

# German Jewish magazine hits Demjanjuk frameup

by Mark Burdman

The German Jewish magazine *Semit* has published an extraordinary special issue, devoted to proving that John Demjanjuk is *not* the Treblinka concentration camp guard "Ivan the Terrible," and that he was framed up by the Soviet KGB, corrupt Israeli authorities, the U.S. Justice Department's Office of Special Investigations (OSI), and Jewish groups who seek to exploit the horrors of the Nazi Holocaust for their own cynical purposes. The story is entitled "Ivan the Terrible or John Demjanjuk: Judicial Insanity? Judicial Scandal!"

Demjanjuk was convicted by an Israeli court in what has been widely denounced as a show trial reminiscent of the Stalin era in the Soviet Union, and sentenced to death. The defense has recently presented new evidence to the Israeli Supreme Court, which has still not announced its ruling on his appeal.

The 32-page special *Semit* issue contains elaborate proof that the famous "identity card" allegedly placing Demjanjuk at the Treblinka concentration camp, and which became the central piece of prosecution evidence, was a crude and monstrous fraud. The magazine produces a photographic montage of the card, and enumerates the various frauds and forgeries committed. It accuses Israeli prosecutor general Michael Shaked of having knowingly accepted fraudulent evidence, and emphasizes that a special team of the German Bundeskriminalamt, which had been asked by Israel to check into the key evidence, judged that it was a poorly architected fraud.

One highlight of the package is an open letter to President George Bush by *Semit* publisher Abraham Melzer. Since such an intervention is so unusual, especially from a European Jewish figure, we publish a translation:

"As publisher of the largest independent Jewish magazine in Germany, *Semittimes*, I direct this appeal to you in the name of justice, fair play, and human rights.

"As you must certainly know, a former American citizen, John Demjanjuk, has been condemned to death by an Israeli court for crimes against humanity. The prosecution claims that he is the notorious 'Ivan the Terrible' who is responsible for the death of countless Jews in Treblinka and the suffering of many who survived the terrible ordeal of this infamous concentration camp.

"The chief evidence against John Demjanjuk, is an identity card purporting to identify him as a guard in Treblinka and a member of the dreaded SS 'Death's Head' units. Not only has Mr. Demjanjuk continually denied ever having been in

or near Treblinka, but this identity card has been proven to be a KGB forgery by a number of independent experts, including the chief forensic expert of the German federal police (Bundeskriminalamt), Dr. A. Werner, who examined it at the request of the Israeli judicial system and termed it 'a plump forgery of poor quality.'

"This perversion of the evidence has led to a flawed verdict and thus to a perversion of Israeli justice, and threatens the fabric of democratic institutions in Israel.

"As a Jew and a voice of independent Jewry in Germany, I urge you to intervene in this case. As the President of the United States, you not only possess the moral authority to demand fairness for John Demjanjuk, but you also have the right to protect citizens of your country who become objects of a gross miscarriage of justice!

"*Semittimes* is eager to see every real murderer of Jews, every real torturer of Jewish women and children brought to justice, tried, and condemned. But we are not willing to accept a politically inspired farce in place of a real trial or a perhaps very minor actor in place of a real war criminal.

"The Eichmann trial gave Jews a measure of revenge and retribution. Eichmann was a man whose actions were provable beyond any doubt and deserving death!

"Demjanjuk is no Eichmann. He is not even a proven war criminal and this trial and its verdict do nothing but bring discredit on Israeli justice, and dishonor to the memory of the victims of the Holocaust.

"Mr. President, in the name of the blindfolded goddess [of Justice], stop this farce before it succeeds in doing irreparable damage to the image of Israel and Judaism in the world."

## Exploiting the Holocaust

*Semit* attacks the "Holocaust Big Business" mob and the U.S. Justice Department's OSI for their role in having set up Demjanjuk. Under the headline "Big Business?" the editorial quotes from a May 30, 1986 letter from then-OSI chief Allan Ryan, Jr. to the attorney general of the U.S.S.R., Aleksander Rekunov, exulting that the "Demjanjuk identity card" given over from the archives of the U.S.S.R. would be "the most important document against Demjanjuk," and would guarantee that Demjanjuk would be deported and convicted. Ryan warned that an acquittal of Demjanjuk in Israel would mobilize public opinion against "Nazi hunter" activities and "Nazi war crimes trials."

*Semit* cited a 1987 warning from the former Chief Rabbi of Great Britain, Lord Jacobowitz, against the potential exploitation and marketing of the Holocaust as a "Big Business," in which "architects, museum planners, even religious leaders would make a profit out of it."

The magazine warned that "other Jewish groups . . . seek to use the Holocaust as a political-ideological instrument. Those who call this instrumentalization into question are incriminated as anti-Semites."