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## Interpreting at the Nuremberg Trials

### Memories and memoirs

The gripping memoirs of this 86-year-old contemporary witness begin with a brief account of his childhood in Austria. A Kindertransport saved him from persecution by the Nazis and brought him to London, where he became bilingual. Bilingualism was in demand in many fields after the end of the war, and so in 1945 Ramler applied to join the team of interpreters at Nuremberg, in which he worked until 1949 and which he headed from 1947 onwards. He married a Hawaiian court stenographer and moved to Hawaii, where he worked for many years as a teacher and the head of an institute, and where he still lives today.

The Nuremberg Trials, which were conducted in four languages and required the translation of mountains of documents, were the first setting for the use of simultaneous interpreting equipment. As such they are of special interest to translators and interpreters. Before that time, interpreting had always been done consecutively and simultaneous interpretation was considered to be impossible. So now people were needed who were willing to use the new technology, spoke two languages to native speaker standard and who would tackle this important task through learning by doing. Quite apart from doing a taxing job, the interpreters also had to stand up to the psychological strain. Many of them lasted only one or two years in the job.

This reading was a unique encounter with a pioneer of simultaneous interpreting and an opportunity to ask questions. Siegfried Ramler then signed copies of his book "Die Nürnberger Prozesse. Erinnerungen des Simultandolmetschers Siegfried Ramler" (Published in English as "Nuremberg and Beyond. The Memoirs of Siegfried Ramler, From 20th Century Europe to Hawai'i") which was published by Martin Meidenbauer in Munich in 2010. The event ended with a light buffet provided by the Bavarian section of the German Federal Association of Interpreters and Translators, and with interesting discussions among colleagues.



The audience of the reading in courtroom 600 where the Nuremberg Trials took place.

Photography: Manos Radisoglou



The German edition of Siegfried Ramler's Nuremberg and Beyond. The Memoirs of Siegfried Ramler, From 20th Century Europe to Hawai'i, Booklines Hawaii Ltd 2009



Siegfried Ramler signing his book.

Photography: Manos Radisoglou

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