

Fritz Bauer Institute

Study- and Documentation Center on the History and Impact of the Holocaust

The Fritz Bauer Institute is the first German interdisciplinary center for the study and documentation of the history and the impact of the Holocaust. It was founded by the State of Hessen, the City of Frankfurt am Main and the Friends of the Fritz Bauer Institute Association in 1995, fifty years after the National Socialist concentration and extermination camps were liberated.

The Fritz Bauer Institute is trying to offer ideas and to sharpen the awareness of the way German society has developed since Auschwitz and for the ways the citizens have confronted the consequences. Scientific reconstruction and a careful analysis of the means and limits to commemoration and representation are prerequisites to a better understanding of the significance and the effects of Auschwitz on the German political culture.

The Institute cooperates with research institutes and educational institutions, with memorial sites and museums in Germany and abroad. It also maintains contacts to a number of survivors' associations. Institute activities range from research projects and interdisciplinary exchange to developing educational pilot projects, participating in memorial event projects and counselling communities, associations and firms in their commemorative work. Exhibitions conceived and/or sponsored by the Institute regularly travel to museums, memorial sites, communal institutions and educational facilities. Publications as well as conferences, lectures and film discussions round out the varied activities of the Institute.

The Education Department of the Institute offers a comprehensive overview of didactic materials for teaching about the Holocaust. In cooperation with other pedagogical institutions, classroom materials and didactic models for formal and informal education are being developed here. A critical approach to German history and a human rights oriented education are the Department's two distinct goals.

One of the central objectives of the Fritz Bauer Institut is the planning and realization of research projects, academic conferences and interdisciplinary work groups. The core of the Institute's research on the history of the Holocaust focuses on the social and individual histories, conditions facilitating the rise of National Socialism, and on the political and social forms of action and perception during the Third Reich.

Fritz Bauer was born 1903 in Stuttgart. He emigrated from Germany to Scandinavia in 1936 after having been forced to resign from his work as a jurist and interned in a concentration camp. In 1949, he returned to Germany to participate in building a democratic society. He was a pioneer in reforming penal law and the prisons system. He strove to enable young criminals to be resocialized, and he constantly reminded the judicial administration of its social responsibilities.

In 1952, as district attorney in Brunswick, he defended the right of resistance against National Socialism. In 1959, after becoming Hessian State Attorney General, he had an essential part in the capture of Adolf Eichmann and set the stage for the Frankfurt Auschwitz Trial which took place 1963–1965. This trial evoked for the first time in Germany a wide public response and a readiness previously lacking to confront recent German history.

Fritz Bauer died on July 1st 1968 in Frankfurt am Main.

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