

Text Professor Johan Galtung 14 May 1985

Lieske, geëerde collega's, dames en heren, I shall promise not to try to speak more Dutch!

In June 1983 the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute had a meeting to discuss the future of the Institute. And there we met, three of us, Professor Kenneth Boulding, an unorthodox economist, formerly from Britain, living in the United States; myself, perhaps a somewhat unorthodox sociologist from Norway and our beloved Professor Bert Røling, unorthodox jurist from Groningen. We had different approaches but we agreed on two things. One had to do with the future of SIPRI, and I think - in our view - also with the future of the terrible situation in which we find ourselves: the importance of trying to establish a new paradigm in Peace-War research and politics, away from the romantic disarmantism, of the 1920's, and towards transarmament - meaning defensive defense <sup>(1)</sup>, within limitations, with nations undertaking to impose upon themselves constraints not to provoke other countries. All three of us were very strongly arguing in favour of that.

But among ourselves we also had an other meeting, agreeing on another thing: that the condition for being a so-called "father of peace research" was to have grey hair and a name ending with "NG". Moreover, the club was now closed, according to us. So that's it, for your information! The rest is the question of who survives whom and who gives speeches about whom.

I consider Bert a very, very dear friend. I was very fond of him and have very many extremely good memories from our countless talks and discussions. In 1964 Peace Research had come to a certain stage. Those three people with the names ending in "NG" had founded their institutes, in Norway in January 1959, in Michigan also in 1959 and in Groningen in the way already described in this fine ceremony. And we all knew perfectly well that there were some reasons why these institutes were not in the nation's capitals. We knew that there were establishments in whose vested interest it was that certain things were not looked into too closely. But at the same time it was also very clear that there was a tremendous intellectual appetite for interdisciplinary studies where no discipline would have a monopoly on the field of inquiry into peace, and for international studies where no nation would have a monopoly on

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how peace was to be waged. So we wanted, in other words, something more holistic and more global, and peace research was slowly taking shape.

Pugwash, that very important set of conferences, instituted by the Russell-Einstein Manifesto of 1955, felt that there was a need for a social science Pugwash. The first meeting for that purpose was in 1963 and out of it came a conference in London in 1964, where the International Peace Research Association de facto was founded under the auspices of UNESCO. The question was, who is going to be the Secretary-General, and there was no doubt: it was going to be Bert Röling.

So, let me just try to mention some of the excellent qualities Bert brought into this, I think perhaps the most important was that he was already an international and interdisciplinary person. He was international in three ways that I would like to try to spell out. It has been mentioned here that he was critical of the concept of law made for and by Europe. Now for him these three dimensions took the following shape: first of all he was conscious that there was a difference Occident-Orient. It must have been terribly difficult for a young man at his age, coming out of the bourgeoisie of a Western-European nation, to attain that level of insight into a so-called enemy country that he did, as a member of the Military Tribunal. I am proud and happy to bring a little extra greeting to Lieske from my wife Fumiko Nishimura, herself a Japanese, to whom - among countless Japanese - Bert's dissenting voice was a voice of sanity.

Secondly, he was conscious that there was something called poor and rich, called weak and strong, in the world system. And that the law was made by the strong and the rich, and had a built-in bias in it. His famous book International law in an expanded world was written at a very early stage. And in a letter to me of 30 august 1977 he says the following: "my little book on "International law in an expanded world" was at the time 1960 almost totally rejected by Western lawyers especially in Holland. But the ideas developed therein were favourably received in the Third World which would profit from their realization." He saw very clearly that it was in the link between values, norms, and interests, that law could develop, could evolve.

The third axis where he was able to be very international, was in East-West. You must remember that the end of the fifties-the early sixties were years where "peace" was considered a communist word. Being an activist in favour of peace was identical with being a communist. Bert was not afraid of being seen together with Soviet citizens. He was sceptical, as he was sceptical of the other superpower. He listened to them patiently, he reasoned in the highly non-abrasive manner which was his. But he was not afraid of being together with either of them.<sup>(2)</sup>

With these three bridges he was able to build he was himself already global. But at the same time he was also holistic. Of course he was a lawyer, of course that was his base like we all carry our disciplinary base with us like we carry our nationality. But he transcended it and built into it an amount of social science which those of us who come from the social sciences usually are sadly missing when we listen to this thing called "law". It must have cost him very much to arrive at all of this and I do not think Bert was a man who did that easily, or glibly. I think he did it through very hard work; that he was fighting to get to these kinds of insights, that he lived them.

What then developed was that IPRA was founded and Bert was the ideal man for negotiations with UNESCO, for bringing to this fledgling interdisciplinary discipline an aura of legitimacy, through his prestige and wisdom. He did it beautifully. He was secretary-general and presided over four conferences. In Groningen in 1965, in Tällberg in Sweden in 1967, in Karlovy Vary in Czechoslovakia in 1969 and in Bled in Yugoslavia in 1971. You notice already the symmetrical mind with which he picked the four places. Two from the two alliances: one west, one east; two from the non-alligned, the NN countries: one north, one south: Sweden and Yugoslavia. You would also notice that from the alliances he picked two small countries, Netherlands and Czechoslovakia, firmly convinced that if peace research were going to be something it could not be in the hands of the superpowers.

I remember very well something he said at the last conference in 1971. As I have said, the early years were dramatic in the sense that peace was seen as communism. But ten years later peace was seen as americanism, as a Nixon-slogan, as a way of covering up, covering over all the interventionism, the blatant flagrant inequality and injustice of the

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world. Bert was hit, of course, and perhaps also hurt, by the attacks on peace research inside the peace research community, by the fact that peace researchers were not always peaceful among themselves. I think Bert sometimes took that a little bit too seriously. He himself was such a wonderful example of how one could manage to be even-handed with all kinds of concepts of peace, and just continue on relentlessly with your work. But in Bled, in 1971, I think he felt a little bit sad, and I think he felt that discontent and non-peace were more touchable than the peace among peace researchers. And he said in his farewell address that at least one thing you must grant me: namely that in all these four conferences we have had beautiful weather!

We have had much more than that. At the tenth IPRA-conference in 1983 in Western-Hungary, there were 300 peace researchers present from about 30 countries, delivering all kinds of papers, not all of them equally good, not all of them equally bad; the field existed. There were very few papers arguing or discussing whether peace research existed, should exist, whether there was such a thing at all. It just existed, it was being done, for everybody to see. And if that was the case, it was to a large extent due to our dear Bert: he created the organisation, he provided the forum that made this phenomenal growth possible.

I remember another thing that Bert said - and I am now going into the little I would like to say about him as a person - once when we were discussing law, particularly criminal law, and more particularly prisons. He quoted the famous prison, ran in Germany by a certain Herr Obermeyer. That prison was a brilliant prison it was a model prison. There were delegations coming to visit that prison. And like good Germans, those delegations were inquiring: what is the system of Herr Obermeyer. And they came up with the conclusion that "das System des Herrn Obermeyers ist Herr Obermeyer selbst".

I am going to say something similar about Bert. Bert does not leave behind a self-contained, well tied-together doctrine of thought. And I would like to quote to you from the same letter, even if the quotation is a little bit long, but then it has the charm of being from a private letter, which means it has not been published so far.<sup>(3)</sup> So it means that those people in this university who are now collecting the "Rölingiana", can keep their ears and tape-recorders particularly open.

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He was reflecting on the essay-collection he got on the occasion of his retirement in 1977, where there was an essay of mine, written in the style of attacking law for being structure-blind, for being focused on actors but not on structures:

"Dear Johan, I am late in writing you. The farewell ceremonies brought about such mixed emotions that I needed long holidays in Italy. And there I started reading the two farewell books....

there are other fields of law than the ones that you used to build up your case, namely criminal law and civil law, the law of criminal procedure in which structures are established in which actors play their role, a structure in which power positions are assured (for prosecution and defense) and in which the rules of the game assure that the community-representative will have the possibility of getting the guilty sentenced, and that the innocent will be able as soon as possible and with the least damage, to have his innocence established. I have been busy with criminal law long ago, and I have tried, in publications to make clear the purpose of the procedural rules, to guarantee by the structure that prosecutors or judges with modest capacities (and perhaps biased attitudes) would be prevented to do too much harm.

This same structural interest in the law you will find in public law, regulating the relations between governments and citizens. In western democracies much attention is paid to Montesquieu's "trias politica": the division of power for the sake of preventing abuse of power. Here too a structure is aimed at to mitigate the damage that might be done by incompetent or evil "men in power".

In short: in my opinion the law deals with actors and structures, the emphasis on the one or the other depends on the field".

I have quoted this because I think Bert was in his entire intellectual style a "both-and" person. When a dichotomy was put in front of him, his tendency would be to find a "both and" formulation. This made him eclectic, which, of course, was highly compatible with his interdisciplinary and international outlook. At the same time it did not make him a man with very clear intellectual structures, with sharp edges. I admired his style. It is not necessarily my own, but I admired it, and I think for peace research it was terribly important to have a man like him as the head of the International Peace Research Association those first years.

"Das System des Herrn Rölings ist Herr Röling selbst". As a person, I think he outgrew any intellectual system he made.<sup>(4)</sup> I see him for my inner eyes in a blue blazer, grey slacks, tanned, a grey-white flock of hair, with a smile, with warm and a little bit naughty eyes. As you understand from my description I see him with love. Like a son sees his father. A gentleman. Both gentle, and a man. I am very very grateful that he existed, was among us, grateful for the tremendous work he did for peace research. Bert will be remembered. He had his ~~fair~~ share of critics; he will be remembered much longer than his critics. He will be

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with us, and again when I am saying these words today in honour of Bert, it is not with sadness. It is our fate to live and to die. We are not living for ever. We leave behind more or less good memories, more or less important structures and things; Bert leaves behind more than most. It was given to Bert to complete his life. I see his life-curve as a beautiful curve from beginning to end. He administered the last months of his life with the orderliness and insight one would expect from him. It was given to him to work to his last days, and to enjoy the happiness that gave to him.

So, let me on behalf of the international peace research community once more express my gratitude, my love for this great man, and my hope that his memory will not only be a light for us but also inside us.

Thank you.

- (1) I think Bert preferred the term "non-offensive", or "non-provocative".
- (2) Nor was he afraid of taking a stand. One of my "Rölingiana" is "Röling (Schmidt) versus Heldring (Reagan)" about the "Crisis in Polen" - De Tijd, 5 februari 1982, pp. 20-33.
- (3) Dated 30 August 1977.
- (4) In no way belittling the value of such papers as "International Law, Nuclear Weapons, Arms Control and Disarmament", Miller and Feinrider (Eds.), Nuclear Weapons and Law, Greenwood Press 1984, and The Impact of Nuclear Weapons on International Relations and International Law, Polemological Institute, Groningen, 1982/3