

**Lisa Appignanesi  
Thomas Harding  
Atina Grossmann  
Martin Doerry  
Philippe Sands  
Katrin Himmeler**

**European Leo Baeck Institute  
Lecture Series  
London, 2017–18**

**The Difficulties of  
Writing Family History**

European Leo Baeck Institute  
Lecture Series  
London, 2017-18

## The Difficulties of Writing Family History

This season's topic intends to discuss the challenges which arise when writing a European-Jewish family history set in the historically and politically charged period of the late 19th to the mid-20th century. What scholarly problems does a writer encounter, what emotional difficulties does an author face – especially in terms of allowing the public access to one's own personal history, and how can these challenges be dealt with?



*Ex Memoria* (2006)

Lectures will be held at:  
German Historical Institute  
17 Bloomsbury Square  
London WC1A 2NJ.  
Places are strictly limited  
and must be reserved in  
advance by contacting the  
Leo Baeck Institute, London  
e: [info@leobaeck.co.uk](mailto:info@leobaeck.co.uk)  
t: +44 (0) 20 7882 5690.  
Admission is free.  
Lectures will begin promptly  
at 6.30pm. Latecomers may  
not be admitted.

**Prof. Lisa Appignanesi**  
King's College London, UK  
**Losing the Dead – Before and After**  
6.30pm, 7 December 2017

Lisa Appignanesi teases out some of the hurdles she encountered researching her critically acclaimed family memoir, *Losing the Dead*. These extended post publication: memoir writing elicits the kinds of responses historical texts rarely do.

Lisa Appignanesi OBE is a writer and novelist. She is a Visiting Professor at King's College, London, Chair of the Royal Society of Literature and Chair of this year's Man Booker International Prize. Amongst her books are *Mad, Bad and Sad: A History of Women and the Mind Doctors* and *The Memory Man*.

PLEASE NOTE: A short 15 minute film called *Ex Memoria*, will also be shown. *Ex Memoria* is a film about memory, loss and survival; Eva Lipschitz is a survivor, but she is now locked away in the twilight world of Alzheimer's disease. The film shows the world from Eva's point of view, at her eye level, and how a chance encounter with a caring young nurse breaks through the barriers. Directed by Josh Appignanesi and starring Sarah Kestleman.



## Thomas Harding

Journalist

**“You’re doing what?” - My family’s response to my trying to save the house stolen by the Nazis**

6.30pm, 1 March 2018

In 2013, Thomas Harding visited his Jewish family’s old weekend house outside of Berlin. He found it shrouded in a jungle of bushes and trees, its windows broken, graffiti painted across its walls and that it was destined for demolition. When he told his family that he wanted to work with the locals to save the house they reacted with intense emotion, triggering a debate about memories, the value of history and the possibility of reconciliation.

Thomas Harding is an international bestselling author and journalist who has written for the *Financial Times*, *Sunday Times*, *Washington Post*, *Guardian* and *Der Spiegel*, among other publications. His books include *Hanns And Rudolf*, *Kadian Journal*, *The House By The Lake* and *Blood On The Page*. Thomas Harding is president of [www.alexanderhaus.org](http://www.alexanderhaus.org), an education and reconciliation charity near Berlin. On 24 June 2016, the day of Brexit, Thomas applied for the restoration of his German citizenship.



## Prof. Atina Grossmann

*The Cooper Union for the Advancement of Science and Art*

**Trauma, Privilege and Adventure in the ‘Orient’: A Refugee Family Archive**

6.30pm, 8 March 2018

The talk examines, through the intimate – yet also distant – lens of family history, the ambivalent and paradoxical experiences, sensibilities, and emotions of bourgeois Berlin Jews who found refuge and romance in the ‘Orient’ of Iran and India after 1933. Drawing on an extensive collection of family correspondence and memorabilia from Iran and India (1935-1947), Grossmann probes her own parents’ understanding of their unstable position as well as the perils and pleasures of writing a ‘hybrid’ border-crossing family story folded into a larger historical drama of war, Holocaust, and vulnerable Empires.

Atina Grossmann is Professor of History at the Cooper Union in New York City. Publications include *Jews, Germans, and Allies: Close Encounters in Occupied Germany* (2007), and *Wege in der Fremde: Deutsch-jüdische Begegnungsgeschichte zwischen New York, Berlin und Teheran* (2012). Her current research focuses on ‘Remapping Survival: Jewish Refugees and Lost Memories of Displacement, Trauma, and Rescue in the Soviet Union, Iran, and India’, as well as the entanglements of family memoir and historical scholarship.



## Dr Martin Doerry

*Der Spiegel, Germany*

**Lifting a Taboo: The Story of a Holocaust victim which has never been told before**

6.30pm, 12 April 2018

After the death of German politician Gerhard Jahn in 1998, his four sisters found hundreds of letters in his house, which they had written during the war to their Jewish mother Lilli, who had been detained in a labour camp and, finally, killed in Auschwitz in 1944. Fifty years of silence had followed, but now, for the first time, the family was able to talk about Lilli once again. But should the letters be published? Lilli’s grandson Martin Doerry undertook the tasks of both convincing his family that they should, and conducting the necessary research, thus finding himself in the dual role of family member and professional historian simultaneously.

Martin Doerry is an editor of *Der Spiegel* in Hamburg, Germany. From 1998 until 2014 he was deputy editor-in-chief of the German news magazine. He studied History and German Literature in Tübingen and Zürich and received his PhD in 1986 with a thesis on the political mentality of the generation of Emperor Wilhelm II. In 2002, he published *My Wounded Heart. The Life of Lilli Jahn, 1900-1944*, the story of his Jewish grandmother who was killed in Auschwitz. The book was translated into 19 languages.

*continued overleaf*



## In conversation: Philippe Sands and Katrin Himmler

6.30pm, 17 May 2018

**Prof. Philippe Sands, QC**  
*University College London, UK*  
**East West Street: A Personal History of  
Genocide and Crimes Against Humanity**

In his short lecture and subsequent conversation with Katrin Himmler, Philippe Sands explores how personal lives and history are interwoven. Drawing from his book *East West Street*, part historical detective story, part family history, part legal thriller – he connects his work on ‘crimes against humanity’ and ‘genocide’, the events that overwhelmed his family during the Second World War, and an untold story at the heart of the Nuremberg Trial that pits lawyers Rafael Lemkin and Hersch Lauterpacht against Hans Frank, defendant number 7 and Adolf Hitler’s former lawyer.

Philippe Sands QC is Professor of Law at University College London and a barrister and arbitrator at Matrix Chambers. He is the author of several academic books on international law, and contributes to the *New York Review of Books*, *Vanity Fair*, the *Financial Times* and *wGuardian*. His multiple prize-winning latest book *East West Street - On the Origins of Crimes Against Humanity and Genocide* is accompanied by a BBC Storyville film, *My Nazi Legacy: What Our Fathers Did*.



**Katrin Himmler**  
*Author*  
**Writing about the Himmler  
Family – Challenges and Chances**

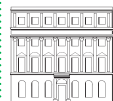
Katrin Himmler’s short lecture and subsequent conversation with Philippe Sands examines the difficulties of combining scientific interests with personal concerns when writing about her own Nazi family, while also looking at the advantages of such a challenging task. In creating a connection between official history and familial narratives about the past – two entities which to this day have remained largely disconnected – her undertaking aims to lead to a deeper understanding of social, historical and familial backgrounds, in the hope that a public discussion of this specific German family may encourage others to see their own families in a new context.

Katrin Himmler is a German author and political scientist. Her great-uncle was Heinrich Himmler, head of Hitler’s SS. She has confronted her family legacy with the book *The Himmler Brothers. A German Family History* (2007/orig. 2005). She has also edited, together with the historian Dr Michael Wildt, *Letters of a Mass Murderer. The Private Heinrich Himmler* (2016/orig. 2014).



The European Leo Baeck  
Institute Lecture Series  
London, 2017–18  
is organised by the Leo  
Baeck Institute London,  
in cooperation with  
the German Historical  
Institute London

Leo Baeck Institute  
2nd Floor  
Arts Two Building  
Queen Mary  
University of London  
Mile End Road  
London E1 4NS  
t: +44 (0) 20 7882 5690  
www.leobaeck.co.uk



German  
Historical  
Institute  
London

**LEO BAECK**  
INSTITUTE LONDON