

Auschwitz photographer dies aged 94. Meantime David Irving, the man who said the Holocaust never happened, slips back into Germany

The Mail



Extermination: Some 1.5million people, mostly Jews, were killed at Auschwitz during WWII

These chilling images of a young Jewish girl at Auschwitz are among thousands that have haunted a Nazi photographer all his life.

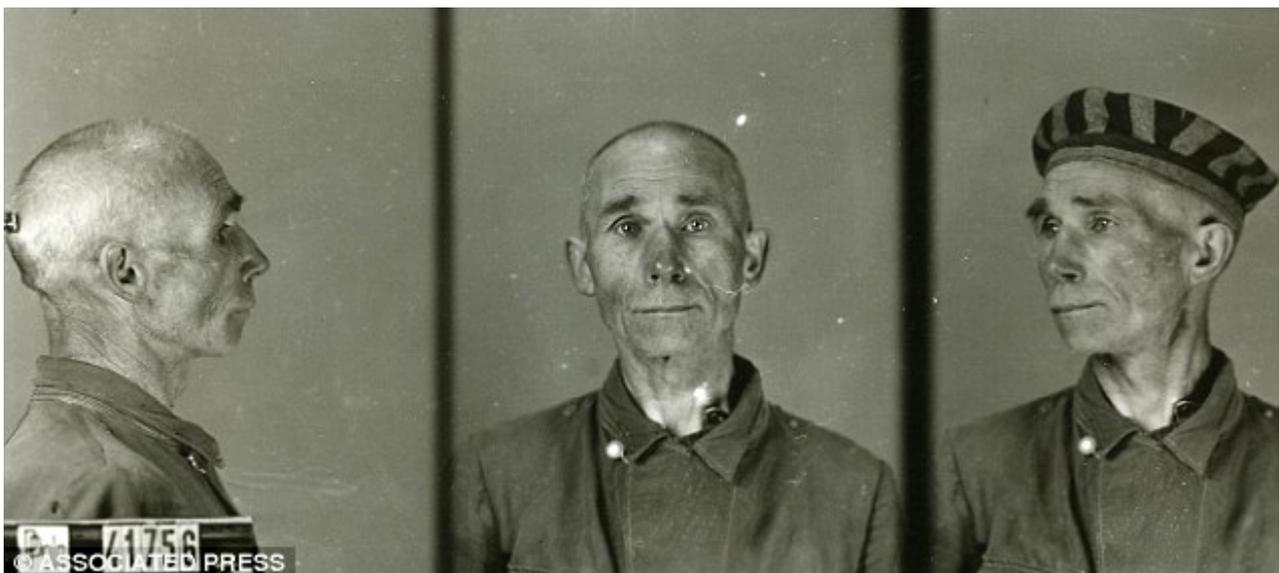
Wilhelm Brasse was forced to take photographs of frightened children and victims of gruesome medical experiments moments

from their death at the extermination camp where some 1.5million people, mostly Jewish died in the Holocaust.

Mr Brasse, who died this week aged 94, has had relive those horrors from inside Auschwitz but is considered a hero after he risked his life to preserve the harrowing photographs, which later helped convict the very Nazi monsters who commissioned the photographs.



***Fr
ighted victims: Wilhelm Brasse took some 40,000-50,000
photographs inside Aushwitz for the Nazis including these
shots of Czesława Kwoka after she was beaten by a guard***



***Ha
unting: The identity photographs of an Auschwitz inmate that
Brasse took as part of the Nazi German effort to document
their activities at the camp***



Harsh truth: Polish inmate Brasse was among many put to work capturing such images



Distressing: Brasse was given the job of taking pictures for the Nazis because he had been a professional photographer before the war

After the war, Mr Brasse tried to return to photography but it was too traumatic.

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He said: 'When I started taking pictures again, I saw the dead. I would be standing taking a photograph of a young girl for her portrait but behind her I would see them like ghosts standing there.

'I saw all those big eyes, terrified, staring at me. I could not go on.'

He never again picked up a camera. Instead, he set up a business making sausage casings and lived a modestly prosperous life.

Before the war, Mr Brasse trained as a portrait photographer in a studio owned by his aunt in the Polish town of Katowice. He had an eye for the telling image and an ability to put his subjects at ease.

But his peaceful, prosperous existence was shattered with the Nazi invasion of Poland in September 1939. He was the son of a German father and Polish mother.



Too traumatic: Mr Brasse never picked up a camera again after the war because when he picked up a camera he 'saw the dead'

He said: 'When the Germans came, they wanted me to join them and say I was loyal to the Reich, but I refused. I felt Polish and I was Polish. It was my mother who instilled this in us.'

Considering the Nazis' capacity for brutality, it was an extraordinarily brave thing for 22-year-old Mr Brasse to do.

After several Gestapo interrogations he tried to flee to Hungary but was caught at the border. He was imprisoned for four months and then offered another chance to declare his loyalty to Hitler.

He said: 'They wanted me to join the German army and promised everything would be OK for me if I did.'

But again he refused and on August 31, 1940 he was placed on a train for the newly opened concentration camp at Auschwitz-Birkenau.

In February 1941, he was summoned to the camp commander's

office, the notoriously brutal Rudolf Höss, who would later be hanged for his crimes.

Mr Brasse was certain that this was the end but when he arrived he discovered that the SS was looking for photographers.

There followed what must have been a bizarre and terrifying experience. The assembled men were tested on their photographic skills.

Each must have known failure would mean a return to hard labour and death.

He said: 'We were five people. They went through everything with us – the laboratory skills and the technical ability with a camera. I had the skills as well as being able to speak German, so I was chosen.'

The Nazis wanted documentation of their prisoners. The Reich was obsessed with bureaucratic records and setup 'Erkennungsdienst,' the photographic identification unit.

Based in the camp, it included cameramen, darkroom technicians and designers.



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Auschwitz bound: Mr Brasse became the Nazi's photographer after being sent to the camp as a prisoner. He managed to hide thousands of negatives which were later used as evidence against the Nazis who commissioned them

He said: 'The conditions for me were so much better then. The food and warmth were heavenly.'

Soon began a daily parade of the doomed in this makeshift photographic studio. Each day he took so many pictures that another team of prisoners was assembled to develop the pictures.

The photographer estimates that he personally must have taken between 40,000 and 50,000 portraits.

One day, a prisoner was sent to him because one of the camp doctors, the infamous Nazi Dr Josef Mengele, wanted a photograph of the man's unusual tattoo.

He said: 'It was quite beautiful. It was a tattoo of Adam and

Eve standing before the Tree in the Garden of Eden, and it had obviously been done by a skilled artist.'

About an hour after taking the photograph, he learned that the man had been killed. He was called by another prisoner to come to one of the camp crematoria where he saw the dead man had been skinned.



Family moment: Brasse took this photo of Austrian resistance fighter Rudolf Friemel with his wife and son



***Ja
iler: SS officer Maximilian Grabner was also captured on film
by prisoner Brasse in the photography department at Auschwitz***

Mr Brasse said: 'The skin with the tattoo was stretched on a table waiting to be framed for this doctor. It was a horrible, horrible sight.'

'Mengele liked my photographs and said he wanted me to photograph some of those he was experimenting on.'

'The first group were Jewish girls. They were ordered to strip naked. They were aged 15 to 17 years and were looked after by these two Polish nurses.'

'They were very shy and frightened because there were men watching them. I tried my best to calm them.'

Mr Brasse and another inmate managed to bury thousands of negatives in the camp's grounds which were later recovered.

David Irving allowed back into Germany

Holocaust denier David Irving has won a surprise victory in a German court – thanks to the EU – that allows him entry into the country next year after overturning a ban that ran for another decade.

Irving, 74, has written a series of books about the Third Reich denying the historical evidence for the Holocaust of more than six million Jews during WW2.

A Munich court convicted and fined him in 1993 on a charge of insulting the memory of the dead after he disputed that the gas chambers at Auschwitz killed hundreds of thousands of Jews.



David Irving (right) arrives for his trial in Vienna, in 2006 facing charges of Holocaust denial

He told a group of right-wingers in 1993 that the Polish government built the chambers after the war to 'show tourists.'

The Munich court imposed the entry ban at the same time as he was fined.

Irving applied last year for re-entry, but German authorities replied that he remained banned until 2022.

The administrative tribunal rejected this on Friday, ruling that this ban could not be upheld under European Union rules of free movement.

This states; 'The free movement of persons is a fundamental right guaranteed to European Union EU citizens by the Treaties.'

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- [Haunting smile of girl facing the Holocaust: How Hitler's PERSONAL photographer captured for history the plight of the Jews in Nazi-occupied Poland](#)
- [The photographer at Auschwitz: Man forced to take chilling images of inmates and their Nazi guards was haunted until his death at 94](#)

'The measures are designed, among other things, to encourage Union citizens to exercise their right to move and reside freely within member states, to cut back administrative formalities to the bare essentials, to provide a better definition of the status of family members, to limit the scope for refusing entry or terminating the right of residence and to introduce a new right of permanent residence.'

The Munich court's decision means that a citizen convicted of a crime in a country signed up to the EU cannot automatically bar someone convicted of committing a crime from returning to their land.

But legal experts said this was an 'interpretation' and was not an automatic ruling for all countries.

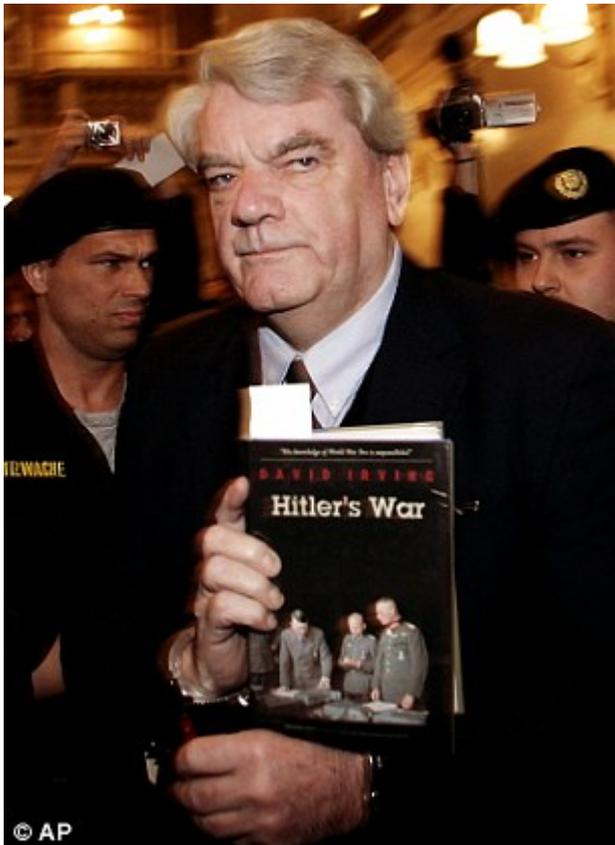


David Irving in former Himmler's field headquarter 'Hochwald', with a group of followers on his 'study tour' in 2010

The female judge in the case said that Irving will have to choose 'milder language' in future if he chooses to return to Germany – a warning he will face further prosecution and possible deportation if he re-offends.

Irving remains unwanted in Australia, Italy, Canada, New Zealand and South Africa.

He is also forbidden to enter Austria, where in 2006 he was sentenced to three years in prison for 're-engagement in Nationalist Socialist activities.'



David Irving holds his book 'Hitler's War' when arriving at a court in Vienna in 2006 accused of denying the Holocaust

He was later deported to Great Britain.

The Austrian entry ban expires in 2014. He received that – along with a three-year jail term – in 2006 for a 1989 speech on Austrian soil denying the Holocaust.

He used his one-day trial to say he had since changed his mind about the Nazi extermination programme and that he now accepted there was a plot to kill the Jews of Europe.

'I made a mistake when I said there were no gas chambers at Auschwitz,' he told the court in the Austrian capital. 'I admit that in 1989 I had denied that Nazi Germany had killed millions of Jews.'

'This is what I then believed, until I later saw the personal files of Adolf Eichmann, the chief organiser of the Holocaust.'

'I said that then based on my knowledge at the time, but by

1991 when I came across the Eichmann papers, I wasn't saying that anymore and I wouldn't say that now.

'The Nazis did murder millions of Jews.'

It is unclear whether Austria will follow suit and lift the ban on him.

One lawyer told an Austrian newspaper: 'The German court's interpretation of EU rules may be totally different from that which an Austrian court might decide. I do not think there would be moves to admit him any time soon.'

Read

more: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2224830/Holocaust-denier-David-Irving-allowed-Germany-thanks-EU-rules-allow-free-movement.html#ixzz2Al89gF8L>

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