

Undercover: Exposing the Far Right uncovers the race science conspiracy

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31 October 2024

Channel 4's *Undercover: Exposing the Far Right*, available here, is an important piece of investigative journalism and documentary filmmaking, revealing the international and financial connections of the global fascist movement.

Among a range of focusses, the strongest and most politically significant is the undercover investigation by Harry Shukman and Patrik Hermansson into a network of well-funded "race scientists", published by Hope Not Hate earlier in October.

Scheduled to be shown at the London Film Festival, the screening was cancelled at the last minute by the organisers, citing safety concerns. Director Havana Marking described herself as "furious that our film has lost a planned theatrical release so late in the day." She added that it was "getting harder to make documentaries with political content, and if they are not guaranteed a screening it really does not help."

Shukman spent months undercover in Britain's far-right. The documentary makes the risks involved clear by detailing the threats regularly levelled against other Hope Not Hate employees.

It begins with his attendance at the Scandza Forum in May 2023, held in Tallinn, Estonia hosting more than 100 fascists from the around the world. While there, he picks up the thread of the *Aporia* online magazine, apparently backed by a wealthy investor with a big tech background in the United States.

At time of writing, *Aporia* has over 15,000 followers on Substack and close to 10,000 on X/Twitter. It is pitched as the reasonable face of racist, eugenicist pseudoscience: so-called "race realism".

Shukman meets the publication's editor-in-chief Matthew Archer (real name Matthew Frost) in Tallinn and spends the next months gaining his trust, posing as a potential investor. He is able to uncover both the identity of *Aporia*'s investor, and the wider network of which it is a part.

Archer reveals that the magazine is the public face of the Human Diversity Foundation (HDF), a limited liability company run by Emil Kirkegaard (under his legal name, William Engman). HDF, Shukman discovers, is the continuation of the Pioneer Fund, originally set up by the multimillionaire heir of a textile business Wickliffe Draper in 1937 to champion Nazi "racial hygiene" laws, and which has funded race scientists ever since.

Directed by Richard Lynn from 2012, it was unclear how the Fund would continue to function after his death in 2023. Archer tells Shukman, "It was left to Emil and now that becomes part of our organisation," HDF. That organisation comprises an

"underground research arm" and public operations like *Aporia*.

A presentation given to Shukman lists 10 researchers and two journals handled by HDF, and another six people working on the media side, including *Aporia*.

Explaining their target audience, Archer says, "We want to be read by the elite, the aspiring elite." And they have a hearing. Over dinner in Athens with Archer and AfD member Erik Ahrens—who participated in the notorious Potsdam Conference last November—Shukman learns that \$1.3 million has been given to the HDF by American tech billionaire Andrew Conru.

More extensive details of the HDF's work, Conru's background, and Shukman's conversations with Archer and Kirkegaard, which have been published in a series of articles by Hope Not Hate, do not make it into the documentary. This is worth summarising.

Archer, referring to a thread he posted claiming the average Palestinian IQ is 85, close to the threshold for mental disability, told Shukman "Palestinians are different. They can't be reasoned with; you can't educate them." In another conversation, he described his wish for mass, forcible "remigration" of people of foreign descent from Europe; he told Ahrens and his AfD party "It's your fucking duty to do this."

Ahrens has played a leading role in HDF's efforts to cultivate networks of social media figures, with 17 far-right influencers already on board in Germany.

HDF's most prominent asset on this front is Edward Dutton, who promotes race science and other fascist talking points on his Jolly Heretic YouTube channel with 110,000 subscribers and Substack with over 12,000 subscribers. According to Hope Not Hate, The Jolly Heretic brings in an estimated \$133,000 a year for HDF, which pays Dutton roughly \$40,000 a year and helps him with video production.

Another major figure is Jared Taylor, president of the white supremacist New Century Foundation and recipient of over \$200,000 from the Pioneer Fund historically. He has appeared on *Aporia*'s podcast and was apparently the connection between Kirkegaard and Conru, a relationship which developed over years.

According to Archer, Conru "realised at the tail end of last year [2022], this needed to be scaled up, systematised, and this was how the HDF was formed." His support has allowed the company to run a \$600,000-a-year operation involving, Hope Not Hate write, "at least four full-time staff members, six part-timers and multiple researchers, contributors and developers paid on an ad-hoc basis, plus production costs and extensive travelling."

Notwithstanding Conru's lame denials after the publication of this exposure, he has also given \$150,000 to the far-right Turning Point USA organisation, \$5,000 to the violently racist and Holocaust denying *Unz Review*, and an undisclosed sum to fund the publication of Simon Webb's *The Equalitarian Dogma: Why Ideology and not Science Dominates Debate on Ethnicity and Race in the Modern World*.

He gave \$50,000 to disgraced academic and former Pioneer Fund recipient Bryan Pesta and \$200,000 to the Center for the Study of Partisanship & Ideology—run by Richard Hanania, who called for the sterilisation of those with low IQ and likened “race mixing” to “destroying a unique species or piece of art”.

Conru was not the only billionaire Archer and company had in discussion. Prior to HDF's founding, Kirkegaard met with Peter Thiel, commenting that he did not secure funds on that occasion but that the discussion had gone well.

As Archer explained his ambitions to Shukman, “In three or four-years' time, this will be the destination for controversial social science. We would rather be read by a few billionaires than 10,000 normies. Judging by our email list, this is already happening: I can look down and see academics, entrepreneurs, journalists at the *New York Times*.”

This fuller picture underscores the fact that the growth of the far right is the result not only of people being “angry” and “scared” about their social conditions, though this—coupled with the bankruptcy and betrayals of the official “left” which is given a free pass throughout the *Undercover* documentary—is undoubtedly a major factor. It is the carefully curated product of a fascistic section of the ruling and middle class: a wide network of academics, billionaires, prominent media personalities, and political operators.

Race science and eugenics play, as throughout the 20th century, a central role. The *World Socialist Web Site* explained in February 2020, in response to the appointment as a government advisor of the social Darwinist Andrew Sabisky:

In every case, social Darwinism and race science has come to prominence in the ruling class in response to a sharpening of the class struggle, under conditions of deep capitalist crisis. Its fundamental purpose is as an ideological weapon against Marxism and the socialist movement—insisting on a biological rather than social cause of inequality—and its consequences are the denigration, suppression and racial division of the working class.

Two years earlier, the WSWS and the International Youth and Students for Social Equality had taken up a fight over the London Conference on Intelligence, attended by Archer, and the appointment to a Cambridge research fellowship of Noah Carl. We placed a focus on Carl's relationship with Kirkegaard and his *OpenPsych* website, and with Lynn and *Mankind Quarterly*—the Pioneer Fund's journal, now taken over by HDF.

“What we have here,” wrote the WSWS, “is a network of right-wing ideologues, who set up what have rightly been called

‘pseudo journals’ through which they publish and ‘review’ one another's tracts.”

After persistent student protests, Carl's fellowship was withdrawn. An enormous hue and cry went up in the bourgeois media denouncing the “mob rule” which was “crushing free speech on campus” and portraying Carl as an innocent victim honestly pursuing controversial but important research. The WSWS described how he was “playing a significant role in the attempt to ... create a right-wing counter spiral in mainstream academia.”

Hope Not Hate's HDF investigation confirms the extent of this conspiracy. Carl is the current editor of, and a regular writer for, *Aporia*. He was suggested to Thiel—alongside Nathan Cofnas, another disgraced race scientist formerly with Cambridge University—by Kirkegaard as someone whose work might interest him.

At one point in *Undercover*, a member of Hope Not Hate explains, “It's terrifying to think that there are people out there who have so much money that they're basically unaccountable.” This is fundamentally true, but it is important not to see these oligarchs as out-of-step, rogue figures. Their fascistic ideas increasingly find a resonance in government, the media and the wider ruling class. It cannot be left to the state to hold them accountable.

As the WSWS wrote in conclusion on the Noah Carl case in October 2019:

Networks of professors and politicians across the world are working to “prove” that German fascism was justified, that race exists as a meaningful scientific category, that the eugenicists have a point.

In opposing this campaign, appeals to scientific reason can only have a lasting impact if they are joined with a progressive, socialist political programme. Falsifications and pseudo-science gain power despite their untruth because they animate and are promoted by reactionary social forces of the kind strengthening daily under conditions of a global capitalist crisis.

The fascist and fascistic movements in which these ideas find a home are being cultivated to defend and enforce explosive levels of social inequality and imperialist violence. Defeating them therefore requires a defence of historical and scientific truth based on a turn to a far more powerful force with diametrically opposed social interests—the international working class, now coming forward into mass struggles against inequality, war and dictatorship.



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