



**Staatsbibliothek
zu Berlin**

Preußischer Kulturbesitz

Department of Early Printed Books

The Kaiser Library

Bruno Kaiser (1911-1982), a literary scholar, laid the basis of his library as early as 1933, when he was a student and young journalist. In 1938 he was forced into exile, because he was a Jew. His library was saved and survived in a small place in Thuringia. During his years of exile, at great material sacrifice to himself, he managed to put together a respectable collection again. In 1947 he brought it back to Berlin and extended it – especially in the field of German literature – until he died.

Kaiser was as interested in unpretentious editions with significant contents as he was in the charmingly illustrated, beautifully bound or the bibliophilic book. Editions of the Weimar classicists form small sub-collections. Moreover, his collection of the works of Heinrich Heine contains many first printings and illustrated editions as well as several satires on “Deutschland, ein Wintermärchen”. Works by authors of the “Vormärz”, the period from 1815 to the German Revolution in March 1848, as well as the “Forty-eighters” - especially Herwegh, Weerth and Freiligrath – are strongly represented. Twentieth-century literature is also present in numerous beautiful editions. The modern art of the book movement is well documented in interesting examples, e.g. by works of artists such as Käthe Kollwitz, Walter Mehring, Kurt Schwitters, Else Lasker-Schüler, Karl Walser, John Heartfield, Hans Meid, Max Pechstein, Rudolf Schlichter and George Grosz. The production of the Malik Verlag was another one of Kaiser’s fields of interest.

Almost all of this library was bought in 1967; after 1982, a smaller part was turned over as a gift on the understanding that it would be kept together as a separate collection. Altogether, the entire library comprises about 40,000 printed works. The 2,000 or so children’s books are kept in the Children’s and Youth Books Department. The ex-libris collection with about 20,000 sheets and other collections associated with it as well as his unpublished manuscripts are now kept in the Manuscripts Department.