Mission Statement of the Fritz Bauer Institute

The Institute

The Fritz Bauer Institute is an independent research and educational institution focusing on contemporary history from an interdisciplinary perspective. It was established in Frankfurt am Main as a common-law foundation in 1995. The aim of the foundation is to pursue the study, research, and documentation of National Socialist mass crimes, especially the Holocaust. The institute moreover focuses on scholarly, pedagogical, and artistic engagements with the National Socialist politics of annihilation and its aftermath reaching into the present day.

Since 2017, the management of the Fritz Bauer Institute has been tied to the newly established Chair for Research on the History and Impact of the Holocaust in the Department of History of the Goethe University of Frankfurt am Main, the first professorship in this field in Germany. This institutional association allows the institute to undertake a wide variety of activities, ranging from seminal historical research through collecting and archiving work to a diverse range of dissemination and education activities. In all these activities, the Fritz Bauer Institute cooperates with national and international research institutions, university professorships, and institutes dedicated to historical/political education.

In the performance of its duties, the institute is committed to the legacy of its namesake Fritz Bauer (1903–1968). As Prosecutor General of Hesse, Bauer devoted himself to the investigation and prosecution of National Socialist crimes and proactively contributed to the strengthening of democratic and humanist attitudes in state and society. One of the foundational purposes of the institute thus concerns the preservation Fritz Bauer’s memory, his work, and his impact.

Pursuant to its conviction that Fritz Bauer’s enlightened, democratic worldview requires solid historical knowledge and a critical historical awareness, the Fritz Bauer Institute dedicates itself to research, documentation, and dissemination relating to the history of National Socialist mass crimes and their aftermath reaching into the present day. This work is augmented by vibrant publishing, programming, and exhibition activities.
Fields of Activity

Research and Teaching
The research programme of the Fritz Bauer Institute covers the period from the prehistory of National Socialism through to the present in a transnational and transdisciplinary framework. In full awareness that perspectives on the past are always shaped by the present and expectations for the future, societal changes and present-day challenges play a key role in the institute’s research activities. The thematic focal points of these research activities are thus broadly conceived.

Archive and Library
The archive and library of the Fritz Bauer Institute collect documentation relating to all the institute’s research topics and fields of activity, making these available to researchers and the general public in as sustainable and accessible a form as possible. A special focus lies on Fritz Bauer’s work and his significance reaching into the present day.

Dissemination and Transfer
The dissemination of topical issues and findings from research on the Holocaust and contemporary history forms the core of the institute’s educational activities. These activities encompass lecture programmes and exhibitions for both a general interested audience and specialists alongside further training and consultation opportunities for teachers and other disseminators. The Fritz Bauer Institute acts as an extracurricular place of learning for schoolchildren as well as adult education groups, offering space for immersion and reflection.

Principles
With its manifold activities in the field of Holocaust research and dissemination, the Fritz Bauer Institute contributes to honing and preserving a nuanced understanding of the history of the Holocaust and its impact in the context of a dynamically changing present as well as an increasingly internationalised culture of commemoration concerning National Socialist crimes. The institute regards itself as a necessary pillar of a participatory, ethically enlightened, and diverse society. It operates under the conviction that the engagement with the history of the Holocaust can never be concluded and that this forms an important point of departure for a historically sensitive recognition of various forms of inhumanity in the present. The staff of the Fritz Bauer Institute is committed to cultivating a diverse working environment and decisively opposes all forms of discrimination and disadvantage.