

Israeli court 'terrible' after changing mind

The praise heaped upon the Israeli Supreme Court Friday following its decision to release a retired Cleveland auto worker who had been convicted of Nazi war crimes may have been premature.

John Demjanuk, a Ukrainian who collaborated with the Nazis during World War II, was accused of being "Ivan the Terrible," a vicious guard at the Treblinka death camp. He was stripped of his U.S. citizenship in 1981, deported to Israel in 1986 and convicted and sentenced to death in 1988.

His conviction rested on the eyewitness testimony of five Treblinka survivors who all fingered Demjanuk as "Ivan the Terrible." However, recently released documents from the former Soviet Union proved Demjanuk was not the man he was accused of being and in fact had never been at Treblinka.

The Israeli Supreme Court agreed with the Soviet documents and overturned Demjanuk's conviction. The court had ordered him deported by Monday, and he was expected to settle in his native Ukraine.

However, a lower branch of the court rescinded Demjanuk's deportation order and ordered him to remain in prison. The court wanted the Israeli attorney general to explain why Demjanuk should not be tried for being a Nazi guard someplace else.

Suddenly, what had been a court receiving praise for putting the law above emotion had become a court seeking to appease the many Jews who were outraged at the earlier decision.

Israel has no authority to try Demjanuk for any other alleged crimes.

Demjanuk may very well have been a Nazi guard at another death camp, and if he was, he should be tried in court. However, Israel has no authority to try Demjanuk for any other alleged crimes.

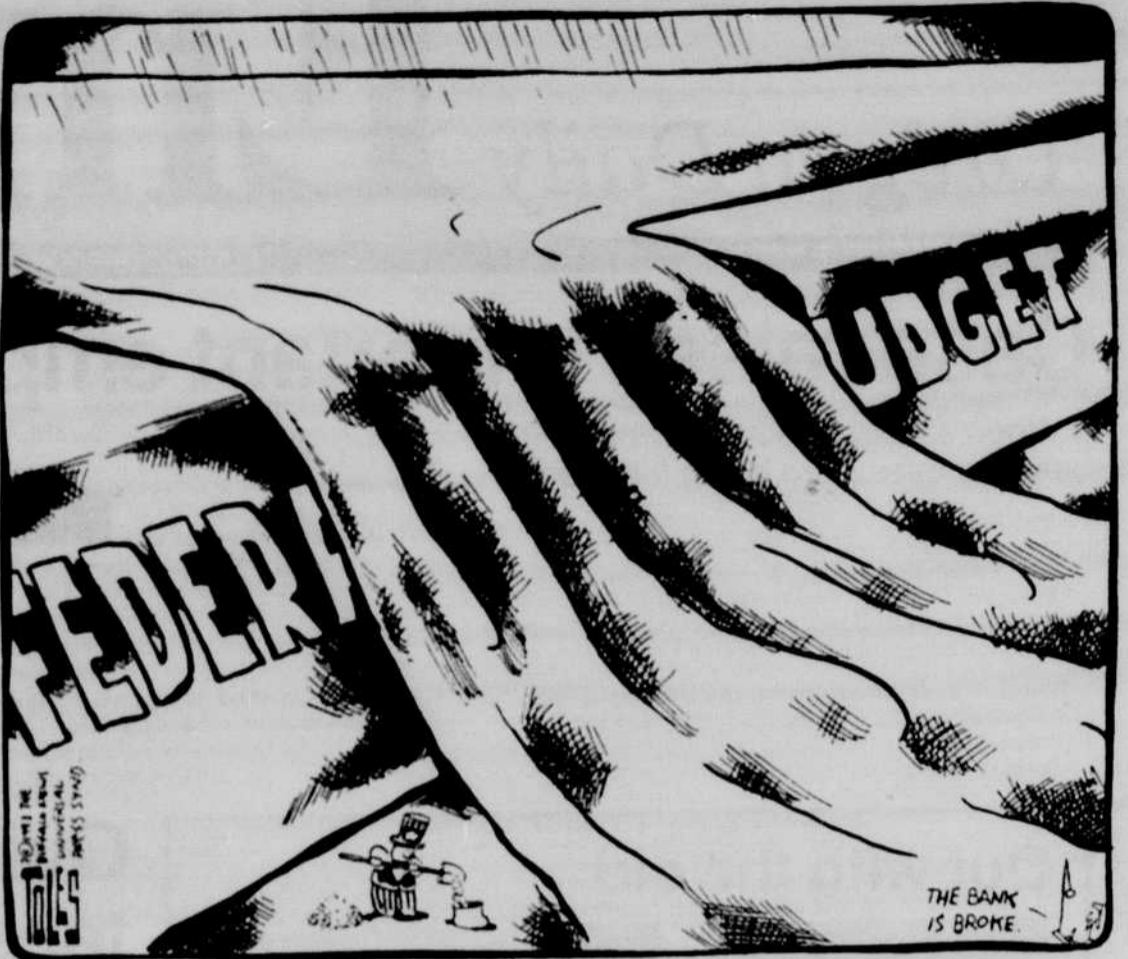
Israel extradited Demjanuk from the United States to stand trial for crimes at Treblinka — not to stand trial for other crimes. Israel tried him, convicted him and then reversed the conviction and freed him. The process had been completed and, for better or worse, its outcome should be honored by the Israeli courts.

There can be no justice when a suspect is repeatedly detained to be tried on new charges merely because the old charges didn't stick. The "he-must-be-guilty-of-something" attitude that is felt in Israel does not serve the demands of justice.

Many people are under the impression that the Israeli court, in its earlier decision, affirmed Demjanuk's guilt for other crimes, or that the court decided he had been a guard elsewhere.

Only a trial can establish whether Demjanuk is guilty of other crimes. An aside from the court does not establish nor confirm guilt, it merely makes a suggestion. And until Demjanuk is convicted of a crime, and that conviction is not overturned, he is innocent.

Defending the civil rights of a man who may have helped the Nazis murder millions of Jews is difficult, but necessary. Certainly, the Jews who were murdered in the death camps were given no such consideration, but their honor and their memory is not served by their fellow Jews lowering themselves to a similar callousness.



LETTERS

Correct praise

I would like to both praise and correct Douglas Groothuis' commentary (*ODE*, July 27).

Christianity was the religion of a culture that was virulently sexist, that destroyed irreplaceable species and ecosystems, and conquered and oppressed numerous other people. While Christianity is not totally responsible for these atrocities, it has shaped — and been shaped by — the culture that committed them.

It is the responsibility of Christians today, gifted with more accurate information about the world, to reform the religion to something more truly ethical. I believe Douglas Groothuis makes some headway here.

At the same time, however, I believe that his characterization of Goddess worship is not fully accurate.

For Goddess worshippers, as for worshippers in many Native American religions, deity is manifest physically all around us, and in us. Forests, mountains, the moon, rivers, lakes, spotted owls, cougars, the sun, the stars, and each human are all manifestations of Her.

This is hardly an "impersonal force." It is a belief with roots in Taoism, in the beliefs of indigenous people all over the world, and in the beliefs of pre-Christian European people.

It offers what only a few visionary Christians, like Saint Francis, have so far offered — an honoring of the natural world around us and a world view that sees humans as an intimate, connected part of the earth.

**Ben Iglauer
Eugene**

Prez says

By breaking the gridlock and ending the filibuster on national service Friday, the Senate scored two victories. It won one for the American people, but it also won one for the Senate itself — showing that when Democrats and Republicans work together, we can move America ahead.

National service will be America at its best — energizing our youth, meeting our nation's needs and reuniting all of us in the common work of citizenship. This legislation joins our nation's finest traditions of building community, rewarding responsibility and offering opportunity.

I want in particular to thank those Republicans who found the courage and vision to support this landmark legislation. When we put partisanship behind us and work together, we really can change America.

**Bill Clinton
U.S. President**

Your momma

Dear Jake "the Snake, a la Kenny Stabler" Berg,

I would like to know who writes the police report. When I read about "Radio Relief 1993" (*ODE*, July 27), I know that Garin Gonzales wrote the article.

Also, Lia Salciccia should have written a two-page apology, as her published apology (*ODE*, July 27) was not as lengthy as I would have liked.

Also, did you see *Leolo*? What did you think about that cat scene?

Finally, Rainier beer is the finest beer I have ever tasted, and it is not from Europe, unlike your momma.

Have a nice summer!

Your friend,
**Brian Butenschen
Eugene**

ASUO showtime

Once again, I would like to voice my concern regarding the EMU Multicultural Center.

It is true that I am entirely

against the idea of using student fees to pay for the "ethnic dungeon" when students have clearly demonstrated that they were against funding such a program. Whether the money comes from next year's incidental fees or past reserves makes little difference; the students are still paying for something that they do not want.

I still firmly believe that much could have been done to acquire funds from sources other than incidental fees. To undertake what is necessary to generate revenue requires far more than what commonly comes from student government.

As far as the statement made by ASUO Vice President Diana Collins Puente, the Leslie Warren/Mark Johnson ASUO Executive campaign did, in fact, know about her fall term credit problem, and I chose to make it an issue.

The information was not leaked from an outside source, it came directly from me. Corruption, even at the most insignificant of levels, cannot be allowed to continue. As far as her excuse as to why she was not a student, it was as much a political tool as our mentioning it in the first place.

I am disappointed that student government has chosen to directly contradict what the students clearly rejected. The coming academic year should provide many entertaining episodes of faulty administration for those of us who have graduated.

**Mark Johnson
B.A.
Economics
and Anthropology**

LETTERS POLICY

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Letters to the editor must be limited to no more than 250 words, legible, signed and the identification of the writer must be verified when the letter is submitted.

The *Emerald* reserves the right to edit any letter for length or style.

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