

Irving leads death camps tour

By Natalia Pankowska for Antifa-Net in Warsaw

DISGRACED AND DISCREDITED across much of Western Europe, the veteran revisionist historian David Irving continues to make a name for himself in Eastern Europe while now living in the USA.

In late September Irving organised a tour of death camps in Poland for 20 people at £1,500 a head excluding flights. The country suffered terribly during the Second World War but despite a campaign from Searchlight and Never Again the authorities refused to block Irving's visit. The police could have acted under a law banning the dissemination of antisemitic and racist ideas, and taken into account the views of Jewish and anti-fascist groups, but did not.

This latest excursion is not Irving's first visit to Poland. In 2007 he attended the International Book Fair in Warsaw to promote and sell his books, but was ejected as a result of a vociferous campaign by Never Again and the media. In 2000 the joint efforts of Never Again and the media prevented publication of the Polish translation of Irving's biography of Herman Goering by a publishing house owned by the Polish Ministry of Defence.

For his latest visit the Holocaust denier put himself forward as a guide to places connected with the Nazis' crimes in Poland, including Treblinka (in Irving's words "Himmler's real death camp"), the Belzec extermination camp, the Warsaw Ghetto and Hitler's Wolf's Lair bunker in the north of Poland. Auschwitz, which he has described as a "tourist attraction" and like "Disneyland", did not figure in his initial plans.

Irving's party included fascists and extreme-right activists from Western Europe and the USA. His visits also tend to bring out local fascists and antisemites.

About 20 people attended Irving's secret lecture at the Marriot Hotel in Warsaw, according to a journalist from the Polish newspaper *Rzeczpospolita*



David Irving reads of his expulsion from the Warsaw book fair in May 2007

who joined them. They included Irving's 25-year old assistant Jaenelle Antas, several middle-aged men from the UK, Germany and the USA, the Polish translator of his books, Bartłomiej Zborski, and a solitary Indian.

In his speech, Irving again defended Hitler, whitewashed his crimes and denied that there were gas chambers at Auschwitz. He blamed the British authorities for allegedly killing Himmler. At the same time he continued to deny his antisemitic intent and told his gullible listeners: "I deny that I am a Holocaust denier. How it is possible to call a person who says that two and half million Jews were murdered during Operation Reinhard and several hundreds of thousands of Jews died in Treblinka a denier?"

Irving even called himself a traditional British liberal who is seeking and presenting "a true version of history" and suffering for the sake of "freedom of speech". He went on to

whinge about his difficult financial situation, calling himself a victim of those who want to create obstacles for "true history". Irving also expressed his unhappiness with the media, which, he claims, "puts me down completely and publishes only lies".

Throughout the trip, Irving promoted and distributed his most famous book, *Hitler's War*, and proudly told the story of an old man who casually learned that he was in Poland and waited for several hours near the memorial site at Belzec to get Irving to autograph his copy of the book.

Irving's tour ended successfully without any intervention from the authorities. Interestingly, the Holocaust tourists visited Treblinka without Irving, who obviously feared some kind of protest.

Irving has already announced a further tour for 2011. Hopefully, this time it can be stopped in its tracks. ■