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Photograph depicting the August 1940 construction of the ghetto wall in Warsaw, Poland. Image from the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. Photograph #37295.

*If we were going to be a labour force,
then what were these old people doing here?*

Wladyslaw Szpilman
The Pianist

It was a warm summer day (August 16, 1942) in Warsaw, Poland. Wladyslaw Szpilman, with his parents and one sister, had been "selected" as part of a labor force to be "resettled in the East."

Waiting for transport to their *actual* destination - the Nazi concentration camp at Treblinka - Szpilman was shocked when he saw his brother and younger sister. They had not been selected but volunteered to leave Warsaw so they could remain with their family. It would prove to be a fatal decision.

When the train finally arrived, Szpilman - a concert pianist - was pulled from the line of people walking to their fate. An unknown person, with the power to choose, literally flung him outside the cordon of police. Trying to break through, so he could rejoin his family, Wladyslaw heard the chiding words of a policeman:

Go on, save yourself!

Instantly, Szpilman realized what would happen to everyone crammed inside the train's cattle cars.

Not long after, the pianist had a dream that confirmed his worst fears. Henryk, his brother, "appeared" to deliver a message:

We are dead now.

See Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/Pianist-The>

See Learning Tasks for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/Pianist-The>



Szpilman with his Parents

Image online, courtesy the szpilman.net website.

View this asset at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Szpilman-with-his-Parents>

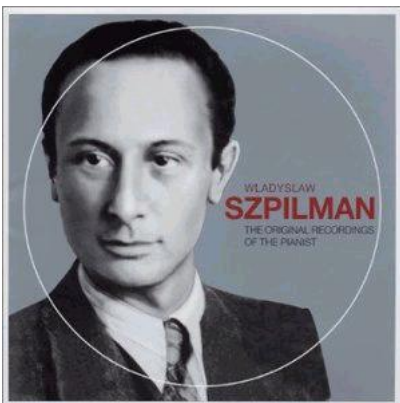


Treblinka - Map Locator

Image online, courtesy the Jewish Community House Project in Breisach website.

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<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Treblinka-Map-Locator>



Wladyslaw Szpilman

Image online, courtesy amazon.com website.

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Pianist, The

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