

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

WWII 80 YEARS AFTER

**CHALLENGES FOR
HISTORICAL
EDUCATION AND
COMMEMORATION**

2–3 JUNE 2025
BUDAPEST, HUNGARY

Venue: Eötvös Loránd University (ELTE)

Organisers:



Co-organiser:



Partner:



ENRS is funded by:



Co-funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA). Neither the European Union nor EACEA can be held responsible for them.

DAY 1:

2 June 2025 (Monday)

Venue: Eötvös Loránd University (ELTE)



8:00–9:00	Registration, networking	11:00–11:30	Coffee Break	14:00–15:30	Lecture
9:00–9:30	OPENING SESSION Welcome speeches: <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Dr Zoltán Maruzsa, Ministry of the Interior, State Secretary for Public Education▪ Prof. Jan Rydel, European Network Remembrance and Solidarity▪ Dr Réka Földváryné Kiss, Committee of National Remembrance▪ Prof. László Borhy, Rector of the ELTE Eötvös Loránd University	11:30–12:30	Theatre play PLACID OR A GAME WITH THE DEATH Placid Oloffson (23 December 1916 – 15 January 2017) was a Hungarian Benedictine monk, priest, teacher and Gulag victim. He became a symbol and a true role model. During his long life, he experienced the hell of the Gulag, where also experienced the grace of God. He truly believed that he had been given the mission in life to keep the spirit alive in his fellow prisoners in inhuman conditions, and so he said that despite all the horrors of camp life he was “the happiest man in the whole Soviet Union.” <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Actors: Zoltán Bezerédi (Death) and Máté Martinkovics (Placid Olofsson)▪ Written by: Borbála Szabó and Pörzse Fehér▪ Directed by: Bendegúz Bezezédi▪ Producer: Krisztina Serfőző		FROM THE PERSONAL STORY TO THE GREAT EUROPEAN NARRATIVES In this lecture, we will explore the profound impact of personal stories in shaping our understanding of history and how they connect to broader European narratives. Drawing on real-life testimonies and memories, we will examine how oral history brings the past to life, making historical events more relatable, emotionally resonant, and pedagogically effective. Speaker: Ioana Hasu-Georgiev (Romania)
9:30–11:00	Debate WORLD WAR TWO MEMORY BETWEEN EAST AND WEST EUROPEAN EXPERIENCE The panel will discuss the differing memories of World War II in Eastern and Western Europe, including the Holocaust and the Gulag as central, and at times competing traumas, and exploring how, for Eastern Europe, 1945 marked both the end of war and the beginning of Soviet domination, thus complicating the European narrative of liberation. Panelists: <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Prof. László Borhi, Central Eurasian Studies, Indiana University Bloomington (USA)▪ Michal Keim, Department of Research and Education, Nation's Memory Institute (UPN) (Slovakia)▪ Robert Kostro, Polish History Museum (Poland)▪ Prof. Zsuzsanna Varga, Head of the Modern Hungarian History Department, Eötvös Lorand University (Hungary) Moderator: Keith Lowe , historian, writer (UK)	12:30–14:00	Lunch	15:30–15:45	Short break
				15:45–17:15	Workshop for teachers and educators THE POWER OF INDIVIDUAL STORIES IN HISTORY TEACHING This interactive workshop focuses on the transformative potential of personal stories in history education. We will explore how teachers can incorporate a variety of personal materials—such as family histories, photographs, documents, and everyday objects—into the classroom to make history more tangible and engaging. Workshoop leader: Ioana Hasu-Georgiev (Romania)

DAY 2

3 June 2025 (Tuesday)

Venue: Eötvös Loránd University (ELTE)



8:30–9:30

Registration, networking

9:30–10:00

Film screening
SOUND IN THE SILENCE

“Sound in the Silence. History through art” is an inter-cultural and international remembrance project designed for youth. At historically significant locations, high school students collaborate with artists from various disciplines to explore how the past connects to their present-day questions and experiences. Thanks to the methodology and artistic workshops, this approach provides young people with new perspectives on European history, encouraging them to develop their own understanding and means of expression. Between 2011 and 2024 project was organized in following locations: Neuengamme, Borne Sulinowo, Gdańsk, Auschwitz-Birkenau and Zilina, Ravensbrück, Warsaw, Bremen and Pitesti. A documentary film presenting the project, learning process and working methods. This video footage summarize the four editions of the Sound in the Silence project, which took place between 2022 and 2023 at the memorial sites of Kaunas, Mauthausen and Gusen, Wannsee, Jasenovac.

10:00–11:30

Debate
THINK OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM: EXPLORING NEW WAYS TO TEACH WWII HISTORY

How should the memory of WWII be preserved and taught in the 21st-century? This debate brings together experts from memorial sites and representatives from educational institutions to discuss the challenges, methods, and best practices in historical education for younger generations. Inspired by the film about the ‘Sound in the Silence’ project, the discussion will explore innovative approaches to engaging students beyond traditional classroom settings. The audience will gain valuable insights into impactful teaching strategies, exploring how the authentic history of memorial sites can deepen understanding of 20th-century European history and foster emotional engagement for today’s youth.

Panelists:

- **Maria Axinte**, Director of the Pitești Prison Memorial Foundation (Romania)
- **Dr. Márta Goldmann**, Department of Education, Holocaust Memorial Center (Hungary)
- **Dr. Matthias Heyl**, Head of Educational Services at Ravensbrück Memorial Site (Germany)
- **Dr. Paweł Ukielski**, Deputy Head of the Warsaw Rising Museum (Poland)

Moderator: Justyna Radziukiewicz,
Sound in the Silence project coordinator at the ENRS

11:30–12:00

Coffee break

12:00–13:30

Talk for teachers and educators
HOW TO PREPARE STUDENTS FOR A VISIT TO A MEMORIAL SITE?

The conversation between the memory site representative and the co-creator of educational projects at the ENRS – Urszula Bijoś, aims to shed new light on the importance of preparing young people for visits to places of remembrance. Such experiences often leave a lasting impact on the psyche of young visitors. How can we prepare them and their parents for this experience? How can we address and process the emotions students carry with them after such visits? These questions, among many others, will be addressed by the host of the discussion to the memory site representative. In addition, the floor will be given to the audience, who, although not present on stage, will have an active part in the discussion. Together, we will develop a list of best practices, ensuring that each teacher participating in the event is equipped with tools to help young people navigate the profound experience of visiting a place of remembrance.

Speakers:

- **Maria Axinte**, Director of the Pitești Prison Memorial Foundation (Romania)
- **Dorottya Baczoni**, Director at the Institute of the Twentieth Century and expert of the House of Terror Museum (Hungary)
- **Urszula Bijoś**, ENRS

13:30–13:45

Closing remarks

- **Iga Raczynska**, European Network Remembrance and Solidarity

13:45–15:15

Lunch