

# NaPolA - The Movie

## *Historical Background*

NaPolA is the abbreviation for **National Politische Erziehungsanstalt** (National Political Reformatory). In the German empire there were 40 NaPolAs with 15.000 pupils. Every second of them died in the war.

The aim of NaPolA was a national socialist education for an ideal employment in the Second World War.



## *General Thoughts*

What is striking in the movie is that the swastika is presented very often and the film uses a commanding tone. The story is choppy and no feelings are shown. There's no room for any private life.

As there aren't many colours, red (the colour of blood) is very dominant.

The aim of the film is to show how feelings and humanity were completely suppressed.

Furthermore, it shows how the people were made to join a NaPolA.

## *Plot*

Friedrich is about 16 years old and he loves boxing. He's very talented and ardent. A NaPolA teacher sees the talent and asks Friedrich if he wants to go to an elite school. On the same day Friedrich comes to the school where he has to pass an entrance examination and a sports test. His father isn't very enthused; he doesn't want Friedrich to go to the NaPolA. But Friedrich runs away from home and starts a new life.

The pupils have to do hard training like throwing grenades, dive in a frozen up lake or soar.

This training shall prepare the pupils for war and those who want to take part, are unmasked in front of the others.

In his new school, Friedrich sees violence, death and cold-heartedness. Anyhow, he stands to the rules. In the course of the film Friedrich meets Albrecht.

Albrecht opens Friedrich's eyes very soon, so Friedrich resists the rules and the violence.

The film goes on and finally it ends in a catastrophe because Albrecht commits suicide. He drowns in a frozen-up lake because can't stand his parents' ideology and the pressure in school any longer. Friedrich is totally shocked and wants to return home. Finally, when he loses the most important boxing competition, he has



to leave the school anyway. The teachers want to mortify Friedrich, so he has to walk away naked. This is when he goes back to his old life.

### **Actors**

Friedrich Weimer Josef Kreiner Albrecht Stein Heinrich Vogler Heinrich Stein		Max Riemelt Michael Schenk Albrecht Stein David Striesow Justus von Dohnányi
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### **Friedrich Weimer:**



Because of his talent in boxing Friedrich goes to a NaPolA. He's an awesome and compliant boy, he fulfils his responsibilities assiduously and he acts submissively towards his teachers. He's very naive and therefore he lives a great life at his NaPolA.

### **Albrecht Stein:**



He's the son of a foreman. His father wants him to go to a NaPolA.

Albrecht tries to impress his father, but his father browbeats him.

His friendship with Friedrich helps him to stand his father's pressure, but after all he stands this ideology any longer and commits suicide.

### **Heinrich Stein:**

Albrecht's father is very demanding and has a strict ideology. He demands a great deal of Albrecht. He loves sports, so he tries to elate his son, too. But Albrecht is not very talented in sports, so Heinrich supports Friedrich.

### **Mr. Weimer:**

Friedrich's father doesn't want Friedrich to go to NaPolA because he declines the ideology of it. He's afraid that Friedrich could like the NaPolA and its attitudes.

## Music and camera:

### Camera:

- Shows the teachers from the bottom of the deck and the pupils from high above -> hierarchy
- Fixed Face; Facial expression comes to the fore
- In fighting scenes: hectic camera work
- In a dramatic situation: slow camera work



### Action:

1. Elopement
2. Arrival of the dead soldier information
3. Soar
4. Friedrich wins the boxing match
5. Freetime
6. Suicide
7. Leaving school

### Music:

1. dramatic, moving
2. sad, depressing
3. happy
4. triumphant
5. eased, happy
6. sad, shattering
7. happy

## Contemporary witnesses

### Helmut Karasek:



Helmut Karasek was a NaPolA member at the age of 10. He says that NaPolA is a “drilling institution”. He was a milksop and therefore it was terrible to do trials of courage. He begged his mother to be allowed to leave the school.

All in all, he criticizes the teaching of anti-Semitism.

### Hardy Krüger Senior:



Hardy Krüger was a NaPolA pupil. He was 13 when he went to the NaPolA Sonthofen. He wanted to go to this school because of an NS-movie in which he wanted to be an actor. Today Hardy Krüger says that he was fascinated by Adolf Hitler at that time. He loved the NaPolA and thought it was an honor to be there. He was one of the supporters of the NaPolAs.