 ended the SA's pursuit of the Napolas. While the purges did not disband the SA completely, the Nazi

[23] Ibid., 12.
[24] Klaus Schmitz, *Militärische Jugenderziehung: Preussische Kadettenhäuser und Nationalpolitische Erziehungsanstalten zwischen 1807 und 1936* (Köln: Böhlau Verlag, 1997), 287-288.
[25] Samuel W. Mitcham Jr, *The Rise of the Wehrmacht*: *The German Armed Forces and World War II* (Westport: Praeger Security International, 2008), 25.
[26] BA Berlin, R 187 Sammlung Schumacher, R 187/270b, "Nationalpolitische Erziehungsanstalten: Entwurf," 10.11. 1933

party's biggest paramilitary organization declined in political significance almost overnight. As a result, the Napola bureaucracy experienced a period of high employee turnover. Haupt narrowly escaped the purges in 1934, but was arrested by the Gestapo in 1935 and removed from his position as Napola inspector. Otto Calliebe, a SS member, relieved Ulrich Sander, the NPEA Potsdam's first headmaster, of his role in 1934. After the appointment of Heißmeyer in 1936, Calliebe was promoted to assistant Napola inspector (*Vize-Inspekteur*) and played a significant role increasing SS influence in the Napolas. Although some Napola officials and Napola teachers continued their SA memberships after 1934, the SA could no longer influence the development of the schools in a meaningful way. In 1942, the SA Supreme Command launched an unsuccessful attempt to rekindle their relationship. Since the schools were firmly under the control of the SS, SA leaders had to resort to desperate and ultimately futile measures. Local SA units were advised to visit Napolas and establish congenial relationships with headmasters and teachers. The SA Supreme Command also passed a recommendation to its senior officers to book space inside the schools for their next convention, "so that they can gain a clearer picture of the Napolas' educational work."[27]

Fritz Kloppe was another influential Napola ideologue whose SA connections proved to be devastating in the aftermath of the Night of the Long Knives. Kloppe had founded the *Wehrwolf* (Werewolf), an auxiliary organization of the *Stahlhelm* (Steel

[27] BA Berlin, R 187 Sammlung Schumacher, R 187/270b, Nationalpolitische Erziehungsanstalten (1934-45), Die Oberste SA-Führung, "Betrifft: Nationalpolitische Erziehungsanstalten," München, den 26. November 1942.

Helmet), in January 1923.[28] The Halle-based formation attracted World War I veterans and *Freikorps* members and had a distinctly anti-republican agenda. Its membership grew to about 40 000 members in 1926-27.[29] Considered dangerous sources of opposition to the NSDAP, the *Stahlhelm*, *Wehrwolf,* and other private paramilitary associations were absorbed by the SA between 1933 and 1934.[30] In 1933, Kloppe was given the rank of *SA-Standartenführer* and began teaching at the Napola in Potsdam. In connection with the SA purges during the summer of 1934, he was sent to a concentration camp.[31]

Prior to his arrest, Kloppe published a short pamphlet based on his experiences at the Napola in Potsdam. *Nationalpolitische Erziehungsanstalten* differed from previous treatises because it offered specific instructions on curriculum design. In many ways, Kloppe was a transitional figure in the history of Napola pedagogy. Realizing that the Nazi movement's revolutionary phase was coming to an end, Kloppe was eager to formalize the Napolas' educational program. In collaboration with Dr. Eugen Stamm, a leading member of the NPEA Potsdam's rectorate, Kloppe proposed a detailed curriculum with fixed weekly hours for academic instruction, physical education, and extracurricular activities.[32] Careful not to overstep his authority, he also emphasized the characteristics of the Napolas that identified the schools as a Nazi creation. Racial

[28] Dirk Schumann, *Political Violence in the Weimar Republic 1918-1933*, *Fight for the Streets and Fear of Civil War* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2009), 118.
[29] James M. Diehl, *Paramilitary Politics in Weimar Germany* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1977), 295.
[30] The *Stahlhelm* was formally dissolved in 1935. Bruce Campbell, *The SA Generals and the Rise of Nazism* (Lexington: The University of Kentucky Press, 1998), 126.
[31] Ursula Aumüller-Roske, *Weibliche Elite für die Diktatur? Zur Rolle der nationalpolitischen Erziehungsanstalten für Mädchen im Dritten Reich* (Pfaffenweiler: Centaurus Verlag, 1988), 31.
[32] Fritz Kloppe, *Nationalpolitische Erziehungsanstalten* (Berlin-Leipzig: Julius Beltz Verlag, 1934), Nachwort zur Unterrichtsverteilung, 9, 12-13.

selection was the hallmark of education in the Third Reich.[33] Kloppe demonstrated that "leaders can obviously not be created artificially."[34] Napola pupils were selected based on their racial health. Jews and other "racial aliens" could not gain admission to the Napolas.[35] The schools' main function was to activate and nurture the supposed hereditary talents of their Aryan pupils. The Napolas were not institutions for troubled youth, nor did they accept students who were too quiet and unwilling to take risks. They aimed at nothing short of creating a "complete human being", a new racial elite.[36]

Prospective Napola pupils were recruited at an early age. Elementary school principals and teachers were often asked to identify suitable candidates and pass recommendations and information leaflets on to their parents.[37] Napola recruitment officers also regularly visited school fairs, sporting events, and entrance examinations hosted by other secondary schools to handpick racially acceptable and athletically gifted students.[38] These boys were then invited to take part in pre-admission testing. The tests usually took place at the Napola, or local host institutions.[39] For an entire week, Napola officials evaluated prospective *Jungmannen*'s academic, athletic, and leadership skills.

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[33] Hans-Jochen Gamm, *Führung und Verführung: Pädagogik des Nationalsozialismus* (München: List Verlag, 1964), 22.
[34] Kloppe, *Nationalpolitische Erziehungsanstalten*, 4.
[35] The use of the term 'racial aliens' can be observed in Claudia Koonz, *The Nazi Conscience* (Cambridge: Belknap, 2003), 273.
[36] Kloppe, *Nationalpolitische Erziehungsanstalten* 4.
[37] Rolf Eilers, *Die nationalsozialistische Schulpolitik*: *Eine Studie zur Funktion der Erziehung im totalitären Staat* (Köln: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1963), 45. A Napola admissions leaflet featured information about the schools' entrance examinations, tuition fees, academic and physical prerequisites, and a broad description of their curriculum. For more information, see BA Berlin, R 187 Sammlung Schumacher, R 187/270b, Nationalpolitische Erziehungsanstalten (1934-45), "Merkblatt für Eltern und Erziehungsberechtigte über die Aufnahme von Jungen in Nationalpolitsche Erziehungsanstalten"
[38] Ibid.
[39] Josef Taubeneder, private correspondence (Question2), August 16, 2014; Rudi Steiner, private correspondence (Question 2), December 12, 2014.

Students were also subjected to health checks and tests of courage.[40] Klaus Schwab, a former Napola pupil, remembered that he was asked to climb to the ceiling of the gymnasium using a long ladder. Once he reached the top, he had to jump and trust for his fellow recruits to break his fall with a rescue net.[41] Failure to complete one or several tests of courage showed weakness in character and resulted in students' dismissal from the selection process. Even after Napola hopefuls had received their letters of admission, they had to pass a third and final step in the Napolas' entrance procedure. Admitted students completed a six-month probationary period before they were considered full-fledged members of the Napola community.[42]

With no clear guidelines from Hitler, Kloppe wanted to create a clear framework for instructional planning. He received tacit approval for this initiative by Rust and other members of the Education Ministry who had remained faithful to the intellectually rigorous Humboldtian school system.[43] Kloppe and Stamm, however, reminded readers that *Nationalpolitische Erziehungsanstalten* was a hastily written account of their lived experiences as Nazi educators and all findings were, by default, provisional. In his concluding remarks, Stamm declared, "Perhaps in one or two years, we will see more clearly what national political education is, at least from a theoretical perspective."[44] Yet national political education never developed into an independent curriculum during the Nazi dictatorship.

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[40] Erich Gummersheimer, private correspondence (Question 2), December 10, 2014.
[41] Klaus Schwab, private correspondence (Question 2), May 22, 2015.
[42] Rudi Steiner, private correspondence (Question 2), December 12, 2014.
[43] Wolfgang Keim, *Erziehung unter der Nazi-Diktatur: Band II Kriegsvorbereitung Krieg und Holocaust* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1997), 34.
[44] Kloppe, *Nationalpolitische Erziehungsanstalten*, 14.

Although some of Kloppe's and Stamm's ideas never saw the light of day, most notably the establishment of a "National Political University," others remained in practice until 1945 and highlighted the exclusivity of the Napolas.[45] Kloppe proposed to keep Napola class sizes as small as possible. Average class size was not to exceed thirty students.[46] This allowed teachers to monitor the progress of their pupils closely.[47] The ideal lesson length should also not exceed 40 minutes.[48] Policymakers would have been hard-pressed to provide similar accommodations to public school students. Nazi Germany's schools were plagued by chronic teacher shortages. The purging of the civil service in 1933 and 1934 led to the dismissal of many "politically unreliable" and Jewish teachers.[49] The teaching profession was further decimated by the demands of the regime's Four-Year Plan. Able-bodied teachers were conscripted into Nazi Germany's armed forces and labor services. A SOPADE report from March 1939 demonstrated the severity of the situation.[50] In 1927/28, the student-teacher ratio had been 36.8:1. By 1937/38, this ratio had increased to 42.7:1. In the early months of 1939, Prussia alone needed 3000 additional teachers.[51]

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[45] Kloppe, *Nationalpolitische Erziehungsanstalten*, 15.
[46] The average class size of thirty students marked a drastic improvement to elementary school conditions during Wilhelmine times. Marjorie Lamberti shows that in 1882 the average class size in Imperial Germany's Rhine Province was 84. In Posen it was 102, 100 in West Prussia, 96 in Silesia, and 93 in East Prussia. Marjorie Lamberti, *State, Society, and the Elementary School in Imperial Germany* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), 82-83.
[47] Kloppe, *Nationalpolitische Erziehungsanstalten* 4.
[48] Ibid.,11.
[49] See for instance, Law for the Restoration of the Professional Civil Service (April 7, 1933), §3.
[50] It is important to remember that intelligence reports prepared by the exile organization of Germany's Social Democratic Party (SPD) were not particularly objective. SOPADE members were anxious to demonstrate the lack of solidarity of the German people with the regime. SOPADE also painted the Third Reich in a permanent state of crisis to encourage revolt, which may have resulted in inflated numbers.
[51] Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands (Sopade), *Deutschland-Berichte 1934-1940: Fünfter Jahrgang 1938* (Verlag Petra Nettelbeck, 2001), 319-320.

As a result of wartime call-ups, class sizes in public schools ballooned. This problem persisted well into the postwar period. During the period of denazification, it was not uncommon for pupil-to-teacher ratios in the American zone of occupation to exceed levels of 70:1.[52] The Napolas, on the other hand, remained relatively unaffected by teacher shortages. Their excessive racial screening and training methods kept student enrolment low for the duration of the Third Reich. By the end of the war the Napolas had produced more dropouts and transfer students than graduates.[53] Moreover, the practical limitations of boarding students meant that each institute could only host a limited number of students. In emergencies, the SS members filled teaching vacancies.[54]

Kloppe also pushed for the creation of elite schools for girls. The regime's reactionary views on female education left little doubt that the Third Reich's elite would at least initially be exclusively male.[55] Prior to their transformation into Napolas in April 1933, the institutes in Plön, Köslin, and Potsdam had served as non-military, state boarding schools (*Staatliche Bildungsanstalten*, Stabilas) for boys and girls during the

[52] Puaca, *Learning Democracy,* 34-35.
[53] Chapter 4, "The Napola am Donnersberg," demonstrates that poor grades, health issues, lack of athleticism, or character issues resulted in Napola pupils' departure from the schools.
[54] BA Berlin, R 187 Sammlung Schumacher, R 187/270b, Nationalpolitische Erziehungsanstalten (1934-45), SS-Abschnitt XV, "Betreff: Erzieher für National Politische Erziehungsanstalten," Hamburg den 3. Oktober 1941. During the war, the SS made work at the Napolas more enticing by offering members exemption from military service and free tuition for university studies. Elke Fröhlich, *"*Die drei Typen der nationalsozialistischen Ausleseschulen," in *'Wir waren Hitlers Eliteschüler: Ehemalige Zöglinge der NS-Ausleseschulen brechen ihr Schweigen*, ed. Johannes Leeb (München: Wilhelm Heyne Verlag, 1998), 247.
[55] While the cult of motherhood solidified patriarchal conditions, Dagmar Reese has shown that membership in Nazi organizations such as the League for German Girls (*Bund Deutscher Mädel*, BDM) sometimes had a liberating effect on young women. Opportunities for emancipation existed, but were limited. Often born out of necessity, National Socialist politics allowed Aryan women to gain influence beyond the home. Labor shortages, for instance, forced women into previously male-dominated industries. Adam Tooze shows that German women's labor market participation in 1939 was higher than that reached by Britain and the United States by the end of the war. As missionaries of Nazi ideology, women also became heavily involved in implementing the regime's Germanization policies in Nazi-occupied territories. For more information, see Elizabeth Harvey, *Women and the Nazi East*: *Agents and Witnesses of* Germanization (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 1-2.

Weimar Republic. Since Napolas did not permit co-educational instruction, female pupils were forced to transfer to public day schools. The last girls left the Napola in Plön in the spring of 1934.[56] The first Napola for girls did not open its doors until 1939.[57] Haupt claimed decades after the war that the Napola inspectorate had made early plans to open schools for girls. Lack of financial resources had allegedly delayed such plans. Stefanie Flintrop believes that these claims cannot be substantiated.[58] The decision to open the first Napola for girls in 1939 came on the heels of Austria's incorporation into the German Reich in March 1938. Rust's ministry acquired the former Austrian Federal Boarding Schools (*Bundeserziehunganstalten*, BEA), which had enjoyed considerable prestige within Austrian society. Since permanent closure was out of the question, the former BEA in Traiskirchen was converted into a Napola for boys in 1938. The BEA Hurbertendorf-Türnitz in Lower Austria, a former girls' boarding school, became the first of three Napola for girls in Greater Germany in 1939.[59] The curriculum of the Napola for girls conformed to traditional gender roles. Girls did not receive premilitary training. Instead, they prepared to become future mothers in the service of the regime.

While Kloppe and others making educational policy were firmly opposed to the idea of co-educational Napolas, there was some concern that an all-male environment could have dangerous effects on the *Jungmannen*'s sexual development. Homosexuality was a criminal offence for the duration of the Third Reich and beyond. Himmler, in

[56] Stefanie Flintrop, "'Wir sollten intelligente Mütter werden': Nationalpolitische Erziehungsanstalten für Mädchen" (PhD Dissertation, Heinrich-Heine Universität Düsseldorf, 2008), 17.
[57] Flintrop, "'Wir sollten intelligente Mütter werden'," 21.
[58] Flintrop, "'Wir sollten intelligente Mütter werden'," 17.
[59] The NPEA Hurbertendorf-Türnitz had three different school locations between 1939 and 1945: Vienna, Hurbertendorf, and Türnitz. Ibid., 31-32.

particular, saw gay men as a threat to the survival of the Aryan race. He established the Reich Central Office for the Combating of Homosexuality and Abortion within the criminal police in 1936, which greatly increased the number of arrests of homosexuals and other "enemies of the state."[60] Between 1933 and 1945, approximately 50 000 men were arrested under Paragraph 175 of the Criminal Code, which had existed since 1871. Nearly half of the arrests occurred between 1937 and 1939.[61]

Kloppe believed that pubescent boys should not be entirely deprived of contact with the opposite sex. According to Kloppe, the Napolas' physically demanding schedule could not eliminate the threat of homosexual behavior. [62] Kloppe hoped to promote heterosexuality by reintroducing the "often mocked" co-educational dance evenings (*Tanzabende*). Since events of this sort could encourage promiscuity among youth, however, the onus fell on the girls to enforce Nazi moral codes.[63] The ideal Nazi woman was of Aryan blood, healthy, married, willing to procreate, and loyal to the regime.[64] According to Dagmar Herzog, the Third Reich did not sexually repress Aryan women. For many, Nazi sexual policy was liberal due to its emphasis on premarital sex, availability of contraceptives, and celebration of healthy bodies.[65] The introduction of elite girls' schools may have been an "inevitable" measure, according to Kloppe, because

[60] Michael Burleigh, *Confronting the Nazi Past, New Debates on Modern German History* (London: Collin & Brown, 1996), 159; Joseph W. Bendersky, *A Concise History of Nazi Germany* (Plymouth: Rowman & Littlefield, 2014), 114.
[61] Richard Evans, *The Third Reich in Power* (New York: Penguin, 2006), 533. For more information on the persecution of homosexuals under the Third Reich, see Richard Plant, *The Pink Triangle: The Nazi War Against Homosexuals* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1986).
[62] Fritz Kloppe, *Nationalpolitische Erziehungsanstalten* (Berlin-Leipzig: Julius Beltz Verlag, 1934), 7.
[63] Ibid.
[64] Jill Stephenson, *Women in Nazi Germany* (London: Routledge, 2001), 18.
[65] For more information see, Dagmar Herzog, "Sex and the Third Reich," in *Sex after Fascism: Memory and Morality in Twentieth-century Germany* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005)

it reined in sexual liberalism.[66] While the Napolas for girls shared many similarities with their male counterparts, they also allotted significant time to courses and extracurricular activities that prepared them for motherhood and household duties.[67]

Routinization sets in: The Napolas on the National Stage, 1936-1939

Attempts at reform subsided after 1934. The Röhm Purges, the dismissal of Haupt as Napola inspector, and the appointment of Heißmeyer, a member of Himmler's inner circle, as head of the Napola bureaucracy ushered in a new period in the schools' development. Under the supervision of the SS, the Napola administration was centralized and extended its powers beyond the Prussian state. The Napolas also fell in line with the regime's preparations for war.[68] Militaristic virtues and mobilization efforts dictated the course of all educational establishments during the immediate prewar period, albeit with differing levels of intensity.[69] Military training dominated everyday life at Nazi boarding schools, which after 1937 also included the Adolf Hitler Schools.[70] The paramilitary curriculum ultimately transformed the Napolas into preparatory schools for SS and *Wehrmacht* during the war.[71]

Under Heißmeyer's and Himmler's leadership, the Napolas began to emerge from relative obscurity into national and international prominence. The combination of racial

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[66] Kloppe, *Nationalpolitische Erziehungsanstalten*, 8.
[67] Flintrop, "'Wir sollten intelligente Mütter werden'," 44, 101-109.
[68] Naake, "Zur Theorie und Praxis der Erziehung in den Nationalpolitischen Erziehungsanstalten und ähnlichen faschistischen 'Eliteschulen'," 66-67.
[69] Keim, *Erziehung unter der Nazi-Diktatur, Band* I, 121-122.
[70] Adolf Hitler approved the founding of the Adolf Hitler schools on January 15, 1937. The schools were under the auspices of the Hitler Youth and the German Labor Front. They educated boys from Grade 7 to 12 and acted as preparatory schools for the party's postsecondary academies, the order castles (*Ordensburgen*). "Gründungsverfügung der Adolf-Hitler-Schulen," in Hans-Jochen Gamm, *Führung und Verführung: Pädagogik des Nationalsozialismus* (München: List Verlag, 1964), 422-23.
[71] Ibid., 108. For more information about the Napolas' relationship to the SS after 1936, see Chapter 3 "The Napolas and the SS."

pre-screening, formal academic instruction, and intensive premilitary training endeared the Napolas to party officials, military leaders, and ideologues.[72] Coverage on the Napolas in SS publications peaked between 1936 and 1939.[73] According to the inspectorate's own estimates, twenty-one Napola institutes had been founded or were currently in the planning phase by 1938.[74] The rising popularity and visibility of the Napolas forced Heißmeyer not only to justify their educational practices to a wider audience, but also to account for their long-term role within Nazi Germany's education system. In December 1938, Heißmeyer presented a detailed account of the Napolas' history and pedagogical goals to the Supreme Command of the Armed Forces (*Oberkommando der Wehrmacht*, OKW).

According to Heißmeyer, the Napolas were not designed to be academic institutions in the traditional sense. Their purpose was to provide a "total education *(Gesamterziehung*)" to German youth.[75] Whereas schools had previously been organized along class, religious, or vocational lines, the Napolas promoted national and racial unity.[76] Heißmeyer also felt compelled to measure their success against other, well-established elite schools in France, England, and the United States. He immediately dismissed the French *lycées* as an inferior educational model. The *lycées* created a purely intellectual environment for students with limited investment in physical education and

[72] In coordination with various military branches, some Napolas added specialized courses to their curriculum. Napola pupils were, for instance, able to receive flight and naval training.
[73] Universitätsbibliothek Mannheim, MA000762501, *Das Schwarze Korps : Zeitung der Schutzstaffeln der NSDAP ; Organ der Reichsführung der SS*. – Berlin, 1936-1944.
[74] August Heißmeyer, *Die Nationalpolitischen Erziehungsanstalten: Nachschrift eines Vortrages im Oberkommando der Wehrmacht im Dezember 1938* (Berlin: Gersbachdruck, 1938), 11.
[75] Heißmeyer, *Die Nationalpolitischen Erziehungsanstalten,*1.
[76] Heißmeyer, *Die Nationalpolitischen Erziehungsanstalten,*4.

fostering camaraderie.[77] Heißmeyer also thought little of the "plutocratic educational system" in the United States. American elite prep schools were funded by private foundations and channeled graduates predominantly into industry.[78]

Heißmeyer identified most strongly with the English public schools in Eton, Harrow, Winchester, and Rugby. Gerwin Strobl has shown that German expressions of anglophilia during the early years of the Nazi regime were not only widespread but also genuine.[79] Although Hitler himself had abandoned the idea of Anglo-German friendship by 1938, the German public had not.[80] Heißmeyer held England's elite schools in high regard.[81] He appreciated the schools' spartan accommodations, extra-curricular activities and military discipline. He also saw strong similarities between the English headmaster and the Napola *Anstaltsleiter*, whose function allowed him to govern the institute with little oversight.[82]

Despite his admiration for the English public school system, Heißmeyer here too underlined the superiority of the Napolas. The public schools promoted the ideal of the English gentleman. A gentleman had to be chivalrous, self-controlled, and loyal to the

[77] Ibid., 4-5.
[78] Ibid., 9.
[79] Gerwin Stroble, *The Germanic Isle: Nazi Perceptions of Britain*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 34.
[80] Stroble, *The Germanic Isle*, 7.
[81] With Heißmeyer's approval, the Napolas continued exchange programs with English public schools until the outbreak of war in 1939. In March 1937, for instance, the Napola in Oranienstein hosted a soccer tournament, which was attended by teams from Shrewsbury, Eton, Bradfield, and Bryanston. LHA Koblenz, 700 238, Sachakte 10, "Erinnerungen an Oranienstein."
[82] Heißmeyer, *Die Nationalpolitischen Erziehungsanstalten*, 6. During his tenure as Napola inspector, Heißmeyer often overstated the Napolas' autonomy from party influences. His subordinates carried this belief into the postwar period. When questioned about the Napolas' relationship to the party during denazification, former Napola officials and teachers unanimously agreed that Heißmeyer's appointment in 1936 had preserved the institutes' independence. In reality, all levels of the Napola bureaucracy touted the party line, especially after 1936. For more information, see Chapters 2 and 3.

nation.[83] However, only a privileged few were able to reap the benefits of a public school education. Whereas the Napolas claimed to recruit children based on racial traits regardless of their socio-economic class or familial connections, the public schools primarily attracted sons from the English aristocracy.[84]

Heißmeyer also addressed concerns regarding the state of repair of some Napola institutes.[85] With the exception of Ballenstedt, the Napolas of the Third Reich were not new constructions. The inspectorate converted former cadet schools, monasteries, abbeys, hospices, and seminary schools into Napolas. Although Heißmeyer could not "wait until our Reich is able to build us beautiful homes," the construction of new school buildings was very low on his list of priorities.[86] With the backing of Himmler and the SS, Heißmeyer was able to seize or confiscate attractive school sites at will. Heißmeyer also appealed to his audience of military officers when he stated that Napola pupils did not require comfortable or luxurious accommodations. Pupils in Wilhelmine cadet schools had made do with simple conditions. Yet that had not stopped them from becoming great military leaders.[87]

The requisitioning of buildings was in the first place a cost-saving measure. Restoration was a cheaper alternative than new construction for the cash-strapped Napola inspectorate. Its total budget for the 1938 fiscal year in Prussia amounted to 124,750 *Reichsmark* (RM). 69,500 RM of this sum covered the salaries of fourteen inspectorate officials. Only 21,000 RM were allocated to administrative expenditures, such as

[83] Heißmeyer, *Die Nationalpolitischen Erziehungsanstalten*,7.
[84] Ibid., 8.
[85] The 1934 founded Napola in Wahlstatt was heavily dilapidated and had to be closed after a few months.
[86] Ibid., 11.
[87] Heißmeyer, *Die Nationalpolitischen Erziehungsanstalten*, 11.

equipment, general upkeep, and teaching materials.[88] Until 1941, costs for Napolas outside of Prussia had to be covered by the individual states.[89] With an official wartime budget of less than 300,000 RM, the construction of new buildings continued to take a back seat to more immediate concerns, such as hiring staff and purchasing textbooks.[90] It is entirely possible that the inspectorate had access to funds beyond those reported by the Prussian Ministry of Finance. On October 22, 1940, Heißmeyer notified the head of the Reich Chancellery Hans Lammers about his plan to expand the Napola system to 100 schools within the next five years. He also requested 14,25 million RM to open fifteen institutes in 1941.[91] Horst Ueberhorst believed that this request had been granted based on the fact that 1941 became the year of the single largest expansion in Napola history. It also remains unclear how much money the SS invested into the Napolas after 1936. Considering that the SA and SS accumulated expenditures in excess of 600 million RM during the Third Reich, the Napolas may have received additional Reich funds.[92]

Repurposing was also motivated by the desire to bestow historical legitimacy on the Napolas. Buildings with long and rich traditions fed into the regime's beliefs that

[88] GStA PK, I. HA, Rep. 151, IC, Nr. 7308, Preußisches Finanzministerium, Ordner IB 3015, Landesverwaltung der Nationalpolitischen Erziehungsanstalten (1937-44), Kassenanschlag Erziehung: Landesverwaltung der Nationalpolitischen Erziehungsanstalten in Preußen für das Rechnungsjahr 1938.
[89] Ibid., 12.
[90] GStA PK, I. HA, Rep. 151, IC, Nr. 7308, Preußisches Finanzministerium, Ordner IB 3015, Landesverwaltung der Nationalpolitischen Erziehungsanstalten (1937-44), Schreiben der Inspektion der Nationalpolitischen Erziehungsanstalten an den Herrn Preußischen Finanzminister, "Betrifft: Aufstellung des Haushaltsplanes für das Rechnungsjahr 1944," Berlin, den 11. Januar, 1944; GStA PK I. HA, Rep. 151, IC, Nr. 7307/1, Preußisches Finanzministerium: Kriegsmaßnahmen zur Versorgung der Nationalpolitischen Erziehungsanstalten mit Lehrmitteln, 1944-45.
[91] Ueberhorst, *Elite für* die Diktatur,106-108.
[92] IfZ München-Berlin ,ED 1771, Archiv des ehemaligen Reichsfinanzministerium, Ausarbeitungen zur Finanzpolitik im 3. Reich für das Deutsche Institut für die Geschichte des Nationalsozialismus, 1948-1951, "Die Ausgaben für die NSDAP und ihre Gliederungen usw. von 1933-45," Berlin, 5. März 1949, 2.

National Socialism was deeply rooted in German history.[93] In order to garner popular support for a school system that had virtually appeared overnight, the Napola leadership preserved the illusion of historical continuity. The instrumentalization of the Napolas' mythical past did not come without problems. Some of the institutes had enjoyed considerable prestige among local populations. They were able to carry on longstanding traditions after their conversion into Napolas. Harald Schäfer showed that *Jungmannen* in Potsdam, Plön, and Köslin initially added the former cadet schools' house colors and epaulettes to their Napola uniforms.[94] Although the Napolas were non-confessional schools, religious instruction continued in regions with strong Catholic or Protestant representation. On June 30, 1942, Himmler complained to Heißmeyer that pupils at the Napola in Putbus still attended confirmation classes.[95] Heißmeyer blamed the reactionary influences of teachers and students who had remained with the institute after its conversion to a Napola in 1941. He promised to resolve the "religious question" in Putbus within the next two years, though given conditions in 1943 we can presume National Socialist ideologues at the school had little success weaning families from Christianity.[96]

Heißmeyer also addressed concerns about the recruitment of Napola graduates in December of 1938. Starting with his appointment in 1936, the SS began to play a more visible role in the administration of Napola affairs. Heißmeyer decided to dispel lingering

[93] Alan Steinweis and Daniel Rogers, eds., *The Impact of Nazism: New Perspectives on the Third Reich and Its Legacy* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2003), 14.
[94] Harald Schäfer, *Napola: Die letzten vier Jahre der Nationalpolitischen Erziehungsanstalt Oranienstein bei Diez an der Lahn 1941-1945* (Frankfurt/Main: R.G. Fischer, 1997), 11-12.
[95] BA Berlin, R 187 Sammlung Schumacher, R 187/270b, Nationalpolitische Erziehungsanstalten (1934-45), Der Reichsführer-SS, Tgb Nr. AR 11/15/1942, Führerhauptquartier, 30.Juni, 1942.
[96] BA Berlin, R 187 Sammlung Schumacher, R 187/270b, Nationalpolitische Erziehungsanstalten (1934-45), Der Inspektor der Nationalpolitischen Erziehungsanstalten an den Reichsführer-SS, "Betreff: Dort. Schreiben Tgb. Nr. AR 11/15/42 vom 30.6. 1942."

suspicions that the Napolas were helping the SS exceed their authorized quota of new recruits. He noted that a large percentage of graduates pursued employment opportunities with Nazi Germany's *Wehrmacht*. The majority of the rest chose careers with the SS, the Reich Labor Service, or joined the Napolas as teachers.[97] Krieck and Haupt had endorsed free choice of occupation in order to transmit national socialist ideology to all sectors of German society. Heißmeyer employed this rhetoric to demonstrate to the attending *Wehrmacht* officers that the SS was not trying to establish a recruitment monopoly in the Napolas. He insisted that Napola graduates could freely choose their professions after graduation.[98]

And yet, even before the war, Heißmeyer modeled the administrative structure of the Napolas closely after that of the SS. Himmler expected healthy Aryan families to produce a minimum of four children. According to the SS statistical yearbook for 1938, however, only 39.7% of SS men were married. The number of children per married SS man was a mere 1.1.[99] Himmler tried to remedy this situation by asking full-time SS leaders to marry early. Starting in 1939, Himmler simplified the procedure for approving marriages, which had been in place since the Engagement and Marriage Order of December 31, 1931.[100] He also sanctioned extramarital procreation to boost birth rates.[101] Heißmeyer internalized Himmler's vision of the SS man as head of a clan (*Sippe*) with

[97] Heißmeyer, *Die Nationalpolitischen Erziehungsanstalten*, 22.
[98] Chapter 3, "The Napolas and the SS," will demonstrate that the SS openly manipulated Napola pupils career choices during the war.
[99] Peter Longerich, *Heinrich Himmler* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 378.
[100] Ibid., 353, 357.
[101] Ibid., 371-372.

many children.[102] After his second marriage to Reich Women's Leader Gertrud Scholtz-Klink in 1940, Heißmeyer's family grew to eleven children, seven of whom were his own. More importantly, Heißmeyer transposed Himmler's ideal of an SS clan community (*Sippengemeinschaft*) into stricter guidelines for Napola teachers. He lamented that his predecessors had ignored Napola teachers' marital status. It was "intolerable" and "absurd" that unwed and childless teachers should lecture to pupils about the regime's pronatalist policies.[103]

A personal letter to a Napola teacher in Oranienstein from April 5, 1939 demonstrated just how serious Heißmeyer was about enforcing marriage policy. Heißmeyer reminded the 33-year old, unnamed teacher that his current non-married status was unacceptable. To underline his point, Heißmeyer referenced a speech he had delivered in front of the assembled teaching staff in the fall of 1936. The speech had given clear orders to senior Napola teachers to marry and have children within the next year. The unnamed teacher had been one of the few to disobey this order. Heißmeyer stressed that Napola educators had a sacred duty to their students, ancestors, and themselves to procreate. Heißmeyer issued a final ultimatum to him to find a wife by December 31, 1939.[104] Unfortunately, the sources remain silent about the fate of the unnamed Napola teacher. Considering that Heißmeyer took a personal interest in the teacher's private affairs, compliance with the ultimatum seemed likely.

[102] Ibid., 740.
[103] Heißmeyer, *Die Nationalpolitischen Erziehungsanstalten*, 15.
[104] IfZ München-Berlin, ED 735, Band 8, August Heißmeyer an den Studienrat in Oranienstein, 5. April 1939.

Missionaries of Empire: The Napolas' wartime responsibilities, 1939-45

Many historians argue that the Nazi regime did not have a clear and coherent concept of education beyond indoctrination.[105] The Napolas corroborate this claim before, but also during the war. Racial political education fuelled students' willingness to make the ultimate sacrifice for the regime, which resulted in a disproportionally high death toll.[106] Harald Schäfer claims that approximately 30-50% of all conscripted *Jungmannen* perished over the course of the war.[107] In 1940, *SS-Sturmbannführer* and assistant Napola inspector Otto Calliebe published a survey of the Napolas in the Central Institute for Education and Instruction's (*Zentralinstitut für Erziehung und Unterricht*) year-end review.[108] As Heißmeyer's right-hand man inside the inspectorate, Calliebe's beliefs about the purpose and future of the Napolas were indistinguishable from his superior's. Calliebe did not find it necessary to concretize the Napolas' educational program. To him, the Napolas already put Hitler's vision for secondary education into practice.[109] He was especially proud that the Napolas' physical training during wartime was superior to that of other schools.[110] Yet critics believed that Napola pupils were more brawn than brains. *SS-Hauptsturmführer* Friedrich Lübbert, the Napolas' athletic director, addressed these concerns in an article published by the NSDAP's press service in 1941. Lübbert quoted a recent speech by Bernhard Rust to demonstrate that the Napolas' attention to

[105] Pine, *Education in Nazi Germany*, 138; H.-J. Hahn, *Education and Society in Germany* (Oxford: Berg, 1998), 83.
[106] Ibid., 90, 251-252.
[107] Schäfer, *Napola,* 86.
[108] Otto Calliebe, "Die Nationalpolitischen Erziehungsanstalten," *Jahrbuch des Deutschen Zentralinstituts für Erziehung und Unterricht* (1940): 248-57.
[109] Calliebe, "Die Nationalpoliischen Erziehungsanstalten," 250.
[110] Ibid., 250.

physical fitness had not lowered academic standards.[111] On the contrary, Lübbert believed that the Napolas had proven over the past eight years that physical education aided pupils' intellectual development.

Although the Napolas had been founded on his birthday, Hitler never personally visited a Napola.[112] His speech to armament workers in Berlin on December 10, 1941 marked the first time that Hitler publicly acknowledged the Napolas' existence – eight years after the first institute opened its doors. He lauded their achievements in educating children from all social backgrounds. The Napolas gave sons of farmers and workers opportunities to attain positions of power and influence, noted the Führer. Hitler also used the proclaimed diversity of the Napolas to launch an attack on Western democracies. Whereas "men of the people" dictated the affairs of the Third Reich, other countries were ruled by a small upper class. Hitler specifically pointed to the example of England, where he claimed sons of financial magnates were in charge of the state.[113]

Hitler's speech was mainly designed to boost morale among workers and underscore the superiority of the *völkisch* state.[114] Gustav Skroblin, a member of the Napola inspectorate, still felt the effects of Hitler's speech in 1943. In an article written for the Central Institute for Education and Instruction's year-end review, Skroblin

[111] BA Berlin, R 187 Sammlung Schumacher, R 187/270b, Nationalpolitische Erziehungsanstalten (1934-45), Die Innere Front NSK, Pressedienst der NSDAP, "Zuviel Leibesübungen? Die körperliche Erziehung an den Nationalpolitischen Erziehungsanstalten," von SS-Hauptsturmführer Friedrich Lübbert, Fachleiter für Leibesübungen an den NPEAs.
[112] Ueberhorst, *Elite für die Diktatur*, 432.
[113] Adolf Hitler, Speech of December 10, 1940, Berlin, Rheinmetall-Borsig Works. Also found in Gelhaus, *Die Ausleseschulen als Grundpfeiler des NS-Regimes*, 67-68.
[114] BA Berlin, R 187 Sammlung Schumacher, R 187/270b, Nationalpolitische Erziehungsanstalten (1934-45), Hunderschaftsführer Gustav Skroblin, Inspektion der Nationalpolitischen Erziehungsanstalten, "Die Nationalpolitischen Erziehungsanstalten," in *Deutsche Schulerziehung Jahrbuch des Deutschen Zentralinstituts für Erziehung und Unterricht* (1941/42): 213.

touched on the developments of the Napolas during the 1941/42 school year. He remembered that "after years of silent efficacy, the National Political Education Institutes are proud to be mentioned by the man [Adolf Hitler]" who was single-handedly responsible for reforming German education.[115] Skroblin also noted that Hitler had bestowed the Napolas with new responsibilities. By comparing the Napolas with the most prestigious elite schools of the Western world, Hitler had made them Germany's premier educational sites.[116] For Nazi Germany to emerge victorious from the epic clash of ideologies, the Napolas had to play a central role in re-shaping the next generation of leaders.[117]

The necessities of war gave the Napolas a clearer sense of direction. Wolfgang Keim noted that Germany's education system made a significant contribution to the rise and consolidation of Nazi rule. It functioned as a "transition point for Nazi ideology, including its racist and imperialistic goals."[118] One of these goals was the Germanization of European children under Nazi occupation. Starting with the founding of the NPEA Sudetenland in the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia in 1940, the Napolas expanded beyond the boundaries of Germany and Austria. Over the course of the war, Napolas, *Heimschulen* and *Reichsschulen* also operated in present-day Poland, Slovenia, France, Czech-Republic, Netherlands, and Luxembourg. To manage this pan-European enterprise, Heißmeyer built up a network of sister schools. This tactic had served the inspectorate well during its prewar expansion inside and outside of Prussia. Whenever the inspectorate

[115] Skroblin, "Die Nationalpolitischen Erziehungsanstalten,"211-212.
[116] Ibid., 211.
[117] Ibid., 213.
[118] Wolfgang Keim, *Erziehung unter der Nazi-Diktatur, Band* II, 368.

opened a new Napola, it was connected to a well-established institute in the region. These so-called "main institutes (*Hauptanstalten*)" were defined as such because of their founding dates, geographical location, and/or the size of their teaching staff and student body.[119] The Napola in Potsdam, for instance, had a sister school in Neuzelle. Until 1938, the Napola in Neuzelle was responsible for educating upper-year students from Potsdam. Other prominent examples included partnerships between Napolas in Neubeuern and Schulpforta, Backnang and Marnheim, and Oranienstein and Stuhm. Similar relationships were set up in the occupied territories to funnel students from the more established boarding school to the new Napola.

The relationships between individual Napola institutes were not limited to administrative oversight. There was an active exchange of personnel, students, and ideas. Hans Worpitz, a former student at the Napola in Loben (Polish Lubliniec), vividly remembered how teachers and students from the Napola in Naumburg had left a lasting mark on the institute in 1941.[120] The process of bringing new institutes up to speed was not always greeted with enthusiasm. For Josef Taubeneder, a former student at the Napola in Neubeuern, the interactions with pupils from the Napola in Schulfporta had left very negative impressions. He resented their "pedantic" need to enforce discipline and order. Anyone who did not wear the appropriate clothing or was unable to keep his room tidy was subjected to hazing.[121]

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[119] Eilers, *Die nationalsozialistische Schulpolitik*, 43-44.
[120] Hans Worpitz, *Roter und schwarzer Moloch: Erkenntnisse des Napola-Schülers Benjamin - Russissche Kriegsgefangenschaft 1945-1950* (Norderstedt: Books On Demand, 2005), 27.
[121] Josef Taubeneder, private correspondence (Question 6), August 16, 2014. Common forms of punishment included push-ups, punitive drills, or "masquerade balls." The latter forced students to change into their

After the Napolas had successfully expanded into Austria in 1939, the next logical step was the establishment of schools in occupied territories during the war. In a private 1942 letter to *SS-Gruppenführer* Berger, the head of the administrative office of the SS, Heißmeyer outlined his plan for further European expansion. He stressed that the "objective of the Napolas was the consolidation and protection of Adolf Hitler's empire" through the recruitment and education of Aryan youth.[122] In addition to intensifying the level of premilitary education, the Napolas had to identify ethnic Germans in Holland, Denmark, Norway, and Flanders and incorporate them into the racial community.[123] The Napolas acted as intermediaries in this process, charged with the task of recruiting racially valuable children from annexed and occupied regions.

Starting in May 1941, the Napolas' selection of Aryan youth was aided by the SS Race and Settlement Office (*SS-Rasse- und Siedlungshauptamt*, RuSHA).[124] In the Protectorate, RuSHA and Napola inspectorate officials recruited pupils at an early age. After Czech school doctors confirmed their racial purity, the children spent the next six to twelve months as members of an induction class. At the end of the probationary period, a final exam determined their eligibility for Napola admission. If the students passed, they would be sent to one of the Napolas in the *Altreich.* SS and Napola officials decreed that

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various uniforms in a short amount of time. Once the ball was over, the student then had to neatly fold his clothes otherwise he would run the risk of additional hazing.

[122] BA Berlin, R 187 Sammlung Schumacher, R 187/270b, Nationalpolitische Erziehungsanstalten (1934-45), August Heißmeyer an den Chef des SS-Hauptamtes SS-Gruppenführer Berger, 24.7. 1942

[123] Ibid.

[124] The SS Race and Settlement Office's control over the recruitment of Napola students spoke to the gradual radicalization of Nazi racial politics during the war. It also demonstrated that the SS did not shy away from limiting the Reich Education Ministry's control over the Napolas even further. BA Berlin, R 187 Sammlung Schumacher, R 187/270b, Nationalpolitische Erziehungsanstalten (1934-45), Reichsminister für Wissenschaft, Erziehung und Volksbildung, "Betrifft: Rassische Auslese der Jungmannenanwärter," 19. Mai 1941.

the boys could not be sent to a Napola that was situated in close proximity to relatives who had already immigrated to Germany. This policy was intended to limit contact with relatives so that students would be fully immersed in their 'Germanic' surroundings. By the end of their Napola schooling, they became naturalized citizens and were offered the same legal opportunities for advancement as German boys.[125] It is important to remember that racially valuable children were forcibly Germanized across the entire Nazi empire. The United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Agency (UNRRA) reported in 1946 that the Nazis had stolen hundreds of thousands of non-Jewish Polish children during the war. Those who were considered racially pure were placed for adoption with German families. Older boys were sent to German boarding schools, such as the Napolas or *Heimschulen*, for reeducation.[126]

Both before and during the war, it was compulsory for upper-year students to complete their land service (*Landdienst*). For periods up to three months, Napola pupils

[125] BA Berlin, R 187 Sammlung Schumacher, R 187/270b, Nationalpolitische Erziehungsanstalten (1934-45), Niederschrift über die Besprechung zwischen Hundertschaftsführer Drews und dem Leiter der Außenstelle Böhmen-Mähren des Rasse- und Siedlungshauptamtes-SS i.V. SS-Hauptsturmführer Prof. Dr. Hesch zur Frage der Aufnahme von Jungen tschechischer bzw. teilweise tschechischer Volkszugehörigkeit in eine NPEA bzw. Deutsche Heimschule am 8. September 1944 in Prag.

[126] William Hauben, *From the Flames: Miracles and Wonders of Survival*, (New York: Writers Club Press, 2001), 20-21. From a practical perspective, the SS supported the establishment of Napolas abroad as a long-term solution to boost its share of conscripts. Since ethnic Germans were exempt from conscription in the armed forces, Himmler could tap into a pool of fresh recruits that was uncontested by the *Wehrmacht.* The SS often had to invest tremendous time and effort in order to influence Napola pupils' career decisions in the *Altreich*. SS recruitment officers often had to compete for the services of Napola graduates with representatives from Germany's armed forces. Some of these obstacles were eliminated in Nazi-occupied territories during the war. For more information about SS recruitment methods, see Chapter 3, "The Napolas and the SS."

[126] Rudolf Benze, *Erziehung im Großdeutschen Reich: Eine Überschau über ihre Ziele, Wege und Einrichtungen,* 3. Auflage (Frankfurt am Main: Verlag Moritz Diesterweg, 1943).The first edition of Benze's book was published in the spring of 1939 and provided a summary of all educational activities inside the Third Reich. The military successes of Nazi Germany prompted a second edition, which appeared in 1941.

were sent to live and work with farmers or miners.[127] These labor assignments were designed to give students a deeper understanding and appreciation for the work and lifestyles of people over whom they would one day rule. To that end students were frequently deployed to borderland regions where they worked alongside party officials on Germanizing local populations of mixed ethnic and racial origins.[128] During wartime, Napola pupils completed their labor assignments in occupied territories. In the summer of 1942, for instance, Grade 9 and 10 students from the Napola in Spannheim were sent to the Warthegau in order to work and learn firsthand about the issues facing annexed regions.[129] In an article written for the *Völkischer Beobachter* in 1943, *Gauleiter* Arthur Greiser estimated that more than 30 000 boys and girls had joined the regime's Germanization mission in the East during the early years of the war. He specifically emphasized the achievements of Napola pupils in assisting farmers in the Warthegau with their harvests.[130]

The rapid expansion of Nazi elite schools across Greater Germany forced *SS-Sturmbannführer* Rudolf Benze, the director of the Central Institute for Education and

[127] Calliebe, "Die Nationalpoliischen Erziehungsanstalten,"253.
[128] LHA Koblenz, 662 008, Sachakte 6, Gemeinsames Tagebuch von 22 Jungmannen der Nationalpolitischen Erziehungsanstalt Oranienstein, "Zum Abstimmungskampf für den Anschluss Deutsch-Österreichs an das Grosse Deutsche Reich eingesetzt im gemischtsprachigen Teile Kärntens."
[129] IfZ München-Berlin, ED 735, Band 5, NPEA Spannheim-Kärnten an die Eltern der Jungmannen in den Zügen 5 und 6, Spannheim, den 26.6.1942. For more information about the Napolas' Germanizing mission in the East, see Helen Roche, "Herrschaft durch Schulung: The Nationalpolitische Erziehungsanstalten im Osten and the Third Reich's Germanising mission," in *Nationalsozialismus und Regionalbewusstsein im östlichen Europa, Ideologie, Machtausbau, Beharrung* (*Regionen des östlichen Europas im 20. Jahrhundert* Bd. 3), eds. Burkhard Olschowsky and Ingo Loose (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2016), 128-151.
[130] Arthur Greiser, "Deutsche Jugend im Osten," in *Völkischer Beobachter*, Nr. 37, Samstag, 6. Februar 1943, 8. According to Catherine Epstein, Greiser's Germanization measures were more radical than those of other *Gauleiters* in the Nazi-occupied East. Catherine Epstein, *Model Nazi: Arthur Greiser and the Occupation of Western Poland* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 267. For more information about the contributions of German girls and women to Germanization, see Elizabeth Harvey, *Women and the Nazi East: Agents and Witnesses of Germanization* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003).

Instruction, to issue a new edition of his book *Erziehung im Großdeutschen Reich*.[131] According to Benze, the acquisition of living space (*Lebensraum*) created welcome new tasks for Germany's education system.[132] In his review of secondary schools, Benze singled out the educational practices of the Napolas. Considering that no major publications in Napola pedagogy followed after 1943, Benze captured the Napolas in their final and most developed form prior to the regime's collapse. Even ten years after the founding of the first Napolas, Benze struggled to find a way to define the novelty of the schools from a pedagogical perspective. He merely noted that the Napolas amalgated three elements of National Socialist education – "school, Hitler Youth, and parental home."[133] He also stated that as residential schools, the Napolas dedicated significantly more time to pupils' physical, character, and academic development than public schools. Their ultimate goal was to shape children into future leaders of the Third Reich through a combination of practical, academic, and communal experience.[134]

The Napolas' educational philosophy and practices rarely progressed beyond declarations of stated goals, most of which went unfulfilled. When Heißmeyer presented his five-year plan in 1940, he expected the Napola system to grow to 100 institutes that could produce up to 3000 graduates annually.[135] Yet only 38 institutes were founded

[131] Rudolf Benze, *Erziehung im Großdeutschen Reich: Eine Überschau über ihre Ziele, Wege und Einrichtungen* (Frankfurt am Main: Verlag Moritz Diesterweg), 1943(3.Auflage). The first edition of Benze's book was published in the spring of 1939 and provided a summary of all educational activities inside the Third Reich. The military successes of Nazi Germany prompted a second edition, which appeared in 1941.
[132] Ibid.,23.
[133] Ibid., 59.
[134] Ibid., 60.
[135] Ueberhorst, *Elite für die Diktatur*, 107. Hitler formally authorized the expansion in 1941. See, BA Berlin, R 187 Sammlung Schumacher, R 187/270b, Nationalpolitische Erziehungsanstalten (1934-45), SS-

during the Third Reich. A regular-sized Napola institute housed an average of 250 students.[136] The Napolas at their peak size could thus enroll approximately 10,000 students. The logistical limitations of the Napolas became evident in the immediate aftermath of the Führer decree from December 7, 1944. Hitler considered it "essential to the war effort" that all officer candidates received their training in one of the Third Reich's elite schools. He trusted none other than Himmler, Rust, and Martin Bormann, the head of the party chancellery, to implement his wishes.[137] On January 2, 1945, Heißmeyer notified Himmler that the Napolas did not have enough space to organize officer training courses.[138] As a temporary solution to the problem, Heißmeyer asked for delivery of 56 barracks from the Protectorate to accommodate the presumed increase in enrolment.[139]

Some of the Napola inspectorate's wartime measures paid dividends in unexpected ways during the final months of fighting. Napola institutes that had originally been awarded the task of implementing the regime's Germanization policies played a pivotal role in executing the inspectorate's evacuation plans. With the Western and

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Abschnitt XV, "Betreff: Erzieher für National Politische Erziehungsanstalten," Hamburg den 3. Oktober 1941.

[136] Adolf Morlang, *"Neuer Stil im Alten Schloss": Die Napola/NPEA Oranienstein 1934-1945* (Diez: Aartal Verlag, 2002), 10.

[137] BA Berlin, R 187 Sammlung Schumacher, R 187/270b, Nationalpolitische Erziehungsanstalten (1934-45), Der Führer, Hauptquartier, den 7. Dezember 1944.

[138] A Reich Education Ministry memorandum from January 26, 1945 decreed that all participants of officer training courses hosted at Nazi elite schools are to receive the title *Jungmannen*. BA Berlin, R 187 Sammlung Schumacher, R 187/270b, Nationalpolitische Erziehungsanstalten (1934-45), Reichsminister für Wissenschaft, Erziehung und Volksbildung an die Unterrichtsverwaltung der Länder (außer Preussen), Herren Reichsstatthalter in den Reichsgauen, Herren Oberpräsidenten der Preuß. Provinzen, Herren Regierungspräsidenten, "Betr: Kriegslehrgänge für den aktiven Offiziers- und Führernachwuchs des Heeres und der Waffen-SS in Heimschulen," Berlin-Spandau, den 26. Januar, 1945.

[139] BA Berlin, R 187 Sammlung Schumacher, R 187/270b, Nationalpolitische Erziehungsanstalten (1934-45), Reichsführung-SS, Diensstelle SS-Obergruppenführer Heißmeyer an den Reichsführer SS, Berlin-Spandau, den 2. Januar, 1945.

Eastern fronts collapsing in 1944, schools in borderland regions shut down. Their remaining boarders fled to safety in the *Altreich*. Pupils from *Reichsschulen* in the Netherlands walked on foot to the Napola in Bensberg near Cologne, or further east to the Napola in Ballenstedt near Leipzig. Napolas in the Alsace region were evacuated to institutes around Lake Constance. Napola students in Haselünne, located west of Bremen, were moved to Naumburg on the Saale River. The Napola in St. Wendel (Saarland) was requisitioned as a military operations center, which forced students to relocate to the Napola in Oranienstein near Koblenz.[140]

The regime was particularly concerned about the safety of students who were too young to contribute to the war effort. Grade 5 and 6 students from the Napola am Donnersberg were sent to the Napola in Backnang. Older cohorts, in contrast, dug trenches, set up anti-tank barriers, or worked as anti-aircraft auxiliaries in Mannheim.[141] Napola officials who were tried by denazification tribunals after the war often pointed to the inspectorate's evacuation plan during the final months of the war as evidence against the Napolas' reputation as sites of indoctrination. Their 'humanitarian efforts' did, however, not apply to all Napolas. The SS secretly supplied Napolas in Mokritz and St. Veit (Austria) with weapons to fight against partisans and local militias in the region.[142] In the fall of 1944, Heißmeyer feared that Napola institutes that were located outside of

[140] BA Berlin, R 187 Sammlung Schumacher, R 187/270b, Nationalpolitische Erziehungsanstalten (1934-45), August Heißmeyer an den Persönlichen Stab RF-SS z.Hd. SS-Standartenführer Dr. Brandt, 9.11.1944.
[141] Chapter 4, "The Napola am Donnersberg," provides a detailed account of the institute's history and its wartime fate based on eyewitness accounts.
[142] BA Berlin, R 187 Sammlung Schumacher, R 187/270b, Nationalpolitische Erziehungsanstalten (1934-45), Der Reichsführer-SS, Persönlicher Stab an SS-Obergruppenführer Berger, Feld-Kommandostelle, den 28.9.1944. Mokrice Castle (*Schloss Mokritz*) is located in modern-day Slovenia. In 1942, Lower Styria (Untersteiermark) became part of the *Reichsgau Steiermark*.

the Reich's major cities were susceptible to attacks. His plan was to transform the schools into military strongholds that could slow down the enemy. Teachers and students were armed as part of the *Volkssturm*.[143] Eventually, the war came to the capital. During the final days of the Third Reich, Heißmeyer, his wife, members of his staff, as well as teachers and students entrenched themselves in the offices of the Napola in Berlin-Spandau. There they fought in close quarter combat against Red Army soldiers and suffered heavy losses.[144] Heißmeyer and Scholtz-Klink eventually escaped from Berlin and lived in hiding until their detection by French police in 1948.[145]

Napola pupils who survived the horrors of the Second World War experienced an identity crisis after the war. The things that had made them special during the Third Reich, including their racial purity, their athletic and military prowess, and most importantly their promised role as future leaders of Hitler's Thousand-Year Reich, were not selling points in Europe's new postwar order. A case study of the Napola am Donnersberg in Chapter 4 will demonstrate that Napola pupils who witnessed the collapse of the regime as minors overcame restrictions levied against Nazi elite school students in the French occupation zone. Napola officials and teachers bore the brunt of denazification after the war. Due to the schools' intimate relationship with the SS, they were prosecuted as major offenders. The following chapter will examine Napola defendants' successful efforts in fending off Allied accusations in Germany's quadripartite government. Many

[143] BA Berlin, R 187 Sammlung Schumacher, R 187/270b, Nationalpolitische Erziehungsanstalten (1934-45), August Heißmeyer an den Persönlichen Stab RF-SS z.Hd. SS-Standartenführer Dr. Brandt, 2.10.44.
[144] National Archives Record Administration [hereafter NARA], College Park, MD, Record Group 0319, Records of the Investigative Records Repository: Intelligence and Investigative Dossiers, Annex "A," Report of Interrogation of August Friedrich Wilhelm Heißmeyer, former SS Obergruppenfuehrer, arrested 29 February 1948, at 0015 hours in Bebenhausen, Kreis Tuebingen, French Zone of Occupation.
[145] Heißmeyer's postwar trial will be the subject of Chapter 3, "The Napolas and the SS."

Napola teachers were exonerated and reinstated after denazification had run its course partially because prosecutors could not identify a consistent vision for the Napolas during the Third Reich. Their escape from Allied justice produced a whitewashed portrayal of the Napolas that endured for several decades after the end of World War II.

Chapter 2: The Napolas and Denazification

Introduction

In his survey of postwar German history, Konrad Jarausch rejected the "rightist memory of a failed denazification" during the military occupation of Germany.[1] The Allied denazification program successfully prevented the continued presence of Nazism, eliminated prominent Nazis from public life, and discredited Nazi ideology. Yet Jarausch acknowledged that denazification did not complete all of its original objectives. He stated "the attempt to bring about a reorientation of all opportunistic Nazis … was also less than successful, as they often only changed their vocabulary while still clinging to their old racist and anti-Communist prejudices."[2] Although World War II in Europe ended with Nazi Germany's total defeat in May 1945, not all Germans were willing to accept Allied indictments of collective guilt. While some historians, including Richard Bessel, insist that "in 1945 Germans were transformed from active protagonists to passive observers of their fate," the Napolas' postwar prosecution demonstrated that some Nazi followers were concerned with more than "everyday problems."[3]

From 1945 to 1949, Napola defendants exploited legal loopholes and zonal differences in the implementation of Allied denazification policies. Their legal activism rehabilitated the schools' tainted past and paved the way for Napola teachers' reinstatement. This chapter will demonstrate that the history of the Napolas, as it has been remembered by some surviving Napola alumni to this very day, was a product of

[1] Konrad H. Jarausch, *After Hitler: Recivilizing Germans, 1945-1995* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 55.
[2] Jarausch, *After Hitler*, 54-55.
[3] Richard Bessel, *Germany 1945: From War to Peace* (New York: Harper Perennial, 2009), 6-7.

Germany's occupation years. More specifically, I will show that postwar memories of the Napolas were constructed in reaction to the Allied denazification program. My investigation focuses primarily upon denazification directives formulated in the aftermath of the 1945 Potsdam Conference. While the proclamation of the Atlantic Charter in 1941, the Moscow Declaration in 1943, and the Morgenthau Plan from 1944 illustrate that the purge of Nazism had been an important objective prior to Allied victory, the Napolas and their personnel were not singled out for prosecution until the publication of the Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force's (SHAEF) "Handbook for Military Government" in December 1944. Combined with the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) Directive 1067 in the early months of 1945, military policies set the tone for indictments against the Napolas in the immediate postwar period.

The Napolas effectively ceased to exist with the German surrender on May 8, 1945. Wartime military directives, however, remained in effect during the ensuing summer months.[4] Initially, former Napola employees, including teachers, administrators, and ministry officials, were left unaffected by the Allies' signing of the London Agreement on August 8, 1945, which mandated the prosecution of major war criminals by an International Military Tribunal at Nuremberg.[5] The introduction of the Control Council Law No. 10 turned feelings of relief and promises of a new beginning, a Zero

[4] United States Forces, European Theater (USFET) waited until July 7, 1945 to translate JCS 1067 into administrative rules regarding "denazification, demilitarization, disarmament, restrictions on political activity, and the necessity for military controls at all levels of government.." John Gimbel, *The American Occupation of Germany: Politics and the Military, 1945-1949* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1968), 2.

[5] Yale Law School, Lillian Goldman Law Library, Nuremberg Trials Proceedings, Vol.1, United Nations, *Prosecution and Punishment of the Major War Criminals of the European Axis ("London Agreement*), 8 August 1945, Art. 1.

Hour (*Stunde Null*), into distant memories. Members of the Napola bureaucracy, who had avoided detection and prosecution until this point, were affected by this legislative change.[6] In addition to the major war criminals summoned to stand trial in Nuremberg, the law provided the legal basis to summarily prosecute "war criminals and other similar offenders, other than those dealt with by the International Military Tribunal."[7] Article 2 issued sanctions against all individuals claiming "membership in categories of a criminal group or organization declared criminal by the International Military Tribunal."[8] This marked an important turning point in the Napolas' postwar history. U.S. Occupation Zone officials treated the Napolas as a subsidiary of the SS; one of seven criminal organizations listed in the original indictment by the International Military Tribunal in October 1945.[9]

While the Potsdam Declaration formalized Allied approaches toward denazification and demilitarization, Control Council Law No. 10 brought the terms of the Moscow Declaration and the London Agreement into effect. It gave U.S., British, French, and Soviet prosecutors teeth in their on-going quest to purge Germany's public sector. On March 5, 1946, a legislative change in the U.S. Occupation Zone prohibited denazification tribunals from removing entire groups of individuals from public office. The Allied Control Council had previously emphasized the "compulsory removal" of

[6] For further discussion on Germany's *Stunde Null*, see Konrad Jarausch and Michael Geyer, *Shattered Past: Reconstructing German Histories* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003).
[7] Yale Law School, Lillian Goldman Law Library, Nuremberg Trials Final Report, Appendix D, Allied Control Council Law No.10, Punishment of Persons guilty of War Crimes, Crimes against Peace and against Humanity, 20 December 1945.
[8] Allied Control Council Law No.10, Art. II (1d).
[9] International Military Tribunal Nuremberg, *Trial of the Major War Criminals before the International Military Tribunal, Nuremberg 14 November 1945 – 1 October 1946* (Nuremberg, Germany: Secretariat of the Tribunal, 1947), v.

civil servants and "persons who have been officials, teachers, or pupils at any time in National Political Educational Institutes (Nationalpolitische Erziehungsanstalten – NAPOLAS or NPEA), Adolf Hitler Schools (Adolf Hitler Schulen) or Ordensburgen."[10] Consequently, Napola teachers were identified as major offenders due to their memberships in the SS, the National Socialist Teachers' League (NSLB), and their employment history at a Nazi elite school.

The newly enacted Law for Liberation from National Socialism and Militarism introduced the following amendment to existing denazification directives: "American Military Government has now decided that the German people may share the responsibility for liberation from National Socialism and Militarism in all fields."[11] With the help of registration forms (*Meldebögen*), both German and U.S. authorities began evaluating a person's degree of complicity with Nazi crimes on a case-by-case basis. Whereas denazification tribunals had previously been able to prosecute and punish nominal Nazis in summary proceedings, the legislative change placed all registered Germans above the age of 18 in one of five groupings: "1.) Major Offenders, 2.) Offenders, 3.) Lesser Offenders, 4.) Followers, and 5.) Persons Exonerated."[12] Most importantly, Article 34 allowed a respondent, who was identified as a Major Offender or

[10] Office of Military Government, Civil Administration Division, "Allied Control Authority, Control Council Directive No. 24 Removal from Office and from Positions of Responsibility of Nazis and of Persons hostile to Allied Purposes, 12 January 1946," in *Denazification, Cumulative Review. Report, 1 April 1947-30 April 1948.* No 34 (1948): Art. 10, 98.
[11] Office of Military Government, Civil Administration Division, "Law for Liberation from National Socialism and Militarism, 5 March 1946," in *Denazification, Cumulative Review. Report, 1 April 1947-30 April 1948.* No 34 (1948): Preamble (5).
[12] Law for Liberation from National Socialism and Militarism, Art. 4.

Offender, "to show in a clear and convincing manner that he falls within a group more favorable to him."[13]

I will demonstrate that in the German states of Bavaria, Hesse, and parts of Wurttemberg, the enactment of the Law for Liberation ultimately aided and abetted Napola advocates' pleas for exoneration. Napola teachers such as Otto Brenner, whose denazification trial will serve as a case study in later sections of this chapter, took advantage of this stipulation. The new burden of proof, which granted the accused access to legal counsel, opened the door for an outright rebuttal of Allied accusations by members of the Napola fraternity.[14] Sworn statements and oral testimonies pressured German denazification courts (*Spruchkammern*) to reconsider the charges against Napola employees.[15] The Napolas' postwar legend, which remained virtually unchallenged in the historiography until the late 1960s, came to life during the legal war of attrition between Napola advocates and Allied and German tribunals.

In many ways, the Law for Liberation's amendments and annotations became templates for subsequent denazification directives in Germany's quadripartite government. On October 12, 1946, Allied Control Council Directive No. 38 recommended several articles from the U.S. Occupation Zone's Law for Liberation to commanders in the British, French, and Soviet zones. Since the directive's principal

[13] Ibid., Art. 34.
[14] Andrew Szanajda, *The Restoration of Justice in Postwar Hesse, 1945-1949* (Lanham: Lexington, 2007), 123.
[15] Germans were eager to obtain a *Persilschein* during denazification. A *Persilschein*, named after the popular German laundry detergent *Persil*, was a term to describe denazification certificates (a certificate of political good conduct) given to a person in the event of exoneration. The sworn statements and oral testimonies that were sent to German tribunals by Napola advocates attested to the defendants' innocence. They played a pivotal role in securing implicated Napola teachers' acquittals. Michael R. Hayse, *Recasting West German Elites: Higher Civil Servants, Business Leaders, and Physicians in Hesse between Nazism and Democracy, 1945-1955* (New York: Berghahn, 2003), 162.

objective was to create a common policy for Germany, registrants in all four-occupation zones were to be placed into one of the Law for Liberation's five classification groups.[16] Moreover, Zone Commanders were given the choice to "use German tribunals for the purpose of classification, trial, and review."[17] In 1950, U.S. High Commissioner John J. McCloy stated in a review of the denazification process in the American zone that many of "these directives were without legal effect until implemented by zonal laws and other enactments… In the U.S., British and French Zones procedures differed somewhat but in general were kept closely to the spirit of the agreed."[18] In reality, the extent to which this, primarily U.S.-driven, denazification program was implemented in the Allied occupation zones differed greatly. Richard Bessel comments in *Germany 1945* on the fact that Soviet authorities used the denazification campaign to remove anyone "who might challenge the politics of the 'anti-fascist democratic' transformation in the Soviet Zone." [19] Sovietization, not denazification, dominated the thinking of Soviet occupation authorities. As a result, the purge of Nazism from public life was often spontaneous, decentralized, and brutal.[20]

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[16] Office of Military Government, Civil Administration Division, "Allied Control Authority, Control Council Directive No. 38 The Arrest and Punishment of War Criminals, Nazis and Militarists and the Internment, Control and Surveillance of Potentially Dangerous Germans, 12 October 1946," in *Denazification, Cumulative Review. Report, 1 April 1947-30 April 1948.* No 34 (1948): Part II (Art. 1).
[17] Allied Control Council Directive No.38, Part I (5e).
[18] John J. McCloy, "Present Status of Denazification," in Office of the U.S. High Commissioner for Germany, *5th Quarterly Report on Germany* (October 1- December 31, 1950): 46-55.
[19] Bessel, *Germany 1945*,199.
[20] For further discussion on denazification practices in the Soviet Occupation Zone, see Norman M. Naimark, *The Russians in Germany: A History of the Soviet Zone of Occupation, 1945-1949* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995)

Denazification in the French zone was limited. Neil J. Kritz believes that the French "were skeptical about the feasibility of efficient denazification."[21] The failures of the *Épuration légale* (legal purges) in France served as a painful reminder to occupation officials that collaborators and war criminals continued to escape justice.[22] Although denazification in the teaching profession tended to be fairly thorough, statistics from 1949 and 1950 reveal the meagre outcome of French denazification efforts as a whole.[23] Compared to the U.S. and British Occupation Zones, French authorities exonerated a disproportionately large number of respondents. Out of 669 068 tried cases, only 17,777 individuals faced serious penalties for their actions during the Third Reich. The remaining cases were either dismissed, or defendants faced little to no consequences for their politically tainted past.[24] According to a report by the Office of Military Government for Germany U.S. (OMGUS), denazification was implemented most leniently in the French zone because of two important factors. Firstly, registration was not a legal requirement. While over 3 million persons became subject to the Law for Liberation in the U.S. zone alone, the lack of compulsory registration reduced the list of persons who were targeted for removal and sanction. A letter to the French military government's education office in Tübingen from July 9, 1948 highlighted the authorities' problems with identifying former Napola teachers. Since the Education Ministry in Baden-Wurttemberg did not have lists or records on Napola teachers' employment histories, denazification authorities were

[21] Neil J. Kritz, *Transitional Justice: How Emerging Democracies Reckon with Former Regimes: Laws, Rulings, and Reports,* Volume III (Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace, 1995), 20.
[22] For further information on the French legal purges, see Megan Koreman, *The Expectation of Justice: France 1944-1946* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1999), 97-100.
[23] Justus Fürstenau, *Entnazifizierung: Ein Kapitel deutscher Nachkriegspolitik* (Neuwied and Berlin: Luchterhand, 1969), 227.
[24] Ibid., 228.

unable to charge them with party or SS membership.[25] Secondly, the French military government granted German prosecutors and tribunals very little autonomy. Close supervision meant that the caseload was kept low in order to accommodate the overtaxed French occupation bureaucracy.[26]

The British implemented Control Council Directives No. 24 and No. 38, in a limited fashion. Germans were not required to register with British military agencies. While U.S. policy-makers transferred direct responsibility for enforcing the Law for Liberation to German tribunals, in the British zone the trial of individuals belonging to either Class I ("Major Offenders") or Class II ("Offenders") was operated under the auspices and supervision of British legal authorities.[27] Additionally, officials belonging to the British Public Safety Branch facilitated the removal and exclusion from public office of lesser Nazis.[28] Overall, the British denazification efforts can best be described as pragmatic. S. Jonathan Wiesen argues in his study on the postwar recovery of West German industry that denazification efforts had to make way for economic concerns. Since the area controlled by Britain encompassed the heart of Germany's heavy industry, Wiesen points to British fears that "denazification might jeopardize the economic reconstruction of their zone."[29] These fears were shared by their American counterparts,

[25] LA Baden-Württemberg, Abt. SA Sigmaringen, Wü 80 T 3,Nr. 2624,"Betreff: Lehrkräfte der früheren Napolas," Letter to the French Military Government, Division de l'Education Publique, July 9, 1948.
[26] Office of Military Government, Civil Administration Division. "Denazification cumulative review." in *Denazification, Cumulative Review. Report, 1 April 1947-30 April 1948.* No 34 (1948): 12.
[27] Ibid.,12-13.
[28] Helen P. Fry, *Denazification: Britain's Enemy Aliens, Nazi War Criminals and the Reconstruction of Postwar Europe* (Stroud: History, 2010), 128.
[29] S. Jonathan Wiesen, *West German Industry and the Challenge of the Nazi Past, 1945-1955* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2001), 67.

especially after the growing political tensions with the Soviet Union and the creation of the Bizone in 1947.[30]

Directives issued by the Allied Control Council were applied most literally in the U.S. Occupation Zone. The majority of trial documents that found their way into German archives after the end of occupation originated from the records of OMGUS officials. Surviving documentation in the French and Soviet Occupation Zones is limited, or has remained classified and inaccessible to researchers. In the absence of reliable statistical data, we can only speculate as to how many Napola teachers and students avoided detection during the occupation of Germany. By 1947, the Allied denazification campaign had been handed over to German legislatures in all four-occupation zones.[31] The start of the Cold War forced military governments to complete the denazification trials in their respective zones as rapidly as possible. In order to expedite the process, sanctions against offenders were lowered or lifted completely.[32] For Otto Brenner and other Napola teachers, the long path to exoneration and reinstatement was more than a moral victory. In a matter of three years, the men who had initially faced internment and sanctions for their alleged roles as staunch National Socialist supporters reinvented themselves and their schools' roles during the Third Reich.

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[30] Memorandum of agreement between the United States and the United Kingdom, December 2, 1946, found in *Germany 1947-1949: The Story in Documents* (Washington: Department of State, 1950)
[31]Office of Military Government, Civil Administration Division," "Four Power Agreement on Denazification of Germany, Fourth Session of Council of Foreign Ministers, Moscow, 1947," in *Denazification, Cumulative Review. Report, 1 April 1947-30 April 1948.* No 34 (1948): 137.
[32]Office of Military Government, Civil Administration Division, "OMGUS letter to the Land Military Governors, U.S. Zone, Subject: Expediting completion of Denazification trials in the U.S. Zone, 27 March 1948," in *Denazification, Cumulative Review. Report, 1 April 1947-30 April 1948.* No 34 (1948): 160-162.

Between 1945 and 1949, Napola alumni submitted sworn statements (*Eidesstattliche Erklärungen*) in support of their beleaguered colleagues to denazification tribunals. The testimonies revealed how aware the accused and their supporters were of zonal legislation. Newspaper reprints of denazification directives allowed keen observers to familiarize themselves with their contents. Before the Law for Liberation divided alleged Nazi perpetrators into one of five categories, interned Napola advocates petitioned Allied denazification courts to drop all SS-related charges. Sworn statements that were submitted to Allied officials before the enactment of the law on March 12, 1946 described in elaborate detail the schools' distance from the regime. In what came to be a distinctive feature of the Napolas' narrative, former Napola teachers, students, ministry and party officials, without exception, classified the Napolas as state-funded boarding schools. Teachers were civil servants and not party officials. The schools' curriculum followed that of the *Deutsche Oberschule.* Students were not ideologically indoctrinated. Most importantly, the students, or *Jungmannen,* were given the right to free choice of employment after graduation.

Apart from the timing of its creation, the exceptionalism of the Napolas' postwar legend lay partly in its universality, and partly in its longevity. While the Reich Ministry of Education (*Reichserziehungsministerium* or REM) and party channels had generally represented the Napolas as one cohesive school system, the differences between the various institutes sometimes outweighed their similarities. The Allied denazification program, however, nullified these differences. Allied accusations were leveled at the Napolas as a whole, and not against individual institutes. This step, which characterized

the over-simplified manner of denazification more generally, had far-reaching ramifications for the Napolas' postwar legacy. Since prosecutors simply ignored qualitative criteria, including an institute's founding date, location, or pedagogical mission, exonerative evidence could be compiled in a piecemeal fashion. In the beginning, eyewitness testimonies simply refuted Allied allegations. Whether a testimony came at the request of a third person, was submitted voluntarily, or was recorded during a mandatory oral hearing, the content of denazification directives essentially dictated the responses by Napola advocates. As more and more Napola alumni became subject to Allied investigations, a collective defense of the Napolas began to emerge, growing in repute and complexity as the denazification process continued. By the time denazification proceedings had moved away from summary trials, defendants were able to rely on a template that was unanimously accepted by all members of the Napola community.

From a legal perspective, the collective defense of the Napolas constructed in the immediate postwar period proved to be a success. Napola advocates realized early on that all individual charges would be dismissed if the history of schools could be reframed in a positive light. Yet their legal shrewdness only tells one side of the story. Michael H. Hayse suggests that the "American-zone –denazification program, much more than that in the East, was hampered by a semblance of legal due process."[33] Therefore, the final section of this chapter will demonstrate that a lack of evidence also made denazification tribunals fall short of their goal. The enigmatic role of the Napolas during the Third Reich became painstakingly clear when prosecutors were unable to substantiate their

[33] Hayse, *Recasting West German Elites,*148.

accusations with independent expert opinion. Most Germans, as it turned out, had very little knowledge of the Napolas' inner workings. To make matters worse, those with insider knowledge could hardly be trusted to deliver unbiased testimony. A closer look at domestic newspaper coverage of the Napolas will show that most ordinary Germans would have possessed a very skewed understanding of their role. The fact that not even members of SOPADE, the executive committee of Germany's exiled Social Democratic Party (SPD), could support the indictment further impaired the work of denazification courts. In sum, the resilience of the Napolas' postwar legend offers an explanation as to why Nazi elite education remained a marginal theme in the historiography of the Third Reich for decades after the end of World War II. Elements of the polarized debate between Napola advocates and denazification officials during the early phase of Germany's occupation have continued to inform recent studies on the Napolas. Without proper contextualization, their findings should not be counted on to reach an objective and definitive verdict on the Napolas' role under the swastika.

A blue print for denazification: SHAEF's Handbook and JCS 1067

The final draft of the *Handbook for Military Government in Germany: Prior to Defeat or Surrender* was published in December 1944. It was produced by the German Country Unit that was established in March 1944 as a Special Staff subsidiary of the SHAEF (G5) Civil Affairs Division.[34] The *Handbook* gave advice and direction to the civil affairs units. In essence, the manual provided preliminary instructions for military government denazification planning upon occupation of Germany territory. General

[34] Szanajda, *The Restoration of Justice in Postwar Hesse*, 34.

Dwight D. Eisenhower, the commander of SHAEF, decreed "this Handbook will be used as a basis of training for all officers who may be employed in the Military Government of Germany."[35] It is important to note that while SHAEF manuals guided military government actions and later influenced denazification directives in Germany's quadripartite government, the long-term Allied policy in postwar Germany remained to be decided.[36]

The manual outlined five principal objectives to achieve the "extirpation of Nazism and Militarism in Germany."[37] These included the destruction of the Nazi party and its subsidiaries, the demobilization of the armed forces, the purging of the police, the removal of all active Nazis and Nazi sympathizers from government offices, and the dismantling of fascist agencies of government.[38] Under the heading "Procedure for Removal and Appointment of Public Officials", military planning authorities first proposed the usage of questionnaires (*Fragebögen*) to identify and remove supporters of the regime from all levels of Germany's civil administration.[39] Article 289, in particular, promulgated that "all removals will be summary."[40] This allowed Military Government officers and carefully selected German officials to dismiss the suspect without an oral hearing or ever seeing a judge.

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[35] Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force, *Handbook for Military Government in Germany prior to Defeat or Surrender* (Office of the Chief of Staff, December 1944), Preamble (Art.6).
[36] Szanajda, *The Restoration of Justice in Postwar Hesse*, 37.
[37] "Eradication of Nazism: General," in *Handbook for Military Government in Germany prior to Defeat or Surrender* (Office of the Chief of Staff, December 1944), Art. 275.
[38] Ibid., Art. 275(a-e).
[39] "Eradication of Nazism: Procedure for Removal and Appointment of Public Officials," in *Handbook for Military Government in Germany prior to Defeat or Surrender* (Office of the Chief of Staff, December 1944), Art. 287.
[40] Ibid., Art. 289.

The *Handbook* singled out Nazi educational organizations and special schools for abolition. While all administrative agencies that were essentially Nazi in character were targeted for dissolution, this marked the first time that SHAEF reported extensively on the future of Germany's postwar school system. Article 804 highlighted the Nazis' introduction of three "new special secondary school types – all boarding schools --…the *Napolas* and *Heimschulen* are administered by the SS, and the *AHS* [Adolf Hitler Schools] by the party."[41] SHAEF recommended the permanent closure of these schools, which also included the *Ordensburgern*. Boarders in these institutions were to be returned to their homes as soon as conditions permitted.[42] In addition, all persons employed "as teachers or administrators in *Napolas*, *Adolf Hitler Schulen*, or other prohibited institutions, will automatically lose their present employment. They will not be re-employed in an educational capacity unless their suitability for employment is established after searching enquiry."[43] Stable employment was the key to survival in war-torn Germany. Former Napola teachers, in particular, identified themselves as state-certified government officials. The *Handbook* effectively ended their aspirations to partake in the rebuilding of Germany's secondary school system.

SHAEF's recommended course of action, with regard to German education, found its way into subsequent wartime directives. The Joint Chiefs of Staff Directive 1067, which received President Harry S. Truman's approval in April 1945, highlighted the

[41] "Education and Religious Affairs: Education," in *Handbook for Military Government in Germany prior to Defeat or Surrender* (Office of the Chief of Staff, December 1944), Art. 804.
[42] "Education and Religious Affairs: Major Policy and Actions to be taken," Art. 826.
[43] Ibid., Art. 819.

United States' push for a more comprehensive re-education program.[44] JCS 1067 was submitted to General Eisenhower, who, in his capacity as Commanding General of the United States forces of occupation in Germany, was responsible for "the administration of military government in the zone or zones assigned to the United States for purposes of occupation and administration."[45] JCS 1067 spoke volumes about the United States' commitment to denazifying Germany's school system.[46] In *Learning Democracy,* Brian M. Puaca states that "[American] denazification efforts struck the schools particularly hard; OMGUS officials removed an average of 50 percent of German teachers from their classrooms in the US zone by 1946."[47] While Article 14 reminded Eisenhower of the closure of all Nazi educational institutions, including the Napolas, and the automatic removal of their personnel, the directive also aimed at the wholesale elimination of "Nazi features" from German schools.[48] For instance, "textbooks and curricula which are not free of Nazi and militaristic doctrine shall not be used."[49] American education experts believed that Germany possessed a long history of anti-democratic traditions. All Nazi, Wilhelmine, and even Weimar pedagogical legacies had to be eliminated.[50]

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[44] Kevin Jon Heller, *The Nuremberg Military Tribunals and the Origins of International Criminal Law* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 10.
[45] Yale Law School, Lillian Goldman Law Library, Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Directive to Commander-in-Chief of United States Forces of Occupation Regarding the Military Government of Germany, April 1945*.
[46] Although JCS 1067 was not made public until October 1945, Rebecca Boehling insists that it served as a guideline for the Potsdam Agreement. Rebecca L. Boehling, *A Question of Priorities: Democratic Reforms and Economic Recovery in Postwar Germany: Frankfurt, Munich, and Stuttgart under U.S. Occupation, 1945-1949* (Providence: Berghahn, 1996), 28.
[47] Brian M. Puaca, *Learning Democracy: Education Reform in West Germany, 1945-1965* (New York: Berghahn, 2009), 15.
[48]Joint Chiefs of Staff, "General and Political: Education," in *Directive to Commander-in-Chief of United States Forces of Occupation Regarding the Military Government of Germany, April 1945*, Art. 14(a, b).
[49]Ibid., Art. 14(c).
[50] Puaca, *Learning Democracy,* 15.

An indictment takes shape: Napola employees under the scrutiny of the International Military Tribunal and the Allied Control Council

The Potsdam Conference, which lasted from July 17 to August 2, 1945, determined Allied approaches toward the demilitarization and denazification of Germany. U.S. President Harry S. Truman, Soviet Premier Joseph Stalin, and British Prime Minister Winston Churchill (replaced on July 26 by newly elected Prime Minister Clement Attlee) attended the conference in order to continue discussions on Germany's postwar fate that had begun at Yalta in February. The conference led to the establishment of the Allied Control Council, an administrative body joined by the three victorious Allied powers. In the course of negotiations, the Big Three extended an invitation to France to participate in the quadripartite government of Germany. During the initial control period, the Potsdam Declaration mandated that "supreme authority in Germany is exercised, on instructions from their respective Governments, by the Commanders-in-Chief of the armed forces of the United States of America, the United Kingdom, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, and the French Republic, each in his own zone of occupation, and also jointly, in matters affecting Germany as a whole."[51] Frank Roy Willis argues that French opposition to some of the political principles outlined in the Potsdam Declaration "had the important effect of paralyzing implementation of the Potsdam decisions by the Allied Control Council."[52] French protests were particularly directed at the implementation of Article 2, which demanded uniformity of treatment of the German population throughout Germany. Willis shows that the unwillingness of the French government to subordinate

[51]Yale Law School, Lillian Goldman Law Library, "The Principles to Govern the Treatment of Germany in the Initial Control Period: Political Principles," in *The Berlin (Potsdam) Conference July 17- August 2, 1945, Protocol of Proceedings,*August 1, 1945, Art. 1.
[52] Frank Roy Willis, *The French in Germany, 1945-1949* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1962), 26.

their denazification program to the wishes of the Allied Control Council led to the "virtual autonomy of each zonal commander and made possible a great differentiation of policy in the different zones."[53]

Zonal differentiations aside, the Potsdam Conference formalized the structure of military government to prioritize the "disarmament and demilitarization of Germany and the elimination or control of all Germany industry that could be used for military production."[54] While the need for democratic reform of Germany's political and social structures was expressed frequently, the re-organization of Germany's education system was relegated to the margins of the proceedings. The Potsdam Declaration merely stated, "German education shall be so controlled as completely to eliminate Nazi and militarist doctrines and to make possible the successful development of democratic ideas."[55] In contrast to earlier reeducation proposals, details about this 'democratic' approach to German education were not included.

Although education and the Napolas did not play an integral role in the promulgation of the Potsdam Agreement, the removal of war criminals did. Article 6, "War Criminals", noted that the trial of major war criminals "should begin at the earliest possible date."[56] Of course, the participating heads of state at the Potsdam conference were eagerly awaiting the results of the International Conference on Military Trials, held in London between June 26 and August 8, 1945. Representatives of the United States, the

[53] Willis, *The French in Germany*, 26.
[54] "The Principles to govern the treatment of Germany in the initial control period: Political Principles," in *The Berlin (Potsdam) Conference July 17- August 2, 1945, Protocol of Proceedings*, August 1, 1945, 3(i).
[55] Ibid., Art. 7.
[56] "War Criminals," in *The Berlin (Potsdam) Conference July 17- August 2, 1945, Protocol of Proceedings* (August 1, 1945).

Provisional Government of France, the Soviet Union, and the United Kingdom had agreed to meet in order to discuss the punishment of major war criminals of the European Axis.[57] As a result, the proclamation of the London Agreement on August 8 outlined the establishment of an International Military Tribunal at Nuremberg for the trial of war criminals.[58] The "Charter of the International Military Tribunal", which all signatories of the London Agreement had to abide by, governed legal procedures and jurisdiction of the Tribunal. A report by Robert H. Jackson, the American representative at the conference and future Chief Prosecutor for the United States at Nuremberg, described the adoption of the Charter as a "landmark" and remarked that the principles of the Charter constituted the "solemn judgment of 23 governments, representing some 900 million people."[59]

Three categories of crimes, as determined by the Constitution of the International Military Tribunal, fell within the court's jurisdiction. These included crimes against peace, war crimes, and crimes against humanity.[60] Less than two months after the signing of the London Agreement, prosecutors appointed by the four signatories issued their joint statement of indictment. On October 18, 1945, the International Military Tribunal's official indictment against 24 high-ranking members of the Nazi state and armed forces

[57] *Report of Robert H. Jackson United States Representative to the International Conference on Military Trials, London 1945* (Washington: Division of Publications Office of Public Affairs, 1949), iii.
[58] United Nations, *Prosecution and Punishment of the Major War Criminals of the European Axis (London Agreement*), 8 August 1945, Art. 1, 3.
[59] *Report of Robert H. Jackson United States Representative to the International Conference on Military Trials, London 1945*, viii.
[60] United Nations, *Charter of the International Military Tribunal –Annex to the Agreement for Prosecution and Punishment of the Major War Criminals of the European Axis ("London Agreement*), 8 August 1945, Art.6 (a-c).

was read in Berlin. The indictment also discussed the crimes of the Nazi party and its affiliated organizations.[61] The trial opened in Nuremberg on November 20, 1945.

The signing of the London Agreement did not immediately spell disaster for the Napolas and their former employees. After all, the International Military Tribunal and its Charter concentrated on those individuals who were accused of initiating a war of aggression, or committing acts of atrocity against civilian populations. A uniform policy to bring individuals to trial for membership in a criminal organization had yet to be formulated. While Article 10 of the Charter proposed "national, military or occupation courts" should try members of an organization that was declared criminal by the Tribunal, it took until the enactment of Control Council Law No. 10 on December 20, 1945 to govern prosecutions in domestic courts.[62] In *The Legal Regime of the International Criminal Court*, Jackson Maogoto notes that the law "not only provided for a wide range of penalties for war crimes and crimes against humanity, but, like the *Nuremberg Charter*, it also criminalized mere membership in certain organizations held criminal by the Nuremberg tribunal without considering individual guilt."[63] In other words, the Control Council created a legal basis for the establishment of military tribunals within each of the occupation zones. These domestic tribunals differed from the International Military Tribunal in Nuremberg for several reasons. Firstly, they were charged with the prosecution of lesser war criminals. Secondly, Zone Commanders were allowed to

[61] David Crowe, *War Crimes, Genocide, and Justice: A Global History* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2014), 166.
[62] United Nations, *Charter of the International Military Tribunal*, Art. 10.
[63] Jackson Magoto, "Early Efforts to establish an International Criminal Court," in *The Legal Regime of the International Criminal Court: Essays in Honour of Professor Igor Blishchenko*, ed. José Doria, Hans-Peter Gasser, and M. Cherif Bassiouni. (Leiden, Netherlands: Koninklijke Brill, 2009), 51-52.

determine the rules and procedures for trial of all wanted persons in their respective zones of occupation.[64] Thirdly, all persons wanted for trial or as a witness by the International Military Tribunal needed to be delivered to the Committee of Chief Prosecutors.[65]

For Napola teachers and administrators, the enactment of Control Council Law No.10 marked the starting point of a legal odyssey that, in some cases, lasted beyond the establishment of the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) and the German Democratic Republic (GDR) in 1949. When the International Military Tribunal issued its formal indictment on October 18, 1945, seven groups or organizations "were declared criminal by their aims and means for the accomplishment thereof."[66] The seven organizations included the Reich Cabinet, the Leadership Corps of the Nazi Party, the Security Service (*Sicherheitsdienst*, SD), the Secret State Police (GESTAPO), the Storm Troops (*Sturmabteilungen,* SA), the General Staff of the High Command of the German Armed Forces, and the party's Protection Squad, more commonly known by its German abbreviation SS (*Schutzstaffel*). During an afternoon session of the Tribunal on December 19, 1945, Major Warren F. Farr, the Assistant Trial Counsel to the United States, began presenting the prosecution's indictment against the SS to the President of the Tribunal, Sir Geoffrey Lawrence.[67] For two full days, Farr cited and summarized evidence from two volumes of documentation in order to prove that "the SS [including

[64] Allied Control Council Law No.10, Art. III (2).
[65] Ibid., Art. III (3).
[66] Yale Law School, Lillian Goldman Law Library, Nuremberg Trials Proceedings, Vol. 1, "Indictment International Military Tribunal, The United States of America, The French Republic, The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republic – against – Defendants,"Art. II.
[67] Yale Law School, Lillian Goldman Law Library, Nuremberg Trials Proceedings, Vol. 4,"Twenty-Third Day: Wednesday, 19 December 1945."

the *Waffen*-SS and the SD] should be declared a criminal organization in accordance with Article 9 of the Charter."[68]

Nazi educational institutes remained (with the exception of one minor reference) absent from Farr's report.[69] The following three examples, however, will demonstrate that the prosecution of Napola personnel and the SS often went hand in hand. To begin with, denazification authorities' special interest in the Napolas, after the signing of the London Agreement and the introduction of Control Council Law No.10, revolved around Napola teachers' membership in the SS. Several sworn statements by leading Napola officials confirmed the inclusion of Napola teachers in the General SS (*Allgemeine SS*) after 1936. Moreover, minutes from day seventy-one of the Nuremberg trial proceedings revealed that Dr. Ludwig Babel, who served as counsel for the SS and SD at Nuremberg, had listed the Napolas among the SS' innumerable branches and organizations. Thirdly, a sworn statement written and signed by seventeen interned Napola teachers from the summer of 1946 discussed the discriminatory contents of denazification questionnaires. An examination of questionnaires from the U.S. and British Occupation Zones will illustrate how the connection between the Napolas and the SS was formalized on paper.

After his appointment to Inspector in 1936, *SS-Obergruppenführer* Heißmeyer decreed that all Napola teachers, who had not joined NS-formations "such as SA, NSKK [National Socialist Motor Corps], etc." prior to his appointment, received corresponding

[68] "Twenty-Fourth Day: Thursday, 20 December 1945," 229.
[69] "Twenty-Fourth Day: Thursday, 20 December 1945," 225.

ranks in the General SS.[70] The following table displays Napola teachers' ranks in the SS after Heißmeyer's decision:

Teaching Ranks (before 1936)	**Rank in the General SS (after 1936)**
Studienreferendar (trainee teacher) in his first year	*SS-Oberscharführer*
Studienreferendar (trainee teacher) in his second year	*SS-Untersturmführer*
Studienassessor (probationary teacher) in his first year	*SS-Obersturmführer*
Studienassessor (probationary teacher) in his second year	*SS-Hauptsturmführer*
Studienrat (teacher)	*SS-Sturmbannführer* or *SS-Obersturmbannführer* (depending on his length of service)
Oberstudienrat (senior teacher)	*SS-Obersturmbannführer* or *SS-Standartenführer* (depending on his length of service)
Anstaltsleiter (headmaster)	*SS-Oberführer* or *SS-Brigadeführer* (depending on the size of the institute)

The contents of this table were extrapolated from the sworn statement of Dr. Lottmann, a former member of the *Dienststelle SS-Obergruppenführer Heißmeyer*.[71] In ascending order of importance, Napola teachers were integrated into the SS bureaucracy without going through the usual application channels. Teachers were assigned ranks based on their length of service and commitment to the school system. After the German surrender, those Napola teachers holding SS ranks were the first ones to be interned by Allied

[70] LHA Koblenz, 662 008, Sachakte 5, Dr. Werner Lottmann, "Eidesstattliche Erklärung," Recklinghausen, November 24, 1947.
[71] LHA Koblenz, 662 008, Sachakte 5, Dr. Werner Lottmann, "Eidesstattliche Erklärung," Recklinghausen, November 24, 1947.

forces. In an attempt to separate themselves from 'actual' SS officials, defendants described their membership in the SS as nothing more than an honorary position. Several sworn statements argued that no additional service (*Dienstleistung*) was required in the SS.[72] Chapter 3 will refute this claim since Napola teachers and students were specifically targeted for service in the General SS and the *Waffen-SS* during the war.

The Napolas were not singled out during the prosecution's presentation of evidence. However, Dr. Ludwig Babel turned the spotlight on the Napolas when he brought forth a severance motion to the International Military Tribunal at Nuremberg on March 1, 1946.[73] Under the headline "Nazi Groups Ask Separate Trials", the *Pittsburgh Press* reported that counsel for six Nazi organizations, including the counsel for the "elite guards" (SS) Dr. Ludwig Babel, "asked the War Crimes Tribunal today to sever charges against them from the overall case and give them a separate trial."[74] Babel, on this seventy-first day of the Nuremberg proceedings, voiced his dissatisfaction with the scope of the trial and the fact that under the current indictment millions of Germans could potentially face prosecution, including the death penalty. Babel argued:

> In order to define a criminal organization, evidence and information as to the knowledge, intentions, and actions of the members of the organizations must be provided; similarly, before convicting individuals, either singly or in the mass, justice and human dignity alike demand that they should each

[72] LHA Koblenz, 662 008, Sachakte 5, Wilhelm Geschwend, "Eidesstattliche Erklärung," Hohenasperg, June 23, 1947. See also, Dr. Walter Faltz, "Eidesstattliche Erklärung," Eselheide, March 3, 1947.
[73] Ludwig Babel, alongside Horst Pelckmann, Dr. Carl Haensel, and Dr. Hans Gawlik, served as Counsel for the SS and SD until March 18, 1946, as Counsel for SS until June 11th, 1946, and as Co-counsel for SS until August 27th, 1946. Yale Law School, Lillian Goldman Law Library, Nuremberg Trials Proceedings, Vol.8, "Seventy-First Day: Friday, 1 March 1946 Morning Session," 427.
[74] Unlike the prosecutors at Nuremberg, the newspaper editors did not make a distinction between the SS and SD. Hence, the reference to "six" Nazi organizations. "Nazi groups ask separate trials," *Pittsburgh Press*, Friday, March 1, 1946, 3.

> be informed of the indictment and should each have an opportunity to be heard in his own defense.[75]

According to Babel, the trial proceedings lacked due process and the legal definition of the criminal character of the SS was flawed. Babel called into question the wholesale condemnation of the SS as a criminal organization, when he presented the following hypothetical scenario to the court: "May it please the Tribunal, there are businessmen who are owners of several firms. If, now, the owner uses one of these firms to commit criminal acts, can we say that the other firms and their employees are also criminal?"[76] It is quite plausible that Babel was referring to criminal acts committed by the SS Deathhead and *Waffen*-SS Divisions, which had been in charge of the Third Reich's concentration camp system. Babel elaborated on the arbitrary nature of the prosecutors' indictment when he stated "by way of summary, the Defense estimate the group of persons indicted as SS members at several millions."[77] "The verdict, however", Babel continued, "will also affect the members of the families of all SS members, at least indirectly, so additional millions will be affected personally, morally, and financially."[78]

Robert H. Jackson, the United States' Chief Prosecutor, countered Babel's request by calling the "wholesale slaughter or a wholesale punishment of people in Germany a figment of imagination."[79] He did, however, address the issue of the SS's "innumerable" subdivisions in greater detail: "The trial of each of these subdivisions would take – I would not venture to say how long. We do not want to see this Court trivialized. This is

[75] "Seventy-First Day,"422.
[76] Ibid., 422.
[77] Ibid., 424.
[78] "Seventy-First Day," 442.
[79] Ibid., 425.

not a police court."[80] Jackson added, "I do not know whether SS motorcycle mounted traffic officers are less dangerous than those who do not have motorcycles, or were less criminal,… In any event, since each individual has to have a hearing, there can be no point in having a hearing for subgroups between the individual and the principal organization that we ask to have declared guilty."[81] Jackson's statement revealed that prosecuting a now dissolved, criminal organization was not without its obstacles. Admitting to the immense, bureaucratic task at hand, Jackson said: "Frankly, I do not know just what manpower is going to be available for the United States' part in the follow-up of these trials."[82]

While U.S. policy-makers partially resolved their zone's "manpower" issues with the enactment of the Law for Liberation from Nationalism and Militarism, Jackson's and Babel's spirited debate on the complexity of the SS forced the legal status of the Napolas into public debate. Babel, who was determined to illustrate the far-reaching ramifications of the Tribunal's indictment against the SS, prepared a list of sixteen groups and organizations with ties to the SS. The Napolas, transcribed as "National Political Institutes", were part of Babel's list. Since the SS and its members were accused of crimes against humanity, Napola teachers, if found guilty, could face a number of punishments that were outlined under Article 2 of the Control Council Law No.10. These included death, imprisonment for life or a term of years, fines, forfeiture of property, restitution of property wrongfully acquired, or deprivation of some or all civil rights.

[80] Ibid., 441.
[81] Ibid., 442.
[82] Ibid., 442.

Pleas for an immediate stop to summary indictments and convictions resonated well with members of the Napola community, who desperately wanted to rid themselves of the SS-label. Although Tribunal sessions were conducted away from the public eye, Napola teachers tried to influence the outcome of the proceedings. A sworn statement signed on June 4, 1946 by seventeen Napola teachers at the British internment camp at Neuengamme and originally submitted to the defense counsel of the SS, Dr. Ludwig Babel, tackled the issue of denazification questionnaires.[83] In their statement's opening paragraph, the teachers expressed their confusion about the contents of a questionnaire from May 16, 1946: "…we read that 'National Socialist Education Institutes', too, were listed as an organization of the SS. As there are no known education institutes operated by the SS, and the Adolf Hitler schools, as well as the *Reichsschule* Feldafing, were establishments of the NSDAP, or rather the HJ and SA, the assumption can be made that the above-mentioned 'National Socialist Education Institutes' you are referring to are [in actuality] the 'National Political Education Institutes'."[84] Needless to say, the internees' accusations have to be taken with a grain of salt. Between May 1945 and March 1946, OMGUS officials distributed questionnaires to all Germans above the age of 18. Until the enactment of the Law for Liberation, a Special Branch of the OMGUS Internal Affairs and Communication Division processed all submitted questionnaires inside the U.S. Zone of Occupation. Questionnaires were six pages in length, printed in both English and German, and consisted of 131 questions. Respondents had to provide detailed information

[83] LHA Koblenz, 662 008, Sachakte 5, "Eidesstattliche Erklärung," British Internment Camp Neuengamme, June 4, 1946.
[84] Ibid.

about their education, employment and military service history, membership in party organizations, scholarly publications, income and assets, and travel and residence abroad. Contrary to the allegations by the seventeen internees, a mention of "National Socialist Education Institutes" was nowhere to be found in the questionnaires. A closer look at British Occupation Zone questionnaires produced similar results. The British Public Safety office had made significant revisions to its questionnaires on January 1, 1946. The revisions doubled the page length of the previously used American template. Yet, specific references to "National Socialist Education Institutes", or the schools' relationship to the SS remained absent.

There was no proof for military government officials mistakenly, or even intentionally conflating the Napolas with other National Socialist school types to produce convictions. Nevertheless, the Neuengamme teachers correctly assumed that Tribunal and Zonal prosecutors targeted the Napolas as SS-preparatory schools behind the scenes. Denazification questionnaires were designed to aid with the identification and classification of Napolas teachers as SS men. Under Section B, "Secondary and Higher Education", British and U.S. questionnaires posed the following two questions. Question 26 asked the respondent to "list (giving location and dates) any Napola, Adolph [sic] Hitler School, Nazi Leaders College or military academy in which you have ever been a teacher."[85] The very next question forced the respondent to elaborate on his previous

[85] See, for instance, Staatsarchiv Ludwigsburg, EL 902/20, Bü 46100, Spruchkammerakten Dr.Hans Bayer, or Landesarchiv Schleswig-Holstein, Abt. 460.10, Nr. 741, C.C.G. Public Safety (Special), Military Government of Germany Fragebogen Emil Nolde.

answer: "Have your children ever attended any of such schools? Which ones, where and when?"

Napola defendants took offense to these questions. Despite their best efforts to distinguish the institutes from "special Nazi schools", the Napolas were singled out alongside party schools and military academies. Once the respondent identified himself or his children as Napola alumni, it fell to the processing agents to determine the severity of his crimes. Given that some Napola teachers were transferred into the SS after 1936, this classification process could be relatively quick. Each questionnaire printed a chart, which listed over 50 Nazi organizations. Respondents had to fill out this chart and make note of all offices held in any of the organizations listed. Most Napola teachers had been members of the NSDAP, the General SS, the *Waffen*-SS*,* the SA, or the National Socialist Teachers League (NSLB) over the course of their teaching careers.

If a respondent, considering the harsh penalties for perjury, was truthful in his responses and identified himself both as a Napola teacher and a member of the General SS, denazification officials simply formalized his admission of guilt. If a respondent identified himself as a Napola teacher but claimed membership in a Nazi organization other than the General SS, or none at all, classification had to comply with Zonal denazification policies that were in effect at the time of the respondent's response. In the case of the U.S. Occupation Zone, most Napola teachers were convicted by summary proceedings in the months following Nazi Germany's surrender. Once a respondent admitted to teaching at a Napola, OMGUS officials removed him from public life, with or without additional evidence. The subtlety of including the Napolas in the questionnaires'

education section, rather than adding them to the chart of outlawed Nazi organizations, produced mixed results. On the one hand, courts were able to compile accurate lists of former Napola teachers. More importantly, those who had held SS-ranks or served in the *Waffen*-SS by war's end quickly ended up in internment camps. On the other hand, the massive influx of millions of filled out questionnaires prevented denazification task forces from formulating a definitive verdict on the postwar status of all Napola personnel. Limited bureaucratic resources were dedicated toward convicting hardened Nazi criminals, and not teachers of alleged SS preparatory schools.

An unexpected opportunity for rehabilitation: The Law for Liberation from National Socialism and Militarism

On March 5th, 1946, OMGUS officials decided to turn over denazification to the German authorities. The Law for Liberation from National Socialism and Militarism became the culmination of a long-line of military government directives to fix issues of bureaucratic back-log and boost public opinion. Most importantly, occupation officials were responding to numerous reports concerning the arbitrary, and oftentimes unsuccessful, methods of identifying mid- and lower-level Nazi functionaries. With the assistance of German tribunals and additional registration forms, OMGUS advisers predicted that a coordinated and combined denazification effort would catch those Nazis who had previously slipped through the cracks.

The legislative change on March 5th confronted the former Napola teacher with two, very different, outcomes. He either risked conviction for his employment history at an alleged party school, membership in the SS and the NSLB by the newly empowered German tribunals, or he successfully filed his case for exoneration with the more

sympathetic German authorities. Naturally, real life was never as black and white; nor was the possibility for conviction or exoneration temporally restricted to the period after the law's enactment. What is of importance was that the legislative change sparked a reaction by Napola alumni. Sensing an opportunity to rewrite their own history in an exculpatory fashion, former Napola teachers and students flocked to available legal channels in order to convince the courts of their and their schools' innocence from Nazi crimes.

Historians have generally agreed that denazification in the three Western Zones was pursued most stringently in the American Occupation Zone.[86] The Law for Liberation mandated that all Germans over the age of 18 were assigned to one of the five groups from Major Offenders down to those who were fully exonerated.[87] Since the International Military Tribunal had linked the Napolas to the SS in its original indictment, former Napola teachers were automatically classified as major offenders. This category was reserved for leading Nazis or supporters of the National Socialist tyranny and mandated harsh penalties in the event of conviction. Under Article 15, a major offender could face political internment, confiscation of property, or a permanent loss of his pension. Moreover, he could lose the right to vote, hold public office, own a motor vehicle, or become a member of a trade union or business association. Importantly, for former Napola teachers, Article 15 also prohibited the defendant from serving as a

[86] James F. Tent, *Mission on the Rhine: Reeducation and Denazification in American-Occupied Germany* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1982), 83.
[87] Law for Liberation from National Socialism and Militarism, March 5, 1946, Art. 3(2), 4.

teacher, preacher, editor, writer, or radio commentator for a period not less than 10 years.[88]

Classification and conviction as a major offender put an abrupt end to any personal and professional aspirations the person might have had for the foreseeable future. Yet the introduction of the law in Bavaria, Hesse, and Wurttemberg on March 5th was not all bad news. According to Article 33, if the respondent fell within the class of major offenders or offenders, the public prosecutor was prevented from making a decision in summary proceedings.[89] German trial procedures, under the continued supervision of OMGUS, demanded an almost comical eye to detail and due process. The law mandated "he [the public prosecutor] shall receive and examine all registration forms, applications, denunciations and other data referring to responsible persons, and institute the investigations *ex officio.* He shall carry out the investigation, prefer the charges and prosecute the case before the Tribunal."[90] If German tribunals had not already been overtaxed by these procedural demands, the law's exaggerated burden of proof on public prosecutors when trying Class I and II offenders surely was the final straw that broke the camel's back.

While the overtaxation of judiciaries resulted in a less vigorous implementation of the Allied denazification program, the Law for Liberation's specific provisions against teachers and other public officials initially made life more difficult for former Napola employees. Fortunately for them, the mandatory registration of approximately 3.2 million

[88] Law for Liberation from National Socialism and Militarism, Art.15(7).
[89] Ibid., Art. 33(3,4).
[90] Ibid., Art. 33(1).

persons meant that pre-trial procedures needed to be sped up.[91] In an attempt to manage this unprecedented caseload, Article 35 stated "they [the tribunals] may hear witnesses and experts under oath and receive affidavits; they may, by subpoena and fines, compel the respondent, a witness, or an expert to appear personally."[92] This stipulation equally benefitted the defendant and the German tribunals. On the one hand, public prosecutors rejoiced at the opportunity to hand over the process of collecting sufficient evidence to the accused. On the other hand, the respondent was granted the chance to convince the court that he belonged in a more favorable class in advance of the trial date.[93] With the support of testimonies and sworn statements by former colleagues and students, a Napola teacher could then make a plea to the court for his charges to be dropped or reduced to that of a lesser offender or follower. Even if the prosecutor insisted on a trial in court, the accused's odds of 'walking away' with a hefty fine or a probationary sentence improved dramatically with the introduction of expert and eyewitness reports into trial and pre-trial proceedings.

The Law for Liberation set a legal precedent for subsequent denazification directives. Many of its clauses were incorporated into Control Council Directive No. 38, from October 12, 1946. The objective of the directive was to establish a common policy for Germany, based on the recent experiences in the U.S. Occupation Zone. Apart from applying the Law for Liberation's five classification categories to all four-occupation zones, Zone Commanders were encouraged "to use German tribunals for the purpose of

[91] On May 1st, 1948, the United States Department of Defense reported that 12 278 387 persons were officially registered in the American occupation zone. LHA Koblenz, 662 008, Sachakte 5, Dr. Heinrich Doehle, "Amnestie oder Annullierung? Der Schlußstrich unter die Entnazifizierung"
[92] Law for Liberation from National Socialism and Militarism, Art. 35(2).
[93] Ibid., Art. 34.

classification, trial, and review."[94] The provisions of the directive, however, were not legally binding. Zone Commanders guarded, the legal sovereignty of the individual occupation zones. A common policy did not come into being since the Law for Liberation was applied very selectively outside of the U.S. Occupation Zone.

The case of Otto Brenner: A Napola teacher's journey from internment to reinstatement

Otto Brenner's legal woes provide a glimpse into what Napola teachers experienced in the U.S. Occupation Zone. His denazification trial was representative of their collective experiences for a variety of reasons. Firstly, Brenner was interned after the war for his employment history at an educational institute that was declared criminal by the International Military Tribunal. Secondly, many of his friends, colleagues, and former students came to his defense after the enactment of the Law for Liberation by submitting sworn statements to the German tribunals. Thirdly, the overall tenor of their statements matched the basic shape of the Napolas' postwar narrative. Lastly, like most of his colleagues, Brenner was ultimately authorized to resume his teaching duties. His charges were downgraded to a lower category and ultimately rescinded completely in 1948 owing to the thoroughness of his defense and recent amendments to the Law for Liberation.

Otto Brenner, the son of Dr. med. Arthur Brenner, was born in Coburg (Bavaria) on April 12, 1904. From 1914 until 1923, Brenner attended the local humanistic *Gymnasium* in Coburg. After graduation, he studied at the business schools in Cologne and Berlin and graduated as a certified teacher of commerce (*Diplom-Handelslehrer*).

[94] Allied Control Council Directive No.38, Part I (5e).

Two years after the Nazi takeover in 1933, Brenner applied and accepted a teaching position at the newly founded NPEA Oranienstein. According to his court files, Brenner, who had officially joined the NSLB in 1937, remained in this role until 1939. From August 1939 until October 1940, Brenner served at the front as first lieutenant of an infantry regiment. Between 1941 and 1943, Brenner added a second Napola institution to his growing National Socialist resume when he became an educator at the NPEA Rufach. At the time of his employment, the school, located in Alsace, France, served as a Napola and a School for Ethnic Germans (*Schule für Volksdeutsche*) under the same roof. Following his two-year teaching stint in Rufach, Brenner spent the remainder of World War II teaching at the NPEA Anhalt in the German state of Saxony-Anhalt.[95]

Unfortunately, Brenner and his family's immediate postwar fates were only partially preserved in the sources. What we can deduce with absolute certainty is that Brenner, his wife, and his five children, all below the age of eleven, fled from advancing Allied troops after the fall of the Third Reich. Brenner was then held in a prisoner-of-war camp from April 1945 until January 1946. After the introduction of the Law for Liberation, Brenner's file was handed over to German officials who formalized his indictment as a Class I or II Nazi offender. While the exact date of his formal indictment cannot be established, friends, former students, and colleagues submitted a staggering number of witness statements in support of Brenner's defense to German officials between 1946 and 1948.

[95] LHA Koblenz, 662 008, Sachakte 5, Otto Brenner, "Lebenslauf," Marburg/Lahn, May 8, 1948.

Their tireless efforts swayed the court's decision to downgrade Brenner's charges to that of a Class IV offender ('Follower') on April 12, 1948. He was consequently sentenced to pay a fine of 400 *Reichsmark* (RM).[96] The court's ruling was, however, not the end of the story. A review was filed and on June 9, 1948, the Marburg-Stadt I Tribunal officially declared "the person affected, [Otto Brenner], had not been an activist, militarist, or Nazi beneficiary."[97] The new ruling also indicated that Brenner no longer had to pay the original fine of 400 RM since his family had endured considerable hardships as refugees.[98] Less than three months after the court had reached its final verdict, Brenner received a letter from the Department of Education in Kassel informing him of his formal reinstatement as a teacher.[99]

As several Napola alumni newsletters attest, Brenner continued his career as a teacher for decades after the founding of the Bonn Republic in 1949.[100] Needless to say, Brenner would have been forced to embark on an altogether different career path had the court's verdict in 1948 been slightly less favorable. In light of his reinstatement by provincial authorities, evidence that ultimately swayed the court's decision in favor of Brenner's exoneration merits a second look. Brenner's witness reports indicated that Napola advocates collaborated with one another to develop a winning legal strategy. The need for food, shelter, security, and employment trumped most other considerations in the

[96] LHA Koblenz, 662 008, Sachakte 5, Hessisches Staatsministerium Spruchkammer Marburg/Lahn-Stadt, "Sühnebescheid," Marburg/Lahn, April 12, 1948.
[97] LHA Koblenz, 662 008, Sachakte 5, Spruchkammer Marburg-Stadt I, "Urteilspruch Otto Brenner schriftliches Verfahren," Marburg/Lahn, June 9, 1948.
[98] Ibid. The ruling made specific reference to the Brenner family's Refugee Certificate (*Flüchtlingsausweis*) 247 743.
[99] LHA Koblenz, 662 008, Sachakte 5, Der Regierungspräsident in Kassel (Erziehung und Unterricht), "Unterrichtsgenehmigung," Letter to Otto Brenner, Kassel, August 12, 1948.
[100] See, LHA Koblenz, 700 238, Sachakte 10, Rundbriefe von Karl Interthal, 1952-60.

immediate postwar period. Yet the mandatory registration of every German sparked Napola alumni's interest in the intricacies of the Law for Liberation. To them, the rehabilitation of the Napolas' historical record became the order of the day.

The Director of the Coburg School of Commerce, where Brenner had been a supply teacher in the late 1920s and early 1930s, submitted one of the earliest sworn statements to the tribunal. On July 29th, 1946, he testified that Otto Brenner had applied for a teaching position at the Coburg School of Commerce in 1937.[101] Albeit unsuccessful, Brenner's application demonstrated his willingness to seek employment outside of the Napola system. Under the Law for Liberation, German officials had to consider Brenner's transfer request as a sign of possible "resistance to the National Socialist tyranny," or at the very least, as evidence to support his claim to be "not more than a nominal participant or insignificant supporter of National Socialism."[102] For a sworn statement to be of positive evidentiary value to the accused, the witness also had to prove to the court that the defendant had been reluctant to participate in the meetings and functions of the NSDAP or any of its formations. Margret Kah's statement from August 3rd, 1946, achieved something to this effect. Kah, who had spent her mandatory year of social service in the Brenner household in 1940, wrote: "Herr Brenner was not a fanatical Hitler supporter. He only attended party meetings on very rare occasions. He was not interested in participating in any SA duties because his boys [students] had to be cared for

[101] LHA Koblenz, 662 008, Sachakte 5, Direktor der Handelsschule in Coburg, "Eidesstattliche Erklärung," Coburg, July 29, 1946.
[102] Kritz, *Transitional Justice*, 395.

day in and day out. As an eye-witness I am convinced that Herr Brenner belonged to this formation for purely formal reasons."[103]

Kah's portrayal of Brenner as a reluctant NSDAP and SA member strengthened his defense but did not constitute sufficient ground for his acquittal. In order to drive his plea for exoneration forward, Brenner also needed reports that demonstrated his outright refusal to follow party directives. Elfriede Lakenmacher's sworn statement described Brenner as an outspoken critic of the regime. Lakenmacher, a former secretary at the NPEA Ballenstedt, asserted that Brenner had been notorious for his "objectionable political behavior" among the school's teaching staff.[104] Much to the annoyance of the school headmaster, she claimed, Brenner had objected to the political and ideological indoctrination of his students. According to Lakenmacher, "he was eager to turn the boys, who were attending the NPEA Anhalt at the time, into able men whose open-minded and honest personality would allow them to walk through the world with open eyes."[105] She remembered that Brenner's disillusionment with the regime reached its peak toward the end of the war when he disobeyed an official order to conscript students into local *Volkssturm* units.

Denazification directives specifically targeted individuals born before 1919. Since youth or immaturity could not be used as extenuating circumstances in Brenner's defense,

[103] LHA Koblenz, 662 008, Sachakte 5, Margret Kah, "Eidesstattliche Erklärung," Diez/Lahn, August 3, 1946.
[104] LHA Koblenz, 662 008, Sachakte 5, Elfriede Lakenmacher, "Eidesstattliche Erklärung," Marburg/Lahn, January 17, 1948.
[105] Reports on a defendant's character traits were not always successful. One of Otto Brenner's former students submitted the following statement to the tribunal: "He (Otto Brenner) always tried to teach us to show respect and tolerance towards other individuals; and demanded from us that we were to be on our best behavior when dealing with the concentration camp inmates who were busy building the school's new fire pond." LHA Koblenz, 662 008, Sachakte 5, Werner Kohl, "Eidesstattliche Erklärung," Pustleben, November 12, 1947.

he required proof of anti-fascist behavior before 1933. On September 11th, 1947, Eberhard Dabritz submitted a piece of evidence to the court that was of particular importance to German officials. In his statement, Dabritz recounted his and Brenner's involvement with the German Boy Scouts' Movement. "Herr Otto Brenner was well known to me since 1928", he remembered, "Together we were members of the Boy Scouts in Coburg, which were affiliated with the International Boy Scouts' Movement based in London which stood for peace, understanding, and mutual respect amongst youth from all nations."[106] The Boy Scouts, among many other youth organizations, had been banned and its membership absorbed into the Hitler Youth as early as 1933. Dabritz's endorsement convinced the court that his political orientation had stood in direct conflict with Nazi ideology prior to Hitler's rise to power.

Overall, Brenner's friends and former colleagues described him as an individual of "fine character", who was known for his "tolerance toward different-minded people" and commitment to his students.[107] Brenner was portrayed as a teacher who had no other choice than to teach at a Napola. His membership in the SA was purely a formality. Despite his best efforts to force his superiors' hands, Brenner was not dismissed from his position; not even after his refusal to accept last-ditch total war measures. As a detached observer, one cannot but admire Brenner's skillfully woven defense. It satisfied every legal criterion outlined in the Law for Liberation to lower the initial charges against him.

[106] LHA Koblenz, 662 008, Sachakte 5, Eberhard M. Dabritz, "Eidesstattliche Erklärung," Erlangen, September 11, 1947.Knowingly or not, Dabritz falsified his sworn statement with his comment about the International Boy Scouts' Movement. Prior to 1933, Germany boasted several boy scouts organizations. The International Boy Scouts' community, however, did not formally recognize any of them until 1950.
[107] LHA Koblenz, 662 008, Sachakte 5, Hilde Wolf, "Eidesstattliche Erklärung," Oberachern, December 5, 1947.

Brenner also benefitted from the timing of the court's final verdict. An OMGUS letter from March 27, 1948 showed that several amendments to the Law for Liberation had come into effect. In order to conclude the Military Government's denazification program as rapidly as possible, sanctions against Lesser Offenders and Followers were suspended, "if the respondent, by his general conduct, has already proved worthy or if the sanctions which must be imposed in accordance with the finding are disproportionate to the personal and economic restrictions to which the respondent has previously been subjected."[108] Since Brenner and his family had suffered from personal and economic restrictions during their flight from advancing Allied troops, the fine of 400 RM was suspended and Brenner was exonerated.

Reactions to Allied accusations: Sworn Statements by Kurt Petter, Dr. Albert Holfelder, Erwin Gentz, and Hermann Reinecke

It is important to remember that individuals from all levels of the Third Reich's educational system came to the defense of the Napolas during denazification. One influential Napola advocate was Kurt Petter, the former inspector of the Adolf Hitler Schools. Reich Youth Leader Baldur von Schirach and head of the German Labor Front, Robert Ley, had founded the Adolf Hitler Schools in 1937. The schools prepared high school-aged students for leadership roles in the NSDAP and its formations. Despite the rivalry between the Napolas and the Adolf Hitler Schools, Petter came to the defense of the former in his affidavit from February 9, 1947.

[108] Office of Military Government, United States (OMGUS) letter to the Land Military Governors, "Expediting Completion of Denazification Trials in the U.S. Zone," March 27, 1948.

Petter, who was held captive at the Darmstadt internment camp at the time of his testimony, listed several characteristics of the Napolas that contradicted their portrayal by Allied and German prosecutors as party schools: "The Napolas", he wrote, "were public schools that received their funding from the German state and [exclusively] employed government-certified teachers."[109] Despite the introduction of the *Reichsjugendgesetz* in 1936, which made membership in Hitler Youth formations mandatory for all German youth, Petter insisted that the party did not exert any influence on the Napolas' curriculum. The Napolas received instructions from the Reich Ministry of Education and its head since 1934, Reich Education Minister Dr. Bernhard Rust.[110] Thirdly, Petter testified "there was no pressure on the part of the NSDAP whatsoever to charge the Napolas with the task of training future party leaders."[111] After all, this task was under the mandate of Petter and the Adolf Hitler Schools. In his statement's concluding remarks, Petter also addressed the Napolas' alleged connection to the SS. "Himmler's intention to meet the *Waffen-SS'* demands for new officer candidates by recruiting students from the Napolas failed … since only 20% of [matriculated] students joined the *Waffen-SS* in the final stages of the war."[112] Petter argued that the Napolas' emphasis on free choice of employment foiled SS plans to monopolize the recruitment of their graduates. The

[109] LHA Koblenz, 662 008, Sachakte 5, Kurt Petter, "Eidesstattliche Erklärung," Deutsches Internierungslager Darmstadt, February 9, 1947.
[110] Anne Christine Nagel, *Hitlers Bildungsreformer: Das Reichsministerium Für Wissenschaft, Erziehung Und Volksbildung 1934-1945* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Taschenbuch , 2012), 66-69.
[111] LHA Koblenz, 662 008, Sachakte 5, Kurt Petter, "Eidesstattliche Erklärung," Deutsches Internierungslager Darmstadt, February 9, 1947.
[112] Ibid.

majority of students, who applied for military careers after graduation, joined more traditional *Wehrmacht* branches, such as the army or the air force (*Luftwaffe*).

Dr. Albert Holfelder, the former deputy secretary and head of the department for education inside the Reich Ministry of Education from 1938 to 1945, corroborated Petter's statements about the administrative structure of the Napolas. Holfelder insisted that the Napolas did not receive any funding from the party. Although Nazi fiscal policies had prohibited the publication of annual budget reports, all schools funds originated from either the Prussian or Reich Ministry of Finance. Holfelder issued the following statement regarding the qualifications of the Napolas' teaching staffs: "To my knowledge as head of the department for education, the Napolas employed teachers who, apart from their unique skills as educators, possessed above-average academic and pedagogical talents."[113] Holfelder's comment was as much a personal attempt to save face, as it was a product of the occupation years themselves. Former Napola teachers needed proof of their skills as liberal and reform-minded educators to successfully apply for reinstatement in Germany' postwar school system. Holfelder demonstrated that Napola teachers were not party ideologues who institutionalized the regime's racial policies inside Napola classrooms. On the contrary, they were highly qualified civil servants who were appointed to teaching positions at a Napola by the Ministry of Education.[114]

[113] LHA Koblenz, 662 008, Sachakte 5, Dr. Albert Holfelder, "Eidesstattliche Erklärung," Darmstadt, December 26, 1946.

[114] Holfelder's statement implied that civil servants who were appointed to teach at a Napola were unable to appeal the ministry's decision. There was a notion of truth to his observation. The Reich Education Ministry assumed responsibility for all teachers' appointments in 1937. If a teacher wanted to protest his placement at a Napola, he had to have had access to a teachers' union. The only remaining teachers' union in Nazi Germany was the National Socialist Teachers' League (NSLB). This compulsory Nazi professional

The shock about Allied accusations against the Napolas and their employees found perhaps its best expression in the sworn statement of Erwin Gentz. As a former legal consultant and undersecretary at the Reich Ministry of Education, Gentz noted "after [eleven] years of experience in the ministry, I can contend with absolute certainty that the office in charge of the Napolas was as much a part of the [Reich] ministry [of Science, Education and Culture] as all the others."[115] Despite the fact that he was held prisoner for his service record in the *Waffen*-SS at the time of his testimony, Gentz wrote that he "had been extremely surprised to hear allegations of the Napolas' SS-affiliations during the course of the Nuremberg trials."[116]

The sworn statement by Hermann Reinecke, a former Napola teacher at the institutes in Plön, Berlin-Spandau, and Potsdam summarized most, if not all, of the chief characteristics of the Napolas' postwar defense. In contrast to Petter, Holfelder, and Gentz, Reinecke did not hold a high office during the Third Reich. Yet the factual depth and timing of his observations exemplified that even at the bottom of the institutional hierarchy implicated Napola members had adopted the postwar legend. Reinecke divided his statement into five sections. Each section rebutted a specific element of the Allies' indictment against the Napolas. The first section, "Their [the Napolas'] administrative role," provided insight into the administrative structure and ministerial oversight of the Napola system:

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organization for teachers would not, however, have accepted regime-critical complaints. Richard J. Evans, *The Third Reich in Power* (New York: Penguin, 2006), 282.

[115] LHA Koblenz, 662 008, Sachakte 5, Erwin Gentz, "Eidesstattliche Erklärung," Neuengamme, October 13, 1947.

[116] Ibid,.

> 1. The man in charge of the Napolas was Reich [Education] minister Rust. Ernst Krieck was responsible for naming the Napolas. National political means something along the lines of 'civic'; 2. The highest authority was a department within the Reich Ministry of Science, Education and Culture; 3. The Napolas' personnel, material, and general expenses were covered by the Reich budget; 4. All Napola educators were government-certified teachers. These teachers were government employees who were transferred to the [Napola] institutes in the absence of any party pressure and without any contributions on their part; 5. The Napolas were either humanistic *Gymnasien*, *Oberschulen*, or *Aufbauschulen*. They possessed the same curriculum and textbooks as all other German higher secondary schools; 6. The selection of prospective students was facilitated entirely through state channels. Parents, district school inspectors, or elementary school headmasters submitted applications on their behalf. Party and Hitler Youth had no impact on the application process; 7. Free choice of occupation for students was guaranteed until the end of the war.[117]

In "The Napolas' attitude towards the NSDAP," Reinecke explored the relationship between the Napolas and the leadership corps of the Nazi party in greater detail. Based upon his commentary, the Napolas were able to enjoy an autonomous existence for the duration of the Third Reich:

> 1. *Gauleiter* and other party functionaries did not possess authority or influence within the institutes; 2. The Napolas were not listed in the NSDAP's party handbook; 3. The Napolas did not participate in any party congresses; 4. According to Dr. Ley's and v. Schirach's founding appeal for the Adolf Hitler Schools, the Napolas were not responsible for bringing new blood into the party; 5. The teaching staffs did not enjoy a special position within the party, or within the state; 6. The Napolas had strained relations with local and regional party authorities. In 1936, the party attempted to close down the institutes because they were not deemed sufficiently national socialist.[118]

After the Nazis promulgated the first Hitler Youth law in 1936, all German youth organizations were absorbed into the Hitler Youth. Although most Hitler Youth members were too young to attract attention from Allied prosecutors after the war, Reinecke was careful to separate the activities of the Hitler Youth from those of the Napolas. In "The

[117] LHA Koblenz, 662 008, Sachakte 5, Hermann Reinecke, "Eidesstattliche Erklärung: I. Ihre verwaltungsmässige Stellung," Ulzen, November 15, 1948.
[118] LHA Koblenz, 662 008, Sachakte 5, Reinecke, "Eidesstattliche Erklärung: II. Die Stellung der NPEA zur NSDAP," Ulzen, November 15, 1948.

NPEA's [Napolas'] attitude towards the Hitler Youth," he highlighted the lack of cooperation between the two:

> 1. The institutes did not acknowledge the Hitler Youth's claims to be the sole bearer of educating German youth; 2. The introduction of the 1936 Hitler Youth law, which absorbed students into the Hitler Youth, was merely a formal solution. In spite of this legislative change, the students were not controlled by the local Hitler Youth leader, nor any other higher Hitler Youth office; 3. The Adolf Hitler schools, not the Napolas, were the only training centers for aspiring party leaders.[119]

Most importantly, Reinecke shed light upon the relationship between the Napolas and the SS. The appointment of Heißmeyer as Napola inspector, Himmler's growing involvement with the expansion of the Napolas both at home and abroad, as well as the introduction of SS ranks after 1936 created a dilemma for Napola advocates after the war. Reinecke argued in "The attitude of the NPEA's [Napolas'] towards the SS," however, that SS patronage enabled the Napolas to continue their existence as autonomous and independent centers for higher learning:

> 1. Prior to the appointment of SS-*Obergruppenführer* Heißmeyer as Napola inspector, the Napolas' independence and sovereignty were threatened by the Hitler Youth, the party, and various branches of the *Wehrmacht*. Because of Heißmeyer, the public and autonomous character of the institutes was preserved. This led to the creation of the Adolf Hitler Schools in January, 1937; 2. The institutes were not under SS command, nor did the SS influence them in any other way; 3. Service in the General SS was not required [for teachers who had been inducted into the SS after Heißmeyer's appointment in 1936]; 4. Due to the emphasis upon free choice of employment, it was quite usual for students to choose a career in the *Waffen*-SS. As we know today (through [Kurt] Petter, Inspector of the Adolf Hitler Schools), Himmler was angry with the inspectorate 's passivity regarding the recruitment of students into the SS and planned to relieve Heißmeyer of his position.[120]

[119] LHA Koblenz, 662 008, Sachakte 5, Reinecke, "Eidesstattliche Erklärung: III. Die Stellung der NPEA zur Hitlerjugend," Ulzen, November 15, 1948.
[120]LHA Koblenz, 662 008, Sachakte 5, Reinecke, "Eidesstattliche Erklärung: IV. Stellung der Napolas zur SS," Ulzen, November 15, 1948.

Finally, Reinecke compiled several arguments that, perhaps due to their lack of specificity, required a separate category in his report. Under the title "Unique characteristics of the Napolas," Reinecke testified to the progressive, liberal, and even cosmopolitan elements of a Napola education:

> 1. The Napolas objected to the military training of their students and rejected military forms of conduct, such as drills, saluting, etc.; 2. The institutes were able to enjoy a great number of liberties internally; each institute was different in the way it functioned. They [Napolas] formed their own little communities that were later considered democratic in nature; a claim that was not completely off the mark; 3. The Napolas were founded on socialist principles. All able boys were considered for admission regardless of their parents' social backgrounds. Three criteria were important for admission: character – knowledge and skills – physical fitness. Tuitions fees were calculated according to the financial situation of the students' families and scholarships were provided to students from poor households; 4. The Napolas organized student exchanges with other countries, especially England (Public Schools) and the United States (military colleges) Such exchanges also extended into France, Argentina, and the Nordic countries; 5. The Napolas offered a rich and diverse curriculum, which was not interfered with by the Hitler Youth.[121]

"In sum," Reinecke wrote, "the Napolas were not party schools, they were neither founded, supervised, funded, nor recruited by the party."[122] Secondly, all teachers who had worked at a Napola were civil servants. Reinecke was convinced that this fact alone made Napola teachers indistinguishable from other German secondary school teachers during the Third Reich. Based upon his testimony, others we have encountered previously in this section, and dozens more that can be found in German archival holdings, the Napolas and their teaching staffs had to be acquitted of any wrongdoing.

[121] LHA Koblenz, 662 008, Sachakte 5, Reinecke, "Eidesstattliche Erklärung: V. Besondere Eigenarten der Napolas," Ulzen, November 15, 1948.
[122] LHA Koblenz, 662 008, Sachakte 5, Reinecke, "Eidesstattliche Erklärung: VI. Folgerungen," Ulzen, November 15, 1948.

The impossible verdict: Denazification courts' troubles finding witnesses to testify against the Napolas

The International Military Tribunal dropped some of the charges against the Napolas prior to its final verdict on October 1, 1946. While the exact date remains unknown, authorities at Nuremberg stopped connecting the Napolas to the SS. Dr. Pelckmann, the associate counsel for the SS, hinted at this development during a Tribunal session on August 20, 1946. Pelckmann had collected several affidavits that proved to him that "Certain groups are charged in the general indictment of the SS. They cannot be brought under the concept of a common conspiracy if only for the reason that they had only a very temporary relationship to the SS or none at all. They are the patron members of the SS, …, [and] the national political education institution."[123] Since the Napolas were not listed in the Tribunal's final judgment, Pelckmann's proposal achieved its intended purpose sometime between August 20th and October 1st.[124] Correspondence between Napola defendants further illustrated that the Napolas were no longer treated as SS units. Herr Koester, a former Napola headmaster, wrote to an unidentifiable recipient about his role as an expert witness at Nuremberg toward the end of 1946. He took pride in the fact that he successfully petitioned the court to treat former Napola teachers as civil servants, and not "party members."[125]

[123] Bob Carruthers, *The SS on Trial: Evidence from Nuremberg.* (Barnsley: Pen & Sword Military Press, 2014), 319. See also, "Volume XXI, Proceedings 12 August 1946 – 26 August 1946," in *Trial of the Major War Criminals before the International Military Tribunal, Nuremberg 14 November 1945 – 1 October 1946* (Nuremberg, 1948)
[124] Yale Law School, Lillian Goldman Law Library, "Judgment of the International Military Tribunal for the Trial of German Major War Criminals," Nuremberg, 30th September and 1st October, 1946.
[125] LHA Koblenz, 662 008, Sachakte 5, Koester, "Abschrift: Lieber…," Oldenburg, February 6, 1947.

Slowly but surely, the legal activism of former Napola teachers began to pay off. Equipped with an alternative history to counter Allied allegations, Napola supporters thwarted the tribunals' efforts to implement the Control Council's directives. In the end, a new orthodoxy had asserted itself based on the constructed memories of Napola alumni. By 1948, officials ran out of time and resources to counter this orthodoxy. A big reason for the defendants' legal successes was their ability to rely on credible witness reports. Prosecutors, on the other hand, had a difficult time finding expert witnesses who could confirm indictments against the schools and teachers in court.

German society enjoyed a very distant and impersonal relationship to the Napolas during the Third Reich. News about the schools was broadcasted sporadically through communications channels that were controlled and censored by the regime. Whether through articles published by the *Völkischer Beobachter* or scenes from movies such as *Kopf Hoch, Johannes!* (1941) or *Unsere Jungen – Ein Film der Napola* (1943) the German public was exposed to information that was limited and heavily shaped by the NSDAP's propaganda apparatus.

Generally speaking, Germans without a direct connection to a Napola, through employment or residence in a Napola town, might have heard about the schools' existence only on a few occasions during the course of the Third Reich.[126] The first time the public heard about the closure of the Weimar *Staatliche Bildungsanstalten* (Stabilas) in Plön, Köslin, and Potsdam in favor of the Napolas was on the occasion of Adolf

[126] Erhard Naake, "Zur Theorie und Praxis der Erziehung in den Nationalpolitischen Erziehungsanstalten und ähnlichen faschistischen 'Eliteschulen'" (PhD Dissertation, Friedrich Schiller Universität Jena, 1970), 141.

Hitler's 44th birthday on April 20th, 1933. Newspapers, such as the *Spandauer Zeitung*, dedicated Thursday's issue to celebrating the achievements of Germany's beloved leader, "our Hitler."[127] Detailed accounts of the festivities in Berlin and Munich, as well as congratulatory messages by President von Hindenburg, Minister of Defense von Blomberg, and Prussian Premier Göring took center stage in this special edition. Among these messages, the newspaper reported the founding of the first three Napolas: "Reich Commissioner [Bernhard] Rust issued for the occasion of the Reich Chancellor's birthday a number of important decrees…Chief among them was the decision to transform the former cadet institutes in Plön, Köslin, and Potsdam into National Political Education Institutes in the sense of the national [socialist] revolution."[128] Apart from the schools' founding date and their locations, the reader was left with little additional information about the Napolas' educational mission.

Subsequent school openings received considerable publicity on the regional level. Extensive news coverage followed the additions of the former cadet institute in Oranienstein (1934) and the humanistic *Gymnasium* Schulpforta (1935). During the festivities of April 22, 1941 in Backnang (all Napolas in Anhalt, Saxony, and Wurttemberg had just been integrated into the Napolas' central administration), Rust's announcement to expand the presence of the Napolas into German-occupied countries, including France, Luxembourg, and Poland, found wide circulation in school and regional newspapers.[129] Moreover, both the *Völkischer Beobachter* and the local *Rosenheimer*

[127] "Zum 44. Geburstags Adolf Hitlers," *Spandauer Zeitung*, April 20, 1933, 1.
[128] Ibid., 3.
[129] Völkischer Beobachter, Berlin, 27.3.1940, 144; "Der Jungmann: Feldpostbericht der NPEA Oranienstein," 6. Kriegsnummer (Dezember 1940-July 1941), 5-6.

Anzeiger reported the first Napola opening in the *Gau München-Oberbayern* on April 2nd, 1942.[130] These examples illustrate that the Napolas' existence was not lost on an informed Third Reich citizen. Yet detailed information about the schools' pedagogical mission was not publicly broadcasted. Only the families of prospective students were allowed a closer look into the life of a Napola. Individual Napola institutes took it upon themselves to send out information sheets and brochures, detailing their entrance requirements, course offerings, and tuition fees.[131]

Although the Napolas' leading functionaries did not belong to Hitler's inner circle, the following individuals raised the Napolas' presence in the media. Joachim Haupt, for instance, the Napolas' first Inspector, had been an active member of the NSDAP's branch in Kiel during the Weimar Republic. Due to his influential pedagogical writings, Haupt was short-listed for appointments to head the National Socialist German Students' League (NSDStB) and the Hitler Youth. Despite losing out to Baldur von Schirach on both occasions, Haupt became a hot topic of discussion among party circles after his arrest and dismissal on charges of homosexuality in 1935.[132] Prior to becoming the nominal head of the Napolas, Bernhard Rust had been a member of the NSDAP and the SA since 1925. After several stints as NSDAP *Gauleiter* during the Weimar Republic, Rust was appointed acting Prussian Education Minister on February 3rd, 1933; narrowly

[130] Private Collection Reinhard Käsinger,"Die erste Nationalpolitische Erziehungsanstalt im Gau München-Oberbayern," *Völkischer Beobachter*, 1942; "Ein Nietzsche-Wort als Erziehungsgrundsatz," *Rosenheimer Anzeiger*, July 10, 1942.
[131] BA Berlin, R 187 Sammlung Schumacher, R 187/270b, Nationalpolitische Erziehungsanstalten (1934-45), Der Reichs- und Preußische Minister für Wissenschaft, Erziehung und Volksbildung an die Adjutantur des Generals Daluege z.Hd. von Herrn Kriminalkommissar Renner, "Merkblatt für die Aufnahme in Nationalpolitischen Erziehungsanstalten," 9. Mai 1938.
[132] Dirk Gelhaus and Jörn-Peter Hülter, *Die Ausleseschulen als Grundpfeiler des NS-Regimes* (Würzburg: Königshausen und Neumann, 2003), 68.

beating out prominent political rivals including Joseph Göbbels, Ernst Krieck, and Hans Schemm for the position.[133] With the founding of the Reich Ministry of Science, Education and Culture on May 1st, 1934, Rust assumed control of all educational matters in the Third Reich.

The person who became the face and driving force behind the Napolas' expansion after 1936 was none other than *SS-Obergruppenführer* August Heißmeyer. Head of the SS main office (SS-*Hauptamt*), the administrative center for all SS units with the exception of the SD, since 1935 Heißmeyer succeeded Haupt as Inspector of the Napolas on March 9th, 1936.[134] The unofficial change of patronage elevated the schools' status among the party leadership. The Napolas began to be featured more regularly in the SS' own, *Das Schwarze Korps* (The Black Corps), which circulated between 1935 and 1945. Pictures and articles documenting the Napolas' graduation ceremonies, camping trips, and sports events created scenes of Aryan normalcy amidst the more grotesque and ideologically charged contents of the magazine.[135] Lastly, Heißmeyer's highly publicized marriage to National Socialist Women's Leader Gertrud Scholtz-Klink in 1940 attracted widespread attention. Second only to Joseph and Magda Göbbels, Heißmeyer and Scholtz-Klink became one of the Third Reich's most recognized couples. With a family of more than ten children, their relationship became a model for the regime's pro-natalist

[133] Nagel, *Hitlers* Bildungsreformer, 40, 46-47.
[134] Heinz Höhne, *The Order of the Death's Head: The story of Hitler's SS*, (London: Penguin Books, 2000), 145. See Chapter 3 for a detailed summary of Heißmeyer's career in the SS.
[135] UB Mannheim, *Das Schwarze Korps: Zeitung der Schutzstaffeln der NSDAP, Organ der Reichsführung-SS*, February 1936 – October 1944.

policies.[136] Following the establishment of Napolas for girls in Austria, Heißmeyer enrolled two of his own daughters at the newly founded schools.[137]

Without the support of modern readership surveys and media monitoring tools, it is difficult to measure the pervasiveness of reports concerning the Napolas' inaugural announcement, subsequent school openings, and leading personalities. It seems fairly likely, however, that most Germans had read about the Napolas at some point between 1933 and 1945. In addition to various newspaper outlets, the Propaganda Ministry spread news about the bravery of Nazi youth, including the Napola *Jungmannen*, with radio broadcasts, short films, and posters throughout the course of the war.[138] However, the amount of relevant information that was shared with the public was low and limited in detail. Ordinary Germans had, at the most, a very elementary understanding of the Napolas' intended role. The fact that denazification tribunals were unable to present sufficient oral testimony to uphold their accusations in court confirms this conclusion.

Military task forces, Napola alumni, and members of the general public were ill equipped to support the prosecution's charge against Nazi educational institutes. Tribunals might have been better served to call outspoken regime critics to the witness stand. Yet even members of SOPADE, the executive committee of Germany's Social Democratic Party, which operated in exile after its ban in June of 1933, were unfit for this task. While monthly and bi-monthly reports, published between 1934 and 1940, provided detailed information about the conditions inside Nazi schools and the Hitler Youth, the

[136] Gudrun Schwarz, *Eine Frau an Seiner Seite: Ehefrauen in der "SS-Sippengemeinschaft."* (Frankfurt: Campus, 1990), 86.
[137] Stefanie Flintrop, "'Wir sollten intelligente Mütter werden': Nationalpolitische Erziehungsanstalten für Mädchen" (PhD Dissertation, Heinrich-Heine Universität Düsseldorf, 2008), 2.
[138] Lisa Pine, *Education in Nazi Germany* (Oxford: Berg, 2010), 106.

Napolas were absent from any meaningful investigation. Overall, the Third Reich's most prominent pedagogical experiment assumed a very peripheral role in the reports. When the schools were mentioned, details about their objectives and administrative structure were factually inaccurate and inconsistent.

In a SOPADE report from December 1938, the Napolas were referred to as "National Socialist Education Institutes (Napoli)."[139] Neither name nor acronym matched the schools' official title. Transcription errors only told half the story. Prosecutors had to rely on intelligence reports that were highly speculative in nature. For instance, the aforementioned SOPADE report included reference to an article published in the *Frankfurter Zeitung* from the previous year, describing the Napolas' pedagogical mission. According to an excerpt taken from the article, the NSDAP engineered the establishment of "special facilities" to educate "loyal and ideologically programmed" civil servants.[140] "The National Socialist Education Institutes (Napoli) were one of the first facilities to be established [for said purpose]. From a 'military perspective, they were in charge of educating a good officer and non-commissioned officer corps, comprised of *Führern* and *Unterführern*, on whom the state could rely…."[141] This observation showed that SOPADE and the *Frankfurter Zeitung*, Germany's most independent newspaper in the Third Reich, could not decide on the Napolas' role inside Hitler's Third Reich. The Napolas were conflated as schools with overt militaristic undertones that were established

[139] Different colloquial uses of the schools' official title were common. However, the transcription error by German regime critics played into the hands of Napola defendants. There was no excuse for native German speakers to confuse the difference between National Socialist and National Political, unless the change was intentional. Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands (Sopade), *Deutschland-Berichte 1934-1940: Fünfter Jahrgang 1938* (Verlag Petra Nettelbeck, 2001), 1386.
[140] Sopade, *Deutschland-Berichte*, 1386.
[141] Ibid., 1386.

by the NSDAP, yet followed the curriculum of the *Deutsche Oberschule*. In essence, the report provided little clarification as to whether or not the Napolas were cadet institutes, party schools, or higher secondary schools. Moreover, the report was purposely vague about the career choices and recruitment of Napola graduates. "After graduation, most pupils become *Wehrmacht* and police officers, and enter the ranks of either the SS or the [Reich] labor service."[142] The usage of the word "most" questioned the report's utility as an admissible piece of evidence. Without accurate statistical information, it was impossible to determine which military branch or party formation used the Napolas as a recruitment pool.[143]

The quality of coverage of Napola-related issues deteriorated as time wore on. Under the March 1939 SOPADE headline "Tendencies and Status of the National Socialist educational reform", the report commented on the regime's progress in bringing Germany's school system into line: "…Adolf Hitler Schools and National Political Education Institutes, as schools with special privileges, were placed under the auspices and administrative oversight of the Hitler Youth and the German Labor Front. These schools consciously prepared [their students] for [admission to] the actual higher party schools, the *Ordensburgen*, and for future service in the party and its formations, public offices and administrations."[144] The Hitler Youth and the German Labor Front had little say in the Napolas' daily matters. August Heißmeyer's appointment to inspector of the

[142] Ibid., 1386.
[143] Chapter 3, "The Napolas and the SS," will examine the recruitment efforts of the SS inside select Napola institutes.
[144] Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands (Sopade), *Deutschland-Berichte 1934-1940: Sechster Jahrgang 1939* (Verlag Petra Nettelbeck, 2001), 308.

Napolas in 1936 effectively ended these organizations' influence over the Napolas.[145] Hitler Youth leader Baldur von Schirach and German Labor Front leader Robert Ley had contested Bernhard Rust's control of the Napolas in previous years, but the introduction of Heinrich Himmler's SS as a patron of the Napolas brought inter-party wrangling to a halt.

As a result, Ley announced the opening of two *Ordensburgen* in Krössinsee and Vogelsang on April 24th, 1936. The third and final institute was set up in Sonthofen and became operational on November 15th, 1937. The *Ordensburgen* were officially administered and funded by the German Labor Front's Strength through Joy program.[146] They served as postsecondary academies and trained university-aged men to assume roles within the party. Since Ley did not want to become dependent upon the Napolas as the sole recruitment pool for his *Ordensburgen*, he teamed up with von Schirach to found the Adolf Hitler Schools in 1937. The Adolf Hitler Schools were boarding schools that educated boys from grades 7 to 12. The original plan was to open a school within each Nazi Gau.[147] However, only 12 schools became 'operational' after 1937, and many of these were simply expansions of the existing *Ordensburgen*. Although some historians have mentioned the Adolf Hitler Schools and *Ordensburgen* in the same breath as the Napolas, the first two school types never lived up to their anticipated role within the Third Reich's educational landscape. The outbreak of war delayed construction and made

[145] Klaus Schmitz, *Militärische Jugenderziehung: Preussische Kadettenhäuser und Nationalpolitische Erziehungsanstalten zwischen 1807 und 1936* (Köln: Böhlau Verlag, 1997), 272.
[146] Alexander-Martin Sardina, "Die Nationalpolitischen Erziehungsanstalten (NAPOLAs) als Beleg für widersprüchliche NS-Erziehungskonzeptionen im Dritten Reich: Diskurs und Zeitzeugenbefragung" (Staatsexamensarbeit, Universität Hamburg, 2002), 55.
[147] Max Klüver, *Die Adolf-Hitler-Schulen* (Beltheim: Bublies, 2007), 9.

regular school operations impossible.[148] Existing structures eventually found alternative usage as party meeting halls, military hospitals, and hubs for the regime's children's evacuation program.

Secondly, the Adolf Hitler Schools' and *Ordensburgen*'s educational prerogatives differed somewhat from those of the Napolas. Since funding was exclusively provided through party channels, with the German Labor Front providing the lion's share of funding for both types of institutes, students were groomed for future service in the party or one of its formations. Ley and von Schirach took great pride in the fact that their students were going to become future party leaders. In contrast, the Napolas allowed its graduates to choose their own careers, at least on paper.

In 1945, there was little need to understand the nuances of the Nazi education system. Before the Law for Liberation afforded due process protection to the accused, cases against Nazi elite school personnel were disposed of in summary proceedings. The legal change in 1946 allowed Napola defendants to use the conflation of different Nazi elite school types to their advantage. According to their interpretations, the Adolf Hitler Schools had been the principal culprits for indoctrinating youth under the swastika, not the Napolas. In the absence of sufficient evidence to the contrary, denazification tribunals had no choice than to lower or drop the charges against former Napola teachers.

Ludwig Mütze, a journalist for the German newspaper *Marburger Presse*, wrote a scathing review of denazification authorities' lenient sentences during the early months of

[148] I.P. Vogelsang,*"Fackelträger der Nation": Elitebildung in den NS-Ordensburgen* (Köln: Böhlau, 2010), 40.

1948. He described denazification courts' efforts and "comical leniency" toward Nazi activists, including Napola teachers, as a "tragicomedy."[149] In the summer of 1949, the U.S. military government published a summary of the denazification proceedings in the U.S. zone of occupation. Its findings validated Mütze's concerns about the ineffectiveness of denazification. Over the course of the U.S. denazification program, 13 million Germans had been registered with the help of questionnaires. 945 000 cases landed in front of denazification tribunals. Of those a negligible 23 500 individuals were found guilty as major offenders and offenders. A total of 815 600 defendants, including Otto Brenner, were labeled as followers, persons exonerated, or had their proceedings "quashed" altogether.[150]

Allied indictments and German counterclaims: The legacy of the trials and its impact on the Napolas' historiographical trajectory

Denazification directives selected the Napolas for dissolution and targeted their members for prosecution. With the signing of the London Agreement and the enactment of Control Council Law No.10, the Napolas were classified as SS preparatory schools. Napola teachers and administrators were interned and faced denazification trials as major war criminals. The introduction of the Law for Liberation in the American Zone of Occupation, sections of which informed policy in all four-occupation zones, ended the phase of summary trials and removals. Instead, Napola teachers were able to prove their innocence from Nazi crimes in individual tribunal sessions under the supervision of German officials. The law stipulated that implicated Napola employees could submit

[149] Ludwig Mütze, "Die staatspolitische Bilanz der Entnazifizierung," *Marburger Presse*, August 28, 1948.
[150] Status of denazification proceedings, End of May 1949, U.S. zone: Table from report of Military governor, found in *Germany 1947-1949: The Story in Documents* (Washington: Department of State, 1950)

evidence in an attempt to argue for a downgrading of their charges to a lower category. Napola alumni sent hundreds of sworn statements on behalf of their beleaguered friends and colleagues to Allied and German tribunals

Their efforts were rewarded in two ways. Firstly, most Napola teachers, administrators, and ministry officials were acquitted of the initial charges levied against them. Due to the credibility of their legal defense and the incipient Cold War conflict, most Napola teachers were reinstated at the end of military occupation and resumed their teaching careers in the Bonn Republic. Secondly, denazification authorities were unable to uphold convictions in court, which allowed constructed memories to reform the postwar image of the Napolas. The Napolas' postwar legend shielded former Napola teachers and pupils from legal, academic, and media scrutiny for decades after the end of the Second World War.

Although the SS had played a major role in the development of the Napolas between 1933 and 1945 - a fact that Allied prosecutors failed to prove beyond a reasonable doubt during the immediate postwar period -, historians have not examined the Napola-SS relationship in isolation. At present, only Horst Ueberhorst's 1969 *Elite für die Diktatur* offers the most comprehensive overview of how Napola officials collaborated with various SS offices on expanding the schools across the Reich. As a former *Jungmann*, Ueberhorst was perhaps too emotionally conflicted to dismiss popular myths about the Napolas outright. Instead, he let his readers decide whether or not the Napolas had been SS preparatory schools. Chapter 3 has no qualms about attacking the Napolas' postwar legend. The Napolas moved increasingly into the sphere of influence of the SS

after 1936. A detailed biographical study of August Heißmeyer's life will show that the inspectorate of the Napolas was headed by a loyal SS man, who belonged to Himmler's inner circle. Contrary to Napola apologists' postwar testimonies, the Napolas and their personnel were not exclusively financed by the Prussian and Reich Ministries of Finance. Himmler ensured that Heißmeyer and other leading Napola officials received generous incomes and operating expenses from SS funds. With the outbreak of World War II and the exponential expansion of SS field units, the SS had a vested interest in the political education and career choices of draft eligible Napola students. Napola institutes in Berlin and Oranienstein hosted lecture series and seminars by visiting SS and *Waffen-SS* veterans. Hoping to recruit Napola students into armed SS formations, members of Heißmeyer's *Dienststelle* provided career counseling services to Napola students and alumni alike. These and other wartime developments gave proof that the administration of the Napolas and selected Napola institutes fell under the auspices of Himmler's SS, not Rust's Education Ministry.

Chapter 3: The Napolas and the SS

Introduction

Eugen Kogon, a former inmate at the Buchenwald concentration camp, became one of the foremost expert advisors to the U.S. military on SS crimes in the immediate postwar period. His 1946 publication, *Der SS-Staat: Das System der deutschen Konzentrationslager,* provided a detailed account of the Nazi concentration camp system and informed the International Military Tribunal's indictment against the SS.[1] In the opening sections of his account, Kogon described the goals and organization of what he referred to as the "SS state." He documented his encounter with a SS officer stationed at the *Ordensburg* in Vogelsang in 1937. Kogon was able to engage this "fanatic" in an open discussion about German history, the role of the Third Reich, and the racial policies of the SS.[2] In the course of their conversation, the unnamed SS man gave Kogon a glimpse into the envisaged purpose of the Napolas. In order to create a new, "National Socialist aristocracy," the SS advocated a two-step plan.[3] First, political opponents and racially inferior persons had to be eliminated from society. Second, the future leadership of the Nazi regime had to be selected and trained by the Napolas.

Kogon's account marked the first time that evidence regarding the relationship between the Napolas and the SS seeped into a postwar study. However, the success of the Napolas' postwar legend prevented a definitive verdict from being reached. Since then,

[1] Kim Christian Priemel and Alexa Stiller, *Reassessing the Nuremberg Trials: Transitional Justice, Trial Narratives, and Historiography* (New York: Berghahn, 2012), 142.
[2] Eugen Kogon, *Der SS-Staat: Das System Der Deutschen Konzentrationslager,* 45. Auflage (München: Wilhelm Heyne Verlag, 1995), 41-42.
[3] Ibid., 42.

scholarly debates have only sporadically addressed the question of whether or not the SS assumed full control over the Napolas. A full-length monograph about the Napola-SS relationship has never been published. Erhard Naake, Rolf Eilers, Horst Ueberhorst, Harald Scholtz, Klaus Schmitz, and Helen Roche have all hinted at the influence of the SS inside the Napolas. Snippets of their hurried assessments have in turn affected the narratives of recent surveys on the Third Reich and its education system. Richard Evans, for instance, noted in part two of his three-volume history of the Third Reich that after the "inspection of the Napolas transferred to a senior SS officer, August Heißmeyer, eventually the administration of the Napolas was turned over to the SS altogether."[4] Martin Kitchen claimed in his 2008 publication *The Third Reich: Charisma and Community* that the Napolas were boarding schools designed to train the future elite of the SS and the SA.[5]

While there is an element of truth to both statements, the relationship between the Napolas and the SS demands a more in-depth investigation. This chapter will demonstrate that the administration of the Napolas and a select number of individual Napola institutes were gradually absorbed into the SS. This assessment is significant for several reasons. The Napolas were not exclusively under the auspices of Bernhard Rust's Education Ministry. Himmler's ambition to widen his powers manifested itself in the gradual takeover of Nazi Germany's school system. For Himmler's SS to transform into a state within a state, its members had to be selected and educated in accordance with SS racial

[4] Richard J. Evans, *The Third Reich in Power* (New York: Penguin, 2006), 285.
[5] Martin Kitchen, *The Third Reich: Charisma and Community* (Harlow, England: Pearson Longman, 2008), 156.

visions, from birth to death. The SS-sponsored *Lebensborn* program, the *Heim*- and *Reichsschulen,* as well as the *SS-Junkerschulen* all became part of a grander scheme to channel those of Aryan blood into the SS. Some Napolas facilitated the racial selection and training of secondary school students between the ages of 10 and 19. Moreover, SS-control demonstrated that teachers, ministry officials, and former students relativized the relationship between the Napolas and the SS after the war. They testified that the start of SS patronage in 1936 preserved the Napolas' autonomy for the remainder of the Third Reich. This chapter will argue that Napola defenders' claims of nominal patronage were wrong. The SS infiltrated many Napola institutes in order to recruit both teachers and students.

The life of August Heißmeyer and the financing of the Napolas exemplified the high level of SS influence. As inspector of the Napolas (*Inspekteur der Nationalpolitischen Erziehungsanstalten*), Heißmeyer determined the schools' fate from 1936 until 1945 and following his career offers important insight into how the Napolas gradually came under the jurisdiction of the SS. Despite his very high rank as *SS-Obergruppenführer*, Heißmeyer was able to cloak or downplay the significance of his criminal activities after the war. After interrogating Heißmeyer in the early months of 1948, the U.S. Army Counter Intelligence Corps submitted a top-secret report on the status of their ongoing investigation. The report determined that Heißmeyer was awarded the rank of *SS-Obergruppenführer* in 1936 because of his early association with the party and the SS. Heißmeyer was able to outrank prominent Nazi leaders such as Bormann,

Kaltenbrunner, or Ribbentrop simply because he had joined the party in 1925.[6] Heißmeyer explained to his interrogators that the rank of *SS-Obergruppenführer* was "probably not commensurate with his duties as head of the NAPOLA and HEIMSCHULE."[7] In essence, the report suggested that Heißmeyer's high rank never translated into real political importance within the Third Reich.

A comparison between the records from Heißmeyer's postwar denazification trial and his SS personnel files, however, shows that the Counter Intelligence Corps' conclusions cannot be validated. Heißmeyer did not merely hold the rank of *SS-Obergruppenführer* as a reward for his long years of party service. Nor did his appointment as head of the General SS in 1935 mark the zenith of his power, as the Intelligence Corps' report suggested. Heißmeyer's career grew in importance through a series of appointments, which included that of Napola and *Heimschulen* inspector, assistant inspector of the *SS-Totenkopfstandarten*, and General of the *Waffen-SS*.[8]

A closer look into the budget reports of the Reich Ministry of Education (*Reichserziehungsministerium*, REM) illustrates that the SS contributed financially to the development of the Napolas starting as early as 1934. On paper, the Prussian Ministry of Finance and the Reich Ministry of Finance officially bankrolled the Napolas' expansion across the Third Reich. However, bureaucratic regulations governing the negotiations between Rust's Education Ministry and the Prussian and Reich Ministries of Finance

[6] National Archives Record Administration [hereafter NARA], College Park, MD, Record Group 0319, Records of the Investigative Records Repository: Intelligence and Investigative Dossiers, Army Staff: Office of the Assistant Chief of Staff for Intelligence (G2), August Heißmeyer, "I-9758, Subject: Heißmeyer, August, Re: War Crimes."
[7] Ibid.
[8] NARA, RG 0319, Intelligence and Investigative Dossiers, Office of the Assistant Chief of Staff for Intelligence (G2), August Heißmeyer, "Dienstlaufbahn."

were tedious and sometimes caused delays in securing funds for new school openings. To speed up the requisition of new Napola buildings during the war, the Napola leadership relied on the police powers of the SS. The SS also supported key members of the Napola administration financially. Between 1936 and 1945, the SS paid all of Heißmeyer's salary. Members of his personal staff also received compensation from the SS. Moreover, the SS manned the busy Napola inspectorate (*Inspektion der Nationalpolitischen Erziehungsanstalten*) offices in Berlin with administrators and clerical workers who remained on SS payrolls after 1936.[9]

Several postwar testimonies verified that Heißmeyer used state funding to reward Napola employees with gifts. Thank-you notes sent to Himmler from Heißmeyer demonstrated that Heißmeyer had also often found himself on the receiving end of such largesse. On one occasion, Himmler, who always made sure to thank his senior staff and officers for their service with personalized gifts, bought Christmas presents for the entire Heißmeyer family.[10] After Heißmeyer took over the reins of the inspectorate in 1936, he modeled his leadership style after Himmler's in order to gain the loyalty of his employees. Heißmeyer's generosity was also part of a carefully designed plan to promote the ideology of the SS to Napola teachers, students, and their families.[11] However,

[9] Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preußischer Staatsbesitz, I. HA, Rep. 151, IC, Nr. 7308, Preußisches Finanzministerium, Ordner IB 3015, Landesverwaltung der Nationalpolitischen Erziehungsanstalten (1937-44), Otto Calliebe an den Herrn Preußischen Finanzminister, 12. 7. 1940 "Betreff: Abkommandierung geeigneter Beamten die zur Zeit zu der Waffen-SS eingezogen sind."

[10] Tuviah Friedman, *Die drei ältesten SS-Generäle Himmlers: Eine Dokumentarische Sammlung*, (Institute of Documentation Israel, 1998), "Reichsführer!." Corruption and bribery was a regime wide practice. Hitler himself kept loyalty of his senior officer corps via lavish gifts of money and real estate. For more information, see Norman Goda, "Black Marks: Hitler's Bribery of His Senior Officers during World War II," *The Journal of Modern History* (2000): 413–52.

[11] Landesarchiv Baden-Württemberg, Abteilung Staatsarchiv Sigmaringen, Wü 13 T 2 Nr. 2139/004, "Eidesstattliche Erklärung, Hans Eckardt, 6.3. 1949," 3.

Heißmeyer knew that their confidence and loyalty would not guarantee the Napolas' complete transformation into SS preparatory schools. The Napolas' learning culture needed changing as well. The SS assumed a very active role in facilitating Napola students' political education (*politische Erziehung*). Some Napola institutes invited SS officials to speak to their students about the core principles of National Socialism. Other institutes hosted *Waffen-SS* veterans who gave lectures about their front experiences. Naturally, the SS did not take an interest in the *Jungmannen*'s political education solely for pedagogical reasons. The administration of the Napolas under Heißmeyer's command began in 1939 to use a variety of measures to increase recruitment into SS and *Waffen-SS* formations. By organizing field trips to SS garrisons and offering career-counseling services on-site, Heißmeyer effectively revealed his long-term plan of converting the Napolas into SS recruitment centers.

Himmler's education expert

August Heißmeyer was born on January 11, 1897 in Gellersen, Lower Saxony.[12] He was the youngest of 13 children. His father was a farmer who owned 80 acres of land. After attending Gellersen's local elementary school for four years, Heißmeyer continued at a private school in Hämelschenburg from 1907 until 1910. He spent the next four years of his secondary school education at a *Gymnasium* in nearby Hameln.[13] The outbreak of World War I interrupted Heißmeyer's education. Instead of completing his studies, Heißmeyer chose to enlist in the army. He served as an air force officer and was awarded

[12] Staatsarchiv Sigmaringen, Wü 13 T 2 Staatskommissariat für die politische Säuberung (1945-1952), Nr. 2139/004, Entnazifizierungsakten der Spruchkammer Tübingen.
[13] SA Sigmaringen, Wü 13 T 2 Nr. 2139/004, "Gouvernement Militairè En Allemagne Questionnaire: August Heißmeyer."

the Iron Cross First and Second Class, as well as the Medal of Service from the city of Braunschweig.[14]

After the end of World War I, Heißmeyer graduated from the *Gymnasium* and applied to study law at the university in Göttingen. He commenced his studies in 1920. In the same year, Heißmeyer joined a *Freikorps* unit for a brief, four-month stint.[15] The *Freikorps* were essential for the creation of the SA and the SS, because of their staunch anti-communist and paramilitary characteristics. As Gerald Reitlinger notes "there is no border-line where the *Freikorps* ends and Hitler's SA and SS begin."[16] After the *Freikorps* were disbanded, many of the units were subsumed into the young National Socialist movement.[17] By Heißmeyer's own account, his service in the *Freikorps* between March and June was rather uneventful. After the failure of the *Kapp-Putsch* in March 1920, Heißmeyer's unit was placed at the disposal of Minister of War Gustav Noske. Heißmeyer insisted that his unit was never called into action. He apparently left the unit in June because of an undisclosed sickness.[18] Heißmeyer's SS-personnel files tell a slightly different story. A memo, which summed up Heißmeyer's life prior to his entry into the SS in 1930, provided the following commentary: "Participated in battles in the southern Harz and Westphalia as a result of the *Kapp-Putsch*."[19] While there is no

[14] SA Sigmaringen, Wü 13 T 2 Nr. 2139/004, Aktz: N 1841., "Niederschrift: Aussage des Betroffenen, August Heißmeyer."
[15] SA Sigmaringen, Wü 13 T 2 Nr. 2139/004, Aktz: N 1841., "Urteilsspruch der Spruchkammer , 4. Mai 1950: August Heißmeyer ist Hauptschuldiger."
[16] Gerald Reitlinger, *The SS: Alibi of a Nation, 1922-1945* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1989), 4.
[17] Ibid., 7.
[18] SA Sigmaringen, Wü 13 T 2 Nr. 2139/004, Aktz: N 1841., "Niederschrift: Aussage des Betroffenen, August Heißmeyer," 1-2.
[19] Friedman, *Die drei ältesten SS-Generäle Himmlers*, "Personal-Notiz."

definitive proof of Heißmeyer's active service record in the *Freikorps,* he successfully used his *Freikorps*-connections to supplement his application to the SS.

According to Heißmeyer's testimony, the German hyperinflation halted his law studies after only four semesters. In 1922 he left the university in Göttingen and worked as a coal miner in Rauxel, Westphalia for six months.[20] Heißmeyer testified that a return to work at his family's farm in Gellersen was no longer an option. Without going into the details of his family's financial situation, he merely noted that the farm had been taken over by his brother-in-law.[21] At a later point in the trial, he changed his story about his family's business. Heißmeyer claimed that two Jews had been responsible for taking over his father's farm. He added that this incident made him start resenting German Jews.[22] During the mid- to late 1920s, Heißmeyer took on a string of menial jobs and eventually returned to Goettingen.[23] Heißmeyer stated on record after the war that his monthly income in these years never amounted to more than 200 RM. In contrast, Heißmeyer started receiving a monthly salary in excess of 1500 RM after his promotion to *SS-Obergruppenführer* in 1936. When the court rendered its final verdict against Heißmeyer in 1950, it considered to be incriminating evidence that Heißmeyer was able to improve his lot only after he started climbing the party ladder. Without party patronage, Heißmeyer, a university drop-out and menial laborer during the 'golden years' of the Weimar Republic, could have never achieved a position of social or political importance.

[20] SA Sigmaringen, Wü 13 T 2 Nr. 2139/004, Aktz: N 1841., "Urteilsspruch der Spruchkammer , 4. Mai 1950: August Heißmeyer ist Hauptschuldiger."
[21] SA Sigmaringen, Wü 13 T 2 Nr. 2139/004, Aktz: N 1841., "Niederschrift: Aussage des Betroffenen, August Heißmeyer," 2.
[22] Ibid., 13.
[23] SA Sigmaringen, Wü 13 T 2 Nr. 2139/004, Aktz: N 1841., "Urteilsspruch der Spruchkammer , 4. Mai 1950: August Heißmeyer ist Hauptschuldiger," 2.

He married for the first time in 1924 and had six children.[24] The following year Heißmeyer came in contact with Frankfurt's local NSDAP branch. After attending an NSDAP assembly, he joined the party as its 21573rd member in August 1925. Two months later, he joined the SA and received the rank of *Sturmführer*. Heißmeyer credited two formative experiences for his decision to join the party in 1925. According to Thomas Kohut's categorization of generational groups, Heißmeyer was a member of the "Wilhelmian youth generation" or the "front generation." For him and other men born between the mid-1880s and 1900, Germany's defeat left a lasting impression on their lives.[25] Heißmeyer later recalled that "the unfortunate ending to the war hurt us very much, considering that everything we stood for was [now] destroyed. It took a long time for us to again cope with the changed world [after the war]."[26] Heißmeyer repeatedly talked about the strong sense of camaraderie and comradeship between members of his company. He described it as a "beautiful experience" that men from all walks of life had come together and formed a community.[27] Heißmeyer's descriptions were a product of the intellectual currents that were prevalent in Germany after World War I. Like many other veterans who had fought in Germany's Imperial Army, Heißmeyer coped with the

[24] After his wife's death in 1939, Heißmeyer famously married Nazi Women's Leader Gertrud Scholtz-Klink (nee Treusch), with whom he had one child. LA Baden-Württemberg, Abt. SA Sigmaringen, Wü 13 T 2 Nr. 2139/004, Aktz: N 1841., "Urteilsspruch der Spruchkammer , 4. Mai 1950: August Heißmeyer ist Hauptschuldiger," 2.
[25] Thomas A. Kohut, *A German Generation: An Experiential History of the Twentieth Century* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013), 6.
[26] SA Sigmaringen, Wü 13 T 2 Nr. 2139/004, Aktz: N 1841., "Niederschrift: Aussage des Betroffenen, August Heißmeyer," 5.
[27] Ibid.

trauma and disillusionment following defeat by clinging on to what Karl Mannheim referred to as a "climate of utopia."[28]

Kohut argues that the concept of a Nazi *Volksgemeinschaft* later appealed to members of this generation who had witnessed the conflict and disorder of the Weimar Republic.[29] While revolutionary upheavals did plague Germany's first democracy initially, recent scholarship rejects the notion of a state in permanent crisis. Similarly to the front generation's "stab-in-the-back-myth," the instability of the Weimar Republic was a figment of imagination nourished by Nazi propaganda. For Heißmeyer, who was discharged from the service as a flight lieutenant in reserve in February 1919, the collapse of the German empire followed by the founding of the Weimar Republic marked the beginning of his political awakening.[30] Heißmeyer's yearning for discipline and order beyond the military became even more pronounced during his university days in Göttingen. In order to counter the influence of the "reactionary" *Hochschulring Deutscher Art*, a *völkisch* nationalist student movement that had been founded in Berlin in 1919, Heißmeyer and other student veterans formed the organization *Freie Deutsche Studenten*.[31] Four of its members were able to secure positions within the university's student council (*Allgemeine Studentenausschuss,* AStA). Heißmeyer was elected to represent the university's student employment agency. Violent clashes between students and workers drove Heißmeyer to seek out the help of Göttingen's SPD leader Richard

[28] Karl Mannheim, *Essays on the Sociology of Knowledge*, ed. Paul Kecskemeti (London: Routledge, 1997), 3.
[29] Kohut, A German Generation, 6.
[30] NACP, RG 0319, Intelligence and Investigative Dossiers, Office of the Assistant Chief of Staff for Intelligence (G2), August Heißmeyer, "I-9758, Memorandum for the Officer in Charge."
[31] SA Sigmaringen, Wü 13 T 2 Nr. 2139/004, Aktz: N 1841., "Niederschrift: Aussage des Betroffenen, August Heißmeyer," 5.

Schiller. Together they organized an assembly to reconcile the warring parties. The event turned out to be a failure. According to Heißmeyer's version of the story, Schiller's aggressive attitude as the keynote speaker had repelled many students.[32]

In addition to his dealings with Göttingen's Social Democrats, Heißmeyer also familiarized himself with the platform of Germany's Communist Party (*Kommunistische Partei Deutschlands,* KPD) by attending local lectures.[33] During his short-lived career as a coal miner, he came into close contact with Germany's trade unions. Heißmeyer claimed that after his co-workers discovered that he had supported the war effort he was no longer approached to join the miners' union. He ultimately joined the NSDAP in 1925. Conan Fischer's *Stormtroopers* showed that it was not uncommon for the SA and other party formations to attract recruits from the political left.[34] In Heißmeyer's case, the extent of his leftist dealings was greatly exaggerated. Heißmeyer, like many other National Socialist supporters of the first hour, used the political ambiguity of the early NSDAP to justify their memberships to denazification tribunals after the war. By referencing his contacts with Germany's SPD and KPD, Heißmeyer was trying to play up the NSDAP's socialist platform as a deciding factor for his entry in 1925. In reality, Heißmeyer was drawn to the party's radicalism and military appearance.

Heißmeyer took his first public office in 1927. As managing director and assistant *Gauleiter*, he was in charge of the NSDAP's operations in the district Hanover-South (*Gau Hannover-Süd*). Heißmeyer's tenure came to an early end in August 1928 when his

[32] Ibid., 5.
[33] SA Sigmaringen, Wü 13 T 2 Nr. 2139/004, Aktz: N 1841., "Niederschrift: Aussage des Betroffenen, August Heißmeyer," 5.
[34] Conan Fischer, *Stormtroopers: A Social, Economic, and Ideological Analysis, 1929-1935* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1983), 146-147.

district was merged with Hanover-North (*Hannover-Nord*) under the leadership of *Gauleiter* and future Reich Education Minister Bernard Rust. He formally quit the SA around the same time for undisclosed reasons. Heißmeyer did not resume political activities until his acceptance into the SS in Göttingen in December of 1930. Due to his previous military experience, Heißmeyer took over his own squad only two months later. After his promotion to SS-*Standartenführer,* Heißmeyer commanded the *Standarte 12* in Braunschweig from December 1931 until November 1932.[35]

Heißmeyer continued to rise quickly through the ranks of the SS after Hitler's appointment as chancellor on January 30, 1933.[36] He served as head of the SS Chapter XVII in Münster until November 1933. Following a six-month assignment in the *SS-Oberabschnitt* (a SS district commanded by a senior SS official) *Elbe* in Dresden, Heißmeyer, now holding the rank of *SS-Gruppenführer*, took charge of the *SS-Oberabschnitt Rhein* in Koblenz from May 1934 until May 1935. Based on his proven track record as a SS administrator, Heißmeyer took over management of the SS main office (*SS-Hauptamt*) in Berlin in May 1935.[37] He oversaw the SS main office's affairs until July 1940.[38] Only three SS offices with *Hauptamt* status existed at the time of

[35] SA Sigmaringen, Wü 13 T 2 Nr. 2139/004, Aktz: N 1841., "Urteilsspruch der Spruchkammer , 4. Mai 1950: August Heißmeyer ist Hauptschuldiger," 4.
[36] SA Sigmaringen, Wü 13 T 2 Nr. 2139/004, "Gouvernement Militairè En Allemagne Questionnaire, August Heißmeyer," D. Enumeration Chronologique Des Tous Les Emplois Et Des Services Militaires.
[37] SA Sigmaringen, Wü 13 T 2 Nr. 2139/004, Aktz: N 1841., "Urteilsspruch der Spruchkammer , 4. Mai 1950: August Heißmeyer ist Hauptschuldiger," 6. Only three SS offices with *Hauptamt* status existed at the time of Heißmeyer's appointment: the SS main office (*SS-Hauptamt*), SD main office (*SD-Hauptamt*), and the infamous SS Race and Settlement Office (*SS-Rassen- und Siedlungshauptamt*).
[38] Heißmeyer was ousted in favor of his successor *SS-Brigadeführer* Gottlob Berger. By the time of Heißmeyer's departure, the SS main office was a shadow of its former self. Due to the emergence of SS field units, the importance of the General SS (*Allgemeine-SS*) had become greatly diminished. In an effort to manage the wartime expansion of the *Waffen-SS*, parts of the SS main office were restructured to form the *Waffen-SS* Recruiting Office (*Ergänzungsamt der Waffen-SS*) and the Operational Headquarters of the

Heißmeyer's appointment: the SS main office, SD main office (*SD-Hauptamt*), and the infamous SS Race and Settlement Office (*SS-Rasse- und Siedlungshauptamt*). After Joachim Haupt was dismissed from office, Heißmeyer added the position of Napola inspector to his growing list of responsibilities. He remained in this role from April 1936 until the collapse of the Nazi regime in 1945.

Heißmeyer reached the zenith of his authority within the SS hierarchy when Himmler promoted him to *SS-Obergruppenführer* in November 1936.[39] As a direct product of the outbreak of World War II, Heißmeyer received two additional commissions in 1939 and 1940 respectively. In September 1939, Himmler selected Heißmeyer for the task of Supreme SS and Police Leader (*Höherer SS- und Polizeiführer*, HSSPF).[40] A decree by Reich and Prussian Minister of the Interior Dr. Wilhelm Frick from November 13, 1937 had initially paved the way for this appointment. In the event of mobilization and war, the decree stated that all police, SD, and SS forces within each military district fell under the centralized command of a Supreme SS and Police Leader.[41] Heißmeyer was responsible for the district Berlin-Brandenburg. While Heißmeyer insisted that his formal appointment did not take effect until 1944, he had presided over the district's SS and Police Court since 1939. The courts were notorious for handing out death sentences for desertion and *regimekritisches* behavior (actions deemed disruptive to

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SS (*SS-Führungshauptamt*). George H. Stein, *Waffen-SS: Hitler's Élite Guard at War, 1939-1945* (Bristol: Cerberus Publishing Ltd, 2002), 36-37.

[39] Universitätsbibliothek Mannheim, MA000762501, Das Schwarze Korps : Zeitung der Schutzstaffeln der NSDAP ; Organ der Reichsführung der SS. – Berlin, Folge 46 (12. November, 1936), Seite 4, "Der Führer beförderte zum 9. November, 1936."

[40] SA Sigmaringen, Wü 13 T 2 Nr. 2139/004, Aktz: N 1841., Urteilsspruch (detailliertere Kopie) der Spruchkammer, 4. Mai 1950: August Heißmeyer ist Hauptschuldiger," 7-8.

[41] Hans Buchheim, "Die Höheren SS- und Polizeiführer," *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte* 11, 4 (1963): 362.

the stability of the regime) during the final months of the conflict.[42] After the war, Heißmeyer attempted to redirect the blame for the court's execution orders in 1945. Despite his function as *Oberster Gerichtsherr* (highest judicial authority) of the Berlin court, Heißmeyer claimed that he was only one of many judicial authorities in the larger district. All death sentences, he insisted, were handled by the SS and Police Court of Appeal, which operated out of Munich.[43]

In January 1940, Heißmeyer was appointed inspector of the *Deutsche Heimschulen*. This type of boarding school was a Nazi creation designed to house and educate students who had lost their parents due to the war. The schools also assisted party and government employees, whose jobs demanded frequent travel, by offering their children stable and safe learning environments. By September 1, 1944, Heißmeyer supervised 61 *Heimschulen*. Moreover, an additional 66 schools had been brought under the inspectorate's control and were awaiting reorganization.[44]

Heißmeyer's exit from the SS main office in July 1940 resulted in a number of organizational changes that directly influenced the development of the Napolas. The inspectorate of the Napolas had been deeply rooted in the organizational structure of the Ministry of Education since 1933. In an effort to better coordinate and govern the relations between the Napolas and the SS, Heißmeyer was given permission to set up his own SS office, the *Dienststelle SS-Obergruppenführer Heißmeyer*. He now oversaw two

[42] Richard Bessel, *Germany 1945: From War to Peace* (New York: Harper Perennial, 2010), 59-61.
[43] SA Sigmaringen, Wü 13 T 2 Nr. 2139/004, Aktz: N 1841., "Niederschrift: Aussage des Betroffenen, August Heißmeyer," 9.
[44] Bundesarchiv Berlin, Benutzungsort Berlin-Lichterfelde, R 187 Sammlung Schumacher, R 187/270b, Nationalpolitische Erziehungsanstalten (1934-45), "Liste der Schulen, die der Inspektion der Deutschen Heimschulen unterstehen (Stand am 1.9. 1944). The *Völkischer Beobachter* reported on January 19, 1944 that the *Heimschulen* had admitted 4500 boys and girls in 1943 alone.

offices that were formally charged with the administration of the Napolas. While the inspectorate of the Napolas remained embedded in Rust's Education Ministry until the end of the war, the newly created *Dienststelle* was under the sole responsibility of Heißmeyer and Himmler. According to the NSDAP's organizational handbook from 1943, his office had the task of supervising the Napolas and their future expansion. In recognition of Heißmeyer's dual function as inspector of the Napolas and the *Deutsche Heimschulen*, his office was also ordered to convert all remaining boarding schools inside the Reich into *Heimschulen*.[45] Unlike the Napolas, the *Heimschulen* did not have strict entrance requirements and thus formed an altogether separate school system. Plans for converting all boarding schools into *Heimschulen*, which also included secondary schools that were privately owned and operated, highlighted the regime's ambition to further centralize Germany's education system.

The organizational changes of 1940 played an important role in Heißmeyer's postwar defense. On January 30, 1949, Gertrud Scholtz-Klink sent a personal letter to the tribunal in Tübingen, which presided over her husband's case. She pleaded extenuating circumstances for Heißmeyer's role in the SS. According to Scholtz-Klink, Himmler lost confidence in Heißmeyer's ability to head the SS main office early in the war. She stated that Himmler wished for someone "tougher" and "less conciliatory" in this position.[46] Recognizing that he was out of step, Heißmeyer approached Himmler and asked to be relieved of this duty, which the latter reluctantly granted. After Heißmeyer voluntarily

[45] Der Reichsorganisationsleiter der NSDAP, *Organisationsbuch der NSDAP* (München: Zentralverlag der NSDAP, Franz Eher Nachf., 1943), 421-422.
[46] SA Sigmaringen, Wü 13 T 2 Nr. 2139/004, "An den Herrn Vorsitzenden der Tübinger Spruchkammer, 30.1.49."

stepped down from his position, he dedicated all of his time to educational issues and the administration of the Napolas.

There are two competing explanations for Heißmeyer's exit from the main office in 1940. In Scholtz-Klink's version of the story, Heißmeyer voluntarily resigned from office. Several postwar testimonies, however, argued that Himmler sacked Heißmeyer for failing to meet his recruiting quotas. Himmler was unhappy with the low recruitment of officer candidates into the *Waffen-SS* and therefore replaced Heißmeyer with Gottlob Berger. According to a postwar report by U.S. Counter Intelligence officers, Heißmeyer would have also been demoted if it had not been for his high-profile marriage to Scholtz-Klink. Hitler, himself, had been a witness at their marriage ceremony. While both stories probably contain elements of truth, Heißmeyer's departure from the SS main office was reflected positively in the court's final verdict. Freed from his obligations as head of the SS main office, the court accepted that Heißmeyer turned his attention toward the organization of the Napolas. According to Heißmeyer's testimony, his objectives were simply to "broaden the students' horizons" and improve their "international understanding (*Völkerverständigung*)."[47] The fact that this understanding was based on the racial science and racial policy of the Nazi regime was conveniently ignored. If the prosecution had probed deeper into the organizational make-up and areas of responsibility of Heißmeyer's *Dienststelle*, it would have become clearer that Heißmeyer was trying to regain Himmler's trust by recruiting a greater number of *Jungmannen* into the SS.

[47] SA Sigmaringen, Wü 13 T 2 Nr. 2139/004, Aktz: N 1841., "Urteilsspruch der Spruchkammer , 4. Mai 1950: August Heißmeyer ist Hauptschuldiger," 7.

Heißmeyer downplayed the level of importance of his office both before and during trial. He stated that he and his two staff were primarily responsible for establishing barracks (*SS-Mannschaftshäuser*) on university campuses.[48] The barracks were made available to members of the SS, who wanted to pursue a post-secondary degree. In reality, the *Dienststelle SS-Obergruppenführer Heißmeyer* provided the nucleus for an office which governed all SS-related educational matters. This office, the *Hauptamt Nationalpolitische Erziehung*, was in the development stage during World War II and consisted of four departments with a combined total of nine employees.[49] Although Heißmeyer was listed as the office's formal head, he vehemently denied its existence during his postwar trial.[50] Heißmeyer also refused to take responsibility for many of his office's more serious offences, including the confiscation of property to speed up the Napolas' expansion with the help of the SD and GESTAPO. Despite denying all collaboration with the SD, in February 1942, correspondence between Himmler and Reinhard Heydrich, head of the SD and governor of occupied Moravia-Bohemia, provides proof that Heißmeyer's office tolerated the use of repressive police measures to secure new Napola locations across the Reich.[51] Other areas of responsibility included the transfer of Napola teachers into SS formations and the racial selection of prospective

[48] SA Sigmaringen, Wü 13 T 2 Nr. 2139/004, Aktz: N 1841., "Niederschrift: Aussage des Betroffenen, August Heißmeyer," 4.
[49] BA Berlin, R 187 Sammlung Schumacher, R 187/270b, Nationalpolitische Erziehungsanstalten (1934-45), "Stellenbesetzung des Hauptamtes Nationalpolitische Erziehung."
[50] SA Sigmaringen, Wü 13 T 2 Nr. 2139/004, Aktz: N 1841., "Niederschrift: Aussage des Betroffenen, August Heißmeyer," 5.
[51] BA Berlin, R 187 Sammlung Schumacher, R 187/270b, Nationalpolitische Erziehungsanstalten (1934-45): 136 "Lieber Heydrich, 13. Februar, 1942"; 139 "Lieber Heydrich, 19. Februar, 1942."

Napola students. Most importantly, Heißmeyer and his team of loyal SS bureaucrats left no stone unturned to steer the *Jungmannen* towards a career in the *Waffen-SS*.[52]

Heißmeyer's faith in the Third Reich and "Hitler's genius" never wavered.[53] In April 1945, Heißmeyer and members of his *Dienststelle* fought against the Red Army in Berlin. Heißmeyer and his men entrenched themselves in the NPEA Berlin-Spandau.[54] Heißmeyer and Scholtz-Klink, who had been wounded during the fighting, were ultimately forced to abandon their positions and join the stream of refugees heading westward. They journeyed to the town of Leitzkau in Saxony-Anhalt, approximately 115 kilometers away from Berlin. In Leitzgau, they were picked up by a Soviet patrol and confined in a political internment camp for four days.[55] By pretending to be displaced persons from the former Nazi-occupied territories, they secured their release and worked in Leitzgau until they were able to apply for new personal documents and identity cards. They changed their name to Stuckenbrok.[56] Two months later, Heißmeyer and Scholtz-Klink travelled south to Castle Bronnen in Baden-Wurttemberg to meet their 11 children.[57]

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[52] BA Berlin, R 187 Sammlung Schumacher, R 187/270b, Nationalpolitische Erziehungsanstalten (1934-45), "Stellenbesetzung des Hauptamtes Nationalpolitische Erziehung," 2-3.
[53] LA Baden-Württemberg, Abt. SA Sigmaringen, Wü 13 T 2 Nr. 2139/004, Aktz: N 1841., Urteilsspruch (detailliertere Kopie) der Spruchkammer, 4. Mai 1950: August Heißmeyer ist Hauptschuldiger," 11.
[54] LA Baden-Württemberg, Abt. SA Sigmaringen, Wü 13 T 2 Nr. 2139/004, Aktz: N 1841., "Niederschrift: Aussage des Betroffenen, August Heißmeyer," 2.
[55] SA Sigmaringen, Wü 13 T 2 Nr. 2139/004, Aktz: N 1841., "Niederschrift: Aussage des Betroffenen, August Heißmeyer," 3.
[56] NACP, RG 0319, Intelligence and Investigative Dossiers, Office of the Assistant Chief of Staff for Intelligence (G2), August Heißmeyer, "Annex A: Report of Interrogation." Stuckenbrok was the maiden name of Heißmeyer's mother.
[57] Heißmeyer had 6 children from a previous marriage. Scholtz-Klink also had six children from previous marriages, two of whom died. Together they had one child in 1944.

The family secured living quarters in a monastery in Bebenhausen, north of Tübingen at the end of 1947.[58] Heißmeyer and Scholtz-Klink continued using their false identities as refugees from East Prussia to avoid detection. Despite their caution, French Police (*Sûreté*) discovered Heißmeyer and Scholtz-Klink's true identities on February 9, 1948.[59] A French military court in Reutlingen convicted Heißmeyer to 18-months in prison for identification fraud. Since French investigators were kept in the dark about Heißmeyer's SS past, he was released on August 13, 1948 after serving less than one third of his sentence at the penitentiary in Rottenburg.

Although Heißmeyer had been a member of Himmler's inner circle, he successfully avoided detection and prosecution late into the 1940s. In 1949, Heißmeyer's luck finally ran out. On January 28, 1949, German and French denazification officials forced Heißmeyer to fill out a questionnaire about his activities under the former regime. Based on his self-incriminating statements, a formal committee of inquiry launched an investigation into Heißmeyer's past. By February 22, 1949, the Tübingen commission (*Kreisuntersuchungsausschuß*) had collected enough evidence to convict Heißmeyer as a Class II Offender.[60] The ruling prohibited Heißmeyer from holding a public office. Moreover, he was no longer entitled to a state pension and lost his right to vote. Finally,

[58] Until the founding of the West German state of Baden-Wurttemberg in 1952, Tübingen was the capital of Wurttemberg-Hohenzollern and part of the French Occupation Zone.
[59] SA Sigmaringen, Wü 13 T 2 Nr. 2139/004, Aktz: N 1841., Urteilsspruch (detailliertere Kopie) der Spruchkammer, 4. Mai 1950: August Heißmeyer ist Hauptschuldiger," 3.
[60] SA Sigmaringen, Wü 13 T 2 Nr. 2139/004, "Kreisuntersuchungsausschuß Tübingen: Einstufung in die Gruppe der Belasteteten."

Heißmeyer could not be employed as a teacher, educator, preacher, editor, writer, or radio commentator for five years.[61]

Members of the Napola community responded with a massive outpouring of support for Heißmeyer following his conviction in February 1949. Former Napola headmasters, teachers, and ministry officials submitted sworn statements in defense of their former boss to the commission in Tübingen. In the hopes of downgrading the court's initial ruling, the testimonies described Heißmeyer as an "idealistic-minded" administrator and "good German" who cared deeply about educational matters.[62] His appointment as inspector, they claimed, had allowed the Napola administrators and teachers to continue their pedagogical efforts without party and SS influence.[63] These arguments were virtually identical to the ones used in previous trials. By 1949, Napola advocates had compiled an impressive collection of sworn statements from past denazification proceedings. Heißmeyer's supporters did not shy away from recycling testimonies that had been submitted on behalf of beleaguered Napola colleagues between 1946 and 1948. His denazification trial presented an opportunity to rehabilitate the image of the Napolas once and for all.

One such submission was sent in March 7, 1949 by Hans Eckardt, who served as the NPEA Ilfeld's headmaster from 1938 until 1945.[64] Apart from providing his own

[61] We have encountered a similar description of sanctions levied against Class I and II offenders in Chapter 2. French prosecutors reopened the investigation into Heißmeyer's Nazi past by relying on the Law for Liberation's provisions and classification system.
[62] SA Sigmaringen, Wü 13 T 2 Nr. 2139/004, "Eidesstattliche Erklärung, Erich Bahr, 22. Mai, 1949."
[63] SA Sigmaringen, Wü 13 T 2 Nr. 2139/004, "Eidesstattliche Erklärung, Günther Buttler, 14. Mai, 1949."
[64] SA Sigmaringen, Wü 13 T 2 Nr. 2139/004, "An den Untersuchungsausschuss für politische Säuberung, Betr. Politische Überprüfung des ehemaligen Inspekteurs der Nationalpolitischen Erziehungsanstalten, Herrn A. Heißmeyer."

evaluation of Heißmeyer's personality and official functions, Eckardt attached 13 sworn statements that contained exonerating evidence related to the Napolas. These included testimonies by Erwin Gentz and Kurt Petter, as well as a copy of the sworn statement that had been submitted to the International Military Tribunal by seventeen interned Napola teachers on June 4, 1946. All three testimonies played a pivotal role in forming the Napolas' postwar myth.[65] In his cover letter to the investigating committee, Eckardt explained his reasoning for handing over additional documents. He believed that exculpatory facts about the Napolas reinforced the portrayal of Heißmeyer as a visionary of "unimpeachable character", whose political idealism was, at times, not compatible with reality.[66]

In Chapter 2, we saw that Otto Brenner's friends and colleagues convinced the tribunal to revise its original verdict. Heißmeyer's appeal process achieved the opposite result. Due to the publicity surrounding his arrest, the public prosecutor's office in Tübingen started carrying out detailed, preliminary investigations into his political activities.[67] The prosecution's objective was to build a case against Heißmeyer and force him to stand trial on charges of crimes against humanity. Police departments in Koblenz, Münster, and Berlin were contacted to obtain evidence that could convict Heißmeyer as a Major Offender. Heißmeyer's responsibilities as Supreme SS and Police Leader of the

[65] See Chapter 2, "The Napolas and Denazification."
[66] SA Sigmaringen, Wü 13 T 2 Nr. 2139/004, "Eidesstattliche Erklärung über den Menschen und ehemaligen Inspekteur der NPEAen, August Heißmeyer, Rinteln den 6.3. 1949," 6.
[67] SA Sigmaringen, Wü 13 T 2 Nr. 2139/004, Schreiben des Staatskommissariat für die Politische Säuberung an die Polizeidirektionen Göttingen, Braunschweig, Münster, Dresden, Koblenz, Berlin Westzone, dem V.V.N. und dem Deutschen Gewerkschaftsbund "Betreff: Politische Säuberung des SS Obergruppenführers August Heißmeyer, wohnhaft in Tübingen-Bebenhausen."

district Berlin-Brandenburg became a key focus of the ensuing investigation.[68] Moreover, prosecutors established communication with Nazi victims' associations, most notably the Victims of the Nazi Regime (*Vereinigung der Verfolgten des Naziregimes,* VVN) and its branches in Stuttgart and Hamburg.[69]

The prosecution notified the Wurttemberg Ministry of Justice on November 15, 1949 that they had launched a formal investigative inquiry into Heißmeyer's SS career.[70] The eight-month gap between Heißmeyer's conviction as a Class II Offender and the official resumption of legal action spoke volumes about the ineffectiveness of denazification in the Western occupation zones. While bureaucratic hurdles and legal technicalities continue to cause long delays in court proceedings even today, Heißmeyer's well-documented role in the SS and prior criminal convictions should have allowed Wurttemberg officials to bring the case to a swift conclusion. After the burden of proof had shifted in favor of the accused in 1946, bringing Heißmeyer to court, let alone rendering a guilty verdict had become far more difficult. The prosecution had to search for evidence that linked Heißmeyer directly to a specific crime. The success of the Napolas' postwar defense and the convoluted relationship between the Napolas and the

[68] SA Sigmaringen, Wü 13 T 2 Nr. 2139/004, Schreiben der Staatsanwaltschaft Tübingen an das Justizministerium Tübingen, 15.11. 1949 "Betreff: Mitteilung von Rechtssachen mit politischem Einschlag."
[69] SA Sigmaringen, Wü 13 T 2 Nr. 2139/004, Schreiben der Vereinigung der Verfolgten des Naziregimes Württemberg-Baden an das Ministerium für politische Säuberung Tübingen-Lustnau, 3.1. 1950 "Betreff: Verfahren gegen den Chef des ehemaligen SS-Hauptamtes, August Heißmeyer."
[70] SA Sigmaringen, Wü 13 T 2 Nr. 2139/004, Schreiben der Staatsanwaltschaft Tübingen an das Staatskommissariat für politische Säuberung, 15.11. 1949 "Betreff: Ermittlungsverfahren gegen August Heißmeyer."

SS forced the prosecution to search for evidence elsewhere.[71] Heißmeyer was brought to trial for authorizing an execution order that condemned four policemen to death on April 24, 1945.[72] The men had been brought before the SS and Police Court in Berlin-Brandenburg for engaging in homosexual behavior. According to the prosecutor's report, Heißmeyer, who presided over the court at the time of the incident, gave the order to have the men executed by firing squad.

On May 4, 1950, the court in Tübingen convicted Heißmeyer as a Major Offender (*Hauptschuldiger*). His crimes as *Oberster Gerichtsherr* of the Berlin-Brandenburg district in April 1945 did not feature prominently in the court's final verdict. Since the prosecution's principal witness, police major Adolf, remained in Soviet captivity throughout the court proceedings, Heißmeyer's guilt in this instance could not be firmly established[73] The court released the following statement to justify its conviction: "Although the trial could not provide certain proof for the accused's personal involvement in the crimes, there is no doubt that he was seriously politically laden (*politisch belastet*) due to his station and extensive powers gained within the Third Reich."[74] Instead of determining Heißmeyer's guilt on the basis of a single committed crime, the court highlighted his many political contributions to the "National Socialist tyranny" to secure a criminal conviction. For instance, Heißmeyer was held responsible for "approving" violent attacks by members of his *SS-Standarte 12* during the

[71] It is important to remember that Heißmeyer's career as Napola inspector remained an enigma to prosecutors at the time. Since Heißmeyer was, at least on paper, associated with Rust's Education Ministry, it seemed more promising for the prosecution to narrow in on his party activities.
[72] SA Sigmaringen, Wü 13 T 2 Nr. 2139/004, Aktz: N 1841., Urteilsspruch (detailliertere Kopie) der Spruchkammer, 4. Mai 1950: August Heißmeyer ist Hauptschuldiger," 13, 15.
[73] Ibid.
[74] Ibid., 7.

Braunschweig riots in 1931. The violent clashes between SS men, workers and local residents of a "leftist persuasion" resulted in two casualties and dozens of injuries.[75]

Heißmeyer was also accused of reinforcing the racial code of the Napolas outside of the schools. Heißmeyer stated on record that he had been a proponent of "solving the Jewish question."[76] However, he stopped short of taking responsibility for the regime's genocidal policies. He denied the existence of extermination camps and the Holocaust after the war. Heißmeyer testified under oath that he had never heard of, nor witnessed any atrocities inside the concentration camps. The court refuted his plea of ignorance by calling Max Ruscher to the witness stand. Ruscher, a former inmate of the concentration camp Sachsenhausen-Oranienburg, testified that Heißmeyer not only knew about the camps' inhumane conditions, but also profited directly from exploiting slave labor. During the summer of 1940, Heißmeyer conscripted him and several other concentration camp prisoners to carry out renovations on his Berlin residence.[77]

The court dismissed all claims that Heißmeyer used his appointment as Napola inspector to improve education. The court noted that Heißmeyer led the Napolas in his capacity as a SS leader, and not as a dedicated educator. Heißmeyer's mission was to find promising young talent and train them for leading roles in the National Socialist state, especially the SS.[78] Most importantly, the court rejected claims that the Napolas provided

[75] Ibid., 12, 17-21.
[76] SA Sigmaringen, Wü 13 T 2 Nr. 2139/004, Aktz: N 1841., "Niederschrift: Aussage des Betroffenen, August Heißmeyer," 15.
[77] SA Sigmaringen, Wü 13 T 2 Nr. 2139/004, Aktz: N 1841., Urteilsspruch (detailliertere Kopie) der Spruchkammer, 4. Mai 1950: August Heißmeyer ist Hauptschuldiger," 12.
[78] Ibid., 18.

an education that was "politically neutral."[79] According to the court's final verdict in 1950, the sworn statements, submitted in defense of Heißmeyer's actions as Napola inspector, could not obscure the fact that the Napolas' pedagogy was quintessentially National Socialist in character.

The court's verdict imposed a series of stiffer penalties on Heißmeyer. In addition to losing his pension and the right to vote, the court revised the ruling from February 1949 and extended Heißmeyer's ban from public positions for a period of ten years. Heißmeyer was also to be interned for three years. All of his personal assets were confiscated and reduced to the amount of 1500 German Mark (*Deutsche Mark,* DM). Heißmeyer also had to bear the costs of the proceedings, which were set at 18 000 DM.[80] Heißmeyer and Scholtz-Klink, who had been classified as a major Nazi offender in a separate trial, were released from prison in November 1951. A petition of pardon, signed by Wurttemberg state president Dr. Gebhard Müller on November 5, 1951, suspended the remainder of their sentences.[81] In October 1956, the Berlin Ministry of the Interior contacted the Baden-Württemberg Ministry of Justice. With the aim of reopening the case against Heißmeyer in a different state, the Berlin ministry asked to have all related case files sent to them.[82] However, no new evidence could be found to justify a retrial. After his release from prison, Heißmeyer took up residence in Schwäbisch-Hall and became the director of a Coca-Cola bottling plant. Horst Ueberhorst interviewed Heißmeyer on

[79] Ibid., 18.
[80] Ibid., 21.
[81] Landesarchiv Baden-Württemberg, Abteilung Staatsarchiv Sigmaringen, Wü 13 T 2 Staatskommissariat für die politische Säuberung (1950-52), Nr. 2836/018, Dr. Müllers Schreiben an das Justizministerium Tübingen, 5.11. 1951 "Betreff: Gnadengesuch der Eheleute August und Gertrud Heißmeyer."
[82] SA Sigmaringen, Wü 13 T 2 Nr. 2139/004, Der Senator für Inneres an das Justizministerium Baden-Württemberg, 15. 10. 1956 "Betreff: August Heißmeyer Entnazifizierungsakten."

March 11, 1968 and included a copy of the interview transcript in his document collection *Elite für die Diktatur*.[83] The interview demonstrated that Heißmeyer, like his wife who was interviewed by Claudia Koonz in 1981, never accepted responsibility for his actions during the Third Reich.[84] Heißmeyer died in 1979 at the age of 82.

Conflicted loyalties?: A closer look at August Heißmeyer's finances as Napola inspector

Heißmeyer was forced to disclose his financial history when he completed the denazification questionnaire on January 28, 1949. The questionnaire showed that Heißmeyer's annual income rose steadily from 1931 until 1945.[85] Heißmeyer's income in 1931 and 1932 amounted to less than 2000 *Reichsmark* (RM) annually. After Heißmeyer entered the *Reichstag* as a member of the NSDAP in 1933, his salary was set at 7500 RM for a period of two years.[86] From 1935 until 1936, Heißmeyer earned an annual salary of 12000 RM in his role as head of the SS main office. Following his appointment as Napola inspector and subsequent promotion to the rank of *SS-Obergruppenführer* in 1936, Heißmeyer received a salary increase of 6000 RM. His income remained fixed at an annual sum of 18000 RM until 1944. For the 1945 fiscal year, Heißmeyer disclosed a significantly reduced salary of 6000 RM.[87] The deduction was, however, not a sign of his diminishing political role. Nazi Germany officially surrendered on May 7, 1945. Government shutdown and military occupation cut Heißmeyer's 'fiscal year' short by

[83] Horst Ueberhorst, *Elite für die Diktatur: Die Nationalpolitischen Erziehungsanstalten 1933-1945, Ein Dokumentarbericht* (Düsseldorf: Droste Verlag, 1969), 426-435.
[84] Claudia Koonz, *Mothers in the Fatherland: Women, the Family, and Nazi Politics* (New York: St. Martin's, 1987), xxi.
[85] SA Sigmaringen, Wü 13 T 2 Nr. 2139/004, "Gouvernement Militairè En Allemagne Questionnaire: August Heißmeyer," H. Revenus.
[86] Heißmeyer's questionnaire showed annual salaries of 5000 RM and 6000 RM for the years 1933 and 1934 respectively. The court's 1950 ruling, however, listed an annual gross salary of 7500 RM.
[87] SA Sigmaringen, Wü 13 T 2 Nr. 2139/004, "Gouvernement Militairè En Allemagne Questionnaire: August Heißmeyer," H. Revenus, 1945.

eight months. Thus, the amount of 6000 RM represented exactly one-third of his annual salary of 18000 RM.

According to data provided by Adam Tooze, 62 per cent of all German taxpayers reported an income of less than 1500 RM in 1936.[88] Despite full employment, only 17 per cent of all taxpayers earned an annual income in excess of 2400 RM.[89] Heißmeyer's annual income in 1938 was six-times higher than that of the average white-collar employee, who earned an average income of 3000 RM according to the 1936 census. His salary rivalled that of other high-ranking SS officials. Reinhard Heydrich's income in 1937 totaled almost 16000 RM. Robert Gerwarth notes that Heydrich received "a small fortune when compared to the average income of 2000 Reichsmarks [sic] earned by a middle-ranked Gestapo officer."[90] While inspectorate officials testified after the war that the autonomy of the Napolas not been compromised by the SS' nominal takeover in 1936, Heißmeyer's generous SS salary left little doubt about where their top decision-maker's allegiances rested.

Heißmeyer's bank account showed a balance of 18000 RM at the end of the war. This substantial sum comprised entirely cash deposits because no other assets, such as properties or bonds, were listed under Heißmeyer's name. At the time of his second trial, the money was still held in a frozen account at a Berlin bank.[91] In response to uncovering Heißmeyer's considerable earnings over the whole course of the Third Reich, the court

[88] Adam Tooze, *The Wages of Destruction: The Making and Breaking of the Nazi Economy* (New York: Penguin, 2007), 141.
[89] Ibid., 142.
[90] Robert Gerwarth, *Hitler's Hangman*: *The Life of Heydrich* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011), 110.
[91] SA Sigmaringen, Wü 13 T 2 Nr. 2139/004, Aktz: N 1841., Urteilsspruch (detailliertere Kopie) der Spruchkammer, 4. Mai 1950: August Heißmeyer ist Hauptschuldiger," 4.

issued the following statement: "His political offices did not only earn him the highest reputation and major [political] influence, but most recently also an annual income of approximately 25000 RM. The amount of 25000 RM was a combination of Heißmeyer's salaries from 1944 and the first four months of 1945. Compared to his level of education and earnings prior to 1933, the accused reaped considerable material benefits from his political activities…"[92] Heißmeyer's assets were seized and he was left with the amount of 1500 DM to care for his wife and children, four of whom were suffering from diabetes.

Heißmeyer's salary marked him as an important figure within the SS. Since the main source of his income came from the SS, the court should have also raised questions about the financial autonomy of the Napolas. The success of the Napolas' postwar defense rested in large part on the fact that neither the party nor the SS provided financial assistance to the schools. Former ministry and Napola officials testified that the Napolas and their personnel had been financed exclusively by state resources.[93] The inspectorate of the Napolas was embedded within Rust's Reich Ministry of Education and operated out of Berlin. Therefore, only the Prussian Ministry of Finance and the Reich Ministry of Finance were responsible for the allocation of funds.[94] Yet, surviving financial records from the REM and the two ministries of finance told a different story. The inspectorate of the Napolas and *Deutsche Heimschulen* published a combined, annual report for the 1944 fiscal year. Heißmeyer's salary of 18000 RM was listed in this ministerial report. It was,

[92] SA Sigmaringen, Wü 13 T 2 Nr. 2139/004, Aktz: N 1841., Urteilsspruch (detailliertere Kopie) der Spruchkammer, 4. Mai 1950: August Heißmeyer ist Hauptschuldiger," 19.
[93] Landeshauptarchiv Koblenz, Bestand 662,008, Nationalpolitische Erziehungsanstalt Oranienstein, Sachakte 5, Unterlagen des Dipl. Handelslehrers Otto Brenner, Coburg (1933-48), "Erklärung des Ministerialrates Dr. Robert Sowade."
[94] SA Sigmaringen, Wü 13 T 2 Nr. 2139/004, "Eidesstattliche Erklärung, Erwin Gentz, 13.10.1947."

however, accompanied by a special notation, which read, "the inspector receives his salary from the SS."[95]

In addition to his base salary of 18000 RM paid for by the SS, Heißmeyer received special allowances as Napola inspector from state funds. In a letter to Rust on June 20, 1943, Prussian Finance Minister Johannes Popitz approved an increase of Heißmeyer's allowances for travel and social expenses from 2400 RM to 3600 RM for the start of 1944.[96] With these funds, for example, Heißmeyer sent gifts to Napola teachers on the births of their children.[97] Moreover, Heißmeyer covered some of the costs for his employees' wedding or funeral preparations during the war.[98] Many of Heißmeyer's former colleagues from the inspectorate pressured the denazification tribunal to see his generosity in a positive light. Hermann Brunk, the former headmaster of the NPEA Plön and assistant Napola inspector from 1936 until 1937, testified to Heißmeyer's austere lifestyle in his sworn statement from March 23, 1949.[99] He noted that Heißmeyer scrupulously monitored all of his personal expenses. As Napola inspector, Heißmeyer waived all claims to additional compensation. He transferred his allowances into a

[95] GStA PK, I. HA, Rep. 151, IC, Nr. 7308, Preußisches Finanzministerium, Ordner IB 3015, Landesverwaltung der Nationalpolitischen Erziehungsanstalten (1937-44), "Inspektion der Nationalpolitischen Erziehungsanstalten und der Deutschen Heimschulen im Ministerium: Rechnungsjahr 1944."
[96] GStA PK, I. HA, Rep. 151, IC, Nr. 7308, Preußisches Finanzministerium, Ordner IB 3015, Landesverwaltung der Nationalpolitischen Erziehungsanstalten (1937-44), Schreiben des Preußischen Finanzministers an den Herrn Reichsminister für Wissenschaft, Erziehung und Volksbildung, Berlin, 20.6.1943 "Auf das Schreiben vom 26. Mai 1943."
[97] SA Sigmaringen, Wü 13 T 2 Nr. 2139/004, "Eidesstattliche Erklärung eines Sacharbeiters für Heimschulen im Erziehungsministerium, 5.2.1949."
[98] SA Sigmaringen, Wü 13 T 2 Nr. 2139/004, "Eidesstattliche Erklärung, Hans Eckardt, 6.3. 1949," 3.
[99] SA Sigmaringen, Wü 13 T 2 Nr. 2139/004, "Eidesstattliche Erklärung, Hermann Brunk, Plön den 23.3. 1949," 2.

wartime support fund for Napola employees to help pay for weddings, funeral arrangements, or medical bills.

Brunk testified further that Heißmeyer rejected all special treatment. When Heißmeyer visited a Napola, he sat down and ate together with the students. Brunk specifically pointed out that "during the war, he [Heißmeyer] personally returned food stamps and bought [foodstuffs] at regular [non-subsidized] rates."[100] An annual salary and personal expense account in excess of 20000 RM certainly helped Heißmeyer cope. Other testimonies documented Heißmeyer's assistance with an even wider variety of personal and financial matters among those who worked in the Napola system. According to Hans Eckardt, Heißmeyer always lent a helping hand during times of financial hardships. He cared deeply when his employees faced difficulties with their living situations, or needed money to pay for medical bills. He also ensured that all Napola kitchen, cleaning, and office staffs were housed in suitable accommodations and received generous supplies of food.[101]

In short, Heißmeyer was portrayed as a good Samaritan who volunteered both his time and resources to helping others. Based on Heißmeyer's dedication to the National Socialist cause and admiration for Hitler and Himmler, his generosity demands interpretation in a different light. Bernd Wegner has argued that Heißmeyer wanted to

[100] Ibid..
[101] SA Sigmaringen, Wü 13 T 2 Nr. 2139/004, "Eidesstattliche Erklärung, Hans Eckardt, 6.3. 1949," 3. Eckardt saw Heißmeyer's trial as a final opportunity to rehabilitate the postwar image of the Napolas. Many of the arguments and evidence brought forth were as much about helping Heißmeyer as they were aimed at promoting the schools' innocence. Eckardt remembered a specific instance when Heißmeyer used the inspectorate's allowances to procure new books. These books were awarded to the *Jungmannen* for their athletic successes. Eckhardt used this anecdotal evidence to describe Heißmeyer as a selfless administrator who promoted access to educational resources. In doing so, he demonstrated that the Napolas were institutes of higher learning, not military schools.

transform the Napolas' teaching staff into an order (*Ordensgemeinschaft*) based on the model of the SS.[102] As the vanguard of the Nazi racial state, the SS promoted unity through the common possession of Nordic blood.[103] This racially based community (*Sippengemeinschaft*) cultivated race-conscious attitudes among SS families. Heißmeyer tried to build similar camaraderie among Napola teachers and their families. Giving financial assistance to Napola employees was one of several tactics to forge a tightknit community out of dozens of geographically dispersed schools. Moreover, through his generosity, Heißmeyer ensured that teachers remained loyal to his leadership of the Napolas. The SS primarily used its weekly newspaper, *Das Schwarze Korps,* as a conduit to educate its membership about National Socialist visions of race, family, and culture. While themes of race and self-sacrifice became staples of individual Napola newsletters during the war, Heißmeyer went one step further. He enlisted the help of SS and *Waffen-SS* officials to strengthen the ideological convictions of Napola students and teachers.

A different after-school program: The SS takes control of the Napolas' political education

The Allied-led denazification programs ensured that the political reeducation of German society became a defining characteristic of the occupation years. In 1949, West and East German policy-makers institutionalized Allied demands to permanently break with fascist traditions and eliminate Nazism from public life. The Federal Republic of Germany's (FRG) and the German Democratic Republic's (GDR) constitutions reflected promises to reshape Germany according to Western democratic, or Soviet socialist

[102] Bernd Wegner, *Hitlers Politische Soldaten: Die Waffen-SS 1933-1945* (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 1988), 39.
[103] Amy Carney, "Das Schwarze Korps and the Validation of the SS Sippengemeinschaft," in *Nazi Ideology and Ethics,* ed. Wolfgang Bialas and Lothar Fritze (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2014), 326.

principles. Political education, a subject that had previously been taught in Nazi secondary schools, did not find favor with Western democracies in the aftermath of World War II. The pedagogical legacies of Soviet Russia, Fascist Italy, and Nazi Germany had forever associated political education with the political indoctrination of totalitarian regimes.[104] Yet democratic and anti-fascist education principles were institutionalized in both German states soon after the end of military occupation. This step symbolized a continuation of German educational traditions, some of which predated the outbreak of World War I. In East Germany, the Socialist Unity Party of Germany (SED) decided at its third party congress in 1956 to make civic studies (*Staatsbürgerkunde*) mandatory for all pupils attending grade 8 or higher.[105] In West Germany, the Federal Agency for Civic Education (*Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung*) was founded in 1952 with the mandate to instill a democratic consciousness among West German society. Since the reunification of East and West Germany in 1990, this office's mandate now includes the implementation of civic education classes in German secondary schools.

The evolution of civic education studies in East and West German school systems demonstrates that Allied reeducation plans only partially materialized after 1949. While the SED's leadership cadre utilized civic education as a tool to aid in the formation of a socialist personality, the goal of civic education in the FRG was more selective and cautious.[106] Nobert Frei describes the basic elements of West Germany's "policy of the past" during the chancellorship of Konrad Adenauer as one of "amnesty, integration, and

[104] Colin Wringe, *Democracy, Schooling, and Political Education* (New York: Routledge, 1984), 89.
[105] Tilman Grammes, Henning Schluß, and Hans-Joachim Vogler, *Staatsbürgerkunde in der DDR: Ein Dokumentenband* (Wiebaden: Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 2006), 59.
[106] Christa Händle, "The Burden of History? Civic Education at German Schools," *Journal of Social Science Education* (Online Journal for Social Sciences and their Didatics 2-2002): 3-4.

demarcation."[107] According to Frei, demarcation meant "the radical dismissal of measures for purging and punishment" that had been features of the occupation years.[108] The conservatism of the Adenauer years not only led to the reinstatement of former Nazi members and sympathizers into West German politics, military, and industry, it also delayed the implementation of civic education in secondary school curricula. While Jeffrey Herff's *Divided Memory* convincingly shows that West Germany's *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* (confrontation with the past) was more successful in cultivating public memories of the Holocaust than in the East, a critical engagement with Germany's Nazi past was absent from West German classrooms for most of the 1950s.[109] Herwig Blankert claims that the Christian Democratic Union (CDU) under Adenauer initially looked toward the Weimar Republic's educational policies for inspiration. The Weimar constitution envisaged transforming Germany into a *Kulturstaat* (cultural nation), which embraced cultural and educational reforms. Detlev Peukert argued that the Weimar Republic fell short of this goal. He insisted that Germany remained a "battleground of irreconcilable ideologies and sectional interests."[110] Although the far right was discredited after World War II, the 1949 Basic Law (*Grundgesetz*) refrained from imposing sweeping reforms on West Germany's educational system.[111] Overall, the school system retained its pre-World War II structure. *Volksschulen* (lower secondary schools), *Realschulen*

[107] Nobert Frei, *Adenauer's Germany and the Nazi Past: The Politics of Amnesty and Integration* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), xii.
[108] Ibid., xiii.
[109] Jeffrey Herf, *Divided Memory: The Nazi Past in the Two Germanys* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997), 2.
[110] Detlev Peukert, *The Weimar Republic,* 144.
[111] Herwig Blankertz, *Die Geschichte der Pädagogik: Von der Aufklärung bis zur Gegenwart* (Wetzlar: Büchse der Pandora, 1982), 244.

(secondary schools), and *Gymnasien* (college-preparatory high schools) continued to provide German pupils with a formal, secondary school education.

Most educators and pupils consciously avoided discussions of the Third Reich's legacies. After more than a decade of ideological indoctrination, many Germans had become apathetic toward controversial political and moral issues. Brian Puaca reminds us that "postwar classes underscored the everyday activities of the citizen in a democratic state." [112] Instead of studying Nazi atrocities, pupils were taught hands-on experiences with the rules and responsibilities of life in a democracy.[113] A report by the German Committee for Education and Schooling in January 1955 advocated the integration of political education into postwar classrooms. Enforcing the committee's recommendations became the responsibility of each of the 11 West German state culture ministries.[114] Based on several reports and school surveys from the West Berlin sector, Puaca concludes that while "political education had secured a place in the curriculum of the postwar schools, instruction in the young subject was irregular, even in the most academically focused institutions."[115] Even though West Berlin became the young FRG's epicenter for cultural and educational reforms, many teachers continued to see political education as a distraction. As a result, politically active student governments and student newspapers often discussed controversial topics outside the classroom as the 1950s came to an end.[116]

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[112] Brian M. Puaca, *Learning Democracy: Education Reform in West Germany, 1945-1965* (New York: Berghahn, 2009), 110.
[113] Ibid., 111.
[114] Puaca, *Learning Democracy*, 113.
[115] Ibid., 116.
[116] Ibid., 124.

The delay of reforms in West Germany's education system spoke volumes about the psychological scars resulting from years of Nazi indoctrination and war propaganda. For many of the reinstated Napola teachers who were active in West German schools after 1949, their apoliticism and apathy toward political education stemmed from a different experience. In addition to their membership in SS formations, Napola teachers came increasingly under attack by denazification courts after 1945 for their National Socialist teachings. Occupation officials, bent on condemning the Napolas as SS-preparatory schools, levied charges of indoctrinating German youth against the teachers. The presentation of sworn statements in Chapter 2 demonstrated that most defendants deflected blame from themselves and their schools and instead pointed the finger at the Adolf Hitler Schools. Napola teachers unanimously agreed that the Napolas were not responsible for educating future Nazi political leaders.

Some Napola teachers submitted reports that refuted the political indoctrination of Napola students in greater detail. In a section of his sworn statement titled "*Politische Erziehung* (political education)," a Napola teacher recounted his experiences with the instruction of political education, or lack thereof, at the Napolas.[117] He stated, "I did not know of any special political education at the institutes, nor did I teach such a subject. We did not interpret political education [as a tool] to impose ideological fanaticism on the boys and [thereby] teach them to adopt an uncritical nature and rule out all criticism

[117] The term "Politische Erziehung" addresses Allied accusations in a much extenuated manner. Political education in this context refers to the systematic indoctrination of German youth in all facets of National Socialist ideology; including racialism, anti-Semitism, anti-Bolshevism, and the "Führer myth." For authenticity purposes, I have decided to translate the original wording as closely as possible.

[against the regime]."[118] He further commented that it would have been unethical and "too easy" to indoctrinate the older students and prepare them for service in party formations.[119] In their postwar report on the history of the NPEA Backnang, Hans Hauser, Dr. Richard Fader, and Karl Beilhard acknowledged the existence of "national political education (*Nationalpolitische Schulung*)" in the school's curriculum, but downplayed its importance.[120] The three former Napola teachers claimed that instruction of the subject did not follow party guidelines. In an effort to appear less like party ideologues and more like academically-minded teachers, they argued that ideological indoctrination was "frowned upon" inside the institute. Teachers used the allocated time slot to teach students about different philosophical convictions.[121] Other postwar reports even described the Napolas' boycott of party and Hitler Youth-recommended textbooks for instruction.[122] Nazi-approved textbooks and suggested readings bore little to no academic value. Since these texts primarily served propaganda purposes, Napola teachers insisted that they were incompatible with the Napolas' high academic standards. Yet Napola policy-makers' fascination with German culture made the schools particularly susceptible to the introduction of teaching materials that landed on the Allies' banned book lists after the war. Publications by Nazi ideologues Julius Streicher, Alfred Rosenberg, Richard Walther Darré, or Joseph Göbbels were studied to further the *Jungmannen*'s political

[118] LHA Koblenz, 662, 008, Nationalpolitische Erziehungsanstalt Oranienstein, Sachakte 5, "Die Nationalpolitischen Erziehungsanstalten," Sektion VI: Politische Erziehung.
[119] Ibid.
[120] Staatsarchiv Sigmaringen, Wü 80 T 3 Kultusministerium (1921-53), Nr. 2624, Abwicklung der Nationalpolitischen Erziehungsanstalt Rottweil und Napola-Lehrer in Württemberg-Hohenzollern, "Bericht über die ehemalige Nationalpolitische Erziehungsanstalt Backnang," Sektion V: Der Unterricht.
[121] SA Sigmaringen, Wü 80 T 3 Nr. 2624, "Bericht über die ehemalige Nationalpolitische Erziehungsanstalt Backnang," Sektion V: Der Unterricht.
[122] LHA Koblenz, 662, 008, Nationalpolitische Erziehungsanstalt Oranienstein, Sachakte 5, "Ergänzungen zu 'Die Nationalpolitischen Erziehungsanstalten," Sektion: Zu I, 5.

education. Moreover, Napola teachers who received ranks in the General SS after 1936 were encouraged to subscribe to SS magazines. It is safe to assume that contents from the weekly SS newspaper, *Das Schwarze Korps,* were discussed inside Napola classrooms; especially considering the paper's regular coverage of the schools after 1936.

The contents of Napola newsletters and so-called wartime reports (*Kriegsbriefe*), paint a clearer picture. Political education was an important part of the Napolas' institutional life, particularly during the war. The NPEA Neuzelle's 1941 report reminded Napola students, teachers, parents, and alumni just how important political education was to the boys' schooling. It insisted that "political education transports humans to a point where they willingly sacrifice their lives in the service of the German nation, with the knowledge that only such a service can give true and genuine purpose to one's own life."[123] In order to prepare the *Jungmannen* in Neuzelle for such a role in the Nazis' racial community (*Volksgemeinschaft*), teachers were allocated one evening a week to discuss current political events, the history of the party and its formations, or other ideological issues with their students.[124] Karl Stephan, a former *Jungmann* at the Napola am Donnersberg remembered that excerpts from Heinrich Himmler's Posen speech were read to the assembled student body one evening in October 1943. The mass killing and genocide of Europe's Jews was a prominent theme during Himmler's speech, which was held in front of a large group of high-ranking SS officials.[125]

[123] Institut für Zeitgeschichte München-Berlin, Signatur ED 735, Bestand Nationalpolitische Erziehungsanstalten, Band 13, "Kriegsbriefe der Nationalpolitischen Erziehungsanstalt Neuzelle," 6. Kriegsbrief (April 1941), 15.
[124] IfZ München-Berlin, ED 735, Band 13, 11. Kriegsbrief der NPEA Neuzelle (Juni 1942), 17.
[125] Karl Stephan, private correspondence ("Die Napola Jahre von 1942-194"), December 11, 2014.

The allocation of classroom hours for political education varied among Napolas. Since political education often depended on the ideological conviction of the educator, party and ministry officials possessed few means to monitor the quality and fervor of ideological instruction at the schools. Membership in party formations was encouraged, but not universally enforced. While the NSLB held considerable influence over teachers' professional development, the integration of National Socialist ideology into secondary school curricula varied between regions and within individual schools. The lack of regulatory oversight also meant that party directives were not always enforced in Third Reich classrooms. To ensure that the *Jungmannen* were taught in the spirit of National Socialism, the SS took on a very active role in providing students with adequate political education outside of the regular curriculum. Depending on the size of their student bodies, some Napola institutes distributed yearbooks, event reports, or newsletters to students, alumni and their families at the end of the school or calendar year. The comprehensive year-in-review calendar summarized weekly events from the past academic year and offers insight into the schools' daily routines. By examining the year-in-review sections from different Napolas, the influence of the SS on the schools' institutional lives becomes apparent.

A typical school year was often highlighted by frequent visits by high-ranking SS officials, or *Waffen-SS* veterans. Apart from maintaining amicable relationships between the SS and the Napolas, visits served a dual purpose: the political education, and the recruitment of the *Jungmannen*. Political education was often facilitated through a

visiting, senior SS officer.[126] The guest lecturers educated the students on various aspects of the Nazi worldview and its more practical applications. In 1941, "*Der Jungmann*" documented the stay of *SS-Sturmbannführer* Heller at the Napola in Oranienstein. Heller, a member of the SD's Wiesbaden office, spoke to Grade 10 and 11 students about the service requirements of SD and GESTAPO officers.[127] In January 1941, Grade 8 students at the Napola in Neuzelle were treated to a visit by a former alumnus. As a member of the SS Race and Settlement Office, he talked about his work as a SS- and police leader (*SS-und Polizeiführer*) in the *Warthegau*.[128] Only one week later, *SS-Untersturmführer* Schönefeld gave a lecture on the tasks of a SS officer in the *Waffen-SS* and the recent military successes in France.[129]

On May 12, 1942, the NPEA Potsdam's newsletter reported on the visit of *SS-Sturmbannführer* Klingenberg. For the duration of his stay, Klingenberg used the opportunity to educate the assembled student body on the regime's Balkan campaign.[130] On November 6, 1942, the fourth annual edition recapped the visit of *SS-Obersturmführer* Schinke. As part of his stay in Potsdam, Schinke gave a talk to the *Jungmannen* titled,

[126] Since Napola teachers were assigned SS-ranks and insignia after 1936, the schools' guest book entries could be misleading. For example, a guest lecture given by a *SS-Sturmbannführer* does not inform the reader whether or not the individual had been promoted from within the Napola system. It some instances, the *SS-Sturmbannführer* (a rank equivalent to a *Wehrmacht* major) was a Napola teacher, whose 'honorary' officer grade carried less weight within the SS-hierarchy. Whenever possible, I included examples of visiting SS-officers with clearly identifiable service records in the General SS or *Waffen-SS*.
[127] Landeshauptarchiv Koblenz, Bestand 662, 008, Nationalpolitische Erziehungsanstalt Oranienstein, Sachakte 2 "Der Jungmann: Feldpostberichte der NPEA Oranienstein," Kriegsnummer 6, Anstaltsnachrichten.
[128] IfZ München-Berlin, ED 735, Band 13, 6. Kriegsbrief der NPEA Neuzelle (April 1941), Kriegschronik der Anstalt.
[129] Ibid.
[130] IfZ München-Berlin, ED 735, Band 12, "Potsdamer Kameradschaft: Blätter der Nationalpolitischen Erziehungsanstalt Potsdam," Jahrgang 3, Heft 2 (1. Oktober, 1942).

"The [German] Empire as the [new] hegemon of Europe."[131] Since political education and recruitment of Napola students often went hand-in-hand, SS officials increasingly oriented their talks around the wartime 'heroics' of the *Waffen-SS,* despite increasing military losses. On January 25, 1943, the NPEA Bensberg invited *SS-Obersturmführer* Teuteberg and *SS-Untersturmführer* Becher to hold a talk on the frontline activities of the *Waffen-SS* in front of upper-year students.[132] Desperate for young and highly educated officer candidates, *Waffen-SS* lecture series were a common sight in most Napolas after the war had decidedly turned against Nazi Germany on the Eastern Front. Otto Taschaukos, a student at the Napola in Spannheim, captured this development in his diary. On February 20, 1943, he noted that *Zugführer* Zentgraf, a wounded *Hauptscharführer* of the *Waffen-SS* stationed in Spannheim, was the substitute teacher for one of his history lessons. Zentgraf spent the lesson talking about the military progress on the Eastern Front, the experiences of the *SS-Panzer-Division* "*Das Reich*", and the battles in the Jelnia area of Russia.[133] On July 1, 1943, Tschauko's diary again made note of a visit by two badly wounded *Waffen-SS* veterans. The officers visited Spannheim as part of a larger "promotional tour" for the SS.[134]

Free choice of employment after graduation? Napola students courted by the SS

In an operational report prepared by the NPEA Potsdam-Neuzelle from March 1937, the authors included the following commentary on the relationship between

[131] IfZ München-Berlin, ED 735, Band 12, "Potsdamer Kameradschaft: Blätter der Nationalpolitischen Erziehungsanstalt Potsdam," Jahrgang 4, Heft 1 (1. April 1943).
[132] IfZ München-Berlin, ED 735, Band 7, "Die wichtigsten Daten aus dem Leben der NPEA Bensberg"
[133] IfZ München-Berlin, ED 735, Band 1, "Nationalpolitische Erziehungsanstalt Spannheim im Lavanttal: Die wichtigsten Daten aus dem Leben der Anstalt," 20. 2. 1943 – Samstag, 28.
[134] Ibid., 1. 7. 1943 – Donnerstag, 48-49.

Napolas and the SS: "The [intimate] relationship between the institute and the SS has manifested itself in the personage of Napola Inspector [August Heißmeyer], who in his role as *SS-Obergruppenführer* also manages the SS main office. According to his will, the work of the institutes should be permeated with the spirit of the SS."[135] The report contradicted Napola teachers' and administrators' testimonies after the war. Instead of safeguarding the Napolas' independence from interparty wrangling, the appointment of Heißmeyer had signaled a change of direction and trusteeship for the schools in favor of the SS. The single, most influential area of SS influence was marked by the introduction of career and recruitment services during the war. Napola students were confronted head-on with the possibility of joining the SS.

SS-sponsored guest speakers and seminars furthered the *Jungmannen*'s political education. They ensured that ideological training became an integral part of the Napolas' curriculum, particularly for upper-year students who were at an age where they were liable for compulsory military service. The limitations that were placed on *Waffen-SS* divisions' recruitment quotas forced Himmler to look for aspiring officers elsewhere. In 1939, the distribution of draftees (German men over the ages of 18) had been fixed at: Army 66 per cent, Navy 9 per cent, and *Luftwaffe* 25 per cent. Even after the rapid expansion of SS field units in 1939 and 1940, *Waffen-SS* recruitment was limited to a 2 per cent share during subsequent call-ups. The emphasis on racial selection and pre-military training at the Napolas allowed the SS to expand their recruitment pool for viable

[135] IfZ München-Berlin, ED 735, Band 13, "Nationalpolitische Erziehungsanstalt Potsdam-Neuzelle, Arbeitsbericht März 1938," 11, 34. The Napolas in Potsdam and Neuzelle became separate institutes after April 1, 1938. Both schools remained under the supervision of headmaster, *SS-Hauptsturmführer* Otto Calliebe.

officer candidates beyond the *SS-Junkerschulen*. The SS was of course not alone in its pursuit of Napola graduates. The *Wehrmacht* and the *Luftwaffe* rivaled, and in some cases, exceeded SS-recruitment efforts.

An officer career in Germany's *Wehrmacht* was highly sought after by German high school graduates. Bernhard Kroener notes that the officer's profession was held in high regard among the German civilian population at the beginning of World War II.[136] Kroener argues that "the feeling of belonging to a national élite" influenced 80 percent of all Napola graduates to enlist in the *Wehrmacht* as officer candidates.[137] Although we do not know the exact calculations behind Kroener's enlistment percentages, he correctly identifies the sway that service in Germany's regular armed forces held over German youth. In a memorandum prepared for Himmler, *SS-Gruppenführer* Berger blamed Napola students' preference for traditional military careers on "youthful perceptions."[138] Ideological zeal and the exaggerated physical selection criteria of the SS were unable to match the appeal of a military career in Germany's regular army. Yet, the late ascent of SS-armored divisions into military relevance amplified the presence of SS-recruitment officers inside the Napolas. Whereas the Supreme Command of the Armed Force (*Oberkommando der Wehrmacht,* OKW) could rely on a steady, legally mandated supply

[136] Bernhard Kroener, "Management of Human Resources, Deployment of the Population, and Manning the Armed Forces in the Second Half of the War (1942-1944)," in *Germany and the Second World War, Volume V: Organization and Mobilization of the German Sphere of Power*, Bernhard R. Kroener, Rolf Dieter Müller, and Hans Umbreit (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2003), 844.
[137] Ibid., 844.
[138] Ueberhorst, *Elite für die Diktatur*, 389.

of fresh recruits and draftees, the SS was forced to go to greater lengths to influence the *Jungmannen*'s career choices.[139]

Many postwar defendants claimed that the Napolas were state-sponsored boarding schools simply because their graduates were granted the right to free occupational choice before and during the war. According to Hans Eckardt, for example, all military branches including what apologists have coined the fourth branch of German armed forces, the *Waffen-SS*, were involved in the recruitment of Napola graduates.[140] Naturally, this led to the recruitment of some students into the SS. Eckardt insisted that the Napolas respected the democratic process and did not coerce students into choosing specific military careers. He also assured prosecutors that "most of the graduates wanted to attend university. Only in very rare instances did a student choose a career within the party [or its formations]."[141] In a sworn statement prepared by NPEA Oranienstein alumni Herbert Engemann, Heinz Eckhardt, and Karl Westermann, the defendants elaborated on the issue of career opportunities within the NSDAP. "We can testify with absolute certainty that no graduate from the graduating classes of 1935-43 chose a career of a leading Nazi official (*Politische Leiter*)."[142] Both testimonies concealed the truth about the *Jungmannen*'s career choices. Napola graduates embarked on different career paths after graduation. The

[139] Stein, *Waffen-SS,* 35.
[140] LHA Koblenz, 662, 008, Nationalpolitische Erziehungsanstalt Oranienstein, Sachakte 5, "Eidesstattliche Erklärung, Hans Eckardt, 7.12.1948."
[141] Ibid.
[142] LHA Koblenz, 662, 008, Nationalpolitische Erziehungsanstalt Oranienstein, Sachakte 5, "Eidesstattliche Erklärung, Herbert Engemann, Heinz Eckhardt, Karl Westermann, Deutsches Internierungslager Darmstadt, 12.5.1947." Political Leaders (*Politische Leiter*) were an elite group within the Nazi party. The International Military Tribunal at Nuremberg provided the following definition: "The *Politischen Leiter* comprised the leaders of the various functional offices of the Party (for example, the *Reichsleitung*, or Party Reich Directorate, and the *Gauleitung*, or Party Gau Directorate), as well as the territorial leaders of the Party (for example, the *Gauleiter*)." Yale Law School, Lillian Goldman Law Library, The Avalon Project: Documents in Law, History and Diplomacy, Nuremberg Trial Proceedings Vol.1, Indictment: Appendix B.

majority of students ended up in various military formations, including the *Waffen-SS*. It was, however, mathematically impossible for a large number of Napola graduates to gain entry into the ranks of some 200 000 leading Nazi functionaries.[143]

Chapter 2 showed that Nuremberg prosecutors did not condemn the entire NSDAP as a criminal organization. Instead, seven party organizations were singled out for prosecution. The Leadership Corps of the Nazi Party was among those. Napola defendants convinced the courts that the Napolas did not streamline students into careers as party functionaries. Aspirants for high-ranking, administrative functions within the party were trained at the *Reichsschule der NSDAP* in Feldafing and the German Labor Front's *Ordensburgen*. The other Nazi-era schools, including the Adolf Hitler Schools and the *SS-Junkerschulen*, had not possessed the enigmatic appearance of the Napolas. Their postwar conviction was a foregone conclusion. Napola defendants continued to incriminate these educational institutions because doing so deflected questions about the level of SS influence inside the Napolas.

Napola newsletters reported meticulously on the institutional ties between SS formations and Napolas. In addition to receiving SS guest lecturers to supplement the *Jungmannen*'s political education, some Napolas organized field trips to important SS training sites. For instance, on December 6, 1938, Napola students in Potsdam visited the *SS-Leibstandarte Adolf Hitler* in Lichterfelde.[144] On December 2, 1943, 40 *Jungmannen*

[143] Evans, *The Third Reich in Power*, 108-109.
[144] IfZ München-Berlin, ED 735, Band 12, "Potsdamer Kameradschaft: Blätter der Nationalpolitischen Erziehungsanstalt Potsdam," Jahrgang 1, Heft 1 (1940). The *Leibstandarte* took up residence in the buildings of the former Prussian cadet school headquarters (*Preußische Hauptkadettenanstalt*) in 1934. Its vicinity to the Napola in Potsdam allowed for regular exchanges and visits. Lichterfelde was also the site

from the Napola in Neuzelle travelled to the Austrian Alps and observed a *Waffen-SS* unit's training course.[145] Some Napolas rewarded their top students with exclusive trips to *Waffen-SS* garrisons. On July 13, 1943, the SS main office extended invitations to five Grade 8 students from the Napola in Bensberg. For five days, the students visited *Waffen-SS* facilities and training grounds in Prague.[146] On other occasions, Napola field trips included scheduled stops at SS sites. In February 1944, Grade 8 students from the NPEA Oranienstein enjoyed their annual ski trip to Germany's Alpine region. On their return to Oranienstein, the students visited the SS Riding School (*SS-Reitschule*) in Munich-Riem for two days.[147]

Napolas that were housed in historic buildings with spacious quarters to entertain large groups became popular travel destinations for student exchanges. Founded in 1934, the NPEA Oranienstein took up residence in a baroque castle on the Lahn River near Diez. The picturesque landscape surrounding the castle made it a welcome retreat for students, teachers, and visitors alike. From February 26-27, 1941, the institute hosted 260 SS leaders and *SS-Junker* from the *SS-Junkerschule* in Braunschweig.[148] As aspiring *Waffen-SS* officers, the *SS-Junker* had just returned from a battlefield tour in Belgium and France. To cap off their trip, the officer candidates visited Oranienstein and took part in the Napola's evening festivities. For those Napolas that were located in close proximity to

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for the SS-sponsored "midsummer games (*Sonnenwendkämpfe*)," which were regularly attended by *Jungmannen* stationed in and around Berlin.

[145] IfZ München-Berlin, ED 735, Band 13, 17. Kriegsbrief der NPEA Neuzelle (März 1944).

[146] IfZ München-Berlin, ED 735, Band 7, "Die wichtigsten Daten aus dem Leben der NPEA Bensberg."

[147] LHA Koblenz, 662, 008, Nationalpolitische Erziehungsanstalt Oranienstein, 2, "Der Jungmann," 11. Kriegsnummer (Mai 1944).

[148] LHA Koblenz, 662, 008, Nationalpolitische Erziehungsanstalt Oranienstein, 2, "Der Jungmann," 6. Kriegsnummer (Juli 1941).

Nazi Germany's political centers, the schools even hosted foreign dignitaries. In the summer of 1942, the Napola in Potsdam documented three separate visits by Finish, Japanese, and Norwegian delegations.[149]

In addition to mutual visits, the *Jungmannen*'s service in SS- and *Waffen-SS* formations strengthened the Napolas' ties to the SS. One recurring argument in many postwar testimonies was that Himmler failed to attract a substantial number of Napola graduates for combat units of the SS.[150] Many Napola defendants either directly quoted or echoed the testimony of Kurt Petter, the head of the Adolf Hitler Schools and deputy to Reich Youth Leader Arthur Axmann. According to Petter, less than 20 per cent of all Napola graduates chose a career with the *Waffen-SS* during the war.[151] Poor recruitment even fueled speculation that Himmler intended to sack Heißmeyer toward the end of the war.[152] We do not have reliable evidence to verify the standard 20 percent enlistment rate claimed by most Napola staff and students in the postwar era. For example, the history of the NPEA Berlin-Spandau claimed that 20 per cent of all graduates from the 1939 class chose careers as officers and SS-leaders.[153] In a separate table titled "Selection of *Wehrmacht* branches 1940," the author also indicated that only 10 per cent of those *Jungmannen* who enlisted in Germany's armed forces selected the *Waffen-SS*.[154]

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[149] IfZ München-Berlin, ED 735, Band 12, "Potsdamer Kameradschaft: Blätter der Nationalpolitischen Erziehungsanstalt Potsdam," Jahrgang 3, Heft 2 (1.10.1942).
[150] George H. Stein notes that the designation *'Waffen-SS*' was not commonly used until 1940. Stein, *Waffen-SS,* xxx.
[151] LHA Koblenz, 662, 008, Nationalpolitische Erziehungsanstalt Oranienstein, Sachakte 5, "Eidesstattliche Erklärung, Kurt Petter, 12.2. 1947."
[152] Ibid.
[153] LHA Koblenz, 662, 008, Nationalpolitische Erziehungsanstalt Oranienstein, Sachakte 5, "Die Nationalpolitischen Erziehungsanstalten," 11. Freie Berufswahl.
[154] Ibid. Please note that the author counted the *Waffen-SS* as the fourth *Wehrmacht* branch.

Considering that some defendants, including *Anstaltsleiter* Eckardt, denied any SS-recruitment presence inside the schools, any successful recruitment could seemingly have been enough to force a conviction. Ultimately, however, 20 per cent proved to be insufficient evidence for the prosecution for two primary reasons. The 'all or nothing approach' of postwar denazification trials stacked the deck against prosecutors. Unlike the *SS-Junkerschulen*, the Napolas did not send a majority of graduates on for future employment or service in SS-formations. Secondly, a recruitment rate of 20 per cent quelled suspicions regarding the Napolas' emphasis on free choice of employment. While 20 per cent was considerably higher than the national recruitment average, it signified, at least on paper, that there were a variety of career paths open to Napola graduates.

Nonetheless, the recruitment rates referenced by Kroener and Petter require closer scrutiny. Since Napola students' vocational choices between 1933 and 1945 cannot be accurately reconstructed, we must look for clues about the *Jungmannen*'s career and military service records after graduation in the pages of the schools' newsletters, event and work reports. For instance, 31 students graduated from the Napolas in Potsdam and Neuzelle in 1937.[155] Out of the 31 students listed in the report, only four enlisted in the *Waffen-SS*. Two students joined the *SS-Leibstandarte Adolf Hitler*. The other two graduates joined the *SS-Standarte Deutschland* and the SS Pioneer Battalion "Dresden."[156] Generally speaking, an enlistment rate of 13 per cent in 1937 can hardly be considered dramatic. George H. Stein demonstrates that prior to the events of the

[155] IfZ München-Berlin, ED 735, Band 13, "Nationalpolitische Erziehungsanstalt Potsdam-Neuzelle, Arbeitsbericht März 1937."
[156] Ibid.

Blomberg-Fritsch affair in the early months of 1938, the position of the armed SS was still far from certain. A Fuehrer decree had not legitimized the *SS-Verfügungstruppen* and the *SS-Totenkopfverbände* as organizations in the service of the state until April 1, 1936. A number of high-ranking *Wehrmacht* generals strongly opposed the establishment of SS field units and hindered their supply of equipment and recruits.[157] To compensate for the units' lack of resources and public resonance, Himmler only selected men who complied with the most rigid physical and racial standards. Stein notes that members of the *SS-Leibstandarte* had to be at least five feet, eleven inches tall, while the minimum height of others units was one inch below that.[158] Although the Napolas had institutionalized a rigorous admission process of their own, the total devotion to Aryan ancestry, physical fitness and ideological conviction discouraged many Napola graduates from joining armed SS units well before the war.

The reputation of the prewar *Waffen-SS* began to improve in 1937. The *Wehrmacht*'s field-gray service uniforms were adopted. Moreover, the three core regiments of the *SS-Verfügungstruppe*, '*Deutschland'*, '*Germania',* and *SS-Leibstandarte Adolf Hitler* were nearing combat-readiness.[159] According to Ian Kershaw, the dismissals of War Minister Werner von Blomberg and Commander-in-Chief General Werner von Fritsch cemented Hitler's absolute power and "quite especially, his dominance over the army."[160] The Führer Decree of August 17, 1938 confirms this observation. Hitler ordered

[157] Stein, *Waffen-SS*, 9,11. Hitler had initially revealed his intention to form the *SS-Verfügungstruppe* on March 16, 1935. On the same day, he also announced to the *Reichstag* that Germany was re-introducing military conscription.
[158] Ibid., 12.
[159] Ibid., 12.
[160] Ian Kershaw, *Hitler, 1936-45: Nemesis* (London: Penguin Books, 2001), 60.

all *SS-Verfügungstruppen, SS-Junkerschulen*, and the *SS-Totenkopfverbände* (and its reserve units) to be armed and trained as military formations for use in the wartime army.[161] Nine days later, a legislative change also mandated that members of the *SS-Verfügungstruppe* were to receive pay and allotments according to *Wehrmacht* pay regulations.[162]

The years following the remilitarization of the Rhineland witnessed a gradual blurring of the differences between *Wehrmacht* and SS units. The *Waffen-SS* gained public recognition for its role in the annexation of Austria and the Sudetenland occupation in 1938. On the eve of war, *Jungmannen* were increasingly drawn to the organization's elite character and level of individual training that was superior to that of regular army units. For those Napolas with graduating classes, the rising popularity and prestige of the armed SS affected the *Jungmannen*'s career choices. In 1939, twenty-eight Grade 12 students graduated from the Napola in Oranienstein.[163] A total of 23 students chose military careers. 10 were mobilized as officer candidates for Nazi Germany's army, air force, and navy. The remaining 11 *Jungmannen* joined various armed SS formations. In other words, 48 per cent of Oranienstein's graduates from 1939 were conscripted into the *Waffen-SS*; a recruitment rate more than twice as high as stated in Petter's testimony.

Within months of the *Jungmannen*'s departure, the next Oranienstein class was called up for military service. Aided by the introduction of the so-called *Notabitur* or *Kriegsabitur* (an accelerated school-leaving certificate in time of war) in September 1939,

[161] Stein, *Waffen-SS*, 12.
[162] Ibid.
[163] LHA Koblenz, 662, 008, Nationalpolitische Erziehungsanstalt Oranienstein, Sachakte 2, "Der Jungmann," 1. Kriegsnummer (Dezember 1939), Anstaltsnachrichten. The graduation ceremony for this particular grade (*Zug* II/8) took place on November 17, 1939.

seventeen Grade 11 students enlisted.[164] A total of 11 *Jungmannen* (65 per cent) decided to serve in the *SS-Standarte Deutschland*.[165] It is difficult to isolate a single driving force behind the exponential increase of enlistment rates in Oranienstein between September 1939 and February 1940. Apart from the school's amicable relationship with the SS prior to the outbreak of war, the *Jungmannnen* joined the *Waffen-SS* for a number of different reasons: the allure of serving in Hitler's personal army, the gradual professionalization of its officer corps, and the integration of armed SS units into regular army operations during the invasions of Poland and France. Moreover, Napola students of pre-draft age could be released from compulsory labor service if they accepted long-term enlistments in the field units of the SS.[166]

Ultimately, we can only speculate as to what drove individual *Jungmannen* toward the SS. Subsequent editions of "*Der Jungmann*," Oranienstein's alumni-funded newsletter, reported on the front experiences of former students and teachers. Yet comprehensive class lists that broke down the graduates' individual career choices were never printed again. Most Napola print media did not share details about the career choices of their graduation classes during the war. Instead, each newsletter compiled letters and reports by conscripted alumni to inform concerned family and friends of their whereabouts. News about the *Jungmannen*'s wartime experiences sometimes reached the institutes in different ways. Students on leave visited their Alma Mater and brought back

[164] LHA Koblenz, 662, 008, Nationalpolitische Erziehungsanstalt Oranienstein, Sachakte 2, "Der Jungmann," 2. Kriegsnummer (Januar 1940), Anstaltsnachrichten.
[165] Ibid. Following the end of the Poland campaign on October 6, 1939, the *SS-Verfügungstruppen* were reorganized. The regiments *SS-Standarte Deutschland*, *Germania,* and *Der Führer* were brought together to form the new *SS-Verfügungsdivision.* Stein, *Waffen-SS*, 32.
[166] Stein, *Waffen-SS*, 43.

stories from the front. Others met on the battlefields of Europe and Africa and shared accounts of their encounters with the schools.[167] As the war progressed and death tolls increased, the printing of obituary notices served as the final source of information about the *Jungmannen*'s occupational choices.[168]

Denazification courts could have used the schools' newsletters to try individual cases. If prosecutors could have afforded the time and money to dig deeper, they would have found sufficient evidence to identify and convict individual members of the Napola community. For instance, Herbert Engemann's testimony regarding the *Jungmannen*'s refusal to embark on a career path within the NSDAP's Leadership Corps omitted several important pieces of information. The sworn statement, which he submitted together with Eckhardt and Westermann in 1947, simply described himself as a former student at the NPEA Oranienstein between 1936 and 1940.[169] The school's newsletters, however, told a different story. Engemann was one of eleven Grade 11 students who joined the *SS-Standarte Deutschland* in 1939/40. Several of Engemann's classmates, who also served in SS formations, reported meeting him on the Eastern Front. Summaries of their encounters were reprinted in the 7th and 8th edition of the school's wartime reports.[170] On March 1, 1943, Dr. Fritz Roth, the editor of "*Der Jungmann*" now in its 9th edition, included an extensive overview of the *Jungmannen*'s current whereabouts. Engemann's entry

[167] See LHA Koblenz, 662, 008, Nationalpolitische Erziehungsanstalt Oranienstein, 2, "Der Jungmann," Kriegsnummer 1-11, "Oraniensteiner trafen sich" oder "Kurzmeldungen von Draußen."
[168] The death of former Napola students, who served in the SS, brought the schools and the SS into direct contact with one another. Members from both institutions attended the deceased's memorial services (*Heldengedenkfeiern*).
[169] LHA Koblenz, 662, 008, Nationalpolitische Erziehungsanstalt Oranienstein, Sachakte 5, "Eidesstattliche Erklärung, Herbert Engemann, Heinz Eckhardt, Karl Westermann, Deutsches Internierungslager Darmstadt, 12.5.1947."
[170] LHA Koblenz, 662, 008, Nationalpolitische Erziehungsanstalt Oranienstein, Sachakte 2, "Der Jungmann," Kriegsnummer 7-8.

provides the following information: "Engemann was moved to the Western Front last fall. He refuses to talk! He has returned to service on the Eastern Front since January."[171] Despite his refusal to talk, the trail of information did not go cold in 1943. In May 1944, readers learned that Engemann had been promoted to *SS-Untersturmführer*.[172]

In comparison to some of his more outspoken classmates, Engemann enjoyed a rather inconspicuous presence in the reports. Yet, the available evidence incriminated him as a member of the *Waffen-SS* who had served the majority of the war on the Eastern Front. The details of Engemann's service record beg the following commentary. Firstly, denazification authorities should have rejected Engemann's sworn statement as inadmissible evidence. His former role in an outlawed Nazi organization facing prosecution, disqualified him as a witness on the grounds of conflict of interest. It is likely, therefore, that Engemann denounced the career path of a political leader to divert attention from his own SS membership. Secondly, trials by summary proceedings during the early stages of denazification did not require such attention to detail. Charges were leveled against the Napola system as a whole. Without a formal investigation into the recruitment history of a specific Napola institute, the newsletters' qualitative evidence was too circumstantial to substantiate accusations. Comprehensive class lists were a rarity. After tribunals started hearing individual Napola cases, the prosecution lacked the resources, manpower and time to conduct in-depth research into the *Jungmannen*'s careers over the course of the war.

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[171] LHA Koblenz, 662, 008, Nationalpolitische Erziehungsanstalt Oranienstein, 2, "Der Jungmann," 9. Kriegsnummer (März 1943), 72.

[172] LHA Koblenz, 662, 008, Nationalpolitische Erziehungsanstalt Oranienstein, Sachakte 2, "Der Jungmann," 11. Kriegsnummer (Mai 1944), 14.

Regardless of the evidence about Oranienstein's 1939 and 1940 graduation classes, the SS leadership was not satisfied with the supply of young, qualified recruits into the *Waffen-SS* in the opening months of the war. Bernd Wegner argues that difficulties recruiting a sufficient number of officer candidates had plagued the SS since 1936.[173] The majority of aspiring officers from the *SS-Junkerschulen* in Bad Tölz and Braunschweig chose not to serve in the armed SS. Their lack of formal education made them unsuitable prospects for senior military commands. By the end of 1936, only one-third of the *Junkerschulen*'s graduates were conscripted into the *SS-Verfügungstruppe*. In 1937, the number of recruits dropped further to 27.6 per cent. Most *Junker* graduates joined the police, SD, or various SS offices, most notably the SS Race and Settlement Office. Despite Himmler's efforts to militarize the entire SS-apparatus, Wegner believes that recruitment shortages continued into 1938.[174]

Since the officer corps of the prewar *SS-Verfügungstruppe* was only a few hundred strong, the shortage of officer candidates did not become critical until the exponential expansion of SS field units in 1939 and 1940. The establishment of the *Waffen-SS* Recruiting Office on December 1, 1939, under the leadership of *SS-Brigadeführer* Gottlob Berger, was unable the break the *Wehrmacht*'s monopoly over draft eligible high school graduates.[175] Himmler and Berger were able to establish a reserve pool for the *Waffen-SS* by mobilizing personnel from the *SS-Totenkopfverbände*.

[173] Wegner, *Hitlers Politische Soldaten*, 143.
[174] Ibid., 143.
[175] SS recruiting stations (*SS-Ergänzungsstellen*) were established in each of the 17 SS-districts, which were coterminous with the military districts of the *Wehrmacht*. Stein, *Waffen-SS*, 36.

As the war continued, the SS recruited ethnic Germans from German-occupied areas into SS field units.[176]

Yet the lack of *Abiturienten* (secondary school graduates who attained the diploma required for admission to university studies) reached a critical level by the end of 1940. The highly coveted officer career in Germany's regular army depended on the applicant's social status and level of education. The completion of a higher secondary school diploma was a mandatory prerequisite for all officer candidates. This also became true for the armed SS after 1939. The prewar *SS-Verfügungstruppe* saw itself as an equal opportunity employer. While small in numbers, Himmler only selected recruits of 'impeccable racial value,' notwithstanding their social backgrounds. Rigorous training ensured that the prewar *Waffen-SS* officer corps was able to match the skills of its cohort in the regular army. After the Poland campaign in 1939, the militarization of the SS was intensified. The exponential increase of SS combat units drove up the demand for additional officer candidates. Since time was no longer on his side, Himmler realized that racial standards and grueling training alone could not produce enough good officers, doctors, or engineers for the SS. The SS dropped its façade of anti-intellectualism and began to lure highly educated students away from the *Wehrmacht*. The position of the SS officer applicant (*SS-Führerbewerber*) was institutionalized by the SS main office and marketed towards Napola graduates, political leaders from the party, and Hitler Youth leaders. Later, the pool of eligible applicants also included recruits from the General SS,

[176] Stein, *Waffen-SS*, 45-46.

SA, NSKK, and RAD.[177] Successful applicants had to complete a preparatory course with a training and replacement unit of the *Waffen-SS*. On completion, the young man subsequently received the title of *SS-Junker* (the equivalent of a *SS-Unterscharführer*) and attended officer candidate courses at one of four *SS-Junkerschulen*.[178]

Despite the diversification of recruitment channels, the SS could not keep up with the ever-growing demand for more officer candidates. In 1943, the situation reached such a dire state that Heißmeyer decided to increase the presence of SS recruiters inside the Napolas. On April 1, 1943, the following announcement was reprinted in the NPEA Potsdam's newsletter: "By order of *SS-Obergruppenführer* Heißmeyer as Inspector of the Napolas, a new opportunity for education and career information services has been created inside his office, the *Dienststelle SS-Obergruppenführer Heißmeyer*. This agency shall not only be available to the *Jungmannen* of the Napolas, but also for all *Altkameraden* [former Napola students and educators]."[179] By offering career counseling sessions, Heißmeyer hoped to sway the students' career choices in favor of the SS. The fact that Heißmeyer's office also targeted former students, the majority of whom seemed to have served in *Wehrmacht* units at the time of the announcement, spoke to Himmler's growing position. On the other hand, it could also be seen as a desperate measure to replenish a severely depleted and underqualified *Waffen-SS* officer corps.

Very few items from Heißmeyer's personal correspondence with high-ranking SS leaders found their way into archival holdings after the war. Fortunately, Heißmeyer's

[177] Wegner, *Hitlers Politische Soldaten*, 144.
[178] Der Reichsorganisationsleiter der NSDAP, *Organisationsbuch der NSDAP*, 216.
[179] IfZ München-Berlin, ED 735, Band 12, "Potsdamer Kameradschaft: Blätter der Nationalpolitischen Erziehungsanstalt Potsdam," Jahrgang 4, Heft 1. (1. 4.1941).

letter to *SS-Obersturmbannführer* Dr. Brandt, a member of the Himmler's personal staff, survived the Allied bombing campaign and the Nazis' purge of confidential documents.[180] Dated January 17, 1944, Heißmeyer reported to Himmler on the progress of his career counseling services. Between November 28 and December 10, 1943, members of his office had travelled to Napolas located in the Danube and Alpine regions, and Bavaria.[181] With the assistance of officials from local SS recruiting stations, the career advisors visited the institutes and spoke to the *Jungmannen* about career opportunities with the *Waffen-SS*. Upon their return to Berlin, an SS official proudly presented the following recruitment numbers as part of a five-page report to Heißmeyer. Out of 267 interviewed students, 144 (53.9 per cent) decided to join the *Waffen-SS*. Only a combined 36.3 per cent of students expressed interest in careers with the army, air force, or navy.[182] The report highlighted that the "result of 53.9 per cent represented a significant improvement over previous years."[183] In 1942, one year prior to the establishment of the Napolas' career counseling services, only 11% of Napola pupils had decided in favor of the *Waffen-SS*. After members of Heißmeyer's *Dienststelle* completed their first tour to Napolas in Bavaria, Austria, and the Sudetenland at the end of the 1942/43 school year, the recruitment percentage improved to 20-25%.

[180] BA Berlin, R 187 Sammlung Schumacher, R 187/270b, Nationalpolitische Erziehungsanstalten (1934-45), Schreiben Heißmeyers an SS-Obersturmbannführer Dr. Brandt, 17.1.1944.
[181] With the exception of the NPEA Traiskirchen (Austria), no other Napola institute was specifically mentioned in the report. Considering that the report also mentioned Napolas in the Danube and Alpine regions, it seems likely that the counselors visited Napolas in Ploschkowitz (NPEA Sudetenland), Sekau, Vorau, Spannheim, Lambach, Sankt Veit, and Neubeuern. BA Berlin, R 187 Sammlung Schumacher, R 187/270b, Nationalpolitische Erziehungsanstalten (1934-45), "Bericht über die Studien- und Berufsberatung an den Nationalpolitischen Erziehungsanstalten."
[182] Ibid., 2.
[183] Ibid., 2.

In essence, the report suggested that the introduction of career counseling services at Napolas in the southern parts of the Reich had increased recruitment of Napola pupils into the SS by nearly 43% in a matter of two years. Its findings let Heißmeyer believe that he had found the answer to SS manpower shortages. He confidently asked Brandt to deliver the good news to Himmler.[184] What Heißmeyer conveniently chose to ignore was that the majority of interviewed students was attending Grade 9 at the time of the career advisors' visit in the fall of 1943. Since these Napola pupils were not eligible for military service for at least another 2-3 years, career counseling did not offer a short-term fix for Himmler's recruitment issues. Yet that did not stop Heißmeyer and his staff of committed SS ideologues from forcing minors into preliminary agreements with the SS.

Overall, the work of the *Dienststelle August Heißmeyer* and its direct influence on Napola students' career choices solidified the institutional ties between the Napolas and the SS in the final years of the war. The combination of visiting guest lecturers, school trips to SS facilities, and on-site career counseling sessions likely convinced young and highly impressionable teenagers to choose careers with the SS. Napola officials even urged the *Waffen-SS* Recruiting Office to publish illustrated books about the adventures of highly decorated *Waffen-SS* soldiers. These texts could undermine the appeal of Nazi Germany's regular armed forces among Napola pupils.[185] Moreover, the SS promised future employment and added benefits in the General SS to former Napola pupils, who

[184] BA Berlin, R 187 Sammlung Schumacher, R 187/270b, Nationalpolitische Erziehungsanstalten (1934-45), Schreiben Heißmeyers an SS-Obersturmbannführer Dr. Brandt, 17.1.1944.
[185] Berlin, R 187 Sammlung Schumacher, R 187/270b, Nationalpolitische Erziehungsanstalten (1934-45), "Bericht über die Studien- und Berufsberatung an den Nationalpolitischen Erziehungsanstalten."

had decided against joining the SS after graduation.[186] This showed Himmler's willingness to retroactively improve recruitment rates from previous years.

In conclusion, the Napolas should not be exonerated from charges that they served as SS preparatory schools. Members of the Napolas' inspectorate, Heißmeyer's *Dienststelle,* as well as teachers from select Napola institutes promoted the fusion of the schools with Himmler's SS. Investigations into Heißmeyer's life, the inspectorate's budgetary policies, and the influence of the SS on the *Jungmannen*'s political education and career choices shed light on some of the ties that were formed between the two institutions after 1936. Realizing that the rapid expansion of armed SS units, the prewar *SS-Verfügungstruppen*, would require a steady supply of well-educated and physically able officer candidates, Himmler began to make his mark on Germany's secondary school system. The appointment of Heißmeyer as Napola inspector in 1936 resulted in a gradual increase in the SS presence at the most well-known and earliest Napola establishments, such as Oranienstein, Potsdam, and Berlin-Spandau. Under Heißmeyer's and Himmler's guardianships, some Napola institutes systematically prepared their students for service in the General SS and *Waffen-SS*. The creation of the first *SS-Junkerschule* in Bad Tölz in

[186]As manpower shortages grew during the war, the SS had to resort to greater blandishments to recruit new members. Several welfare agencies within the SS Race and Settlement Office had looked after the livelihood and health of SS members and their families long before the outbreak of war. All welfare activities were financed from the private funds of the SS. Yet there is a paucity of information on the subject of SS financial benefits. Götz Aly's *Hitler's Beneficiaries* does not treat the SS separately from the Wehrmacht in its discussion of the benefits to the Germans of the racial war and plunder. Peter Longerich's biography of Himmler briefly discusses Himmler's willingness to ease the financial difficulties his subordinates found themselves in. In some ways, Heinz Höhne's classic work on the SS remains the most illuminating because it examines what drew recruits to the SS in the 1930s. Götz Aly, *Hitler's Beneficiaries: Plunder, Racial War, and the Nazi Welfare State*, trans. Jefferson Chase (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2005), Peter Longerich, *Heinrich Himmler,* trans. Jeremy Noakes and Lesley Sharpe (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 324-328; Heinz Höhne, *The Order of the Death's Head: The Story of Hitler's* SS, trans. Richard Barry (New York: Penguin Books, 2000), 133-160.

1937 gave Napola students access to a network of officers' training schools after graduation. Due to the war, partnerships between select Napola institutes and the SS primarily served to satisfy the recruitment needs of the *Waffen-SS*. The reason why the Napolas appealed to Himmler was their emphases on racial purity, pre-military training, and political education. Rather than found his own secondary school system, Himmler commissioned Heißmeyer, his education expert, to infiltrate the Napola administration and turn some of its schools into full-fledged SS preparatory schools.

Since many *Jungmannen*, who joined the SS and *Waffen-SS* after 1936, died during World War II, the following chapter will concentrate on those students who were too young for conscription. Heißmeyer insisted that the Napolas' recruitment methods had paid dividends in battle. On March 9, 1944, he reminded Himmler of the many Napola alumni who had been awarded the Knight's Cross (*Ritterkreuz*), the German Cross (*Deutsche Kreuz*), and other military accolades over the course of the war. He also mentioned that 1226 Napola graduates died or were missing in the service of the Nazi regime.[187] Chapter 4 will juxtapose these images of bravery and zealotry with a more sobering view of daily life at a Napola during wartime. A case study of the Napola am Donnersberg, located in Germany's Palatinate, will demonstrate that some pupils succumbed to the pressures of a Napola education. Poor academic and athletic performances forced these students to transfer to public schools. Those who withstood the trials of the war as Nazi elite students faced new challenges after the collapse of the Third Reich. Due to the Napolas' ties to the SS, the Napola am Donnersberg was confiscated

[187] Berlin, R 187 Sammlung Schumacher, R 187/270b, Nationalpolitische Erziehungsanstalten (1934-45), Schreiben Heißmeyers an den Reichsführer-SS, Berlin-Spandau, 9.3.1944.

by Allied soldiers in 1945. Its students were denied access to higher education by French occupation authorities. Chapter 4 will shed light upon the early postwar restrictions that former Napola am Donnersberg pupils faced in the French occupation zone. It will also examine the efforts of community members to overturn the military requisition of the former Napola by introducing new, Christian elements to the Napolas' postwar legend.

Chapter 4: The Napola am Donnersberg

Introduction

Chapter 1 demonstrated that Nazi empire builders utilized schools and education to bring Aryan children into the racial community. During the war, the regime's Germanization mission overshadowed educational policy in contested borderland regions. In contrast, Napolas that enjoyed the relative safety of the Altreich's countryside facilitated regular learning for students well into 1944 and in some instances into the first half of 1945. While the institutes at Potsdam, Plön, Köslin, Berlin-Spandau, Oranienstein, Bensberg, Backnang and Schulpforta count among the most frequently studied examples, this chapter sheds light on a lesser-known school, the Napola am Donnersberg. This Napola was founded in 1941 at the height of Nazi Germany's military successes. Nestled in the commune of Weierhof, in what is now the German state of Rhineland-Palatinate, the school was a short distance away from Kaiserslautern, Mainz, and Frankfurt.

Apart from its rural location and late founding date, the school presents an intriguing case study for several reasons. For one, I enjoyed unique access to the former Napola's archival holdings, which are housed on-site. The original Napola buildings are still in use today and house a day- and boarding school that draws students from all over Germany. I also established contact with surviving members of the Napola am Donnersberg's alumni association. Their eyewitness testimonies add depth to this chapter's discussions of the everyday lives of Napola students before and after the collapse of the Nazi regime. Secondly, the institute in Weierhof was the only Napola to house a different Nazi elite school prior to its opening in 1941. The *Gau-Oberschule*

Donnersberg, a party-sponsored boarding school, had operated on the Napola's premises between 1936 and 1941. A comparison between the two boarding schools demonstrates that the Napola's education and training programs were far more strict than the *Gau-Oberschule*'s. Thirdly, when U.S. soldiers occupied the Palatinate in the spring of 1945, they classified the Napola am Donnersberg as a SS-preparatory school and confiscated the property.[1] After the ratification of the Potsdam Agreement, the French and U.S. militaries took turns using the former Napola institute as barracks for their men. After a protracted legal battle that included personal appeals to President Dwight D. Eisenhower, the property was returned to the school's not-for-profit association, the *Verein für die Anstalt am Donnersberg*, on December 10, 1958.[2] The tug of war over the site demonstrated that the postwar myth that exonerated the schools between 1945 and 1949 took on different forms in the 1950s.

This chapter is divided into three chronological parts. Each part deepens the conclusions drawn from previous chapters through the prism of the Napola am Donnersberg and its pupils. Nazi officials promoted the Napolas as a cohesive school system during the Third Reich. Similarly, Allied prosecutors did not pay much heed to institutional differences during denazification. Yet the Napolas were not all the same. Each institute possessed unique characteristics and traditions that endured from their

[1] Gymnasium Weierhof am Donnersberg: Privates Archiv, Bolanden, Rheinland-Pfalz, Verein für die Anstalt am Donnersberg, 1951, 1955-1957, Freimachung (Schriftwechsel), Verein für die Anstalt am Donnersberg in Weierhof b. Marnheim e.V. an die hierfür zuständige amerikanische Regierungs-Dienststelle in Washington/USA, Pentagon, "Betreff: Freigabe unseres seit 1945 beschlagnahmten Landschulheim-Anwesens Realanstalt am Donnersberg in Weierhof," November 1956.
[2] Gymnasium Weierhof am Donnersberg: Privates Archiv, Bolanden, Rheinland-Pfalz, *Nationalpolitische Erziehungsanstalt am Donnersberg: Kriegsende des 4. Zugs*, 5.

previous origins, at least for a period of time, after their transformation into Napolas.[3] The first part of this chapter will demonstrate that the initial resemblance between the *Gau-Oberschule* and Napola was so striking that former pupils could not pinpoint the exact founding date of the latter after the war. While the transition from a *Gau-Oberschule* to a Napola was characterized by a high degree of continuity, Napola officials gradually introduced a stricter recruitment and physical training regimen. A detailed analysis of Napola am Donnersberg student dossiers reveals that some *Jungmannen* could not cope with the physical and emotional demands of a Napola education during wartime. They left the Napola am Donnersberg in favor of schools where the military climate was less intense. While my findings are limited to this one school, they may also apply to other Napolas. This first section also suggests that the number of Napola attendees – former *Jungmannen* who did not complete their secondary school diploma at a Napola – may have outnumbered substantially those who graduated. Low retention rates prove that policymakers enforced the racial exclusivity of the schools late into the war years. It shows that the regime was serious about its proclaimed aim of developing a racial community with Napola graduates at its helm.

The second part of this chapter will examine the *Verein für die Anstalt am Donnersberg*'s efforts to secure the release of the Weierhof property from French and U.S. authorities after the war. The association was founded in 1867 and was charged with the task of upholding Mennonite traditions in the newly founded school at Weierhof. In

[3] Helen Roche will explore the diversity within unity exhibited by individual schools in her forthcoming publication on the Napolas. Helen Roche, *The Third Reich's Elite Schools: A history of the Napolas* (forthcoming from Oxford University Press).

1907, it began to accept non-Mennonite members to serve on its board. By the time the school was converted into a *Gau-Oberschule* in 1936 and the association's membership was dissolved, the majority of members were not Mennonites. Between 1936 and 1945, only a small board of trustees continued to represent the school association in an informal capacity. The body was not officially reconstituted until February 26, 1948.[4] Since the school association was listed as the principal owner of the *Realanstalt am Donnersberg* prior to the school's appropriation by Nazi authorities in 1936, individual members were legally barred from becoming plaintiffs in the court case. As soon as the school association regained its legal status as a registered society (*eingetragener Verein, e.V.*) twelve years later, efforts to secure the release of the school started to take shape.[5]

In their efforts to regain the school, the school association subscribed to the Napolas' postwar legend. However, the fact that the site had held two separate Nazi elite schools made it substantially more complicated to claim that the Napola am Donnersberg had not been a site of Nazi indoctrination. The buildings service as strategically important barracks for the French and U.S. militaries after the war also meant that restitution claims fell on deaf ears. However, the changing international climate presented the school association with an unprecedented opportunity. In the midst of building their case against French and U.S. occupation authorities, the Bonn Republic was founded on May 23, 1949. One year later the outbreak of the Korean War resulted in West Germany's

[4] Wagner, "Aus weltanschaulichen Gründen besonders bekämpft und gehaßt?," 143.
[5] The Weierhof not-for-profit association continues to exist today. It has 180 employees and over 300 members.

rearmament by the Truman administration.[6] The partial restoration of West Germany's sovereignty enabled a change of rhetoric in the association's legal strategy. Starting in the early 1950s, the school association began to combine elements from the Napolas' postwar defense with tales of religious persecution. It enlisted the help of West Germany's Christian Democratic government and Christian supporters in the United States by putting its and the school's Mennonite past front and center.[7] Although historians have demonstrated that German Mennonites had fared far better than Mennonite minorities in Nazi-occupied territories, the school association constructed a narrative of victimhood that secured the school's release in 1958.[8] This case study shows that efforts to disassociate the Napolas from the SS and the Nazi past more generally continued into the

[6] For more information about West Germany's rearmament and its integration into the Western military alliance system, see Dieter Krieger, *Das Amt Blank: Die schwierige Gründung des Bundesministeriums für Verteidigung* (Freiburg: Rombach, 1993), David Clay Large, *Germans to the Front: West German Rearmament in the Adenauer Era* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1996), Wolfgang Krüger, *Adenauer und die Wiederbewaffnung* (Bonn: Bouvier, 2000), Steven L. Rearden, "The Dilemmas of Dual Containment: Germany as a Security Problem, 1945-1950," in ed. Detlef Junker, *The United States and Germany in the Era of the Cold War, 1945-1990: A Handbook,* Vol. 1 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 204-208.

[7] For more information about the role of Christianity in West German society and the development of the Christian Democratic Union (*Christliche Demokratische Union Deutschlands*, CDU) after World War II, see Geoffrey Pridham, *Christian Democracy in Western Germany: The CDU/CSU in Government and Opposition 1945-1976* (London: Croom Helm, 1977), Noel D. Cary, *The Path to Christian Democracy: German Catholics and the Party System from Windthorst to Adenauer* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1996), Maria D. Mitchell, *The Origins of Christian Democracy: Politics and Confession in Modern Germany* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2012).

[8] Historians have shown that Mennonite communities survived the Third Reich's *Gleichschaltung* policies relatively unharmed. Generally speaking, the relationship between Mennonites and the regime has been characterized as one of peaceful coexistence. Mennonites rarely criticized or resisted the politics of the regime. Mennonite newspapers ignored the fate of Jewish victims. After the war, German Mennonites suppressed the Nazi past, or inserted themselves into tales of persecution suffered by French and Dutch Mennonites. For more information about the history of the Protestant free churches (*Freikirchen*) during the Third Reich, and German Mennonites' selective memories in the postwar period, see Hans-Jürgen Goertz, "Nationale Erhebung und religiöser Niedgergang. Mißglückte Aneignung des täuferischen Leitbildes im Dritten Reich," in ed. Hans-Jürgen Goertz, *Umstrittenes Täufertum, 1525-1975: Neue Forschungen* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1975), Diether Götz Lichdi, *Die Mennoniten im Dritten Reich: Dokumentation und Deutung* (Weierhof: Mennonitischer Geschichtsverein, 1977); James Irvin Lichti, *Houses on the sand? Pacifist denominations in Nazi Germany* (New York: Peter Lang, 2008).

1950s. Uneven confrontations with the Nazi past, a hallmark of the Adenauer years, resulted in Heißmeyer's pardoning in 1951 (as discussed in Chapter 3) and the reopening of the former Napola am Donnersberg as a secondary school in 1959. The school association's legal case also illustrates that the Napolas' postwar legend did not remain static. It evolved according to political and local circumstances.

Most recently, reunification has prompted a new wave of renegotiations with the Nazi past. Former Napola students have felt able to come forward and speak for the first time positively and publicly about their experiences, thanks to a growing openness since reunification to remember the past without shame. In the mid- to late 1990s, Christian Schneider and Johannes Leeb gave the Napolas' postwar legend new life by providing former Napola pupils with a platform to highlight the perceived advantages of a Napola education after the end of the Nazi dictatorship.[9] Schneider and his team of sociologists argued that the Napolas' postwar legacies can be felt into the third generation.[10] More importantly, Schneider accepted, without probing further, that the majority of Napola pupils described themselves as an "educated elite," whose skills and values transferred into the postwar period.[11] Leeb, whose interest in the postwar legacies of the Napolas was sparked by a personal encounter with the Napola system in 1942, similarly refrained from

[9]Christian Schneider, Cordelia Stilke, and Bernd Leineweber, *Das Erbe der Napola: Versuch einer Generationengeschichte des Nationalsozialismus* (Hamburg: Hamburger Edition, 1996); Johannes Leeb, *'Wir waren Hitlers Eliteschüler': Ehemalige Zöglinge der NS-Ausleseschulen brechen ihr Schweigen* (München: Wilhelm Heyne Verlag, 1998).

[10] Schneider's work has not been well received by critics. The small sample of interviewees has been the biggest point of contention. Klaus Natorp, an editor for the German newspaper *Frankfurter Allgemeine*, does not think that a critical discussion about the Napolas' postwar legacies can be based on a few interviews. Klaus Natorp, "Kinder als NS-Akteure? Die 'Napolas' als interdisziplinäre Generationengeschichte." *Frankfurter Allgemeine,* 14.10. 1996.

[11] Schneider, *Das Erbe der Napola*, 37.

critically assessing the contributions of twenty former Nazi elite school alumni.[12] He merely expresses his surprise that so many of his interviewees had "splendid careers" in the Bonn Republic.[13] The third and final part of this chapter examines the validity of these claims and analyzes to what extent surviving members of 'Generation Napola' in the area that you focus on truly benefitted from their education under the swastika.

My findings are based on eyewitness testimonies from eight former Napola am Donnersberg pupils, who often spoke on behalf of classmates whose declining health prevented their personal involvement in this project.[14] While the small sample of testimonies does not allow for generalizations about the Napolas' postwar legacies, it does suggest that the link between any stability or professional success found by some former Napola am Donnersberg pupils in the postwar period and the education they received at this elite Nazi school was not nearly as simple or uniform as Leeb and Schneider presume. Beyond the curriculum, it could be that that the camaraderie of boarding during the war or the sense of superiority instilled at the schools were motivating factors for professional success. My work on those who attended the Napola am Donnersberg also seems to indicate that higher education restrictions on former Napola students in the French Occupation Zone, not wartime experiences, may also have fueled their desire to succeed.

[12] Leeb was invited to the NPEA Berlin-Spandau's entrance examination in 1942. He was not admitted because he failed the test of courage.
[13] Leeb, *'Wir waren Hitlers Eliteschüler'*, 17.
[14] Considering that reunions and special alumni events help keep their camaraderie alive, the sample of eight testimonies may be sufficient to speak to Napola am Donnersberg pupils' collective experiences. The disadvantage of this approach is that individual recollections, or at least certain parts of them, are subsumed into the constructed memory of the collective.

Rejected by the system: The human consequences of opening a Napola in Weierhof

Many *Jungmannen* attended Napolas for a period of time, but never actually matriculated. Students who experienced life inside a Napola for a limited period of time likely outnumbered those who graduated.[15] Harald Schäfer, a former Napola pupil in Oranienstein, even speculated that there might not have been a single student who attended a Napola from Grade 5 to Grade 13.[16] Some students did not pass the Napolas' entrance examinations. Others could not successfully complete the schools' six-month probationary period. Many were forced to transfer to public schools even after they passed the Napolas' rigorous application procedures. Reasons for their transfers could include poor grades, or lack of athleticism. There were also those students whose Napola schooling was cut short by the collapse of the Nazi dictatorship in 1945. Stranded and without a degree to show for their efforts, they were forced to press on with their academic careers amidst the chaos of postwar occupation and denazification.

By drawing on student files from the Napola am Donnersberg, I have identified three types of pupils who did not live up to their intended leadership roles in Nazi Germany's racial community. Physical ineptitude prevented some Napola pupils from meeting the Napolas' rigorous physical and racial standards. They withdrew from the Napolas in favor of public schools. The second example examines the experiences of Napola day student (*Tagesschüler*) Kurt Schraven. Napola officials and pupils did not consider day students "real" members of the Napola community.[17] The bonding

[15] In 1942, for instance, only 576 *Jungmannen* graduated from Napolas. Gelhaus, *Die Ausleseschulen als Grundpfeiler des NS Regimes*, 112.
[16] Schäfer, 112.
[17] Ludwig List, interview by Tim Mueller, January 6, 2015.

encouraged by communal living was considered just as important as academic or physical training. Third, I will examine those students who died while they were still enrolled in a Napola.

The case studies shed light upon school-level decisions by Napola policymakers. The transformation of private schools into Napolas was not as seamless as Nazi newspapers reported.[18] Institutes had to be renovated and modernized. Teachers were brought into line by joining party organizations, such as the SS or NSLB. More importantly, student bodies had to be purged of "undesirable" boarders. Some Napola students could not satisfy the Napola am Donnersberg's strict standards regarding health and physical prowess. The former *Jungmann* Hans Schmitt suffered such a fate. Born on March 28, 1930 in Neustadt, Hans Schmitt attended primary school in Neustadt/Weinstrasse from Grade 1 to 4.[19] As was customary in Germany's primary school system, academically gifted pupils had the option of attending higher secondary schools upon completing Grade 4. While Germany's lower secondary schools (*Volksschulen*) educated students up to Grade 9, higher secondary schools instructed students from Grade 5 to 13. Only higher secondary school graduates (*Abiturienten*) were eligible to attend university. Due to the party's substantial financial investment into the school after 1936, the *Gau-Oberschule Donnersberg* was the only boarding school in the region that offered the German baccalaureate's entrance ticket to university.

[18] See for example, UB Mannheim, Das Schwarze Korps, "Neuer Stil im Alten Schloss," Folge 42, 21. Oktober, 1937, 3.
[19] Gymnasium Weierhof am Donnersberg: Privates Archiv, Bolanden, Rheinland-Pfalz, Akten der Schulverwaltung: Schülerakten ehemaliger Schüler, 1867-1945, "Hans Schmitt."

Hans Schmitt's father, Wilhelm Schmitt, a butcher by profession, was eager to send his son to the prestigious *Gau-Oberschule Donnersberg* for the start of the new school year in the spring of 1940.[20] Wilhelm began the tedious work of putting together an application package, while Hans was still attending his fourth and final year of elementary school. In March Hans received an invitation to the *Gau-Oberschule*'s entrance exam in March 1940, and later that month Wilhelm was notified that Hans had passed and would be attending the institute on a trial basis during the first semester of the upcoming academic year.[21] His tuition fees were set at a monthly rate of 108 RM over a period of ten months.[22]

Securing Hans' admission to the *Gau-Oberschule Donnersberg* had not been an easy feat for the Schmitts. Applicants needed to complete a very comprehensive application. This list of required documents changed little after the *Gau-Oberschule* was converted into a Napola in October 1941. The father or legal guardian of the applicant had to request admission to the school by letter to the headmaster. The school also required supporting documentation such as a resume and school transcripts. Parents needed to disclose personal information about their occupational history, income, living situation, and marital status. To demonstrate unwavering commitment and loyalty to the

[20] In 1941, Nazi Germany adjusted the start of the regular school to September. Prior to that, the school year had lasted from the beginning of April until Easter break. Gymnasium Weierhof, Schülerakten, Wilhelm Schmitt an das Direktorat der Gau-Oberschule Marnheim, 1.2.1940.
[21] Gymnasium Weierhof, Schülerakten, Schreiben des Anstaltsleiters an Herrn Wilhelm Schmitt, 19.3.1940.
[22] Ibid.

regime, parents also had to attach a "Certificate of Good Political Standing" from their local NSDAP office.[23]

Prospective pupils also had to submit proof of their Aryan ancestry.[24] The applicant's family could not have a trace of Jewish ancestry for a minimum of two generations. The school also required a preliminary medical exam of all incoming students. Without medical clearance and an Aryan family tree, admission to the school was impossible during the war. Although the later years of the war saw a dramatic relaxation of what constituted an acceptable racial background as the need for manpower grew more pressing, the elitism of the Napolas remained intact. Racial screenings radicalized after the *Gau-Oberschule* was transformed into a Napola in 1941. Within months of the Napola am Donnersberg's opening, representatives from the SS Race and Settlement office conducted medical checks on prospective *Jungmannen*.[25]

For Hans Schmitt, the change in Grade 6 from a *Gau-Oberschule* pupil to a Napola *Jungmann* went largely unnoticed. Both institutions were boarding schools, followed the curriculum of an *Oberschule*, and selected students based on their racial purity. This allowed some *Gau-Oberschule* pupils who had yet to complete their secondary school diplomas to continue boarding at the Napola am Donnersberg after

[23] Gymnasium Weierhof, Schülerakten, Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei, Kreisleitung Weinstadt/Neustrasse an die Gau-Oberschule Donnersberg, "Betreff: Polit. Zuverlässigkeit der Eltern des Schülers Hans Schmitt, Neustadt an der Weinstr."
[24] Gymnasium Weierhof, Schülerakten, Hans Schmitt, Nachweis der deutschblütigen Abstammung des Schülers (Formblatt 4).
[25] Gymnasium Weierhof, Schülerakten, Fritz Müller, Rasse- und Siedlungshauptamt-SS, "Der Bewerber Müller Fritz ist für die Aufnahme in eine NPEA geeignet."

1941.[26] On March 26, 1942, Hans received notification from the Napola directorate that his tuition fees for the 1942/43 academic year had been reassessed.[27] When determining a *Jungmann*'s tuition fees, Napola policymakers followed a formula that had been used since 1933. First, the family of the applicant had to disclose all sources of income. Based on the family's annual salary, capital assets, and statutory deductions, the Napola admissions office calculated their monthly earnings. Each family was then rated on a points scale. If the *Jungmann* had two parents, then the family received two points. If the family rented or bought their own apartment or house, they also received a point. For each child and other dependents, the family scored additional points. If the applicant and his family lived more than 100 km away from the Napola, one or two extra points were added. Finally, conditions such as low family income, poor quality housing or food insecurity counted in the family's favor and increased their score. At the end, the points were tallied up and used as a divisor to calculate the *Jungmann*'s monthly tuition fees. Low-income families scored higher point totals, which reduced the applicant's tuition fees significantly.

For Hans Schmitt, whose parents earned a modest income of 583.30 RM per month and scored six points on the Napola am Donnersberg's points system, the monthly fee for the upcoming school year was set at 95 RM.[28] Few working-class families would

[26] Gymnasium Weierhof, Übergabe-, Umwandlungs-, und Entnazifizierungsakten, Schreiben des Vereins für die Anstalt am Donnersberg an den Präsidenten des Bezirksverbandes Pfalz, Herrn Oberbürgermeister Imbt, "Betreff: Umwandlung der Gau-Oberschule in eine Napola," 11. September, 1941.
[27] Gymnasium Weierhof, Schülerakten, Hans Schmitt, "Berechnung des Erziehungskostenbeitrages für Jungmann Schmitt Hans," 26. März, 1942.
[28] The actual amount was rounded down from 97.21 RM. On paper, the monthly sum of 95 RM for the 1942/43 school year represented a tuition reduction of 5 RM compared to the previous year. However, Hans Schmitt's parents were also asked to pay an additional 15 RM per month into his personal expense account.

have been able to send their children to higher secondary boarding schools prior to the creation of the Napolas. In some cases, Napolas waived tuition fees for underprivileged families altogether.[29] Attendance at a *Gymnasium* or *Oberschule* had once been the sole preserve of Germany's upper classes. The Napolas' obsession with racial purity, however, expanded opportunities for so-called "Aryans" of less privileged backgrounds.

Although the Napola am Donnersberg presented a tremendous opportunity for Hans Schmitt to improve his family's social standing, his career as a *Jungmann* was short lived. On May 27, 1942, Wilhelm Schmitt sent a note to the Napola directorate in Weierhof, indicating his plans to transfer Hans to a school in the Black Forest for the start of Grade 7.[30] He also stated that his son's withdrawal was entirely motivated by medical concerns. Doctors had recommended treating Hans's chronic asthma by sending him to the Black Forest's favorable climate for 6-8 weeks every year. Since this treatment option was too pricey, Wilhelm decided to permanently relocate his son to the *Heimschule Birklehof*.

As future leaders of the Nazi *Volksgemeinschaft*, Napola pupils had to be as tough as "Krupp steel."[31] Napolas insisted on a rigorous training regimen that pushed students to their limits. Students who could not keep pace were gradually weeded out. Hans Schmitt left the Napola school system for good in July 1942. There had been early signs that his days at the Napola am Donnersberg were numbered. Three separate report cards

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This raised the annual tuition costs from 1140 RM to 1320 RM. Gymnasium Weierhof, Schülerakten, Hans Schmitt, "Berechnung des Erziehungskostenbeitrages für Jungmann Schmitt Hans," 26. März, 1942.

[29] Stephan, private correspondence ("*Die Napola-Jahre 1942 bis 1945*") December 11, 2014.

[30] Gymnasium Weierhof, Schülerakten, Hans Schmitt, "An das Direktorat der Nationalpolitischen Erziehungsanstalt am Donnersberg," 27.5.1942.

[31] UB Mannheim, Das Schwarze Korps, "Flink wie Windhunde, zäh wie Leder, hart wie Kruppstahl!," Folge 22, 28. Mai 1938, 8.

confirm this observation. During the fall semester in 1941, Hans did not receive any marks for his performance in track and field, combat games, gymnastics, and swimming.[32] Moreover, Hans' homeroom teacher commented that the "well-developed boy could only gently participate in physical exercises."[33] During the winter semester, Hans was able only to participate in a limited capacity and received a 'C' for his efforts. However, the report card's overall assessment read, "he [Hans] needs to become more willing and more outspoken."

On July 15, 1942, Hans picked up his final report card as a Napola *Jungmann*. Despite scoring mediocre to poor marks across all courses, the report concluded that Hans had conducted himself admirably during his time at the Napola.[34] It was, however, evident that his physical limitations could not satisfy the Napolas' fitness standards for graduation. Hans transferred to a boarding school in Hinterzarten where he found a learning environment that was more conducive to his abilities. At the time of his transfer, Hinterzarten was under the operational control of the *Deutsche Heimschulen* inspectorate, which was also headed by August Heißmeyer.[35] It may have been a coincidence that Hans remained part of Heißmeyer's sphere of influence. But there is also the possibility that Heißmeyer was creating a reserve pool of Aryan children in the *Deutsche Heimschulen*. After 1940, the Napola inspectorate informed parents of prospective Napola pupils about the possibility of enrolling their children in *Deutsche Heimschulen*, where standards were

[32] Gymnasium Weierhof, Schülerakten, Hans Schmitt, "Zeugnis für die Zeit vom 8.9.1941 bis 18.12.1941 für Jungmann Hans Schmitt des 2. Zuges."
[33] Ibid.
[34] Gymnasium Weierhof, Schülerakten, Hans Schmitt, "Abgangszeugnis Jungmann Hans Schmitt."
[35] BA Berlin, R 187 Sammlung Schumacher, R 187/270b, "Liste der Schulen, die der Inspektion der deutschen Heimschulen unterstehen (Stand vom 15.1.1943)"

more relaxed.[36] Heißmeyer's motivation to promote the *Deutsche Heimschulen* in such a manner may have been due to foresight. Since race was paramount in the recruitment of Napola pupils, even those who performed poorly possessed the basic racial standards that Heißmeyer and Himmler desired. The *Deutsche Heimschulen* offered an opportunity to retain Aryan talent, perhaps with the hope that maturation eventually unlocked their racial potential.

Hans Schmitt was not the only student to leave the Napola am Donnersberg less than one year after its opening. Walter Ruckriegel, born on February 8, 1929, had attended the *Gau-Oberschule Donnersberg* and Napola since April 1939.[37] On April 30, 1942, Walter transferred to an unnamed secondary school to attend Grade 8. His final report card described him as a "reliable *Jungmann*, who put satisfactory efforts into meeting the institute's demands."[38] The report, however, also stated that he had been unable to fulfill the Napola's physical requirements because of his asthma.[39] On the whole, Walter's academic and athletic achievements left much to be desired. Apart from failing to take part in the Napola's physical education training, his overall average was close to a 'D'.[40] Yet poor academic performance did not force Walter's transfer to a

[36] BA Berlin, R 187 Sammlung Schumacher, R 187/270b, Nationalpolitische Erziehungsanstalten (1934-45), "Merkblatt für Eltern und Erziehungsberechtigte über die Aufnahme von Jungen in Nationalpolitsche Erziehungsanstalten"
[37] Gymnasium Weierhof, Schülerakten, Walter Otto Ruckriegel, Schreiben des Anstaltsleiters der Gau-Oberschule an Herrn Johann Ruckriegel, Gendarmeriemeister, 3.4.1939.
[38] Gymnasium Weierhof, Schülerakten, Walter Otto Ruckriegel, "Abgangszeugnis Walter Ruckriegel," Allgemeine Beurteilung.
[39] Ibid.
[40] Ibid., 'Wissenschaftliche Ausbildung.'

public school. Napola instructors primarily criticized his inability to live up to the stereotype of a healthy and athletic Aryan youth.[41]

While some withdrawals were prompted by medical concerns, Napola policymakers' war on Aryan imperfection also affected healthy boys. Ralf Schmitt, for instance, had a clean bill of health.[42] Yet he left the Napola am Donnersberg on October 22, 1943, two months into the first semester of his Grade 7 year.[43] His premature departure to a secondary school in Kaiserslautern did not come as a surprise. Teachers had lamented that the "willowy boy" needed to become stronger and improve his level of fitness.[44] Similar criticisms were raised against other Napola attendees. Peter Krieger, who had been part of the first wave of pupils accepted immediately after elementary school, left the institute after Grade 6 in July 1943. His teachers reprimanded him for being "awkward" and "clumsy" in gymnastics.[45] His Grade 6 report card showed failing grades for physical education. "Peter Krieger," the year-end report card read, "must improve his athletic performances."[46]

Considering that Napola teachers primarily judged a student's worth by his physical efforts, it seems likely that students who failed to meet the Napolas' standards of fitness may have represented the majority of Napola attendees who left the schools early.

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[41] Gymnasium Weierhof, Schülerakten, Walter Otto Ruckriegel, "Zeugnis für die Zeit von Weihnachten 1941 bis Ostern 1942 für Jungmann Walter Ruckriegel des 3. Zuges."
[42] Gymnasium Weierhof, Schülerakten, Staatliches Gesundheitsamt Kaiserslautern, "Amtsärztliches Zeugnis," 18.12.1940
[43] Gymnasium Weierhof, Schülerakten, Ralf Schmitt, "Abgangszeugnis Jungmann Ralf Schmitt," 22. Oktober 1943.
[44] Ibid.
[45] Gymnasium Weierhof, Schülerakten, Peter Krieger, "Zeugnis für Jungmann Peter Krieger des 1. Zuges," 24.3.1942.
[46] Gymnasium Weierhof, Schülerakten, Peter Krieger, "Jahreszeugnis für Jungmann Peter Krieger des 2. Zuges," 8.4.1943.

However, a second category of students who did not fit in were those who attended Napolas during the day, but did not board. Aside from the racial screening of incoming pupils, boarding at the school was perhaps the most important component of a Napola education. Napola theorists believed that the boarding school environment was ideal for fostering boys' loyalty to the Nazi regime.[47] Constant supervision isolated Napola students from traditional support structures, such as family and church. Moreover, boarding school educated and socialized the *Jungmannen* according to National Socialist principles. As members of a miniature *Volksgemeinschaft,* they learned to appreciate that "the welfare of the *Gemeinschaft* preceded the value of the individual."[48]

Students who did not partake in communal life were not considered full-fledged *Jungmannen* by their teachers and peers. Kurt Schraven studied at the former *Gau-Oberschule* turned Napola in Weierhof from 1939 until 1944. He left the school in the fall of 1944 to pursue a career as a medical officer.[49] Unfortunately, the sources are silent as to why Kurt spent the entirety of his Napola career living at home and attending the institute on a strictly part-time basis.[50] Boys who were needed to fill the financial and

[47] See Chapter 1, "Visions for the Napolas."
[48] Alessio Ponzio, *Shaping the New Man: Youth Training Regimes in Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2015), 95.
[49] Gymnasium Weierhof, Schülerakten, Kurt Schraven, Empfelungsschreiben des Leiters der NPEA am Donnersberg, Weierhof den 5. September 1944.
[50] The 1941 agreement for transfer of ownership between the Reich and the *Gau Westmark* stipulated that former *Gau-Oberschule* day students could retain their enrolment status. The Napola am Donnersberg officially stopped admitting day students after 1943. Gymnasium Weierhof, Übergabe-, Umwandlungs-, und Entnazifizierungsakten, Schreiben des Vereins für die Anstalt am Donnersberg an den Präsidenten des Bezirksverbandes Pfalz, Herrn Oberbürgermeister Imbt, "Betreff: Umwandlung der Gau-Oberschule in eine Napola," 11. September 1941.

emotional void left behind by a deceased male breadwinner during the war may have qualified for special treatment.[51]

Napola policymakers were scrupulous in reminding day students of their status as second-class members of the Napola community. A typical report card featured the name of the Napola institute and the party eagle holding a swastika at the top of the document. Below the letterhead, the teacher inserted the student's name, period of attendance, and grade level. All of Kurt Schraven's report cards had the preprinted title '*Jungmann'* crossed out by hand and replaced with '*Tagesschüler* (day student).'[52] This served as a powerful reminder to both parents and students that the *Jungmann* rank was reserved only for those who committed to the Napolas full-time. Perhaps even more telling was a recommendation letter issued by the Napola directorate on September 9, 1944. Despite deeming him well suited for a career as a medical officer in Germany's *Wehrmacht*, the referee emphasized on two separate occasions that Kurt Schraven had not been enrolled full-time at the Napola. The letter stated, "Schraven was not a *Jungmann* of the Napola am Donnersberg, since he only participated in the institute's academic education."[53]

Kurt Schraven completed all academic requirements. He participated in most extracurricular activities. In the summer of 1943, he assisted with the regime's efforts to evacuate children to the countryside (*Kinderlandverschickung*, KLV) as an official

[51] Mothers were also eager to retain full-time custody over their under-aged children. Without dependent children, they faced conscription into the Nazi wartime economy. Karl Stephan, "Die Napola-Jahre 1942 bis 1945."
[52] Gymnasium Weierhof, Schülerakten, "Abgangszeugnis für ~~Jungmann~~ Tagesschüler Kurt Schraven des 6. Zuges," 25. Juli 1944,
[53] Gymnasium Weierhof, Schülerakten, Kurt Schraven, Empfelungsschreiben des Leiters der NPEA am Donnersberg, Weierhof den 5. September 1944.

representative of the Napola am Donnersberg.[54] On January 20, 1944, Kurt and other Grade 10 students were sent to Mannheim to serve as anti-aircraft auxiliaries.[55] In mid-February, Kurt's participation in the war effort was cut short due to a kidney inflammation. He spent the next four months in a *Luftwaffe* infirmary.[56] Despite his many sacrifices, he was denied the title of a *Jungmann* because he did not board. His case demonstrates that the Napolas were committed to superseding traditional socialization influences. It also shows that character education and communal bonding after the regular school day had ended may have been more important to Napola officials than academic instruction and physical training combined.

Nazi-era photographs and films depicted scenes of youthful bliss and harmony inside the Napolas.[57] Away from the public eye, the Napolas insisted on high standards of discipline. Some students could not cope with the extreme conditions of the Napolas' "total education," which often pushed them to the brink of mental and physical exhaustion. [58] They opted to complete their diplomas at one of Nazi Germany's public schools instead. Others died wearing Napola uniforms. The prewar *SS-Verfügungstruppen* presented the deaths of aspiring officer candidates during live-fire exercises as evidence of the units' toughness and ideological vigour.[59] Despite modeling many aspects of the

[54] Gymnasium Weierhof, Schülerakten, Kurt Schraven, "Vormerkung: Der Jungmann Schraven wurde am 7.7.1943 als Helfer in der Kinderlandverschickung (Protektorat) eingesetzt," 29.10.1943.
[55] Gymnasium Weierhof, Schülerakten, Kurt Schraven, Nationalpolitische Erziehungsanstalt am Donnersberg an das Finanzamt Kirchheimbolanden, "Betreff: Ausbildungsbeihilfe," 27.1.1944.
[56] Gymnasium Weierhof, Schülerakten, Kurt Schraven, Einheit L 16 951 an den Leiter der Nationalpolitischen Erziehungsanstalt Weierhof/Donnersberg, "Betreff: Entlassung des Lw.-Helfers Kurt Schraven," 14. Juli 1944.
[57] See for example, IfZ München-Berlin, ED 735, Band 16, "NPEA Potsdam und Neuzelle, Ferienlager, Turniere, Besuche hochrangiger Politiker."
[58] Pine, *Education in Nazi Germany*, 4.
[59] Stein, *The Waffen-SS*, 14.

schools' administration and communal life after the SS, Napola policymakers concealed student deaths to prevent enrolment declines.

The combination of military discipline and Nazi racialism, however, claimed the lives of numerous Napola students. Fritz Kramer, a Grade 11 student at the Napola am Donnersberg, passed away on January 16, 1942 from the consequences of a serious gymnastics accident.[60] The Napola inspectorate launched a formal inquiry into the cause of his death. The ensuing case report did not find the attending teacher guilty of negligence. Fritz died because of his overzealous efforts to complete a horizontal bar routine, despite having several spotters and other safety precautions in place.[61] Although the possibility of a freak accident cannot be eliminated, Fritz's death highlights some of the pressures that Napola pupils regularly faced. According to his student file, Fritz had been an outstanding athlete who wanted to become a *Wehrmacht* officer after graduation. However, his academic grades were not strong. The school had asked Fritz's parents on several occasions to send him to a public school.[62] Since Fritz was attending the Napola am Donnersberg on a scholarship thanks to his racial qualifications, his departure from the school would have had devastating consequences for his career prospects. Fritz's parents did not have the money to afford tuition at a different higher secondary school. Had Fritz been forced to leave the Napola, his dream of attaining the *Abitur* and becoming an officer candidate would have evaporated. It seems likely that Fritz's

[60] Gymnasium Weierhof, Schülerakten, Fritz Kramer, "NPEA am Donnersberg: Der Jungmann Fritz Kramer ist am 16. Januar 1942 infolge schweren Unfalls beim Turnen gestorben," 30. Januar 1942.
[61] Gymnasium Weierhof, Schülerakten, Fritz Kramer, Die Inspektion der Nationalpolitischen Erziehungsanstalten, "Betreff: Unglücksfall mit nachgefolgtem Tode," Berlin, 17. Januar, 1942.
[62] Gymnasium Weierhof, Schülerakten, Fritz Kramer, Friedrich Kramer, "Sehr geehrter Herr Direktor," Oberlustadt, 11. Januar 1941.

athleticism was the only thing that kept him enrolled at the Napola. His desire to excel in gymnastics might have prompted him to take unnecessary risks on the day of the accident.

It is difficult to ascertain whether or not Kramer's accident was an isolated incident. Without access to complete Napola student records, the total number of school-related accidents remains unknown. Since Napola students were expected to compete in hazardous extracurricular activities such as firing practice, skiing, fencing, horseback riding, sailing, gliding, or trekking, accidents likely occurred on a regular basis. Wartime duties such as manning air-aircraft guns, constructing anti-tank barriers, or performing labor assignments in occupied territories deliberately put Napola students into harm's way. In October 1944, for example, pupils from the Napola am Donnersberg were sent to Saarbrucken to dig trenches. A few weeks later, some of the younger *Jungmannen* were relieved of their duties and returned to the institute. Their outbound train was attacked by fighter-bombers and several students were killed.[63]

Moreover, *Jungmannen* shouldered the burden of evacuating schools during the final months of the war. Since older students and able-bodied teachers had already been conscripted into military service, the responsibility of saving boarders from the dangers of airstrikes and artillery bombardments often fell on boys under the ages of 16. In late 1944 and early 1945, Napola students, particularly those attending schools in the East, had to flee from advancing enemy troops. On their flight to safety, they sometimes crossed distances of hundreds of kilometers through a countryside devastated by war. Kurt

[63] Stephan, private correspondence ("*Die Napola-Jahre 1942 bis 1945*: *Schanzarbeiter im Dienste des Vaterlandes*), December 11, 2014.

Wreitmann, a former student at the Napola am Donnersberg, remembered that he and several other classmates turned 16 during the evacuation process. Due to the mass conscription of 16-year old boys during the final months of the war, Kurt received the order to report to the Prince Arnulf Barracks in Munich. On their journey to the Bavarian capital, low-flying Allied aircraft attacked Kurt and his company, resulting in 33 casualties.[64]

The wartime experiences of Napola am Donnersberg pupils suggest that more students might have passed through the Napola school system between 1933 and 1945 than previously assumed. Erhard Naake argued that in 1938 4000 *Jungmannen* attended Napolas.[65] Helen Roche estimates that by 1945 around 10 000 students were enrolled in Napolas across the German Reich.[66] In one of the only surviving surveys conducted by the Reich Education Ministry, the total number of Napola attendees, including female Napola students, was listed at 7362 in July 1942.[67] It is fair to assume that this estimate did not account for former Napola pupils who had prematurely departed from the schools before the end of the regular school year. I speculate that the total number of boys and girls who came in contact with the Napolas, even if only for a short period of time, may

[64] Kurt Wreitmann, private correspondence (Question 2), December 8, 2014.
[65] Naake, "Zur Theorie und Praxis der Erziehung in den Nationalpolitischen Erziehungsanstalten und ähnlichen faschistischen 'Eliteschulen'." 61.
[66] Roche, *Sparta's German Children,* 181.
[67] IfZ München-Berlin, ED 735, Band 12, "Potsdamer Kameradschaft: Blätter der Nationalpolitischen Erziehungsanstalt Potsdam," "Gesamtübersicht – Stand am 1.7. 1942 – Bearbeitet von Zugführer Rudolf Weiß."

have exceeded twenty or thirty-thousand.[68] This revised estimate underscores the strict selection process of Napola pupils throughout the years of Nazi rule.

Invoking an imaginary Mennonite past: The Weierhof school association' pursuit of postwar restitution

The history of the Napola am Donnersberg goes back to 1867 when Michael Löwenberg, a teacher and preacher, founded the institute as a Mennonite school. The seminary originally opened under the name *Lehr- und Erziehungsanstalt auf dem Weierhof*. After Löwenberg's death in 1874, the school's fortunes steadily declined. In the late 1870s and early 1880s, lack of state support and low student enrolment ended Löwenberg's vision of maintaining the institute as a seminary.[69] In 1884, Dr. Ernst Göbel took over the reins of the school. In his role as principal, he oversaw the school's transformation into the *Realanstalt am Donnersberg* (the school's official title until 1936) from 1884 until 1891. Pupils were able to attend this type of intermediate secondary school from Grade 5 until Grade 10. An Imperial school commission noted as early as 1891 that the *Realanstalt am Donnersberg* lacked a clearly identifiable Mennonite character.[70] In 1892, the school received permission to issue school-leaving certificates that allowed its graduates to enlist in Germany's Imperial Army as one-year volunteers,

[68] Elke Fröhlich estimates that an average of 100 students were invited to partake in the Napolas' entrance examinations. Only one-third of students passed. In order to reach an enrollment figure of 10 000 in 1945, Fröhlich's success rate suggests that the Napolas may have turned away up to 20 000 students at some point during the Third Reich; in addition to the unrecorded number of students who transferred to public schools during and after the schools' six-month probationary period. Elke Fröhlich, "Die drei Typen der nationalsozialistischen Ausleseschulen," in *'Wir waren Hitlers Eliteschüler: Ehemalige Zöglinge der NS-Ausleseschulen brechen ihr Schweigen*, ed. Johannes Leeb (München: Wilhelm Heyne Verlag, 1998), 246.
[69] Ibid.
[70] Ibid., 149.

which further distanced the school from its Mennonite roots.[71] Due to its increasingly secular and nationalist character, the institute experienced a period of prosperity that lasted into the early 1930s.

The success of the institute made it a prime target for Nazi *Gleichschaltung* policies. On March 17, 1936, Dr. Pfaller, the school's principal, was ordered to appear for an impromptu meeting with *Gauleiter* Josef Bürckel in Neustadt.[72] Governor of the *Gau Westmark* since 1934, Bürckel confronted Pfaller with his plans to open a new National Socialist school in the district. According to Bürckel, the new school would be modeled after the *Realanstalt am Donnersberg*. He added that state and party resources would generously fund the project, establishing a "model school" with "state-of-the-art equipment."[73]

Since Bürckel knew that the opening of a second boarding school in close proximity to the *Realanstalt am Donnersberg* would be financially disadvantageous, he presented Pfaller and the school association's board of trustees with an alternative proposal. "To honor the success of the institute [*Realanstalt am Donnersberg*] up to now," Bürckel suggested, "I will hold off on the construction of a new school if the board is willing to concede ownership to the *Gau*."[74] He added that the school would also receive generous financial investment from the state.

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[71] Gymnasium Weierhof, Übergabe-, Umwandlungs-, und Entnazifizierungsakten, "Betreff: Die einstige Realanstalt am Donnersberg in ihrer allmählichen Entwicklung."
[72] Ibid.
[73] Gymnasium Weierhof, Übergabe-, Umwandlungs-, und Entnazifizierungsakten, "Die Geschichte der Übergabe der Realanstalt am Donnersberg an den Kreis Pfalz, 17.3.1936 – 26.5.1936," 1.
[74] Gymnasium Weierhof, Übergabe-, Umwandlungs-, und Entnazifizierungsakten, "Die Geschichte der Übergabe der Realanstalt am Donnersberg an den Kreis Pfalz, 17.3.1936 – 26.5.1936," 1.

Following the day's events, Pfaller and six other board members held an emergency meeting to discuss Bürckel's proposal. Hours after the idea of transforming the *Realanstalt am Donnersberg* into a boarding school financed and operated by the NSDAP had been introduced, the board agreed in principle to Bürckel's ultimatum.[75] A general meeting of the school association was scheduled for March 24, during which the board's decision was formalized. The school officially changed ownership on May 26, 1936.[76] The *Realanstalt am Donnersberg* ceased to exist and was replaced by the *Nationalsozialistische Oberschule Saarpfalz.* After the 1936/37 academic year, the school was renamed *Gau-Oberschule Donnersberg*. This party-sponsored boarding school followed the curriculum of an *Oberrealschule* and educated boys from Grade 5 to Grade 13.

At the time of the school's transfer into *Gau* ownership, its assets were valued at 668 500 RM.[77] Yet Bürckel acquired the *Realanstalt am Donnersberg* without paying any amount to the school association.[78] In return for their "voluntary" donation, the association's board of trustees merely asked Bürckel to honor a series of requests. Although the general membership of the *Verein für die Anstalt am Donnersberg e.V* was disbanded in May 1936, Bürckel accepted the continued existence of a five-men board of

[75] Steffen Wagner, "Aus weltanschaulichen Gründen besonders bekämpft und gehaßt?: Die Weierhöfer Schule und ihre Umwandlung in eine NS-Eliteanstalt im Jahre 1936," *Mennonitische Geschichtsblätter* 68 (2011): 132.
[76] Gymnasium Weierhof, Übergabe-, Umwandlungs-, und Entnazifizierungsakten, "Betreff: Die einstige Realanstalt am Donnersberg in ihrer allmählichen Entwicklung," B. Umwandlung der Anstalt.
[77] Gymnasium Weierhof, Übergabe-, Umwandlungs-, und Entnazifizierungsakten, "Die Geschichte der Übergabe der Realanstalt am Donnersberg an den Kreis Pfalz, 17.3.1936 – 26.5.1936," 3.
[78] Gymnasium Weierhof, Übergabe-, Umwandlungs-, und Entnazifizierungsakten, Ausfertigung, Gesch. Reg. Nr. 657, "Übereignung der Realanstalt am Donnersberg," 26.5. 1936. See also, "Niederschrift über die Sitzung des Kreistages der Pfalz am Dienstag, den 26. Mai, vormittags 10 Uhr in der Realanstalt am Donnersberg in Weierhof bei Marnheim," 2.

trustees.[79] Moreover, Bürckel promised to leave the school's alumni association intact. These small, pyrrhic victories for the board had little impact on the future management of the institute. Both Bürckel and the board accepted that the school and its curriculum would be completely Nazified in the years to come, with or without the association's input.

Bürckel kept his promise and the *Gau* made a substantial financial investment in the school over the next five years. Approximately 1.2 million RM was spent modernizing and expanding the institute.[80] By 1941, its success had not only attracted students from all over Nazi Germany, but had also caught the attention of the Napola inspectorate. Heißmeyer's decision to centralize Nazi elite education on April 22, 1941 ended the Palatinate district's (now *Gau Westmark*) hopes of retaining ownership of the *Gau-Oberschule*. While Himmler encouraged the establishment of Napolas in the occupied territories, Heißmeyer also increased the Napolas' presence outside of Prussia. Six months after Heißmeyer's speech in Backnang, the former *Realanstalt am Donnersberg* again changed owners. On October 13, 1941, Rust's Education Ministry sent out invitations to celebrate the transfer of the *Gau-Oberschule Donnersberg* into "the federation of Napolas."[81] The ceremony took place on October 22, 1941 and was personally attended by Heißmeyer, his wife, Nazi women's leader, Gertrud Scholtz-Klink, and *Gauleiter* Bürckel. The official transfer of ownership contract was signed

[79] Gymnasium Weierhof, Übergabe-, Umwandlungs-, und Entnazifizierungsakten, "Die Geschichte der Übergabe der Realanstalt am Donnersberg an den Kreis Pfalz, 17.3.1936 – 26.5.1936," 4-6.
[80] Wagner, "Aus weltanschaulichen Gründen besonders bekämpft und gehaßt?," 142.
[81] Gymnasium Weierhof, Übergabe-, Umwandlungs-, und Entnazifizierungsakten, Schreiben der Inspektion der Nationalpolitischen Erziehungsanstalten an Herrn Dr. Göbel, 13.10.1941.

between the German Reich, represented by Heißmeyer's Napola inspectorate, and the Palatinate district association (*Bezirksverband Pfalz*) represented by Bürckel.

The contract stipulated that the district ceded the ownership and management of all buildings and land associated with the former *Gau-Oberschule Donnersberg* to the Reich at no additional cost. Moreover, the district was charged with the responsibility of bearing all costs during the transitional period, which lasted from October 1, 1941 until March 31, 1942.[82] The Napola remained open late into 1944. In November of that year, when U.S. forces crossed the Rhine and were closing in on Weierhof, the school's remaining boarders fled 150 km south and sought shelter in the Napola in Backnang. In February 1945, students in Grade 5 through 8 were again relocated to a chalet in the *Kleinwalsertal*, a valley in Austria.[83] After Napola teachers expressed concerns that the valley could become encircled by enemy forces, the boys were transported on trucks to the *Oberallgäu* region in the Bavarian Alps. There they found accommodations with local farming families and awaited the end of the war.[84] Since SHAEF demanded the permanent closure of all Napolas, U.S. troops confiscated the school buildings and converted them into barracks. After the establishment of quadripartite control in Germany, French soldiers moved into the premises in July 1945 and remained there until

[82] Gymnasium Weierhof, Übergabe-, Umwandlungs-, und Entnazifizierungsakten, Vertrag zwischen dem Deutschen Reich, vertreten durch den Reichsminister für Wissenschft, Erziehung und Volksbiludng – Inspektion der Nationalpolitischen Erziehungsanstalten, gezeichnet Heißmeyer und dem Bezirksverband Pfalz der Reichesstatthalter in der Westmark und Chef der Zivilverwaltung in Lothringen in Saarbrücken, gezeichnet Bürckel, Weierhof, 22.10.1941.
[83] Erich Gummersheimer, private correspondence (Question 1), December 10, 2014.
[84] Ernst Müller, private correspondence, "*Mein Werdegang ab April 1945*," June 26, 2015.

the spring of 1951.[85] On April 17, 1951, the U.S. government again took possession of the former school.

After Nazi Germany's total defeat, the school association which had operated the *Realanstalt am Donnersberg* before 1936, tried to reclaim the property. Yet its pleas for restitution yielded no results. Napola supporters' range of legal actions, albeit decisive in evading Allied justice, was limited during the immediate postwar period. As Chapter 2 demonstrated, they submitted testimonies in support of beleaguered colleagues and friends. They were not, however, successful in their attempts to reclaim confiscated property. It was one thing for Napola teachers to have their sentences commuted during the height of denazification. It was another to demand financial compensation or the return of 'SS-property' at a time when the full extent of Nazi atrocities was exposed to the world. As sites of Nazi indoctrination, Napola school buildings were entirely incompatible with Allied reeducation efforts. They were repurposed as military barracks, hospitals, or displaced persons camps – but never educational institutions. The association's short-term goal, however, was to reopen the school.[86]

Thus members of the association greeted the departure of French troops in April 1951 with hopes of regaining the property. With West Germany firmly entrenched as one of the United States' Cold War allies, the school association hoped that U.S. military

[85] Gymnasium Weierhof, Freimachung, "Amerikaner wollen den Weierhöfer Schulkomplex nun doch freigeben," in *Die Rheinpfalz,* Nr.82, 14. März 1957, 4.
[86] Christian Galle justified this goal by issuing the following statement: "It goes without saying that in view of the great number of schools destroyed in Germany, the necessity for reopening our institute is very great." He asked the school to be released from military occupation so that "we will again be able to train our youth in the Christian spirit." Gymnasium Weierhof, Freimachung, Verein für die Anstalt am Donnersberg in Weierhof b. Marnheim e.V. to the President of the United States of America, "A Memorandum: Requesting the Release from Requisitioned Status of the Rural Secondary Boarding School 'Realanstalt am Donnersberg' located at Weierhof, Germany," January 1956, 4-5.

officials would be more accommodating than the French had been. However, requests sent to U.S. High Commissioner John McCloy on April 23, 1951 and European Theater of Operations, United States Army (ETOUSA) Commander-in-Chief Thomas Handy on July 18, 1951 failed to alter the army's requisition order from 1945.[87] U.S. military officials were reluctant to part with the "Weierhofer barracks" because of their strategic significance.[88] United States Army Europe (USAREUR) headquarters and command centers were conveniently located in nearby Frankfurt and Heidelberg.[89]

The school association stepped up its efforts after the military occupation of West Germany came to a conclusion on May 5, 1955 and the FRG joined the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). Although West Germany had regained its sovereignty, USAREUR still refused to relinquish the barracks. On August 16, 1955, ETOUSA Commander-in-Chief Anthony McAuliffe notified Rhineland-Palatinate Minister Peter Altmeier that the former Napola would be needed for a period of "indefinite duration."[90] On August 29, 1955, West German Defense Minister Theodor Blank contacted the American embassy in Bad Godesberg to argue on the school association's behalf. He was informed that the Weierhof barracks were vital to "on-going tactical operations and would remain so for the foreseeable future."[91]

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[87] Gymnasium Weierhof, Freimachung,"Betreff: Freigabe unseres seit 1945 beschlagnahmten Landschulheim-Anwesens Realanstalt am Donnersberg in Weierhof," D. Freigabebemühungen nach erneuter Übernahme unseres Anwesens in amerikanische Verwaltung und Benutzung, November 1956.
[88] Gymnasium Weierhof, Freimachung, "Die Realanstalt am Donnersberg wird wieder frei," in *Der Mennonit* (1957), 94.
[89] USAREUR has maintained a strong presence in the region to this very day. Its current headquarters are located in Wiesbaden.
[90] Gymnasium Weierhof, Freimachung "Betreff: Freigabe unseres seit 1945 beschlagnahmten Landschulheim-Anwesens Realanstalt am Donnersberg in Weierhof, November 1956," 8.
[91] Ibid., 8.

With negotiations between Germany and U.S. military authorities stalled, the association took a desperate step and contacted the President of the United States, Dwight D. Eisenhower, directly. The decision to involve Eisenhower in this matter was not an arbitrary one. Although Eisenhower did not belong to a church until he became president, his family and ancestors had been Mennonites, or agreed with Mennonite doctrines.[92] A memorandum, titled "Requesting the release from requisitioned statues of the rural secondary boarding school '*Realanstalt am Donnergsberg'* at [sic] Weierhof, Germany" was sent to the White House in January 1956.[93] It summarized the institute's history from its earliest beginnings in 1867 until its "erroneous [sic]" confiscation by American forces in the spring of 1945.[94] Signed by Christian Galle, the chairman of the school association, the document demonstrated that tales of imagined victimhood were alive and well in German society eleven years after the total defeat of Nazi Germany.

The memorandum suggested that the school association's ownership was forcibly stripped by NS-authorities in 1936. In 1941, the regime transformed the institute into a Napola and "thus estranged it completely from its original purpose."[95] The memorandum concluded its emotional appeal to President Eisenhower with the following statement: "Scarcely [sic] no one can understand why the property of a private Christian school with

[92] For more information about Dwight Eisenhower's life and upbringing, see Paul Johnson, *Eisenhower: A Life* (New York: Penguin Books, 2015).
[93] Gymnasium Weierhof, Freimachung, Verein für die Anstalt am Donnersberg in Weierhof b. Marnheim e.V. to the President of the United States of America, "A Memorandum: Requesting the Release from Requisitioned Status of the Rural Secondary Boarding School 'Realanstalt am Donnersberg' located at Weierhof, Germany," January 1956.
[94] Gymnasium Weierhof, Freimachung, Verein für die Anstalt am Donnersberg to the competent U.S. government office [sic] in Washington D.C., Pentagon, "Re: Request for Release of our Rural Secondary Boarding School 'Realanstalt am Donnersberg in Weierhof', which is requisitioned since 1945," November 1956, 3.
[95] Ibid., 2

an excellent reputation, which was confiscated by the Nazis because the school did not agree with the Nazi principles, should still be in possession of the occupation authorities ten years after the war."[96] Steffen Wagner, who has worked extensively on the history of the *Weierhöfer* institute, rejects the school association's portrayal as "Mennonite martyrs."[97] Mennonite traditions had ceased to be the school's hallmark long before the Third Reich.

Supported by West Germany's ruling Christian Democratic party, the school association portrayed itself as a "victim of Nazi cultural policies and fascism."[98] It even enlisted the support of the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) in Akron, Pennsylvania.[99] On February 14, 1957, MCC Executive Secretary J. Harald Sherk brought the Weierhof case to the attention of U.S. Secretary of Defense Charles Wilson.[100] Sherk explained to Wilson that the loss of the Weierhof property "had been a

[96] Ibid., 5
[97] Wagner, "Aus weltanschaulichen Gründen besonders bekämpft und gehaßt?," 90.
[98] Gymnasium Weierhof, Freimachung, Schreiben der Staatskanzlei Rheinland-Pfalz an den Herrn Bundesminister für Verteidigung, "Betreff: Freigabe des Schulanwesens des Vereins für die Anstalt am Donnersberg in Weierhof bei Marnheim," 29. August, 1955, 2. According to Geoffrey Roberts, "Christianity and Christian ideals seemed to many Germans in the immediate post-war period to be the only possible basis for political reconstruction after their recent experiences of nationalism and fascism." Geoffrey Roberts, *Party Politics in the New Germany* (London: Pinter, 1997), 12.
[99] The Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) was founded in 1920 and has since transformed into an international, faith-based humanitarian agency of Mennonite Churches in the United States and Canada. Its primary areas of activity include relief, development, and peace. MCC opened an advocacy office in Washington in 1968. Keith Graber Miller, however, argues that MCC had influenced policymaking prior to that. In 1940, MCC joined with other peace churches to form the National Service Bureau for Religious Objectors (NSBRO). The organization represented the rights of military draftees considered conscientious objectors and acted as a liaison between the churches and the government. From 1945 onward, at least one Mennonite representative served on NSBRO staff in Washington. Moreover, members of MCC's Peace Section travelled frequently from its headquarters in Akron, Pennsylvania to keep "abreast of legislative and policy action on Capitol Hill." Keith Graber Miller, *Wise as Serpents, Innocent as Doves: American Mennonites engage Washington* (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1996), 42.
[100] J. Harald Sherk was born on December 20, 1903 in Berlin (now Kitchener), Ontario, Canada. He served as the Mennonite Central Committee's Executive Secretary from 1949 until 1958. In 1958, he was appointed director of the National Service Bureau for Religious Objectors (NSBRO). He served in this role until his retirement in 1969.

hard blow to the educational program of the Mennonite Church."[101] He also urged Wilson to expedite the process of returning the barracks to the school association.

The political influence of the Mennonite Central Committee proved instrumental in the school association's quest to re-open the Weierhof barracks as a private secondary school. In the early months of 1957, Reverend Sherk enlisted the help of high-ranking members of the U.S. House of Representatives, including congressmen Paul B. Dague, Leon H. Gavin, and Carl Vinson.[102] Both Gavin and Vinson sat on the House of Representatives' Armed Services Committee at the time. As the Chairman of the Committee, Vinson had a direct line to the Department of Defense. In May 1957, he was able to secure written confirmation from Assistant Secretary of Defense Floyd S. Brant that the "property will be available for its original purpose by January 1959."[103] Although Congressman Gavin paid a personal visit to Weierhof in the summer of 1957, and petitioned local military contacts to speed up the school's release, it remained in the possession of the U.S. military until December 1958. Almost thirteen years after its initial capture by U.S. soldiers, the former Napola opened its doors to students under the name *Heimschule Weierhof am Donnersberg* in September 1959. In 1975, the school was

[101] Gymnasium Weierhof, Freimachung, Mennonite Central Committee Agency for Relief and other Christian Services an den ehrenwehrten Herrn Charles R. Wilson, Secretary of Defense, Washington D.C, Pentagon, "Betreff: Gesuch um Freigabe des Landschulheim Realansalt am Donnersberg in Weierhof, in Weierhof/Deutschland," Akron, 14.2.1957.

[102] See, J. Harold Sherk to Charles E. Wilson, February 14, 1957; Paul B. Hague to Rev. J. Harold Sherk, February 21, 1957, and Paul B. Hague to Rev. J. Harold Sherk, May 6, 1957. What can be deduced with absolute certainty from surviving correspondence is that the Mennonite Central Committee was closely allied with Congressman Paul B. Hague, who represented the 9th district in Pennsylvania. Reverend Sherk refers to Hague on multiple occasions as "our own Congressman," which may indicate that Hague was a member of the Mennonite church. Hague, in turn, convinced Leon H. Gavin, another Congressman from Pennsylvania's 23rd district to join the cause of returning the Weierhof property. Gavin ultimately presented the issue to Chairman of the House Armed Services Committee Carl Vinson.

[103] Gymnasium Weierhof, Freimachung, Letter from Carl Vinson to L.H. Gavin (undated).

renamed *Gymnasium Weierhof am Donnersberg*, under which name it has operated until this very day.[104]

The school association's reclamation case sheds light on the evolution, but also the limitations of the Napolas' postwar legend. Military authorities were not swayed as easily as German denazification tribunals by claims that the Napolas had not been SS schools. In a bizarre turn of events, the school association accused the U.S. military of violating the Hague Convention. According to Article 56 of the Convention, schools were not allowed to be confiscated.[105] In the 1950s, the school association adjusted its legal strategy to the prevailing political climate. According to the neoconservative German philosopher Hermann Lübbe, West Germany's partial silence on Nazi crimes in the first two decades after the war became a political necessity. The reintegration of former Nazis allegedly facilitated the Bonn Republic's democratic transformation.[106] West Germans who could demonstrate past links to Christianity and pro-Western goals of educating youth were particularly welcome agents of democratization. The school association

[104] Very little information about the school's history during the Third Reich can be accessed on the Weierhof institute's current website. Walking around the grounds today, only a trained expert could identify the buildings that were built during the Third Reich. Most teachers and students would be hard pressed to answer questions about the origins of their auditorium, lunch hall, dormitories, or former barracks spread across the campus. Portraits of headmasters who had been active under the Nazi regime still decorate the teachers' lounge. The only reason the school's Nazi past has not been completely neglected in public memory is that a network of former Napola am Donnersberg pupils continues to organize meetings of alumni. Gymnasium Weierhof, "Kurze Geschichte der Schule," www.weierhof.org (Website).
[105] Gymnasium Weierhof, Freimachung, Verein für die Anstalt am Donnersberg to the competent U.S. government office [sic] in Washington D.C., Pentagon, "Re: Request for Release of our Rural Secondary Boarding School 'Realanstalt am Donnersberg in Weierhof', which is requisitioned since 1945," November 1956, F. Our Request, 10.
[106] Charles S. Maier, *The Unmasterable Past: History, Holocaust, and German National Identity* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997), 90. See also, Hermann Lübbe, "Der Nationalsozialimus im deutschen Nachkriegsbewusstsein," *Historische Zeitschrift* 236 (1983): 579-599.

capitalized on its 19th century Mennonite origins and successfully petitioned prominent U.S. politicians into expediting the release of the Weierhof property.

Sites of indoctrination or higher learning? Napola interviewees weigh in on postwar debates

Debates about the role of the Napolas during the Third Reich have dominated recent scholarly works. Given the success of some Napola alumni who achieved great stature as politicians, businessmen, or journalists in postwar Germany, a Napola education seemingly left positive and long-lasting impressions on former students. Christian Schneider argues that the professional successes of former Napola students in the FRG have often been used as evidence of the Napolas' "pedagogical superiority."[107] In comparison to students from other types of higher secondary schools that existed during the Third Reich, Napola graduates were allegedly more qualified to assist with Germany's postwar reconstruction.[108] More importantly, the top international careers of former Napola students appeared to provide proof against the Napolas' reputation as sites of Nazi indoctrination.[109] The careers of former West German ambassador to the United Nations (UN) Rüdiger von Wechmar, former NATO Commander-in-Chief Leopold Chalupa, or AEG and *Deutsche Bahn* CEO Heinz Dürr demonstrated that Napola pedagogy was compatible with the expectations of Western democratic societies at large.

Many Napola alumni did not talk about their past as Nazi elite students until late in their lives. Due to the stigma of having attended SS preparatory schools, most awaited

[107] Christian Schneider, Cordelia Stilke, and Bernd Leineweber, *Das Erbe der Napola: Versuch einer Generationengeschichte des Nationalsozialismus* (Hamburg: Hamburger Edition, 1996), 37.
[108] *Herrenkinder- Das Sytem der NS-Eliteschulen (2008)*, Documentary produced by Christian Schneider and Eduard Erne (Frankfurt am Main: Pegasos Filmverleih und Produktion GmbH).
[109] Ibid.

retirement to tell their stories.[110] Some never talked at all. With each passing year, we are left with fewer Napola eyewitnesses. Those who are still alive, healthy, and willing to discuss the history of the Napolas fall into a special category of Napola attendees. They gained admission to a Napola during the final years of the Nazi dictatorship. They were too young to be conscripted into active military service during the war. After the fall of the Third Reich in 1945, they did not hold a completed secondary school diploma. As former Napola *Jungmannen*, they were often initially barred from attending higher secondary schools by occupation authorities.

Many had lent the Napolas' postwar legend, the collective defense of the school system during denazification, their tacit approval by remaining silent for most of their adult lives. Their passive support stands in stark contrast to the political and societal pressures that those with connections to the schools faced during the 1960s, 70s, and 80s. Following the conservatism of the Adenauer years, the student protests of the late 1960s sparked a reexamination of postwar orthodoxies.[111] Starting in 1969, successive chancellorships by SPD politicians Willy Brandt and Helmut Schmidt showed that an electoral majority supported more public awareness of Germany's Nazi past.[112]

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[110] Johannes Leeb, *'Wir waren Hitlers Eliteschüler': Ehemalige Zöglinge der NS-Ausleseschulen brechen ihr Schweigen* (München: Wilhelm Heyne Verlag, 1998), 14.

[111] For more information, see Philipp Gassert and Alan E. Steinweis, eds., *Coping with the Nazi Past: West German Debates on Nazism and Generational Conflict, 1955-1975* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2006)

[112] Jeffrey Herf, *Divided Memory*, 390-391. The founding of the Central Office of the State Justice Administrations for the Investigation of National Socialist Crimes (*Zentrale Stelle der Landesjustizverwaltungen zur Aufklärung nationalsozialistischer Gewaltverbrechen*) in Ludwigsburg in 1958, for instance, brought questions of responsibility for Nazi-era crimes back into the public spotlight. Joachim Scholtyseck, "Conservative Intellectuals and the debate of National Socialism and the Holocaust in the 1960s," in *Coping with the Nazi Past: West German Debates on Nazism and Generational Conflict, 1955-1975*, 241-242.

Reunification changed the course of Germany's political and historiographical trajectory. The collapse of the GDR and the perceived triumph of Western liberalism marked the starting point of a new national consciousness and commitment. Konrad Jarausch has labeled Germany's emerging national identity "democratic patriotism."[113] Since the Nazi trauma serves as an insufficient guide for the future, issues of how to narrate Germany's past continue to be the subject of intense academic and political speculation. [114] Historians have employed different strategies to reconcile post-reunification developments, such as the revival of German nationalism, with the mental burden of two failed German dictatorships.[115] Heinz Bude, Mary Fulbrook, and Rolf Schörken have examined the formative experiences and collective identities of "social generations" across different historical periods.[116] Christian Schneider's *Das Erbe der Napola* traces the impact of a Napola education beyond 1945 on members of "Generation Napola." [117] His psychoanalytical study highlights the long-term effects of Nazi indoctrination on the personal, professional, and even sexual development of former Napola students and their children in postwar Germany.[118] Generational studies have allowed former Napola students to comment on questions about Nazi pedagogy, Allied

[113] Konrad Jarausch, *After Hitler: Recivilizing Germans, 1945-1995* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 70-71.
[114] Jarausch and Geyer, *Shattered Past*, 38.
[115] Stefan Berger, "Historiography and Nation-building: Some Preliminary Remarks," in *The Search for Normality: National Identity and Historical Consciousness in Germany since 1800* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2003)
[116] See, Heinz Bude *Deutsche Karrieren: Lebenskonstruktionen sozialer Aufsteiger aus der Flakhelfer-Generation* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1987), Rolf Schörken, *Die Niederlage als Generationserfahrung. Jugendliche nach dem Zusammenbruch der NS-Herrschaft* (Weinheim: Juventa Verlag, 2004), or Mary Fulbrook, *Dissonant Lives: Generations and Violence through the German Dictatorships* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011)
[117] Christian Schneider, "Gelobt sei, was hart macht," *WirtschaftsWoche*, May 20, 2009.
[118] Schneider, *Das Erbe der Napolas*, 65-75 .

occupation, postwar reconstruction, and European integration. These works illustrated that there was no such thing as 'ordinary Germans.'[119] People were shaped by the times and places into which they were born and had different key formative experiences.[120] As a result, members from different social generations tackled common challenges, or "camouflaged their roles in history" in unique ways.[121]

Oral history projects with Third Reich witnesses present a unique set of problems. On the one hand, oral history allows historians to examine the impact of events on the lives of individuals. On the other hand, historians have to be sensitive to interviewees' subjective interpretations of the past. For eyewitnesses, almost 70 years have elapsed since the collapse of the Nazi regime. Lynn Abrams reminds us that individual memories are always "framed and shaped by external influences including collective remembrances of the past."[122] In *Remembering Survival,* Christopher Browning examines the history of the Starachowice slave labor camp with the help of 292 eyewitness accounts. When he began his research project, he expected that due to the dispersion of eyewitnesses after the war, different "memory communities would take shape, increasingly homogenized within but increasingly divergent from one another."[123] These expectations were not fulfilled. He discovered that survivor memories were more stable and homogeneous than he had originally anticipated. Although former Napola pupils were not Holocaust survivors and should not be treated as victims of the regime, a similar postwar development seems to

[119] Fulbrook, *Dissonant Lives*, 3.
[120] Ibid., 9.
[121] Ibid., 472.
[122] Lynn Abrams, *Oral History Theory* (London: Routledge, 2010), 96.
[123] Christopher R. Browning, *Remembering Survival: Inside a Nazi Slave-Labor Camp* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2010), 9.

have taken place. Due to the efficacy of the Napolas' exonerative discourse after the war, individual memories often became indistinguishable from the collective.

Napola defendants between 1945 and 1949 protested Allied accusations concerning the totalitarian character of the schools. Yet it was too early to convince U.S., British, and French denazification tribunals that former Napola students embraced democracy. Since reunification, some historians have begun to redress this predominantly negative picture of the schools. Among the many historians, political scientists, philosophers, writers, and film makers who have contributed to the "renaissance of the national idea" after the events of 1989/90, Johannes Leeb broke the silence on Nazi elite students' contributions to postwar reconstruction in 1998.[124] He explored whether a Nazi elite education gave former pupils discernable advantages in a capitalist democracy. Based on his illustrious list of former Napola, AHS, and *Reichsschulen* attendees, Leeb was inclined to answer the question in the affirmative.[125]

While historians, journalists, and filmmakers have pursued the topic of the Napolas and their postwar legacies with renewed vigor since 1990, the question remains as to why some Napola pupils were able to excel after World War II. In other words, can claims about the Napolas' pedagogical superiority be validated? Were former Napola students on average better educated to deal with postwar challenges?

Over the past two years, eight students from the former Napola am Donnersberg volunteered to take part in this research project. Through written questionnaires and oral interviews, the participants responded to a series of inquiries about their experiences

[124] Leeb, *'Wir waren Hitlers Eliteschüler,* 13-20; Berger, *The Search for Normality*, 1-2.
[125] Ibid., 17-18.

during and after the Third Reich.[126] Questions tackled two main themes: the Napolas' learning culture during the war and the impact of Napola education and training on students' postwar careers.

Kurt Wreitmann began attending Grade 5 of the *Gau-Oberschule Donnersberg* in September 1939.[127] In 1941, he witnessed the school's conversion into a Napola firsthand. Since the institutes initially bore strong similarities, Wreitmann could no longer recall the precise moment when he became a Napola *Jungmann*.[128] General observations about boarding school life dominated his narrative and raised doubts about the uniqueness of the Napola curriculum. He remembered, "from the onset we were schooled and trained in punctuality, cleanliness, diligence, endurance, honesty, and willingness to help."[129] He also described a very mundane daily school routine comprised of early wake-up calls, breakfast, class, lunch, rest, and afternoon activities.

Wreitmann described his experience at the Napola am Donnersberg in a very positive light. He fondly recalled school trips to nearby historical sites. Weather permitting, students visited the town of Göllheim, the site of a 13th century battle, or hiked up the Donnersberg mountain.[130] During one of August Heißmeyer's visits to Weierhof, Wreitmann allegedly overheard the Napola inspector talk about his plans to

[126] Each participant received a comprehensive information package in the mail. It included a six-question survey that could be filled out by hand and sent back to the author.
[127] Wreitmann did not disclose his age. He did, however, reveal that he turned 16 after D-Day; which puts his birthday between June and December of 1928. Kurt Wreitmann, private correspondence (Question 2), December 8, 2014.
[128] Ibid.
[129] Wreitmann, private correspondence (Question 2), December 8, 2014.
[130] Wreitmann, private correspondence (Question 3), December 8, 2014.

construct a "castle-like structure" on the peak of the mountain.[131] The mountain had been named after Thor, the Norse god of thunder, and Heißmeyer encouraged visiting Napola students from across the Third Reich to learn more about Norse and Germanic mythology.

Wreitmann believed that a Napola education benefitted students after the war. Due to their strict education, former Napola students worked hard and successfully met the demands of the postwar period. He did not specify what those demands entailed. He simply stated, "There was an enormous amount to do."[132] He spent the months after the war working as a lumberjack because "construction materials were in short supply everywhere."[133]

Wreitmann was reluctant to discuss his career beyond the immediate postwar period. While he strongly supported the hypothesis that former Napola students had a competitive advantage after the war, he did not see his own career as proof. Instead, he referenced the careers of three classmates who became bankers and government officials in the FRG.[134] He stated that "[only] those who received [financial] support from home" attended university after the war, and achieved success as "doctors, lawyers, architects, etc. [sic]."[135] While we do not know Wreitmann's profession after the war, his answers suggested that he did not subscribe to the postwar rags-to-riches story. While opportunities for social advancement and reduced tuition fees had lured some boys from working-class backgrounds into the Napolas, secondary schooling had remained

[131] Wreitmann, private correspondence (Question 2), December 8, 2014.
[132] Wreitmann, private correspondence (Question 4), December 8, 2014.
[133] Ibid.
[134] Ibid.
[135] Wreitmann, private correspondence (Question 5), December 8, 2014.

essentially a middle class affair during and after the Third Reich.[136] One example illustrates this point. Prior to its transformation into a Napola in 1941, the public school for boys (*Pädagogium*) in Putbus on the German island of Rügen had enjoyed widespread popularity. Like the Napola am Donnersberg, the newly founded NPEA Rügen had to absorb many of its predecessor's pupils. According to Heißmeyer's breakdown of their social backgrounds, 39.2% of students were sons of large landowning farmers. 9.6% were sons of military officers and 10.4% of businessmen. Of note, 6.7% were sons of civil servants and 0.8% of party functionaries.[137] Heißmeyer observed that no sons of working class families had previously attended the *Pädagogium*.[138] Although Heißmeyer claimed that the social class stratification in Putbus was completely different from most Napolas, it is highly unlikely that the inspectorate achieved its egalitarian goals during the war.[139] In this light, Wreitmann's career as a Napola *Jungmann* may have been the exception rather than the rule. The collapse of the regime ended his chances for social mobility based on racial criteria. Moreover, the upper-middle-class aura and high attrition rates of

[136] Tent, *Mission on the Rhine*, 8.
[137] Heißmeyer does not touch on the social backgrounds of the remaining 33.3% of students who had no ties to the *Pädagogium* in Putbus.
[138] BA Berlin, R 187 Sammlung Schumacher, R 187/270b, Nationalpolitische Erziehungsanstalten (1934-45), Der Inspektor der Nationalpolitischen Erziehungsanstalten an den Reichsführer-SS, "Betreff: Dort. Schreiben Tgb. Nr. AR 11/15/42 vom 30.6. 1942."
[139] In *NS-Ausleseschulen*, Harald Scholtz published the findings of a 1940 report, which illustrated that the majority of Napola pupils' fathers were civil servants (*Beamte*), white-collar workers (*Angestellte*), or businessmen (*Gewerbetreibende*). According to this report of unconfirmed origins, only a combined 20.7% of fathers were farmers (*Landwirte*) or laborers (*Arbeiter*). Harald Scholtz, *NS - Ausleseschulen: Internatsschulen als Herrschaftsmittel des Führerstaates* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1973), 132-133. Although schools in Putbus, Neubeuern, Weierhof, or St. Wendel retained many upper-middle class youth after their transformations into Napolas, a definitive answer to questions about the Napolas' social composition between 1933 and 1945 has to await further quantitative research. The dossiers of former Napola pupils provide an excellent entry point for scholars since parents of prospective Napola pupils had to disclose their occupation and submit proof of income prior to enrolling their children.

higher secondary schools after the war deterred low-income families from enrolling their children.[140]

Born in 1930, Karl Stephan attended elementary and middle school in Saarbrucken until Grade 5. Since his family could not afford to send him to the local *Gymnasium,* Stephan was invited to the Napola am Donnersberg's admission exam in the summer of 1942. He passed and enrolled full-time for the start of Grade 6 in September 1942. Unlike Wreitmann, Stephan remembered details from his weekly schedule at the Napola. A regular school day began in the summer at 6:00 and in the winter at 6:30 in the morning. After the boys had showered, they returned to their dorms, made their beds, and put on their uniforms. Before entering the breakfast hall, everyone had to appear on the courtyard for the daily flag raising ceremony. Classes lasted from 8:00 until 1:00 in the afternoon, followed by a lunch break. The period between 2:00 and 4:00 PM, with the exception of Wednesday afternoons, was reserved for the *Jungmannen*'s physical education and pre-military training. At four o'clock, students sat down for a light meal. From 4:30 until 6:00 PM, they completed their homework for the next day. After dinner, those in Grade 5 through 8 had to be in bed by nine o'clock. The older students went to sleep at ten.[141]

Stephan's recollections demonstrate that Napola pupils had little time for leisure. While public school students usually finished classes at 1:00 in the afternoon and returned to their homes, Napola students followed a rigorous schedule that lasted all day. For

[140] Tent, *Mission on the Rhine,* 120.
[141] Karl Stephan, private correspondence ("*Die Napola-Jahre 1942 bis 1945*: *Einiges über den Alltag*"), December 11, 2014.

seven days a week, boarders were given little freedom to explore their individuality. All daily activities were performed in group settings. Stephan also pondered deeply on the process of becoming a member of the elite during the Third Reich. For Stephan elitism meant that "National Socialist society expected above-average accomplishments [from Napola students]." He also insisted that Napola students did not receive any preferential treatment from society because of their elite status.[142] Both statements, however, beg further clarification. Stephan's definition of elitism conveniently ignored its racial connotations. The regime and society expected Napola pupils to perform great deeds in the service of the *Volksgemeinschaft,* because they were deemed genetically superior. Ordinary Germans did not afford Napola pupils special privileges because the exclusivity of the schools had resulted in limited popular awareness of the school system and its goals. Moreover, the secluded locations of some schools achieved a very physical separation between Napola pupils and the rest of society.

Stephan was confident that Napola *Jungmannen* had been in better physical condition than students from "normal schools."[143] He did not, however, claim that Napola students had been better prepared academically. Stephan personally enjoyed the Napola's German, English and Latin language courses; despite his English teacher's "lousy" pronunciation. [144] History lessons focused on examples of Germanic superiority, beginning with the Germanic migrations and culminating in the emergence of the Third

[142] Karl Stephan, interview by Steffen Wagner (Question 5: "*Zum Alltag*"), August 15, 2006.
[143] Karl Stephan, interview by Steffen Wagner (Question 3: "*Zum Unterricht*"), August 15, 2006.
[144] Stephan, private correspondence ("*Die Napola-Jahre 1942 bis 1945*: *Einiges über den Alltag*"), December 11, 2014.

Reich. Stephan correctly identified that this National Socialist interpretation of history was prevalent at "most schools" and not just the Napolas.[145]

Stephan acknowledged that he had been bitterly disappointed by the collapse of the Nazi regime in 1945. "In our youthful foolishness" he remembered, "we believed that after so much effort and sacrifice we should have won the war."[146] Years of Nazi propaganda and promises of final victory had left a lasting impact on Stephan and his classmates. Some historians even argue that ten- to fourteen-year olds were the most impressionable group during the Third Reich.[147] The naivety of this age group continued into the postwar period. Stephan argued that "once the [regime's] crimes were revealed, we realized that we had been deceived and abused."[148] Even older cohorts feigned ignorance when it came to topic of the Holocaust.[149] Kurt Wreitmann, for instance, remembered seeing "men in oddly striped uniforms" at the train station in Dachau after the war. He claimed that at the time he did not know they were concentration camp survivors.[150] Historians, however, have convincingly shown that most Germans had some knowledge of the regime's attempts to destroy European Jewry.[151] Napola pupils, in particular, were instructed about the laws of nature and racial ancestry at an early age.[152]

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[145] Stephan, private correspondence ("*Die Napola-Jahre 1942 bis 1945*: *Einiges über den Alltag*"), December 11, 2014. For more information on the National Socialist interpretation of history, see Gilmer W. Blackburn, *Education in the Third Reich* (Albany: State University of New York, 1985), 51-57.
[146] Karl Stephan, interview by Steffen Wagner (Question 8: "*Nach 1945*"), August 15, 2006.
[147] Hilmar Hoffmann, *The Triumph of Propaganda: Film and National Socialism, 1933-1945, Volume 1*, trans. John A. Broadwin and Volker Rolf Berghahn (Providence: Berghahn Books, 1996), 99.
[148] Ibid.
[149] Leeb, *'Wir waren Hitlers Eliteschüler,*18.
[150] Kurt Wreitmann, private correspondence (Question 3), December 8, 2014.
[151] Michael Meng, *Shattered Spaces: Encountering Jewish Ruins in Postwar Germany and Poland* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2011), 25.
[152] Claudia Koonz, *The Nazi Conscience* (Cambridge: Belknap, 2003), 161.

Many Napola am Donnersberg students could not attend higher secondary schools in the French occupation zone after the war. Occupation authorities wanted to punish families who had benefitted under the Third Reich. They also wanted to deny politically tainted children the opportunity of filling leadership roles in postwar Germany. In the fall of 1945, the French military government informed Stephan that he could no longer attend the *Gymnasium* in Saarbruecken because of his Napola past.[153] The school's headmaster, however, ignored French demands and allowed Stephan to stay. In December 1945, French officials amended occupation law. Some Napola students were allowed to attend, if they signed an affidavit promising to abide by French school regulations and abstain from politics.[154] Stephan shied away from becoming politically involved the rest of his life.[155] Although Leeb's and Schneider's works may have created the illusion that many Napola pupils ended up in political office after the war, Stephan's apolitical stance was replicated by others of his generation. Alexander von Plato has shown that members of the Hitler Youth generation, those born between 1919 and the early 1930s, reacted to the collapse of the regime in different ways. Some looked for a new ideological framework and found a home in the theories of the Socialist movement. The majority, however, felt a deep sense of disillusionment after years of socialization in Nazi youth formations.[156]

[153] Karl Stephan, interview by Steffen Wagner (Question 8: "*Nach 1945*"), August 15, 2006.
[154] Ibid.
[155] Stephan, private correspondence ("*Die Napola-Jahre 1942 bis 1945*: *Welche Spuren hat nun diese Zeit in uns hinterlassen*?"), December 11, 2014.
[156] Helmut Schelsky has referred to depoliticized members of this age cohort as the "skeptical generation." Helmut Schelsky, *Die Skeptische Generation: Eine Soziologie der deutschen Jugend* (Düsseldorf: Eugen Diederichs Verlag, 1958), 84-92.

Many swore to never join a political party again.[157] According to Rolf Schörken, they were drawn instead to cultural life.[158]

Stephan was not the only interviewee who embarked on an academic career after the war. Klaus Schwab, a retired professor of geology, was admitted into the Napola am Donnersberg in September 1943. Schwab had come in contact with the Napola school system at an early age. Schwab grew up in Weierhof and his family lived within walking distance of the Napola. Moreover, Schwab's father had been a teacher at the institute for some time.[159] After day students were no longer accepted in 1943, Klaus and his older brother Rainer became boarders. While Rainer disliked the Napola's "military drill," Klaus adjusted well to school and communal life.[160]

Schwab's recollections of life at his Napola were overwhelmingly positive. He argued that classes were less politicized than those at nearby public schools. Every year on his birthday, students at the *Oberschule* in Kirchheimbolanden had to write an essay about Adolf Hitler. "This was something," he clarified, "we did not have to do in Grade 5 and 6."[161] The Napolas monitored students' behavior around-the-clock, which may have eliminated the need for such displays of loyalty to the regime. As a natural athlete, Schwab embraced the curriculum's "paramilitary component" including camping,

[157] Alexander von Plato, "The Hitler Youth generation and its role in the two post-war German states," in *Generations in Conflict: Youth revolt and generation formation in Germany 1770-1968,* ed. Mark Roseman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995),216-217.
[158] Rolf Schörken, *Jugend 1945. Politisches Denken und Lebensgeschichte* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 2005), 142.
[159] Schwab's written response implied that his father had taught at the Weierhof institute prior to its conversion into a Napola in 1941. Klaus Schwab, private correspondence (Question 2), May 22, 2015.
[160] Ibid.
[161] Schwab, private correspondence (Question 3), May 22, 2015.

outdoor games, and marching in formation.[162] Apart from participating in music and handicraft lessons, he also valued the teaching of everyday practical skills such as horseback riding, basic sewing, making jam, and bringing in local farmers' potato harvests.

According to Schwab, 18 months of Napola schooling had left him and his former classmates with many valuable lessons. He acknowledged, however, that the collapse of the Nazi regime in 1945 had been timely. "Despite the fact that we remembered 1 ½ years of Napola Weierhof [sic] as an extended Boy Scout camp," Schwab suggested, "nothing must disguise the fact that with increasing age, we would have been subject to a lot more militaristic and ideological indoctrination, which would have turned most of us into loyal supporters of the regime."[163] His comment is important for two reasons. On the one hand, he admitted that the Napolas' ultimate goal was to prepare pupils for leadership roles in the Nazis' *Volksgemeinschaft*. On the other hand, he insisted that the Napola curriculum during the first two years (Grade 5 and 6) had not been infused with the ideology of the regime to the same degree. In other words, Schwab chose to recast his past at the Napola am Donnersberg in a positive light because older Napola pupils, not him, had borne the brunt of the school's militarization and indoctrination efforts.

Schwab's positive memories were also predicated on the fact that he had been spared most of the hardships other Napola pupils had to endure. By having family close-by, he claims he did not become homesick while boarding at the Napola. He was too young to be conscripted into combat. During the final months of the war, he was not

[162] Schwab, private correspondence (Question 2), May 22, 2015.
[163] Schwab, private correspondence (Question 4), May 22, 2015.

among his classmates who fled and sought refuge in the Bavarian Alps. Instead, he travelled with his family to the town of Tuttlingen, north of Lake Constance.[164] Shortly after the cessation of hostilities, they returned to their house in Weierhof.

In the summer of 1945, Schwab successfully applied to the *Nordpfalzgymnasium* in Kirchheimbolanden. Once he had signed the mandatory affidavit promising to never become politically active, Schwab continued his path towards the *Abitur.*[165] While Schwab expressed no resentment towards French occupation officials, he lamented that most of his classmates were not able to attend a *Gymnasium* after the war because of their "political" past. Those who aspired to attend university achieved their goal through alternative means of education, "which required a certain level of assertiveness."[166] Night schools and technical colleges, for instance, offered professionally experienced students the opportunity to qualify for postsecondary education after the fact. It should be stressed that Schwab shed light on the particular conditions of Germany's postwar order first. He made reference to the Napolas' educational goals only later. The Napolas instilled obedience and discipline in their students, which "might have helped" overcome postwar challenges.[167] The militarization of youth was not unique to Napola pupils. Millions of boys had been exposed to paramilitary training in the Hitler Youth over the course of the Third Reich. Rolf Schörken argues that many had come to resent military imperatives of obedience and order by the end of the war. Teenagers, including former Napola pupils,

[164] Schwab, private correspondence (Question 5), May 22, 2015.
[165] Ibid.
[166] Ibid.
[167] Ibid.

may have actually distanced themselves from military values after the collapse of the Nazi regime.[168]

Schwab intimated that the Napolas had provided qualitatively superior education to their students. One of his classmates, Rudi Steiner, corroborated this claim by recounting his transition from Nazi to postwar schooling. In January 1946, his parents registered him at the *Oberrealschule* in Landau. Within weeks of arriving at the new school, Steiner noticed that his knowledge in courses such as English and mathematics was more advanced than his peers'.[169] His stay was cut short when French military officials demanded that the school dismiss all former Napola students. Since Steiner was still of mandatory school age, he was forced to transfer to a lower secondary school in Spirkelbach. Three months into the semester, Steiner received a letter from the school directorate in Landau notifying him of his re-admission.[170] Despite missing over ten weeks of classes, Steiner believed he was able to catch up quickly due to his Napola "head start."[171] Steiner's early advantages in Germany's postwar public school system might not necessarily have been the result of superior schooling during the Third Reich.

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[168] Rolf Schörken, *Luftwaffenhelfer und Drittes Reich: Die Entstehung eines politischen Bewusstseins* (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta Verlag, 1984), 230-231.
[169] Rudi Steiner, private correspondence (Question 4), December 12, 2014.
[170] The Allied Control Council introduced Directive No. 24 on January 12, 1946. The law stipulated the compulsory removal of persons who had been officials, teachers, or pupils in the Napolas. It also selected "parents who have permitted any of their children to attend National Political Educational Institutes" for further review. Yet the retention of persons fell within the discretion of zonal governments. Since Steiner does not remember the circumstances of his re-admission, it may have been due to the efforts of more lenient-minded, local French authorities. Generally speaking, Steiner's case benefitted from an overall softening of restrictions during the early months of 1946, exemplified by the introduction of the Law for Liberation in the U.S. Occupation Zone on March 5, 1946. Office of Military Government, Civil Administration Division, "Allied Control Authority, Control Council Directive No. 24 Removal from Office and from Positions of Responsibility of Nazis and of Persons hostile to Allied Purposes, 12 January 1946," in *Denazification, Cumulative Review. Report, 1 April 1947-30 April 1948.* No 34 (1948): 10 (98), 12 (q).
[171] Ibid.

While the Napola am Donnersberg held regular classes until the end of 1944, Steiner's classmates at Landau may not have enjoyed similar privileges. Steiner received the *Abitur* in 1952. He graduated from teachers' college in 1954 and for over 40 years taught high school biology and chemistry.[172] He was convinced that two years of Napola schooling had a crucial impact on the rest of his life and the lives of other classmates. In the same vein, Steiner made it very clear that "we have been staunch democrats and citizens of Europe [since the end of the Second World War]."[173] Steiner's story demonstrates that positive memories of the Third Reich and democratic reintegration were not mutually exclusive after the war.

French restrictions could, in some cases, derail the professional aspirations of Napola pupils completely. Erich Gummersheimer attended the Napola am Donnersberg from May 1943 until its dissolution in April 1945. In October 1945, he applied to the *Oberrealschule* in Ludwigshafen without success. After Gummersheimer and his father filed an exemption request, he had to appear for a personal interview with the local French cultural attaché. When he was asked if he had enjoyed his time at the Napola, "I [Gummersheimer] answered with a resounding 'Yes'."[174] Gummersheimer always believed that his youthful naiveté in answering in the affirmative was what led the French commission to deny his request to complete his education.

Although many of his classmates encountered similar difficulties, Gummersheimer did not take his rejection well. He "felt humiliated" and dropped out of

[172] Steiner, private correspondence (Question 5), December 12, 2014.
[173] Steiner, private correspondence (Question 6), December 12, 2014.
[174] Erich Gummersheimer, private correspondence (Question 5), December 10, 2014.

school entirely.[175] For most of 1946, he travelled through the Wurttemberg countryside and "bartered for bread, lard, flour, and other foodstuffs for the family."[176] He also remembered selling goods on the black market. Since the *Wehrmacht* had blown up the main bridge between Mannheim and Ludwigshafen during the final months of fighting, Gummersheimer and his sisters operated a side business helping pedestrians cross makeshift bridges and Allied checkpoints.

In February 1947, Gummersheimer returned to school and finished his lower secondary school degree (*Volksschulabschluss*) in five months. In the summer of 1947, he submitted his application for teachers' college in Speyer. It was again dismissed "for familiar reasons."[177] Instead, Gummersheimer opted for two years of vocational training to become a trade merchant, but that line of work did not appeal to Gummersheimer for long. After years of volunteering with local Catholic parishes, Gummersheimer decided to pursue the career of a social worker. In 1953, he completed his intermediate secondary school certificate and enrolled in a Catholic college with a specialization in welfare work. He graduated in 1958. Gummersheimer spent the next 30 years managing a facility for troubled teenagers. Towards the end of his professional career, he also headed the social work department of the German Caritas Association.[178]

Ludwig List was admitted to the Napola am Donnersberg in 1943. Unlike most of his former classmates, List remembered his Napola experience in a very sobering light. He vehemently rejected the idea of Napola students being perceived as elites before and

[175] Gummersheimer, private correspondence (Question 5), December 10, 2014.
[176] Ibid.
[177] Ibid.
[178] Ibid.

after 1945. "We all came from modest backgrounds," he stated, "and we were definitely not academic overachievers."[179] While List would later go on to become director of a local *Commerzbank* branch, his path to success was anything but smooth during the immediate postwar period. In 1946, he was excluded from attending school in his hometown of Pirmasens. A personal hearing with French denazification officials determined that List was eligible to attend higher secondary school under the condition that he do so in the heavily damaged city of Zweibrücken.[180] He remembered travelling on board cattle cars because passenger train services were often delayed. His daily food rations, at the time, amounted to less than 200 grams of bread. During the initial probationary period, he also had to subject himself to bi-weekly questioning by police, "where I was asked stupid questions."[181] In the summer of 1948, List finally received permission to transfer to the *Oberrealschule* in Pirmasens. However, the family's precarious financial situation forced him to leave school after Grade 10, and he subsequently apprenticed at a bank.[182]

In her article "Surviving '*Stunde Null,*'" Helen Roche examines the experiences of Napola pupils who witnessed the end of World War II as adolescents.[183] In an attempt to gain insight into what has shaped collective memories, Roche identifies three major themes and patterns in the narratives of former Napola pupils. Firstly, former

[179] Ludwig List, interview by Tim Mueller, January 6, 2015.
[180] List, private correspondence (Question 5), January 4, 2015.
[181] List, private correspondence (Question 3), January 4, 2015.
[182] Ludwig List's father had been a *Reichsbank* employee during the Third Reich. After the war, he faced a lengthy denazification trial during which he was unable to rely on a steady income for his family of eight. As a result, Ludwig had to pay for the school's tuition fees himself. Ludwig List, interview by Tim Mueller, January 6, 2015.
[183] Helen Roche, "Surviving 'Stunde Null': Narrating the Fate of Nazi Elite-School Pupils during the Collapse of the Third Reich," *German History* Vol.33, No.4 (2015): 571.

Jungmannen repeatedly emphasized the role of NPEA authorities as caregivers during the final months and weeks of the Nazi dictatorship. Secondly, former students stressed the usefulness of a Napola education after the collapse of the Nazi regime. The Napolas' emphasis on physical education and pre-military training allowed students to overcome the physical challenges of denazification and military occupation. Thirdly, former Napola pupils shed light upon the discrimination they faced in the immediate postwar period or in their later lives.[184]

Roche's primary goal was not to assess the objective validity of former Napola students' testimonies. Instead, she highlights the fact that "these occurrences are deployed in a similar fashion throughout the corpus of evidence under analysis."[185] She speculates as to whether or not Napola students' selective interpretation of the past "could perhaps form the basis of a specific form of collective identity."[186] Moreover, Roche argues that former *Jungmannen* have purposely reframed their Napola memories, both during and after the war, in a positive manner. She states that "while the 'success stories' the *Napolaner* tell about their achievements later in life have much in common with those told by their civilian counterparts [pupils who did not attend Napolas], they are often predicated on the very specific advantages which their Napola education had (allegedly, if not actually) instilled in them."[187]

Roche's study leaves several important questions unanswered: Should we take Napola pupils' different alma maters into account? Did tales of persecution vary between

[184] Ibid., 575-576.
[185] Roche, "Surviving 'Stunde Null'," 584.
[186] Ibid., 586.
[187] Ibid.,585-586.

occupation zones? Why did individual memories become absorbed by collective presentations in the first place? Most importantly, what caused large numbers of former Napola attendees to have successful careers in the FRG?

During my conversation with Ludwig List in the summer of 2014, he warned against making generalizations about Napola pupils' experiences.[188] He recommended treating every case study as unique. His words of advice informed, at least in part, this dissertation's methodological approaches. While Roche relies on a diverse cast of interviewees from Napolas in Bensberg, Stuhm, Plön, Köslin, Reichenau, Spandau, Rügen, and Naumburg, this chapter has concentrated exclusively on the history of the Napola am Donnersberg and a selection of former students. Considering that few Napola pupils are still alive today, any type of historical enquiry that is based on original testimonies can advance our understanding of the Napolas. Yet there are several benefits to writing micro histories.

Roche does not qualify her selection of Napola student testimonies beyond the fact that they belonged to the "rarely discussed group of war children."[189] She presumes that her sample population is representative of all *Jungmannen* who experienced the collapse of the Third Reich as adolescents. The fact that her interviewees attended different Napolas seems to only strengthen her argument. My research, however, has shown that former Napola pupils situate their retelling of events first and foremost within a specific localized context. This context needs to be intelligible and accessible to the reader.

[188] Ludwig List, interview by Tim Mueller, January 6, 2015.
[189] Roche, "Surviving 'Stunde Null'," 587.

Tales of persecution during the immediate postwar period by my interviewees and correspondents paid tribute to zonal differences. Harsh material conditions, food and housing shortages, violence, and economic difficulties plagued Germans of all ages after the war. Nazi elite students were not alone coping with these circumstances. Yet legal conditions varied significantly between Western zones of occupation. Napola pupils in the French occupation zone were excluded and dismissed from higher secondary schools. Roche downplays the significance the prohibitions on education and career choice had on Napola am Donnersberg pupils.[190] French denazification policies left a lasting impression. While Roche admits that these men developed "narratives of victimhood" over the decades, she may have underestimated the important role these early experiences played in their young lives.[191]

In the follow-up to my personal interview with Albert Herrmann, who also joined the Napola am Donnersberg in 1943, he shared a list detailing his classmates' careers after the war:[192]

Name of former Napola am Donnersberg pupil	**Professional title and/or career in the postwar period**
Prof. Dr. G. Alefeld	Nuclear physicist
F. Anefeld	Protestant minister (*Dekan*)
R. Baisch	Mechanical engineer (technical director of the Stuttgart airport)

[190] Ibid., 581.
[191] Ibid., 576.
[192] The accuracy of this list has not been confirmed. Albert Herrmann lost contact with 18 additional classmates after the war. He believes that 2 of them emigrated to Sweden and Australia, and 1, a jazz pianist, committed suicide. Considering that approximately 36 % of the 1943 Napola am Donnersberg class has not been identified, the findings in this section are necessarily provisional. There is a slim chance that Hermann stayed in touch with peers with similar interests. Therefore, the number among those 17 who went into agriculture or blue-collar jobs very well could be higher compared to those accounted for in this list. Albert Herrmann, private correspondence, March 7, 2015.

H. Becker*[193]	Business Graduate (*Diplomkaufmann*)
H. Bohlander	Secondary school teacher
W. Decker	Chemical engineer
W. Emig	Vice-Principal of a *Gymnasium*
E. Fess*	Industrial manager
H. Frank	Entrepreneur (shoe stores)
Prof. Dr. H. Fritsch	Internal medicine
E. Gummersheimer*	Social worker
W. Hensel*	Industrial manager
A. Herrmann*	Management expert (CEO of a company specializing in soldering technology)
H. Herzbach	Customs officer
Prof. Dr. F. Hoffmann	Civil engineer
H. Hoffmann	Principal
O. Krämer*	Painter and small business owner
O. Katzenmeier	Entrepreneur (company in Indonesia)
H. Huhn	Clog maker and head of the Daimler-Benz Wörth fire department
L. List*	Bank branch director
E. Müller*	Mayor
J. Niebling	Insurance agent
G. Rhode	Human resources manager (Town of Wiesbaden)
Prof. M. Schiedhelm	Architect
K. Schneider	Restaurant Owner
Prof. Dr. K. Schwab*	Geologist
R. Steiner*	Secondary school teacher
W. Thaler	Electrical Engineer
H. Zerger	Farmer

To put the 1943 class of forty-seven Grade 5 students into perspective, we need to consult the only surviving Reich Education Ministry survey from October 1941. On the

[193] Pupils labeled with an asterisk (*) had initially expressed interest to join this study. Due to medical complications, only Gummersheimer, Hermann, List, Müller, Schwab, and Steiner provided written declarations of consent and completed the extensive questionnaires. List and Hermann, accompanied by their spouses, also shared their experiences in one-on-one interview sessions.

reporting date (October 15, 1941), 238 *Jungmannen* were attending the Napola am Donnersberg:[194]

Grade	Number of Students
5	40
6	37
7	34
8	35
9	28
10	40
11	14
12	10

For the start of the 1942/43 school year, the Napola am Donnersberg admitted 36 Grade 5 students.[195] If we added those to Albert Herrmann's 47 classmates from the 1943/44 school year, an estimated total of 351 pupils attended the school during the Third Reich.[196]

This partial list of postwar employment histories of former Napola am Donnersberg pupils suggests that the top international careers of former Napola pupils, who figured prominently in Leeb's and Schneider's works, may have been outliers and

[194] To foster a more military atmosphere, grades had been referred to as platoons (*Züge*) at all Napolas since 1933. A *Jungmann* who was enrolled in the first platoon (*Zug*) was in fact attending Grade 5. Conversely, a student enrolled in the second platoon was in Grade 6, and so forth. Reichsministerium für Wissenschaft, Erziehung und Volksbildung, Reichsstelle für Schulwesen, *Wegweiser für das höhere Schulwesen, Schuljahr 1941* (Berlin: Weidmannsche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1936), 3.

[195] Private Collection Steffen Wagner, Deutsches Institut für Internationale Pädagogische Forschung, Bibliothek für Bildungsgeschichtliche Forschung – Sammlung 872.

[196] A ministerial circular from November 18, 1944 indicates that the 1944/45 acceptance class may have seen a drop in enrolment. The circular asked public school boards to identify and recommend suitable candidates to the Napola am Donnersberg for the 1945/46 school year, including "for the first time" those who were going into Grade 6.I speculate that 30 students or less were admitted to the Napola am Donnersberg in the summer of 1944, thus raising the school's total school population to 351 between 1941 and 1945. This very conservative estimate does not factor in the unknown number of Napola am Donnersberg drop-outs and deaths. It is, however, fair to assume that annual enrollment numbers did not exceed the 1941 benchmark of 238 students in subsequent years. Landesarchiv Speyer, Bestand H13, Akten des Landrats des Landkreises Alzey, Der Reichsstatthalter in Hessen, "Betreff: Meldung von Jungen zur Aufnahme in der Nationalpolitischen Erziehungsanstalt am Donnersberg," Bensheim, den 18. November 1944.

not representative of the Napola population as a whole. Nevertheless, Herrmann's classmates found employment and contributed to the success of postwar society in meaningful ways. Out of 29 former Napola am Donnersberg pupils, twelve (41%) joined West Germany's private sector workforce. Four worked as teachers or principals at various types of German secondary schools. Five found work as higher education professionals, raising the employment number of former Napola pupils in West Germany's postwar education sector to nine (31%). Three (10%) held jobs with West Germany's federal and municipal governments, whereas two (7%) joined Protestant and Catholic organizations. Out of the remaining three members of the 1943 cohort, one (3%) worked in agriculture and two (7%) in manufacturing during the Bonn Republic.

In an article written for the German business magazine *WirtschaftsWoche,* Christian Schneider claimed that former Nazi elite students were drawn to West German industry.[197] Others have speculated that disproportionate numbers of former Napola pupils became professors of physical education after the war.[198] Both claims were formulated without sufficient statistical evidence. Yet the authors' hypotheses should not be dismissed altogether. In my sample, the majority of Napola am Donnersberg pupils spent their professional careers in West Germany's civil service and industry. Klaus Schwab argued that his academic career was a conscious attempt to abstain from political

[197]Christian Schneider, "Gelobt sei, was hart macht," *WirtschaftsWoche*, May 20, 2009.
Jonathan Wiesen's findings in *West German Industry and the Challenge of the Nazi Past, 1945-55* give some support to Schneider's claims. West German industry became a safe haven for former Nazi sympathsizers after the war. S. Jonathan Wiesen, *West German Industry and the Challenge of the Nazi Past, 1945-55* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2001), 173.
[198] There is no evidence for this claim. The author blindly assumed that Horst Ueberhorst's postwar career as a professor of sport history was representative of all former Napola pupils. Arnd Krüger, "Breeding, Rearing and Preparing the Aryan Body: Creating Supermen the Nazi Way," in *Shaping the Superman: Fascist Body as Political Icon – Aryan* Fascism, ed. J.A. Mangan (Portland: Frank Cass, 1999),61.

life. It is, however, impossible to draw similar conclusions for the rest of his class. Although Germany's civil service has enjoyed a reputation for political neutrality, teachers made significant contributions to the democratization of education and the FRG's political stability after the war.[199] Similarly, those who chose West Germany's private sector over a career in public service were not always motivated by disillusion with politics. Private industry simply paid higher salaries.[200] Nevertheless, it is perhaps noteworthy that only one Napola am Donnersberg pupil became an elected government official after the war.

It is difficult to compare the career choices of former Napola pupils to West German society more generally. The difficulty stems from the spotty records we have of Napola students and the fact that French denazification policies affected each person differently. Pupils who entered the Napola am Donnersberg in the summer of 1943 for the start of Grade 5 were on average 10 or 11 years old. In October 1944, two months into Grade 6, the institute and its boarders were evacuated to the Napola in Backnang. Until the collapse of the Nazi regime in May 1945, no regular classes were held. Since school attendance was mandatory until age fifteen in occupied Germany, former Napola am Donnersberg pupils continued their secondary schooling in either Grade 6 or Grade 7

[199] Brian M. Puaca, *Learning Democracy: Education Reform in West Germany, 1945-1965* (New York: Berghahn, 2009), 2.
[200] Curt Garner, "Public Service Personnel in West Germany in the 1950s: Controversial Policy Decisions and their Effects on Social Composition, Gender Structure, and the Role of Former Nazis," in *West Germany under Construction: Politics, Society, and Culture in the Adenauer Era*, ed. Robert G. Moeller (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1997), 189.

after the war.[201] This was where the similarities ended, however. Some were fortunate enough to attend school within months of the Nazis' defeat. Others had to wait another year or two for re-admission. Moreover, not all had the ability to continue on with their educations and not everyone wanted to continue on with their educations.[202] Erich Gummersheimer finished his schooling after Grade 8. Ludwig List left for a career in banking after Grade 10. Rudi Steiner finished his *Abitur* in 1952.

Taking into account the time for vocational training or postsecondary education, the majority of former Napola pupils would have entered the job market roughly between 1950 and 1956. During this seven-year time span, an average of 20.9% of West Germany's population was employed in agriculture, forestry, and finishing. An average of 45.4% of people worked in production industries whereas 33.8% held jobs in the service sector.[203] Tony Judt argues that the proportion of people working in the service sector, including government employment, increased across most Western European nations after the war. [204] In 1950, 17% of West Germany's working population was employed in the public service sector, rising to 18% in 1961.[205] Hermann's peers, almost half of whom

[201] Synopsis of Military Government Directives on School Reform: Excerpt from Report of Military Governor April 1948, found in *Germany 1947-1949: The Story in Documents* (Washington: Department of State, 1950)
[202] These voluntary and involuntary choices affected the entire postwar cohort, and not just former Napola pupils.
[203] Destatis, Statistisches Bundesamt, Results of employment accounts according to national accounts definitions.1950 to 1969 Classification of Economic activities, 1979 edition. 1970 to 1990: Classification of Economic activities, 2003 edition. From 1991: Classification of Economic activities, 2008 edition.
[204] Tony Judt, *Postwar: A history of Europe since 1945* (New York: Penguin Books, 2005), 327-328. Tertiary sector employment in Germany stood at 74.1% in 2015.
[205] R. Hohls and H. Kaelble, Die regionale Erwerbsstruktur im Deutschen Reich und in der Bundesrepublik 1895 - 1970. St. Katharinen: Scripta Mercaturae Verlag, S. 72-73. Primärquellen: Stat. Jahrbuch f.d. Deutsche Reich, hg. v. Kaiserlichen Statistischen Amt, Jg. 1884, S. 10-20; K. Ermann 1984: Arbeitsmarktstatistische Zahlen in Zeitreihenform. (Beiträge zur Arbeitsmarkt- und Berufsforschung 3.1). Nürnberg, S. 104-106. 1982: Schätzung anhand der Daten des Mikrozensus 1982.

were employed in public service, seem to show a higher aptitude for this sort of work compared to national percentages. However, the very small sample does not allow for such conclusions to be drawn.

Generally speaking, former Napola am Donnersberg believed that two years of Napola training had positively influenced their careers.[206] While these years undoubtedly provided former Napola pupils with key formative experiences, academic instruction at the Napola am Donnersberg did not seem to have differed much from other secondary schools; especially considering that the youngest *Jungmannen* had been spared some of the more radical elements of a Napola curriculum.[207] Moreover, skills taught in Grades 5 and 6 may form the basis for future learning, but do not guarantee professional success.

I believe that the answer to the Napolas' long-term impact lies somewhere between reality and imagination. Ernst Müller, also a member of the 1943 Napola am Donnersberg cohort, gave the most plausible explanation for his classmates' success after the war. Again, his answer was firmly rooted in the postwar conditions of the French occupation zone. Müller claimed that their success was the result of a "positive inferiority complex."[208] According to Müller, postwar success for former Napola pupils originated in the early post war struggles, rather than in the superiority of the Napola curriculum. He argued that "the deficit of not having the *Abitur*" motivated him to study hard for the rest

[206] Albert Herrmann, interview by Tim Mueller, January 6, 2015.
[207] Erich Gummersheimer stated that they had had been too young to receive lessons in "political education." Gummersheimer, private correspondence (Question 4), December 10, 2014.
[208] Ernst Müller, private correspondence, June 26, 2015. In addition to completing the questionnaire, Müller sent copies of his CV, newspaper clippings, book excerpts, and Napola transcripts to the author unprompted.

of his life.[209] His perseverance resulted in a civil engineering degree and an 11-year mandate as the Mayor of Sinsheim, a town in Baden-Wurttemberg.

This inferiority complex could have manifested itself in different, individualized ways. Some students believed they were destined for leadership positions within German society even after the Third Reich collapsed. They coped with broken Nazi promises by influencing postwar reconstruction through political and non-political channels. Based on the career paths of former Napola am Donnersberg pupils who had been born in 1932/33, most joined West Germany's private sector, or began teaching at West German secondary schools or postsecondary institutions. Others may have considered their professional accomplishments as belated acts of defiance against French occupation authorities. Lastly, the Napolas' emphasis on racial elitism had afforded a small number of boys from lower-income families the opportunity to attend a higher secondary school. Despite economic hardships in the postwar period, some could have been motivated to complete a program in higher education through alternative means in order to realize their families' desire for upward mobility. Hypothesizing motivations for individuals' career choices is a speculative endeavor, one that goes beyond the realm of the empirical. Yet the fact remains that my sample of the 1943 class constituted a highly educated and highly skilled workforce. More than 50% received postsecondary education and training at some point after the war.[210]

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[209] Müller, private correspondence (Question 4), June 26, 2015.

[210] Out of the group of 29, only the educational levels of 21 Napola pupils could be deduced with absolute certainty. 15 completed bachelor's, master's, or doctor' degrees. 6 did not complete a higher education degree. For context, only 1.9% of West Germany's population in 1950 was working towards a higher education degree. The proportion of higher education pupils and students rose to 3.2% in 1965, but remained well below the educational attainment of this study's sample population. Peter Flora, *State,*

The findings in this chapter are not immediately applicable to broad discussions about the Napolas' history during and after the Third Reich. The Napola am Donnersberg was, in many respects, unique and its students' experiences were shaped by local conditions. The transition from a *Gau-Oberschule* into a Napola highlighted the struggles of pupils to adjust to stricter physical requirements during the war. The *Verein für die Anstalt am Donnersberg* skillfully manipulated the school's 19th century origins to push through its claims for restitution after the founding of the Bonn Republic. Yet similar to most Napola alumni, former Napola am Donnersberg pupils have remembered their schooling in a positive light.[211] This chapter has proposed several explanations for their selective memories. Helen Roche suggests that former Napola pupils' "unwitting recourse to somewhat Nazified paradigms of thought" can provide insight into the continuities and discontinuities of Third Reich mentalities.[212] The eyewitness reports of former Napola am Donnersberg pupils indicate instead that remnants of the Napolas' postwar legend may have carried into Germany's 21st century. Recent debates about the perceived postwar benefits of a Napola education may have also encouraged Napola am Donnersberg pupils to speak positively about their experiences. Although a number of Albert Herrmann's classmates found places within the educated, salaried middle class, this chapter does not see a causal link between Napola training and postwar success. Instead, its stresses that former Napola am Donnersberg pupils faced obstacles in the French Occupation Zone,

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Economy, and Society in Western Europe 1815-1975. A Data Handbook in two Volumes, Vol. I (Frankfurt: Campus, 1983), 585.

[211] Anke Herbert, "Blick zurück: Der Weierhof als Nationalpolitische Erziehungsanstalt," *Die Rheinpfalz,* Nr.105, Samstag 7. Mai, 2005.

[212] Roche, "Surviving 'Stunde Null'," 586.

which may have fuelled their desire to maintain or improve upon their socio-economic status in Postwar West Germany.

Conclusion: From Racial Selection to Postwar Deception

The Napolas were founded on April 20, 1933 and dissolved with the fall of Nazi Germany on May 8, 1945. During their twelve-year life span, the schools expanded across all corners of the German Reich. Although the Napolas did not have a decisive impact on the course or outcome of the war, they represented the regime's most daring venture into reshaping Germany's education system. The Napolas' blend of Nazi ideology with pre-1933 pedagogical practices disguised their more radical aims and intentions. Former staff and students took advantage of the Napolas' ominous presence during the Third Reich and influenced academic and public discourses on the schools for decades after the Second World War.

The Napolas contributed to the militarization of youth before and during the Second World War. By admitting only boys of pure Aryan heritage, the Napolas lent their support to the regime's goal of building a racial community. During the war, the Napolas also became agents of Germanization by recruiting racially valuable children in Nazi-annexed and occupied territories. Although Bernhard Rust's Reich Education Ministry was formally charged with the administration of the Napolas, the primacy of race attracted admirers from within the Nazi party. After the appointment of August Heißmeyer to the position of Napola inspector in 1936, the Napolas fell gradually under the auspices of Heinrich Himmler's SS. Himmler's motives for absorbing the Napolas into his sphere of influence were multifold. In the first years of the regime, the SS had little control over the education, racial indoctrination, and training of prospective recruits until they became members of the organization. Unlike the NSDAP, the Hitler Youth, or

the German Labor Front, the SS did not establish its own secondary and postsecondary academies. The *SS-Junkerschulen*, which provided professional military education to aspiring SS officers between 1934 and 1945, made no attempt to combine military instruction with academic learning.[1] The SS-sponsored *Lebensborn* program, a network of maternity homes for the mothers of racially valuable children born out of wedlock, similarly did not facilitate higher learning.[2]

The expansion of the armed SS after 1936, however, necessitated a well-trained and educated SS officer corps. Combining formal schooling, premilitary preparation, and race-conscious recruitment policies, the Napolas presented an ideal solution to Himmler's long-term recruitment needs. The SS infiltrated all levels of the Napola bureaucracy. Heißmeyer was committed to promoting the ideology of the SS to Napola teachers, students, and their families. In return for his and other high-ranking Napola officials' loyalty to the SS, they received generous financial support and additional SS resources. On the school-level, Napola teachers were awarded ranks within the General SS after 1936. SS ideologues furthered Napola pupils' political education through regular lecture series. Napola pupils attended SS maneuvers or shared their accommodations with visiting SS officer candidate classes. Starting in 1943, August Heißmeyer's *Dienststelle*

[1] Weale, *Army of Evil*, 209. For more information on the *Junkerschulen*, see Bernd Wegner, "Die Junkerschulen," in *Hitlers Politische Soldaten: Die Waffen-SS 1933-1945* (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 1988), 149-171 and Jens Westemeier, "Die Junkerschulgeneration," in *Die Waffen-SS: Neue Forschungen*, ed. Jan Erik Schulte, Peter Lieb, and Bernd Wegner, (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 2014), 269-285. The account by former *Waffen-SS* officer and commander of the *SS-Junkerschule* Bad Tölz Richard Schulze-Kossens, however, needs to be read with caution. See Richard Schulze-Kossens, *Die Junkerschulen: Militärischer Führernachwuchse der Waffen-SS* (Osnabrück: Munin Verlag, 1982).

[2] For more information about the SS *Lebensborn* program and its contribution to the regime's Germanization project, see Dorothee Schmitz-Köster, *Deutsche Mutter, bist du bereit? Alltag im Lebensborn* (Berlin: Aufbau Verlag, 1997), and Volker Koop, *Dem Führer ein Kind schenken: Die SS-Organisation Lebensborn e.V.* (Köln: Behlau Verlag, 2007).

also offered career-counseling services to current and former Napola students in the hope of increasing the pool of SS recruits.

Wartime military directives sealed the fate of the Napolas before the Second World War came to a conclusion. U.S. policymakers, in particular, considered the Napolas to be training grounds for the SS. The confiscation of the former Napola am Donnersberg in the spring of 1945 by the U.S. military provided an early example of the hard line OMGUS officials were going to take toward the schools and their former employees during the early months of occupation. In the aftermath of the Potsdam Agreement, individuals with ties to the Napolas were removed from public life by summary proceedings in all four-occupation zones. Allied Control Council Law No.10 from December 20, 1945 demanded that members of organizations declared criminal by the International Military Tribunal at Nuremberg, which included the SS, had to be tried by denazification tribunals. As a result, conviction as lesser war criminals became a very real possibility for former Napola officials, teachers, and pupils.

The start of 1946 provided no immediate relief to their situation. On January 12, 1946, Allied Control Council Law No. 24 reiterated the sentiments of earlier directives and called for the immediate removal of the Napolas' former staff and pupils. The introduction of the Law for Liberation from National Socialism and Militarism in the U.S. occupation zone on March 5, 1946, however, offered Napola defendants a shot at redemption. The law stipulated that all persons above the age of 18 had to be placed in one of five groupings, ranging from "Major Offenders" to "Persons Exonerated." The fact that former Napola officials and teachers found themselves assigned to the former proved

to be a blessing in disguise. The Law for Liberation gave the accused access to legal counsel and the right to a formal hearing in front of German denazification tribunals. Napola defendants used the opportunity to persuade the courts that they belonged to a lesser category of offenders. With the help of oral testimonies and sworn statements by former colleagues and students, Napola teachers, such as Otto Brenner, were not only able to cast a favorable light on their own roles during the Third Reich, but on that of the schools as well. Although the provisions of the Law for Liberation were applied only selectively outside the U.S. zone, the legal activism of Napola apologists in Western occupation zones distanced the schools from the crimes of Nazi regime and allowed former Napola staff to resume their careers in Postwar Germany. The Napolas' postwar legend, the product of nearly four years of legal campaigning by Napola supporters between 1945 and 1949, remained intact throughout the Bonn Republic. Yet it did not remain static. The *Verein für die Anstalt am Donnersberg*'s successful reclamation of the Weierhof property revealed that the Napolas' postwar legend evolved according to local and political circumstances. Since Germany's unification, former Napola pupils have openly discussed the positive aspects of Nazi elite education. Their positive memories prove that the exonerating postwar myth has endured to this very day.

While this dissertation was able to make use of eyewitness testimony, future research on the Napolas will have to make do without access to Napola alumni. Fortunately, some Napola alumni associations have left written records that document their efforts to cultivate a selective memory of the schools after the war. Alumni newsletters have been essential to maintaining contact and informing members about

reunions and other events. When challenges to the Napolas' postwar legend arose, newsletters also provided former Napola pupils with a platform to coordinate responses. The *Potsdamer Kameradschaft*, for instance, has been in existence since 1953. It is an alumni association comprised of former *Jungmannen* and their families from Napolas in Potsdam and Neuzelle. Newsletters produced by the *Potsdamer Kameradschaft* during the early 2000s illustrate that its subscribers have continued to shape public discourses on Nazi elite education in unified Germany.[3] Publications and movie productions that painted the Napolas in a negative light were subject to heavy criticism. The release of the popular movie "Napola – Elite für den Führer" raised the ire of former NPEA Potsdam pupils in 2004 and 2005. The movie depicts life inside a fictional Napola during the war. Scenes of ideological indoctrination, premilitary training, and death run counter to the narrative constructed by Napola apologists. Members of the Potsdam association dismissed this "caricature of reality" and wrote letters to editors and producers, the reprints of which were in turn published in subsequent alumni newsletters.[4] Although nothing came of their efforts, the willingness of former Napola pupils to petition authorities over the portrayal of the schools is reminiscent of the behavior of Napola defendants during denazification.

At this critical juncture in the historiography of the Napolas, it is perhaps time to shift attention to the physical legacy of the schools. Although former Napola buildings continue to play an important role in Germany's memory landscape

[3] IfZ München-Berlin, ED 735, Band 15, Potsdam-Neuzelle, Nachrichtenblatt Potsdamer Kameradschaft.
[4]Ibid., Robert Abraham, Leserbrief, "Napola – Was war das?"

(*Erinnerungslandschaft*), they have not been subject to an independent investigation.[5] Some structures that once housed the Third Reich's racial elite now educate Germany's future leaders. In the summer of 2013, I visited the campus of the former Napola in Neubeuern. The castle now houses one of Europe's most prestigious boarding schools. While touring the premises, my host surprised me with an assortment of Nazi-era memorabilia that was stored in the school's basement. It included a large Adolf Hitler bust made out of bronze, a Mauser pistol, and a dagger that featured the Nazi swastika and eagle motif; all were discovered during excavations in 2009. When American troops were closing in on the Napola in April 1945, Nazi officials dumped incriminating evidence in the school's well. These and other Nazi relics have since featured in several public exhibitions hosted by the school to inform students and community members about life during the Nazi regime. Considering that German society has not commemorated all parts of its memory landscape equally, former Napola buildings could serve as physical reminders of Nazi crimes in the understudied realm of education.

[5]According to Rudy Koshar, monuments and buildings have proven to be "tangible symbols of cultural continuity within a history that has often appeared as a series of massive and irreducible breaks." Rudy Koshar, *From Monuments to Traces: Artifacts of German Memory, 1870-1990* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 12. For more information of how German society has responded to the legacy of Nazi architecture and buildings that had been appropriated by the regime, see David J. Case, "The Politics of Memorial Representation: The Controversy over the German Resistance Museum in 1994," *German Politics and Society* 16, 1 (1998): 58–81; Gavriel D. Rosenfeld, *Munich and Memory: Architecture, Monuments, and the Legacy of the Third Reich* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000); Sharon MacDonald, "Undesirable Heritage: Fascist Material Culture and Historical Consciousness in Nuremberg," *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 12:1 (2006), 9-28; Gavriel D. Rosenfeld and Paul B. Jaskot (eds.), *Beyond Berlin: Twelve German Cities Confront the Nazi Past* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2008).

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This collection of primary source materials (newspaper excerpts, report cards, eyewitness reports, etc.) on the former Napola Neubeuern (Bavaria) was compiled by Reinhard Käsinger, a geography and physical education teacher at *Schloss Neubeuern*

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