



printer friendly

download Adobe PDF document

Röling Foundation Web > RÖLING: biography/bibliography

## RÖLING: biography/bibliography



"...as a person, Röling outgrew any intellectual system he made..."  
(Galtung, quoted by Cassese)

The main information on Röling is to be found at the (Netherlands) National Archives (Nationaal Archief, The Hague), about 12 meters of material under # 2.21.271; see below

pre-Tokyo

Röling started as a criminologist. He focused *inter alia* on the criminological aspects of Shakespeare's plays. His Ph.D thesis dealt with the legislation with regard to the so-called professional and habitual criminals (1933). That same year he set up, together with the great reformer Willem Pompe, Netherlands' first criminological institute. During the German occupation he sat on the bench first in Utrecht, and later as a low-key judge in Middelburg, Zeeland.

- Tokyo

Röling's stay in Tokyo 1946-1948 became a decisive experience. Just 40 years old, his two years as a Judge with the IMT influenced his thinking as well as his scholarly career in a significant manner. Yet, it did not represent a rupture with his past, it rather concerned logical steps, a to-be-expected development.

- post-Tokyo

Röling was appointed to a chair in criminology with Groningen University in 1948, to be followed by an appointment in 1950 to the international law chair as well. He gradually moved his main attention into the latter direction, - and beyond: in 1963 he founded the Polemological Institute (Institute for Peace Research) and realized that 'law' was an instrument rather than a goal in itself. Even more so, international law, in his views should have a global outlook rather than a national one. He also differed between *conservative* and *progressive* approaches, to some extent based on the UN Charter's article 13, in which due reference is made to the progressive development of international law. Thirdly he stressed the need to distinguish between the imperialist and egalitarian outlook. Lastly, he preferred to look upon (international) law as only one factor among many others and not as a more or less independent factor: an integrationalist approach indeed.

Summing up, rather than an interpreter of positive law (*lex lata*), a lawyer should be a promotor of a *multi-disciplinary approach* as well as of *lex ferenda* (source: Cassese, *op. cit.* pp 137-138).

- Pugwash

The Pugwash Conferences on Science and World Affairs is an international organization that brings together scholars and public figures to work towards reducing the danger of armed conflict and to seek solutions to global security threats. It was founded in 1957 by Joseph Rotblat and Bertrand Russell in Pugwash, Nova Scotia, following the release of the Russell-Einstein Manifesto in 1955.

In 1995, 50 years since the bombing of Nagasaki and Hiroshima, and 40 years since the signing of the Russell-Einstein Manifesto, the Pugwash Conferences and Józef Rotblat were jointly awarded the Nobel Peace Prize "for their efforts to diminish the part played by nuclear arms in international politics and, in the longer run, to eliminate such arms".

The Norwegian Nobel committee hoped that awarding the prize to Rotblat and Pugwash would "encourage world leaders to intensify their efforts to rid the world of nuclear weapons".

In his acceptance speech, Rotblat quoted a key phrase from the Manifesto: "Remember your humanity".

Bert Röling attended his first Pugwash meeting, the Sixth Pugwash Conference, in Moscow in November 1960, and his final Pugwash meeting was the symposium on The Arms Race and International Law, held in Helsinki in February 1983. In between, he participated in eleven other Pugwash conferences, workshops and symposia, for a total of 13. All the relevant Pugwash material was kept at the Polemological Institute, Groningen University. Scholarly research into the Dutch involvement in Pugwash should be welcomed.

**A biography and an overview of Röling's many publications can be found in Akkerman et al**

(ed.) *Declaration on Principles, a Quest for Universal Peace*, Leyden 1977, on respectively pp. XVIII-LXVIII, (a humanist for peace, by Paul Teunissen) and pp. 383-403 (prepared by Teunissen and Doeleman).

Also, mention should be made of Verwey's excellent biography published in 1985 by the Asser Institute: W.D. Verwey, *Bert V.A. Röling 1906-1985* (biografie-serie van prominente Nederlandse internationaal recht-juristen), Den Haag: T.M.C. Asser Instituut 1985.

In order to get an insight into Röling's way of thinking and reasoning, [The Tokyo Trial and Beyond: Reflections of a Peacemonger](#) by B.V.A. Röling, Antonio Cassese (Editor) (1995) ISBN 0-7456-1485-X is indispensable.



August 6, 1946.  
Justice Bernard V. A. Röling (Netherlands)

on IMT TOKYO:  
- *Opinion of Mr. Justice Röling*, member for the Netherlands. 12 November 1948 ASIN: B0007JY25I,

- Röling, B.V.A. and C.F. Ruter, eds. *The Tokyo Judgment: The International Military Tribunal for the Far East*. Amsterdam: University Press, 1977.

on PEACE RESEARCH AND INTERNATIONAL LAW  
- *International Law in an Expanded World*, Amsterdam 1960 (en eye-opener – still – for a globalizing world)

- *Over Oorlog en Vrede* Amsterdam 1963 (made a huge impact on Dutch thinking, - and beyond)
- *Inleiding tot de Wetenschap van Oorlog en Vrede* Assen 1968
- [Volkenrecht en vrede](#) Deventer 1973 (a unique treatise that deserves to be updated [e.g. by Nico Schrijver, Röling's foremost pupil who helped him updating the 2<sup>nd</sup> edition] and to be translated into the English)
- *Vredeswetenschap: Inleiding tot de polemologie* (Utrecht, Aula-boeken), 1981
- [Wapenbeheersing en ontwapening](#) 1984

See also:

- Van den Burg et al: *Vrede en oorlog: Nieuwe ontwikkelingen in de polemologie* : [opstellen voor prof. mr. B. V. A. Röling] (Synopsis), 1977

- Akkerman, van Krieken and Pannenburg, *Declaration on Principles, a Quest for Universal Peace* (Liber Amicorum Disciplinorumque), Leyden 1977 [the preface has been included hereinabove]



The Tokyo IMT Judges

- W.D. Verwey, *Bert V.A. Röling 1906-1985* (biografie-serie van prominente Nederlandse internationaal recht-juristen), Den Haag: T.M.C. Asser Instituut 1985

- Dekker & Schrijver, *Röling in 8* Kritisch Denkerslexicon, October 1989.

#### NATIONAAL ARCHIEF, THE HAGUE:

<b>Naam</b>	Persoonlijk archief B.V.A. Röling
<b>Datering</b>	1915-1985
<b>Korte inhoud</b>	B.V.E. Röling (1906-1985) werd in 1946 benoemd tot rechter bij het Internationaal Militair Tribunaal voor het Verre Oosten. Als jongste rechter speelde hij daar van 1946 tot 1948 een opvallende rol door in veel gevallen voor milde straffen te pleiten voor de Japanse beklagden. Na zijn terugkeer naar Nederland werd hij hoogleraar in Groningen. Zijn belangstelling ging daarbij sterk uit naar het volkenrecht, waarbij hij niet aarzde politiek uitgesproken standpunten in te nemen. Zo pleitte hij voor dekolonisatie en tegen atoombewapening. In 1962 kwam hij aan het hoofd te staan van het op zijn initiatief opgerichte Polemologische Instituut in Groningen dat onderzoek deed naar vraagstukken van oorlog en vrede. Röling werd een van de meest vooraanstaande figuren van de internationale vredesbeweging. In 1976 ging Röling met emeritaat. Het archief bevat materiaal over het tribunaal van Tokio, met onder meer portretten van de verdachten, krantenknipsels, aantekeningen, protocollen van de beraadslagingen, briefwisseling, documentatie over het proces in Neuremberg en de vervolging van oorlogsmisdadigers in Nederland, later lezingen van Röling over het Tribunaal in Tokio, stukken in zijn hoedanigheid als lid van de Nederlandse delegatie naar de <b>Algemene Vergadering van de Verenigde Naties (VN)</b> , stukken van Röling over volkenrechtelijke kwesties (in het bijzonder VN en koloniale kwesties), de Commissie van Advies inzake Vraagstukken van Ontwapening en Internationale Veiligheid en Vrede (1975-1982) en de adviescommissie Voorlichting en Bewustwording Ontwikkelingssamenwerking (1981).
<b>Titel inventaris</b>	2.21.273 - B.V.A. Röling [levensjaren 1906-1985], (1915) 1928-1985
<b>Openbaarheid</b>	Volledig openbaar

**Omvang**

10,7 m dozen staand, < 37 cm diep  
0,6 m dozen staand, > 37 cm diep  
1 m registers staand, < 37 cm

*PROMOVENDI***LIST OF THOSE WHO PREPARED AND DEFENDED THEIR PH.D. (Dr. Jur) UNDER RÖLING:**

1950-1975: to follow  
20 December 1976 Van Krieken  
14 September 1978 Pannenburg  
24 January 1980 Myjer  
24 April 1980 Meuffels

**SERIE POLEMOLOGISCHE STUDIËN**

This series of (mainly) monographies on peace research and related topics has Röling as its editor-in-chief. He personally oversaw to its high standards.

The series, over a period of some 15 years (1962-1977), carries almost 20 titles, under which:

- (1) Berg et al., *De oorlog in het licht der wetenschappen*
- (2) Boasson, *Approaches to the study of international relations*
- (3) Baerends et al., *De oorlog in het licht der wetenschappen (2)*
- (4) Delfgaauw et al., *Aspecten van de koude oorlog*
- (5) Röling et al., *Opstand en revolutie*
- (6) Duisenberg, *Economische gevolgen van ontwapening (the economic consequences of disarmament)*  
[this is the same W.F. Duisenberg who later became the first president of the European Central Bank]
- (8) Röling, *Polemologie: Inleiding tot de wetenschap van oorlog en vrede*
- (9) Lafeber, *Nieuw Guinea en de Volkskrant*
- (12) van den Doel, *Konvergentie en evolutie*
- (13) Spits, *De metamorfose van de oorlog in de 18<sup>e</sup> en 19<sup>e</sup> eeuw*
- (14) Alting von Geusau, *Denken over wereldvrede*
- (15) Tromp et al., *Kritische Polemologie*
- (16) Verwey *Economic development, peace and international law*
- (17) van Krieken, *Deserteurs, dienstweigeraars en asielrecht (deserters, conscientious objectors and the law on asylum)*
- (18) Jochheim, *Antimilitaristische Aktionstheorie, soziale Revolution und soziale Verteidigung*