

Academics and students oppose Cambridge University appointment of eugenicist Noah Carl—Part 1

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This is the first of a two-part series.

The appointment of Noah Carl to a prestigious research fellowship at Cambridge University has been met with widespread outrage. Nearly 600 academics and 900 students have signed a petition condemning Carl's "ethically suspect and methodologically flawed" work, which they say legitimises racial stereotypes and is being "used by extremist and far-right media outlets with the aim of stoking xenophobic anti-immigrant rhetoric."

The petition demands that the university reconsider the appointment and issue a statement "dissociating themselves from research that seeks to establish correlations between race, genes, intelligence and criminality in order to explain one by the other."

Cambridge has announced two investigations into the matter. Meanwhile, Carl has received full-throated defence from a wide section of the right-wing press. In whatever way his professional fate is ultimately resolved, his appointment points to a right-wing turn in academia that is bound up with the degraded character of official bourgeois politics.

Carl spent the first several years of his academic life working at Oxford University. While there, he authored 34 papers, many of which support his own right-wing politics. Enoch Powell, author of the infamous "rivers of blood" anti-immigrant speech, is listed as one of his Facebook "Likes," alongside Jacob Rees-Mogg, Nigel Farage and Boris Johnson. One of Carl's articles, written in 2016, is titled, "Net opposition to immigrants of different nationalities correlates strongly with their arrest rates." It argues that anti-immigrant attitudes are "reasonably accurate" concerning criminality. This was followed in 2017 by, "Are immigration policy preferences based on accurate stereotypes?"

In "A global analysis of Islamist violence" Carl claims that having a large "percentage of Muslims in the population" is the cause of an increased threat of terrorism. In "Ethnicity and electoral fraud in Britain," he links cousin marriage and electoral fraud in Pakistani and Bangladeshi communities.

Another article is titled, "IQ and socio-economic development across local authorities of the UK."

The most common co-authors for Carl's articles, as listed on ResearchGate, include Heiner Rindermann, Richard Lynn and Emil Kirkegaard.

Rindermann is the author of *Cognitive Capitalism* which claims global inequality is the result of genetic, racial differences in intelligence. He occupies the Chair of Educational and Developmental Psychology at the Technical University of Chemnitz, the city where over 7,000 neo-Nazis rampaged through the streets in August. His work is promoted on the far-right websites *VDARE*, *The Unz Review* and *New Observer*. One article, "Secondary School Level Engineers," warned against the dilution of German intelligence by immigrants, claiming "the standard of education of most immigrants from Western Asia and Africa is low, and their capabilities are limited. The consequences of this will be bitter."

Kirkegaard is a Danish white supremacist who has posited the existence of racial "tiers" and argues for banning Muslim immigration because it is "self-destructive" to the host country. He has posted a picture of himself receiving the "Heil Hitler" salute with his own caption, "There will be an heir to the Fuhrer." He has also advocated sex with sleeping children as a compromise "solution" to paedophilia.

Lynn has praised Kirkegaard's "brilliant work identifying the genes responsible for race differences in intelligence." Lynn, formerly emeritus professor of psychology at Ulster University, has called for the "phasing out" of the "population of incompetent cultures." He heads the Pioneer Fund, listed as a hate group by the Southern Poverty Law Center.

Carl's elevation follows the scandal which erupted in January when University College London (UCL) senior honorary lecturer James Thompson was found to have hosted the eugenicist London Conference on Intelligence (LCI) on campus. Thompson, whose own work posits differences in genetic intelligence across genders, political affiliations and ethnicities, organised several annual LCI meetings on UCL's campus. Carl, Rindermann and Kirkegaard were regular attendees and presenters.

When the LCI story broke, the *World Socialist Web Site*

explained, “Eugenics is being advanced within academia and politics because it serves definite social interests” by justifying social inequality and far-right ideology. Thompson was moved quietly into retirement, while UCL’s own investigation announced in January has issued no public findings. Nearly 12 months later, Carl has not only been protected but promoted—awarded a research fellowship at one of the most prestigious academic institutions on the planet.

There isn’t a shred of scientific or academic credibility for the social Darwinist ideas of Carl and his fellow pseudoscientists. Firstly, there is no serious basis for talking about distinct and defined “races.” As the geneticist and 10-year editor of *Nature*, Adam Rutherford, explained with regards to Thompson’s writings, “As soon as you begin to speak about black people and IQ you have a problem, because genetically-speaking ‘black people’ aren’t one homogeneous group. ... Any two people of recent African descent are likely to be more genetically distinct from each other than either of them is to anyone else in the world.”

Groups of people sharing a high amount of genetic inheritance (“population groups,” in scientific terms) do not map on to the criteria of “race” used by the likes of Carl and Lynn.

In any case, the overall variance which exists across all human beings is remarkably small compared to other mammals, thanks to the species’ relatively recent origin.

Likewise, the suggestion that highly complex mental characteristics might develop differently between different groups in the same manner as characteristics such as skin-colour is fraudulent. In contrast to the single-gene mutations which affect many well-known distinguishing traits, whatever genetic element there is to an individual’s intelligence and behaviour is determined by potentially thousands of genes.

Moreover, the role that genes play in an individual’s development, let alone that of society, is dwarfed in comparison with a host of social factors. Eugenics attributes everything from disparate levels of educational attainment to unemployment or crime—phenomena that are overwhelmingly the product of a society based upon class and imperialist exploitation—to genetic causes. It does so almost invariably for politically motivated ends.

Many of Carl’s articles have been published on the *OpenPsych* website set up by Kirkegaard to circumvent the peer review system. Its editors and referees are almost all associated with the far-right and often do not even have qualifications in the fields they are responsible for overseeing. Over half of the articles on the site are authored or co-authored by Kirkegaard.

The co-founder of *OpenPsych* is Davide Piffer—another pseudo-scientific researcher who once claimed to have psychic powers—who is based at the Ulster Institute for Social Research (UISR), established by Richard Lynn. UISR is backed by Lynn’s Pioneer Fund and publishes the equally irreputable

Mankind Quarterly, which regularly prints Kirkegaard’s writings. What we have here 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.

They have successfully functioned while occupying senior positions throughout academia. Carl did a BA, MA and PhD at Oxford University, and then worked as a postdoctoral researcher in its Nuffield College. During his time there, according to RationalWiki, the college was informed that Carl was using his Oxford email address on papers published in Kirkegaard’s *OpenPsych* “journals.” Oxford told him to remove the email, stated it did not agree with his views and then let the matter lie.

Thompson published racist, bigoted nonsense in the name of science for years while an honorary professor at UCL. Rindermann holds a chair at the Technical University of Chemnitz. Lynn lost his position as professor emeritus at Ulster University earlier this year when student protests forced the institution to drop him. He is still on the editorial board of both *Personality and Individual Differences* and *Intelligence*, journals published by the respected Elsevier publisher.

To these names can be added Adam Perkins—yet another LCI speaker—working as a professor at King’s College London. Perkins authored a book called *The Welfare Trait*, which essentially argued that welfare dependency could be bred out if benefits payments were reduced until there was a birth rate decline in out-of-work households.

This is not a case of the odd rotten apple. Ideas of genetically determined inferiority—both racial and as a function of social class—have an established foothold in academia.

To be continued



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