

ACQUITTED

**FREE AT LAST? ▲**

The news of his release is broken to Demjanjuk, still in his Israeli prison clothes, in 1990. But, in 2002, he was once more stripped of his US citizenship—again accused of war crimes.

In the Jerusalem courtroom the crowd chanted “Death! Death! Death!” as the judge read out the verdict. “It is as if Treblinka still existed,” he said. “Still Ivan the Terrible poisons and stabs, although his face has turned into an old man’s face. He still cuts off breasts, slits bellies, shoots youths, and drills into the living flesh. In the light of the above, we sign a punishment of death.” From his

wheelchair, John Demjanjuk cried out, “I am innocent!”

Gas chamber guard

The crimes of which he was accused took place during World War II at Treblinka, an extermination camp in Poland. There, as many as 900,000 Jews were gassed under the supervision of hundreds of Ukrainian guards. One, nicknamed “Ivan the Terrible” by camp inmates, was notorious

for acts of unspeakable cruelty, and had personally operated the machinery of death.

John Demjanjuk had emigrated to the United States in 1951, settling in Cleveland, Ohio, and working in the motor industry. He lived inconspicuously and apparently blamelessly until 1975, when his name appeared on a list of suspected Nazi war criminals compiled by the Soviet Union.

The US Justice Department began proceedings to strip Demjanjuk of his citizenship so that he could be extradited to Israel for trial. The Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) studied Demjanjuk’s application for citizenship, and found that he had claimed to be “a farmer in Poland in a settlement called Sobibor” during the war. Soviet records revealed that Demjanjuk had in fact worked as a guard at a death camp in Sobibor.

The Nazi hunters investigate

The INS then supplied Israeli police with photographs of Demjanjuk taken from his immigration files. The Israeli police were

◀ CRIMES AGAINST HUMANITY

These starving prisoners, escaped than 15 million others died at Nazi extermination and concentration camps. Though acquitted of being Ivan the Terrible of Treblinka, Demjanjuk is still a war crime suspect.

Ivan the Terrible

John Demjanjuk was just a retired mechanic to his neighbors in Cleveland, Ohio. Then a report identified him as “Ivan the Terrible,” a sadistic Nazi death camp guard. The accusation, which hinged on identification by Holocaust survivors who last saw Demjanjuk 40 years earlier, was effectively a death sentence on the 55-year-old Ukrainian.

TREBLINKA



investigating another war crime suspect who had worked at Treblinka, and they showed mugshot albums, which included pictures of both men, to Treblinka and Sobibor survivors. However, Demjanjuk's picture, and that of the other accused man, were twice the size of the "fillers" on the page; they were brighter and clearer, too. Several survivors identified Demjanjuk as Ivan the Terrible of Treblinka. Then, at a Treblinka survivors' reunion, witnesses who had already identified Ivan met with fellow survivors, some of whom went on to make the same identification. In spite of these irregularities, other survivors failed to identify Ivan. And there was no hard evidence to suggest that Demjanjuk had ever served at Treblinka. Nevertheless, the INS concluded that he had been positively identified and, in 1981, stripped him of his citizenship. In 1986 he was flown to Israel to stand trial.

On trial for his life

In the trial that began the following year, the identification evidence of the survivors was crucial to the prosecution. They also produced a certificate (see right) that appeared to prove that Demjanjuk had volunteered as a member of the Nazi SS, and had gassed Jews at Sobibor—

IN COURT IN JERUSALEM ►

Demjanjuk sits between guards during the trial. He often had difficulty understanding the proceedings; his Ukrainian translator was also a witness for the prosecution.

though not Treblinka. The defense questioned the authenticity of the certificate and cast doubt on the identification witnesses, but, despite these arguments, the court found Demjanjuk guilty. He immediately appealed and, when the appeal was heard in 1990, Demjanjuk was able to present witness statements, gathered in the Soviet Union, that identified another man, Ivan Marchenko, as Ivan the Terrible. Demjanjuk's sentence was quashed and he returned to the United States a free man. The case of John Demjanjuk graphically illustrates the hazards of identification evidence, especially when the passage of time has clouded witnesses' memories and changed the physical appearance of the suspect.

Empfangene Ausrüstungsgegenstände

Mäntel:	1	Koppel- Seitengewehr- tasche:	1
Blaise:	1	Handschuhe:	1
Hose:	1	Unterhemd:	1
Stiefel:	1	Unterhosen:	1
Schuhschuhe:	1	Wollweste:	1
Socken:	1	Wadenhose:	1
Fusslappen:	1	Handschuhe:	1
Festgeschirr:	1	Trinkbecher:	1
Trinkbeutel:	1	Feldflasche:	1
Wolldecken:	1	Gewehr Nr.:	
Seitengewehr Nr.:		Ausgegeben:	
		Richtig empfangen:	

Personen

Größe: 175 cm
 Haarfarbe: grau
 Haarlinie: niedrig
 Augenfarbe: blau
 Besondere Merkmale: Narbe auf dem Rücken

Familienname: Демьянович
 Vor- und Nachname: Иван Иванович
 geboren am: 3. 3. 20
 geboren in: Dubowlina, Ukraine
 Nationalität: Ukrainer
 Abkommandiert am: 22. 11. 41 zu: Lublin
 Abkommandiert am: 27. 3. 42 zu: Sobibor
 Abkommandiert am: zu: Sobibor

THE "TRAWNIKI" CERTIFICATE ▲

Demjanjuk's SS record card showed that he had attended a training camp for death camp guards, Trawniki. Demjanjuk's lawyers insisted that the card had been forged by the KGB (the Soviet secret police) in order to frame their client.

