

Sabisky eugenics scandal exposes fascist core of UK Tories

Thomas Scripps
22 February 2020

The move to appoint Andrew Sabisky as an adviser to the British government confirms the emergence of a fascist element in the Conservative Party.

In blog posts and comments, Sabisky has said, “[V]ery real racial differences in intelligence are significantly—even mostly—genetic in origin” and that “it would be nice” if politicians paid attention “from the standpoint of immigration control ...” He has argued, “One way to get around the problems of unplanned pregnancies creating a permanent underclass would be to legally enforce universal uptake of long-term contraception ...”

At an education research conference in 2014, he told an audience, “A great deal of educational time and resource is spent discussing various ‘achievement gaps’ and how to remedy them ... This may very well be time and money wasted ... individual differences in intelligence and academic outcomes are largely a result of genes, not environments.”

In a 2016 interview, Sabisky claimed, “Eugenics is about selecting for good things. Intelligence is largely inherited and it correlates with better outcomes: physical health, income, lower mental illness.”

His appointment was no accident. In a subsequent press briefing, the prime minister’s spokesperson refused to answer whether Boris Johnson agreed with Sabisky’s views on 32 separate occasions. The *Times* has since revealed that Sabisky met with Johnson personally on his first day at work.

Sabisky only resigned on Monday evening when the overwhelming public outcry over his appointment made his position untenable.

The event confirms the warnings made by the *World Socialist Web Site* following the London Conference on Intelligence exposure and Noah Carl’s appointment at Cambridge University in 2018. A network of social Darwinists and race scientists are working to revive the eugenicist ideas of the late 19th and early 20th century. They are gaining an audience for these reactionary theories in the political establishment.

Sabisky works in these circles. In 2014, he published a

positive review of Tutu Vanhanen’s book, *Ethnic Conflicts: Their Biological Roots in Ethnic Nepotism*. Vanhanen worked with white supremacist race scientist Richard Lynn, a former emeritus professor at Ulster University, to produce an IQ map of the world, claiming to demonstrate racial intelligence differences.

In 2016, Sabisky praised the “boldness” of *The Welfare Trait*—a book published by King’s College London Professor Adam Perkins, which claims welfare dependency can be bred out of the population.

Both Sabisky and Perkins attended the London Conference on Intelligence (LCI)—a secretive annual gathering of neo-Nazis and eugenicist pseudoscientists, organised by University College London honorary lecturer James Thompson. Sabisky gave a presentation on “The efficacy of early childhood interventions in improving cognitive outcomes.”

Another attendee at the LCI was far right commentator Toby Young. Having previously advocated “progressive eugenics,” Young was appointed by the Tory government in 2018 to lead the Office for Students. Like Sabisky, he only resigned in the face of overwhelming popular pressure.

When Oxford-trained sociologist Noah Carl had a Cambridge University fellowship rescinded after students and academics challenged his role in fueling fascist ideology, Young led a charge in the right-wing media in his defence. The *Telegraph*, *The Times*, the *Daily Mail*, the *Spectator*, *Spiked*, *Breitbart* and *Quillette* all denounced Cambridge University students for their “mobbing” of a “young scholar,” whose ideas deserved respectful debate. The campaign prepared the way for Education Secretary Gavin Williamson to threaten in *The Times* earlier this month, “If universities can’t defend free speech, the government will”.

Now the eugenicists have found an ally in Johnson’s viciously elitist, anti-migrant Tory government.

Johnson himself, the prime minister of the United Kingdom, is a fascistic individual. Alongside his numerous racist and Islamophobic comments, he has articulated the

same zoological views of human society as Sabisky.

In a speech at the Centre for Policy Studies in 2013, while he was Mayor of London, Johnson said, “Whatever you may think of the value of IQ tests, it is surely relevant to a conversation about equality that as many as 16 percent of our species have an IQ below 85 ...”

The same year, he wrote an article for the *Telegraph*, which argued that the “super-rich” belong to “three fairly exclusive categories of human being.” They “tend to be well above average” in “mathematical, scientific or at least logical reasoning”.

Johnson’s lead adviser Dominic Cummings, whose blog Sabisky commented on repeatedly, wrote a paper for former Education Secretary Michael Gove in 2014 suggesting that 70 percent of a child’s cognitive capacity was genetically determined. A well-rounded education for working class youth was therefore deemed pointless.

In a blog post, Cummings wrote, “Once we identify a substantial number of IQ genes, there is no obvious reason why rich people will not select the egg that has the highest prediction for IQ.” The government has refused to comment on these views.

In 2018, then Tory Party Vice Chair for Youth Ben Bradley claimed in a blog post that Britain would soon be “drowning in a vast sea of unemployed wasters,” before telling poorer families, “Sorry but how many children you have is a choice; if you can’t afford them, stop having them! Vasectomies are free.”

During last year’s general election, prominent Tory MP and Leader of the House of Commons Jacob Rees-Mogg told a radio show that he would have been more likely to survive the Grenfell Tower fire because he had more “common sense” than those who died. The comment was defended by fellow Tory Andrew Bridgen with the line, “But we want very clever people running the country, don’t we?”

Prospective Tory MP Francesca O’Brien was then found to have posted on Facebook that people living on social security, featured in the TV show “Benefits Street,” “need putting down.” She was allowed by the party to continue running for parliament.

Throughout history, this fascist ideology has been employed to justify the most reactionary policies and horrific crimes of the capitalist class.

In Britain in the early 20th century, reports were issued on “mental defectives” and the “social problem group” —the poorest 10 percent of society. The same ideas were used to advance large-scale programmes of forced sterilisation in America, and the anti-immigrant legislation of the Federal Government. They saw a revival in the 1980s with the onset of Thatcher and Reagan’s all-out assault on the remaining

social gains of the working class.

Eugenics reached its fullest and most terrible expression in the fascist dictatorship of Nazi Germany. Hundreds of thousands were sterilised and millions—Jews, Soviet prisoners of war, Slavs, Roma, the disabled and homosexuals—were murdered.

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.

The same process is underway today. Johnson’s government is pursuing a murderous austerity programme and anti-migrant agenda.

Speaking at the Centre for Social Justice in 2016, Iain Duncan Smith, the architect of the onslaught of welfare provision, which the UN special rapporteur on poverty likened to a “natural disaster,” attacked the Labour Party’s alleged legacy of benefits. Social security, Smith said, “entrapped individuals ... and created a growing underclass”.

The ideology is evident in the xenophobic rhetoric used to justify the recent deportation of Jamaican nationals and the plans for a minimum salary threshold for migrants.

Sabisky’s resignation is meaningless and all the questions now being raised in the media about “vetting processes” are irrelevant. Figures like Young, Carl and Sabisky are periodically advanced to push politics to the right. When they are forced to resign by legitimate popular protest, they do so without apology and are represented as martyrs for the cause of “truth” against politically correct “left wing ideology.”

This reactionary filth is the product of a deep-going rot in ruling class politics, which increasingly takes on a fascistic character. It can only be fought by a mass mobilisation of the working class against social inequality, for socialism and scientific and historical truth.



To contact the WSWS and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact