

rijo research 2.0

Don't let the
bastards
grind you down



About us



**1999: The preparations for the launch of *rijo-research.de* are in full swing
(in front Mr. Jochem, in the background Ms. Rieger)**

On June 8, 1999, we, the political scientist Susanne Rieger from Munich and the contemporary historian and archivist Gerhard Jochem from Nuremberg, started the homepage *rijo-research.de*. Our intention was to create an independent and non-commercial platform for topics, people and their stories not being in the mainstream of the media, in addition to our publications in books, magazines and newspapers. Since then, the criteria for consideration remained the same: We write about anything which subjectively appeals to us as being worth of writing about, which we strongly like or dislike, preferably in Nuremberg and Munich, whether concerning history, urban development or architecture - and try not to lose our sense of humor when doing so. At the same time we offer web space and our by now well established brand name to people who share our views.



Screenshot from the first edition of *rijo-research.de* (June 1999)

Consequently the dynamics of the project caused a widening of its scope regarding the times, spaces and subjects which are covered. With this approach we succeeded in initiating public discussions, e.g. about forced labor during WW2 in the Nuremberg region and its compensation, supplying facts which eventually led to political action, lately the creation of the memorial on Plärrer square in October 2007. By such activities we did not only make friends but our coat of arms displays a (when it has to be) pugnacious porcupine and in moments of doubt the truth is a guideline which always can be trusted. Thus a lot is left to be done, particularly research on the perpetrators of Nazi injustice before and after 1945 or the volatile fashions of *Erinnerungskultur*.



Newspaper headlines about our featured list of former forced laborers in Nuremberg

An essential part of our concept has always been to reach out to eyewitnesses such as Jewish refugees, former forced laborers or prisoners of war and migrants, for which purpose *rijo-research.de* is bilingual German and English since its beginnings. Later we were able to include also texts in other foreign languages by various guest authors. From that numerous contacts with the contemporaries of historic events, foreign internet users, experts and institutions evolved which are very valuable to us by sharing their professional knowledge or first hand accounts.

In May 2011, our experiences with eyewitnesses prompted us to create the *Zeit Zeugen Zentrale z3* as a fair exchange for them and people looking for such contacts. Another asset gained from this source is the motto of *rijo-research.de*, *Don't let the bastards grind you down*, which we borrowed from the *Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT)* after it was brought to our attention by an old friend of ours in the USA.

Through the internet we found many friends with whom we act together for common purposes such as remembrance, material compensation of injustice and reconciliation. The effec-

tiveness of this practice is confirmed by the acknowledgements *rijo-research.de* received in the years gone by:

- 1999 Certificate of Appreciation from *JewishGen Inc.* (USA) for the cooperation in its *Yizkor Book Translation Project*.
- 2000 Certificate of Commendation from the *German Jewish Community History Council* (USA) and honorary membership of the *Association of the Victims of Slovenia's Occupation 1941-1945* in Kranj.
- 2001 Certificate of Appreciation from *JewishGen Inc.* (USA) for the cooperation in its *Worldwide Burial Registry Project* and an awarding in the contest *Humanistic Education and New Media - Continuity and Changes in the Schooling of the Internet Era* by the *Association of Friends of the Melanchthon High School Nuremberg*. In its judgment the jury stressed the informative contents and the balance of the presentation between serious ethical and lighter aspects, therefore being especially suitable for youngsters to learn about local and regional contemporary history.
- 2002 Certificate of Commendation from the *German Jewish Community History Council* (USA).
- 2003 *Obermayer German Jewish History Award* of the *German Jewish Community History Council*. For this the website was evaluated by an international jury with members from the USA, Israel, France and Germany.
- 2011 Certificate of Appreciation from the *Society of the 3rd U.S. Infantry Division, Outpost # 5845 Europe*.



Screenshot 2005

In the spring of 2005, when *rijo-research.de* counted 42,470 monthly *hits* (figures from January), we had to take a timeout for various reasons: Our internet provider made us migrate all the data causing the necessity to reorganize the website from the scrap. To us this cut seemed to be a good opportunity for a complete relaunch of *rijo-research.de*. At the same time the unauthorized copying of contents had reached an annoying level which regrettably made legal and technical steps against such abuse inevitable. Until February 2006 we developed and realized a new structure for *rijo-research.de* with the help of professional web designers and on March 5, 2006, *rijo 2.0* went online. Its most important formal novelty was the formatting of the text documents as PDFs with variable degrees of protection against intellectual theft. Re-

garding its contents the experiences from 5 ½ years of *rijo-research.de* instigated us to expand substantially the variety of its subjects as a framework for the complex historical, political, economical and social interactions influencing our lives in a globalizing world - and a comfortable pitch for our own ideas.

In the same year our encounters with the established media and official cultural politics logically and organically resulted in the expansion of the project into the printing business: We founded *Verlag testimon (testimon print)* and published the book *Solange ich lebe, hoffe ich* (I hope as long as I live) by the Hungarian concentration camp inmate Ágnes Rózsa in order to create another outlet for our schemes. Doing so we are well aware of the convergence of the media: What else is *rijo-research.de* but an ever expanding huge e-book tome?

The backbone of *testimon print's* catalogue is the magazine and book series *transit nürnberg* which we introduced to the public in March 2007. Its title and contents embody our entire philosophy, 2010 in its 4th issue, a German-English book of 300 pages dealing with the relations between this city and the USA since 1945. In 2012 our *Olympia 72 Lesebuch* covered the Munich Summer Olympics as they were experienced by eyewitnesses in the city and from abroad. The print to which an online bookstore named *testimon antiquarisch* and on *Amazon* are attached, figures also as the umbrella for our *club testimon* lectures and events which in July 2013 took place already for the 9th time.

Our concept and the people from all around the globe who contributed to its realization by their textual input or mere sympathy were honored by the *Alternative Media Award* which was presented to the editors of *transit nürnberg* in May 2007. In the same month we started *teribloG*, replacing the news section of *rijo-research.de* as it was till 2005, and in August 2011 our online diary *Nürnberg griddisch* devoted to the peculiarities of local politics and its sometimes puzzling results. At the end of 2012 we added the graphic blogs *my eye* and *shoe box pix* to our internet platforms. Since June 2008 our guided tours in Munich and Nuremberg are branded with the name *transiturs*.



Starting in May 2011 we are also present in the social media, paralleling the structure of our website by a German *Facebook* site of *testimon print* and an English branch by the customary name of *rijo-research.de* which since October 2012 we use for our German *Twitter* channel, too (*@rijo_research*). Its English pendant is dedicated to our idol as far as humor and humanity are concerned, Julius *Groucho* Marx: *@julius_marx*. Both ways of information and communication are taking much additional work and time but we enjoy the challenge because it demands entirely different forms of expression and interchange with the audience.

From the beginnings in 1999 when four HTML files spun their initially lonely circles on an internet server, within 14 years a media conglomerate comprising several websites, social media outlets, a print, events, guided city tours and a contact exchange has emerged. For its presences on the internet, at this point of time containing 732 PDFs and innumerable HTMLs and graphic files, a peak of 97,000 *hits* / more than 5000 unique visitors was recorded in January 2013. We are anxious about the future development and hope for the continuing attention of our visitors, followers and readers. Although we always try to unlock new means and ways to deliver our message, *rijo-research.de* will stay the starting point and hub of all that we do.

The past is not dead, it's not even past. William Faulkner



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