

THE CHILDREN

Eleonora Witońska

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Eleonora Witońska was born on 16 September 1939. Her family nickname was Lenka. On 9 September 1939, one week before she was born, German troops had occupied the city of Radom. The SS and the German police set up their headquarters in the street where the Witoński family lived. In April 1941, the family, like all Jewish inhabitants of the city, was forced to move into one of the two ghettos.

The Witoński children had to witness the shooting of their father on the holiday of Purim in the spring of 1943. After this incident, the children lived in terrible fear of the SS in the Radom ghetto. Rucza Witońska and her children were later deported to Auschwitz and imprisoned together in the women's camp before the children were separated from their mother. On 28 November 1944, Eleonora Witońska was taken to the Neuengamme concentration camp, and she was murdered here on Bullenhuser Damm on 20 April 1945 aged 5.

After her liberation in 1945, Rucza Witońska tried in vain to find out what had happened to her children. In 1981, Günther Schwarberg wrote to Rose Grumelin-Witońska, as she was called by then. Schwarberg had used the address Witońska had given on a search request to the International Tracing Service filed in 1950, in which she had enquired about the fate of her own and other children. Schwarberg knew from a list of the children's last names, which the Danish doctor Henry Meyer had made public in 1945, that a girl by the name of "Witonska" was among the victims. There was no boy named "Witonski" on the list. Schwarberg showed Rose Grumelin-Witońska the photographs from Dr Heißmeyer's experiments, and she recognised her two children. Grumelin-Witońska first visited the memorial in 1982.

A street in the Hamburg district of Burgwedel is named after Eleonora and her brother.

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Rose Grumelin-Witońska, Eleonora
and Roman's mother in 1982.

*Neuengamme Concentration Camp Memorial,
Günther Schwarberg collection*

