

The Holocaust was obviously a hard time for everyone. The attempted genocide of an entire religious group by a madman, drunk with power, would instill fear into the minds of the toughest and bravest men. Though some of the horrors came from what Adolf Hitler and the Nazis did physically and mentally to the Jews at concentration camps during their rise to power up until and during World War II, the emotional scars and nightmarish memories that the survivors remembered from this trying time for the Jewish population was something these people would have to live with for the rest of their lives.

Some children would never see their parents again. After the gargantuan parties all across the globe died down after the Allies won the war, a wave of realization swept over the world as thousands of children were left orphaned – never again to see their beloved mother or father, and never again to feel a parent’s love. This was the case for Madeline Deutsch. *“I can thank her [Madeline’s mother] for my survival because...not only did she give me the piece of bread that I was given, she was giving me a piece of her bread without me knowing so that I could go on and survive”* (Madeline 1990) Madeline and her mother were already separated from her father and brother (who did not survive the war), so the strain put on young Madeline from that alone must have been unfathomable. Only after the war did Madeline find out that her mother was giving up food for her to be just a little more comfortable in an otherwise hellish landscape. The burden put on Madeline’s soul after the realization that her mother died starving for her daughter, with Madeline her only family left, must have put a gigantic emotional and guilt ridden weight upon Madeline.

Many parents would never get to see their children grow old and strong. No parent should ever have to live past their children and witness their young - naive and innocent - taken away from them by the hands of a complete stranger, their bloodlines ended, and their legacies having died with their children. This horrendous experience was felt by Norbert Wollheim, along with too many others. Norbert was separated from his wife and child in March of 1943, and sent to the Buna works near Auschwitz III (Monowitz) for forced labor. *“There were tears, and there was concern, and the last advice by the mothers what to do and what not to do, and then a certain time when the time of departure came closer, with wagons which had to be filled with children. And the*

*police had insisted that the parents do not accompany"* (Norbert 1990) Norbert would come to find out that his family did not survive the war. Norbert survived the Auschwitz camp, and was liberated by US forces in Germany in May 1945, though no man would want to live while the rest of his family did not, and go on knowing he would never see his beloved kids or beautiful wife again.

Now for a story of love: parents did all they could, putting their lives on the line, to at least try and make their children happy in a time of crisis. David Bergman's father would not allow his son's Bar Mitzvah to go by unnoticed uncelebrated. *"And we got on the train, my father said that today's my Bar Mitzvah. And he had secretly hidden, risking his life, a little bottle of wine. And he took it out. And he passed it around to everybody, and everyone had a little sip and had a toast. And that's how I celebrated my Bar Mitzvah"* (David 1990) Even though they were being taken to Hell on Earth, David's father still wanted his son to remember that his special day would not be forgotten. And perhaps this was the only thing they could do on that train – take a moment and forget about the nightmares awaiting them, and remember what it is to feel happiness, and to celebrate something in a time otherwise filled with mourning.

It is certainly not easy to summarize this. A time of immense suffering and loss cannot be easily put into words by someone who has never felt such an appalling and atrocious experience, and has never been around so much grisly death. During World War II, there were some stories of love, but many more stories of loss and sadness – too many more. Parents had children sent away to live while they died, but their kid's would only live with sadness as they were forced to grow up without the love of a mother or father. Children saw their parents slaughtered like cattle right in front of their eyes, neither parent nor progeny able to do a thing about it.