

## Editorial

# Challenging Nuclearism

A cruel year finally closed. The COVID-19 Pandemic has coincided with the deaths of many friends and supporters of the Russell Foundation. In April 2020, we lost Ken Fleet, who had been the Foundation's tireless Secretary for 50 years. The year also claimed Robert Fisk and John Le Carré, contributors to *The Spokesman*. In this issue, we remember two other contributors who died in 2020—Mike Cooley and Stephen Cohen, who made their mark in different fields.

I first heard Mike Cooley speak at an Institute for Workers' Control conference in the early 1980s. Mrs Thatcher was Prime Minister and the prospects were bleak. Mike spoke about tacit knowledge — how workers know what to do. He probed hand-eye co-ordination, going on to celebrate the skill entailed in safely crossing a busy road. When, in later years, I reminded him of this example he had given, he was somewhat surprised, though it did stir a memory. For he would occasionally phone the Foundation to keep in contact, particularly after we republished *Architect or Bee?* in 2016. Mike then sent the manuscript of *Delinquent Genius*, and asked for an opinion. He had deliberated about it for some decades. My immediate response was that these insights, personal and scientific, should be shared more widely. So it was that the book came to be published in 2018, with a generous introduction by Michael D Higgins, President of Ireland and Mike's old school friend from Tuam in County Mayo. We reprint a chapter from that book, together with John Palmer's appreciation of Mike's life, which is the Foreword to *The Search for Alternatives*, the third title in the Cooley trilogy published by Spokesman. Mike's archive now resides at Waterford Institute of Technology, where it attracts international attention. Meanwhile, the Lucas Plan discussion network links Mike's insights to ongoing work for a Green New Deal and related questions. Closer to home, Shirley, Mike's wife, and Graham, his son, keep the flame burning.

Stephen Cohen was another longtime friend of the Russell Foundation. He collaborated with Ken Coates in the extended campaign, ultimately successful, for the rehabilitation of Nikolai Bukharin in the Soviet Union. Bukharin's widow, Anna Larina, and son, Yuri, had exhausted every

official avenue in the Soviet Union, so that a wider international campaign was necessary. John Daniels sketches Cohen's broader achievements in explaining modern Russia to the wider world.

\* \* \*

The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons came into force in January 2021. It is a notable achievement, the result of long decades of campaigning at the United Nations and in wider civil society. We publish a Dossier which includes the text of the Treaty itself, together with critical commentaries including one by Richard Falk, which gives us our title for this issue. The Dossier was compiled by Tom Unterrainer, who has kindly agreed to join me as co-editor of *The Spokesman* journal. Tom piloted into print our little book entitled *Why Trident?* From this, we have selected excerpts by Vice Admiral Blackham and Commander Forsyth.

\* \* \*

The transition period has ended and people in the UK endure the consequences of 'Hard Brexit', embodied in the minimal trade agreement with the European Union signed by Prime Minister Boris Johnson. Travel and trade have become more difficult, and some 60 million UK nationals have apparently lost their status as EU citizens, although this is being challenged at the European Court of Justice. Meanwhile, millions of EU nationals resident in the UK, together with millions more UK nationals resident in continental Europe, have endured life in Limbo since the Brexit referendum of 2016. We reprint first-hand accounts of what this really means from *In Limbo: Brexit Testimonies from EU Citizens in the UK*, compiled by Elena Remigi and colleagues. We're pleased to publish this landmark work under the Foundation's imprint, together with *In Limbo Too: Brexit Testimonies from UK Citizens in the EU*. We are also grateful to PM Press for permission to reprint a chapter from their landmark title *Asylum for Sale: Profit and Protest in the Migration Industry*.

\* \* \*

Banksy visited Nottingham, once known for its cycle industry, and brightened a street corner where children play. Whilst browsing his website ([banksy.co.uk](http://banksy.co.uk)), we found a cover for *Challenging Nuclearism* which made us smile. We hope pest control office approves.

*Tony Simpson*