

# German reporter goes underground at Fundamentalist Christian Madrassa Patrick Henry College

German reporter goes underground at Patrick Henry College – America's Madrassa

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Amrai Coen, a writer for *Die Zeit*, wanted to visit Patrick Henry College, but the college administration refused her visit since the school had “bad experiences with foreign journalists.” Undeterred, Amrai posed as a prospective student and showed up on campus on “Visitor’s Day”. Her piece on her experience that day provides a rare inside glimpse of life at America’s Madrassa,



Nearly all of the students at Patrick Henry College have been home-schooled by ultra-conservative evangelical Christian

parents. At Patrick Henry these young people can complete their christo-fascist indoctrination before joining right-wing think tanks and media groups in Washington. Students are taught to kneel before images of Jesus and Ronald Reagan; they attend lectures on how America can waterboard its way to global dominance. Professors are dismissed if they actually teach science, since students are taught that the earth is only 6000 years old and baby Jesus frolicked with dinosaurs.

*Das College hat eine Mission: Amerika vor dem Untergang retten. Vor dem Abgrund, dem entgegen Barack Obama das Land in ihren Augen in den vergangenen vier Jahren gelenkt hat. Junge, konservative Christen sind die Soldaten in diesem Krieg. Am Patrick Henry College werden sie ausgebildet, um eines Tages an der Front zu kämpfen – als Politiker, Filmemacher oder Unternehmer sollen sie die amerikanische Gesellschaft zurückerobern. Manche von ihnen haben Yale und Harvard verschmäht, um hier zu studieren.*

(The college has one mission: to save America from its downfall, from the abyss into which Barack Obama has steered the country in the past four years. Young conservative Christians are the soldiers in this war. At Patrick Henry College they will be trained to fight one day on the front – as politicians, filmmakers, or entrepreneurs they will win back American society. Some have rejected Harvard or Yale in order to study here.)

Amrai Coen points out the irony of kids who grew up isolated from American society want to become political activists.

*Könnten diese Studenten wirklich eines Tages Amerika regieren, frage ich mich nach ein paar Stunden und vielen Gesprächen auf dem Campus. Die meisten von ihnen kennen nur ihr Wohnzimmer als Klassenraum, nur ihre Geschwister als Mitschüler. Ausgerechnet diese jungen Leute wollen in die Politik, wollen einen Beruf ergreifen, der mit sozialer Verantwortung zu tun hat, wollen Entscheidungen treffen, die das Leben von*

*Millionen Menschen bestimmen.*

(Could these students really govern America some day? I ask myself after a few hours and many conversations on campus. Most of them have only experienced their own living rooms as their classroom and their siblings as classmates. And these are the students who want to into politics, to pursue a career that is involved in social responsibility, to make decisions that impact the lives of millions of people.)

She sees the students as mostly naive or just misguided. I see something rather more sinister: as the college puts on its Web site, the school is engaged in a war on secular society and seeks to overturn the separation of church and state which is at the core of the American experience:

“But when such a government 1) commands disobedience to God, 2) enjoins the right and duty of human beings to worship God, 3) denies other God-ordained rights by extreme oppression and tyranny, or 4) “when a long Train of Abuses and Usurpations, pursuing invariably the same Object (tyranny), evinces a design to reduce them under absolute Despotism” it is the right and duty of godly men and women “to throw off such Government, and to provide new Guards for their future Security.” Importantly, this action must be taken in accordance with God’s laws and in submission to other legitimate authorities, anarchy being as illegitimate as tyranny.”