

# The early years of a Dutch publisher in South Africa: A case study of Van Schaik in Pretoria

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## ABSTRACT

Print culture came to South Africa with the Dutch East India Company, followed by the British colonisers. This influence persisted after colonisation officially ended, with the Union of South Africa in 1910. Many early publishers and booksellers were immigrants, especially Dutch immigrants. While the settlers were Dutch, many lent their support to Afrikaner nationalist causes. This article considers the implications of the colonial influence for the development of South African print culture, using a case study of Van Schaik Publishers, which was founded by a Dutch Immigrant, JL van Schaik, in 1914. Attention is paid to the question of how this early publisher saw its role in developing an 'imagined community' that engaged both with the culture of the coloniser and that of the developing settler colony. It is argued that Van Schaik played a significant role in the development of Afrikaans publishing, but little scholarly attention has been paid to his publishing philosophy and strategy.

**Keywords:** Pretoria; Van Schaik; print culture; Afrikaner; publishing; colonial.

## Introduction

In South Africa, European colonisation was directly responsible for influencing print culture. Unlike in colonial contexts where printing presses were introduced by missionaries or settlers, printing was only approved in the Cape in the late eighteenth century by the Dutch East India Company (VOC). When Britain took over the Cape Colony in 1795 and then again in 1806, the new colonial governors kept an equally firm hand on the use of print. This may be seen in, for example, the first newspaper,

the bilingual *Cape Town Gazette and African Advertiser*, which was started in 1800 'to publish the various Political, Military and Naval Occurrences passing in Europe, India, or Elsewhere; together with Colonial Advertisements and Occurrences, more immediately interesting to the Inhabitants' and 'for the benefit and accommodation of the Colony' (direct quotations from the masthead of the *Cape Town Gazette and African Advertiser*, e.g., Saturday, 26 June 1802). Such newspapers and other forms of print media contributed to the development of a colonial imagined community (in the sense used by Benedict Anderson, 2006). Although this was not a homogenous community, Dubow (2006:3) points out that the intellectual community in the Cape was largely Anglicised and 'consciously conceived of itself as part of the imperial mission, with a natural responsibility to promote civilised values'. The print media produced by Afrikaners, especially those who moved inland, was more closely influenced by Dutch print culture.

Colonial culture also had an indirect influence on the development of print culture, through the settlers who established printing presses and publishing houses in South Africa. This article focuses on the cultural and economic role of one such publisher in the shaping of print culture in South Africa – and the role of print and the book trade between Europe and Africa in the formation of a national culture. The publishing house of J.L. Van Schaik is examined here as a case study to consider the incorporation of the company into the fabric of Pretoria, both geographically and culturally, using archival records. Some of the publisher's records may be found in the Unisa Library Archives. The documents, mostly corporate records, include sales figures, historical photographs, private correspondence and family photographs. The letterbooks, for instance, are big (1000-page) leatherbound books containing business letters in both Afrikaans/Dutch and English. Some handwritten documents are too faded to be legible. Other archival records for Van Schaik may be found at the company's offices in Pretoria, and some in the national Afrikaans Literary Museum (NALN). While the Unisa archives were disappointing in their gaps, they offer some glimpses into the origins and early years of the publisher.

## Dutch settlers and publishing

Settlers emigrated from Europe to South Africa for a variety of reasons, including political, religious, economic and cultural motives. For instance, while some wanted just to improve their lives and the prospects of their children, others had more specific goals in mind: some aimed to expand the cultural influence of their motherland in the colonies, while others strove to open up regional markets to

commerce. As others have shown in more detail (see e.g., Ploeger & Kromhout 1994), Dutch migrants especially to the Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek (ZAR) or Transvaal played an important role in both the political and cultural development of South Africa. In particular, well-educated Dutch immigrants ‘played a significant role in the development of state institutions such as the railways and the education system, and they contributed to the modernisation of South Africa’ (Kuitenbrouwer 2012). The best-known example of such Dutch immigrants is the so-called *Hollanderskliek*, a term used especially to designate those who worked with the government of the ZAR. But another group deserves further research and attention, and this is the small group of Dutch migrants who had a disproportionate influence on publishing and print culture. Indeed, Rosenthal (1970:279) argues that ‘South Africa owes a very great debt to the handful of Netherlands publishers who tried their luck in the country towards the end of the nineteenth century’ (see also Steyn 2014). An early example was Jan Carel Juta, who moved to Cape Town in the 1850s, initially to work for a Dutch printing firm. He soon set up his own bookshop and publishing house, which is now the oldest continuously operating publisher in South Africa. More recent examples are AA Balkema, who moved to South Africa to start a publishing house after the Second World War, and Ad Donker, who opened his publishing house in 1973.

In the century between these examples, we can point to a range of other enterprising Dutch immigrants and publishing firms. In particular in the Boer Republics of the ZAR and Orange Free State (OFS), there was little publishing initially, and reliance on the local branches of Dutch firms for bookish needs. Towards the end of the nineteenth century, we can point out at least four Dutch individuals or companies who actively imported books and later moved into publishing. The first of these, Jacques Dousseau of Amsterdam, published under his own name and then established the *Hollandsch-Afrikaansche Uitgevers-Maatschappij* (HAUM) in 1897 in Cape Town. HAUM immediately focused on publishing the works of writers in the emerging Afrikaans language. Their titles sold well in both the Netherlands and South Africa; one of their bestsellers was the historical novelist JF van Oordt (Rosenthal 1970; Kuitenbrouwer 2012).

A second example is PA Nierstrasz, a former artillery officer from the German army who travelled to South Africa in 1896. He set up a publishing house called *Nederland* which was based in The Hague and Pretoria. The company had an ideological motive for publishing, focusing mainly on patriotic publications such as the weekly magazine *Hollandia* (Figure 1), a ‘weekly paper for the Dutch-speaking world at large’ (according to its masthead), which was aimed at the Dutch diaspora. During the South African War (1899–1902), Nierstrasz became involved in the pro-Boer

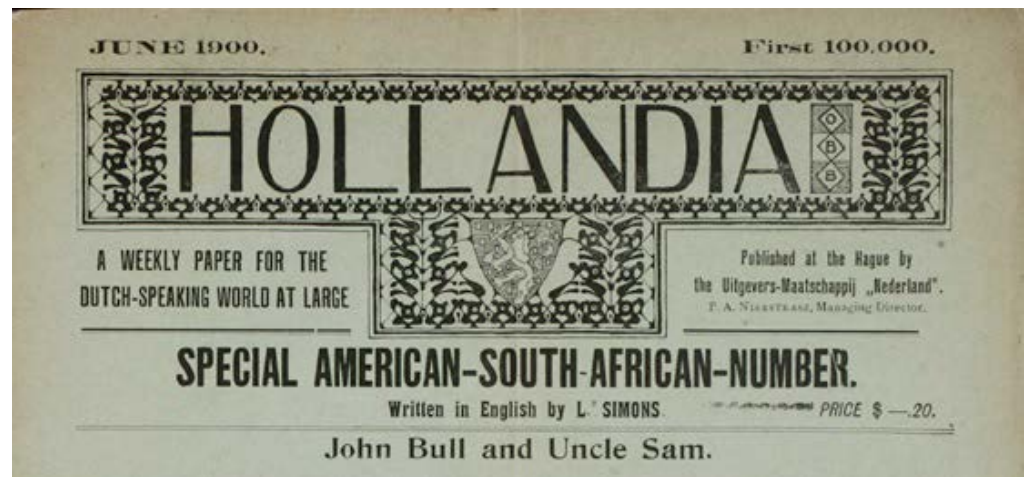


FIGURE N<sup>o</sup> 1

*Hollandia* masthead, June 1900.

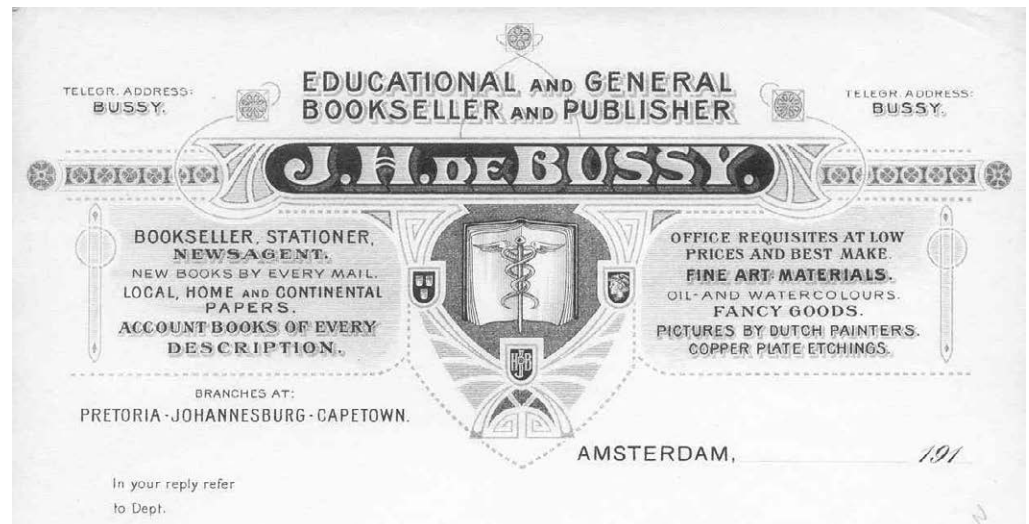


FIGURE N<sup>o</sup> 2

JH de Bussy letterhead.

propaganda campaign in Europe, supported by the *Nederlandsche Zuid-Afrikaansche Vereeniging* or NZAV (the Dutch-South African Society) (Kuitenbrouwer 2012).

The third example is JH de Bussy, who also travelled to South Africa in 1896. De Bussy ran a successful bookshop, printer and publishing house in Amsterdam, and later established a Dutch bookshop in Pretoria, followed by branches in Johannesburg and Cape Town. Importantly, he retained strong links with Amsterdam, as his company letterhead shows (Figure 2). The letterhead mentions 'local, home and continental papers', referring respectively to newspapers from South Africa, the Netherlands, and Europe. The company was supported financially by the NZAV, which also 'provided the financial means to help open Dutch kiosks at train stations so that travellers would not have to depend on English reading matter on their journeys. In addition, the firm got much work from the NZAV, printing their annual reports and most of the circulars' (Kuitenbrouwer 2012:54).

The fourth example has direct relevance for the case study to follow. JA Wormser, a Dutch publisher and bookseller, visited the Cape in 1896 owing to 'die levendige handel, die tusschen Zuid-Afrika en mijn firma sedert tal van jaren gedreven wordt' ('the lively trade which has existed between South Africa and my firm over several years') (Ploeger 1985:34; my translation). He opened two bookshops in the Transvaal: one in Pretoria – which was run by his son – and one in Potchefstroom. However, Wormser was not particularly successful as a businessman in South Africa, as Kuitenbrouwer (2012:54–55) argues:

His enthusiasm for the Boer cause might have obscured his assessment of the potential risks for his company as he made large sums of money available for his South African activities. In 1898, he invested substantially in the Pretoria branch in order to boost the Transvaal market for books. Less than a decade later he had to conclude, however, that the "fateful" war of 1899-1902 had put an end to these plans because supply routes were disrupted and demand plummeted. According to him, the economic depression in post-war South Africa and the attitude of Afrikaner leaders, who were reluctant to spend money on Dutch education, effectively meant the end of his business there. Because he had invested so much money in South Africa, Wormser's whole company went bankrupt in 1907, which led to a personal crisis later that year.

Kuitenbrouwer balances the two key motivations for publishers in this period: ideology and commerce. While he shows that an ideological bias led to an under-appreciation of the possible monetary risks of running a publishing business, Rosenthal (1970:279) points out that few of the smaller Dutch or proto-Afrikaans publishers survived for long: 'Hard economic facts prevented most of these ventures



FIGURE **Nº 3**



Höveker & Wormser, ca. 1898. Church Street between Koch Street and Church Square. (Dunston 1975:177).

(Afrikaans publications in small towns) from yielding a profit and so stopped the further development of the publishing activities. It was in the larger centres that Afrikaans books were to achieve their success – but only after many attempts and failures’.

In the ‘larger centre’ of Pretoria, the Höveker & Wormser bookshop was ultimately unsuccessful too. Centrally located in an attractive building in Church Street (Figure 3), the Wormsers sold books in Dutch, English, French and German, as well as stationery and paintings. Shipments arrived weekly from the Netherlands. An 1897 advertisement lists some of the items to be found as ‘regseleerede werke, skryfbehoeftes, tydskrifte, papier, kerk- en skoolbanke, etse, skilderye, etc’ (*‘legal works, stationery, magazines, paper, church and school desks, etchings, paintings, etc’*) (quoted in Ploeger 1985:12; my translation). It appears, however, that the demand for Dutch books was limited and sales were slow. The South African War also disrupted shipments of books and other products from Europe. This led to serious financial problems (Kuitenbrouwer 2012:267), and as a result Wormser Jr sold his business to Johannes Lambertus Van Schaik in 1914.



## Van Schaik in Pretoria

The origins of print culture in Pretoria may be traced to the 1860s, when the first printing presses were set up (Smith 1971). Cornelius Moll, Junior, became the Government Printer and started the first regional newspaper, *De Republikein*, in 1864. The Government Printing Works were established in 1888, with PWT Bell as director and a staff of 19: 'The intention was not only to meet the printing requirements of the state, but also to create employment and to teach young Transvalers the art of printing' (Smith 1971:115). The first private printer in Pretoria was CW Deecker.

Fifty years after the first local printing, Pretoria had around 36,000 white inhabitants (in 1911) and was growing fast (Ploeger 1984). The British (and, it should be said, Dutch) view of the Boers was of a grubby, somewhat 'boorish' group (Davenport 1963:194 notes that Hertzog was described as 'a wild, unkempt, boorish Boer', for instance). But Pretoria society was more diverse than this stereotype suggests, with a diversity of language groups as well as theatres, newspapers, and a growing middle-class. In contrast to the perception that Van Schaik was the first Pretoria bookseller, there was also a variety of bookstores, as can be seen in Lola Dunston's photographic history of Pretoria (1975): A Allen sold books, newspapers and stationery as well as music products in the 1890s, and the Transvaal Bookstore or Algemene Afrikaansche Boekhandel was run by Mr A Wildeboer from the 1890s until 1906; it was taken over by Phillip Mark Vamleer and renamed the Grosvenor Library in 1908. Dunston's photographs (1975) reveal that the Central News Agency, established in the 1890s, also opened a branch in Pretoria before 1900. However, little is known about the reading habits of the comparatively small group of literate people in the Transvaal at this time.

Van Schaik (1888–1965) immigrated to South Africa in 1911, at the age of just 23. He had worked for Meulenhoff publishers in the Netherlands, and had familial links with the Van Schaik booksellers in Amsterdam and Bussum. In South Africa, he worked as a sales representative for JH de Bussy in Johannesburg for a few years, before purchasing Wormser's business. This experience in publishing and bookselling provided a good background for the new firm, as Wormser attested to his customers:

De Heer Van Schaik heeft, na een zorgvuldige opleiding genoten te hebben, verscheidene jaren in het buitenland in de voornamste zaken ondervinding opgedaan en is gedurende die laatste drie jaren in Zuid-Afrika in die boekhandel werkzaam geweest.

*Mr Van Schaik has, after having enjoyed a careful training, gained several years' experience in important firms overseas and has for the*

*past three years been working in the book trade in South Africa*  
(Wormser pamphlet announcing takeover, 1 July 1914, in JL Van Schaik  
Publishers Papers)

The new bookseller traded upon the reputation of the older one for several years, as can be seen in early photographs that give the previous name ('Wormser's Bookstore') below that of the new proprietor, JL van Schaik (Figures 4, 5). This shows the insertion of the bookseller into the urban and intellectual fabric of Pretoria – both a physical landmark and a cultural one.

What was Van Schaik's motivation in setting up a bookstore and publishing house, when others like Wormser before him had suffered such serious financial difficulties? Some, such as Van Schaik (1984), Van Schaik and Raubenheimer (1992:476) and Du Plessis (2008), have emphasised his interest in and support for '*die Boeresaaak*' ('the Boer cause') – suggesting an ideological motivation for his entrepreneurship. Van Schaik, we are told, felt very sympathetic towards 'the Afrikaners' (Van Schaik & Raubenheimer 1992:478), although he was not actively involved in support for their cause until after the South African War. Perhaps as a result, the distinction between Van Schaik as a Dutch national and as an Afrikaner publisher has been elided. Although Van Schaik was Dutch, he has mostly been portrayed as a patriotic Afrikaner publisher (see e.g., Beukes 1992; Du Plessis 2010). He certainly saw his Dutch roots as significant enough to maintain membership of the association 'Nederland in den Vreemde' after moving to South Africa, and the Van Schaik archives retain records of regular correspondence with his mother country. But in 1916 he became a South African citizen, and his circle of friends and his publishing list both point to a growing involvement in the movement to promote Afrikaans language and culture. Clearly, his allegiances developed over time, and his publishing list reflects this.

The context, after 1910, was one of an uneasy Union in South Africa, with the emphasis (at least in the official discourse) falling on white unity, citizenship, and national symbols as well as the growing infrastructure of the press, education, and modernisation generally (Hofmeyr 1987:106). The rise of Afrikaner nationalism was closely linked with the promotion of Afrikaans as a separate language. At the same time, Afrikaans was not yet an official language, although it quickly became more widely used and promoted in the years after the establishment of the Union. In 1914, a decision was made that Afrikaans was to be taught in schools at primary level; by 1918, it was a university-level subject. In each case, it required materials to be produced, which meant a good business opportunity for printers and publishers. Hofmeyr (1987:112) argues that, at this historical juncture, 'publishing





FIGURE **Nº 4**



Van Schaik's bookshop, previously Wormser's Bookstore.

(Uncatalogued photographs, JL Van Schaik Publishers Papers).



FIGURE **Nº 5**



Van Schaik Bookseller in Church Street East, Pretoria, 1917.

(JL Van Schaik Publishers Papers).

Afrikaans texts was a lucrative business', while Steyn (2014:442) suggests that Van Schaik 'used his Dutch business acumen to become one of the leading publishers of Afrikaans school books'. In 1915, Van Schaik started publishing his first titles in Afrikaans.

In spite of such statements, at the time the profitability of Afrikaans books was not immediately obvious, as the market was not yet well defined. Du Plessis (2010:13) explains:

Publishers sympathetic to the cause of Afrikaner nationalism, such as Nasionale Pers and J.L. van Schaik, invested resources into producing Afrikaner histories and literary works – despite the fact that some of these publications were expected not to be profitable – as a contribution to the cause of Afrikaner nationalism. Because a shared history is regarded as a powerful way in which political identifications are forged, the creation or invention of such narratives therefore takes a prominent place in the promotion of nationalist ideas by the bourgeoisie and intelligentsia who act as community-creators.

It is significant that Van Schaik is mentioned alongside Nasionale Pers here, although once again this obscures or at least simplifies various differences between these publishers (see Muller 1990:347, for a similar comparison). For a start, Van Schaik is seen as playing an important role as a 'community creator', in the same way as the Afrikaner nationalist Naspers, although he was in fact a Dutch immigrant and not an Afrikaner. Secondly, there is a tension between the argument that 'the decision to publish new manuscripts did not always hinge on sound business principles' and seemingly contradictory findings that various authors' books were in fact published for their profitability (Du Plessis 2008). Naspers was able to subsidise what was still a fairly precarious publishing programme in Afrikaans from the profits of its highly successful newspaper and magazine publishing, in particular *Die Burger* and *Die Huisgenoot*. Van Schaik had to rely on the sales of his books and the income from his bookselling to keep his small business afloat. He also soon diversified his publishing list, as will be described below, to include lucrative schoolbook and children's book publishing. This diversification points more to shrewd business-sense than to a contribution to a cause.

The publishing philosophy can be seen on an early letterhead – and even the logo – from the 1920s: '*Uitgewers van Letterkundige Werke, Skool- en Kinderboeke*' ('Publishers of literary works, schoolbooks and children's books') (Figure 6). Publicity material from the 1930s repeats this philosophy: '*Van Schaik se Uitgewery staan vooraan op die gebied van skooluitgawes, letterkunde en kinderboeke*' ('Van Schaik's Publisher is at the forefront for school editions, literature and children's books'). A



FIGURE N° 6



Van Schaik logo

photograph of the bookstore display specifically mentions '*bijbels en kerkboeken*' ('bibles and church books') (Figure 7), which shows that the marketing was making certain assumptions about the reading habits of early Pretoria inhabitants. Interestingly, these documents make little mention of their non-fiction books.

Van Schaik was a publisher by training, as well as a bookseller, and he performed the two roles admirably. His son, Jan van Schaik, argues that his father was highly skilled in selecting authors. The questions that arise from his publishing list include: How did he select such iconic authors so soon? Or did they become iconic because they were published? And how was he able to insert himself into this top echelon of intellectual society so soon? The first publications, in 1915, were short non-fiction works by prominent academics at Potchefstroom University: Dr SO Los (*Beginnselen van die karakterkunde*) and Dr Ferdinand Postma (*De Heere regeert: drie leerredenen*). (Postma would later become rector of Potchefstroom University). In 1916, Van Schaik was able to publish works by Gustav Preller, who was an extremely important role player in the second Afrikaans Language Movement (a short biography of the Boer War general Kaptein Hindon, followed a year later by his biography of Great



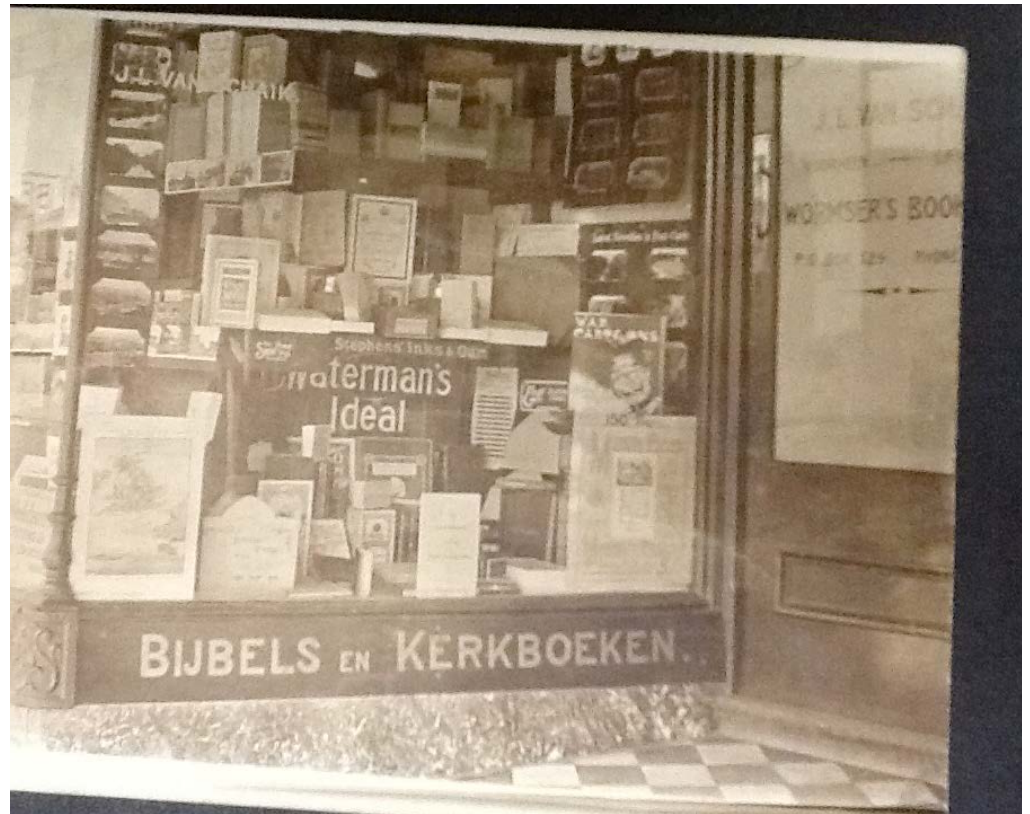


FIGURE **Nº 7**



Van Schaik display

(JL Van Schaik Publishers Papers)

Trek leader Piet Retief), but also satirical fiction by Dr O’Kulis (the pseudonym of Willem Postma, a relative of Ferdinand Postma). In 1917, Jochen van Bruggen’s *Teleurgestel* won the first Hertzog prize from the newly established South African Akademie – as is proudly announced on the title page – and in 1920 the celebrated author, C Louis Leipoldt, published a collection called *Dingaansdag* with Van Schaik. There were also books for children, with the first being *Kaskenades van Klein Duimpie* (‘Adventures of Tom Thumb’) by Tannie Cicely Clark (Mrs van Heerden) and by 1919 schoolbooks (mostly assisted by his brother-in-law, Dr AK Bot) (JL Van Schaik Publishers Papers).

As the paratext – and specifically the book design and covers – shows (Figures 8 and 9), these texts were well designed and produced. In keeping with book publishing conventions at the time, the books were mostly hardcover. But Van Schaik introduced some stylistic elements that were not so common in South Africa at the time, and which he had evidently brought with him from Europe: the stamped covers, the

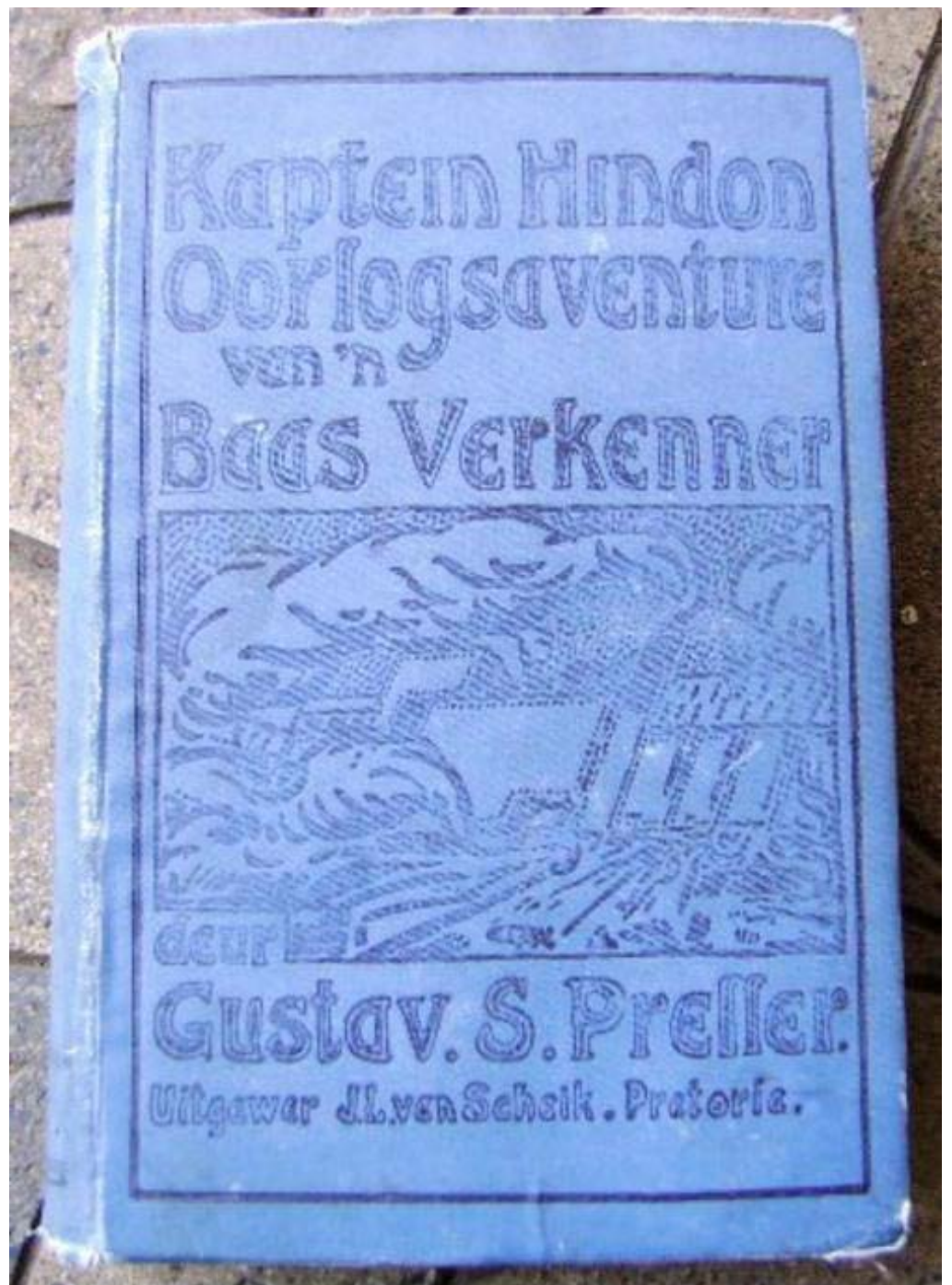


FIGURE **Nº 8**



*Kaptein Hindon*

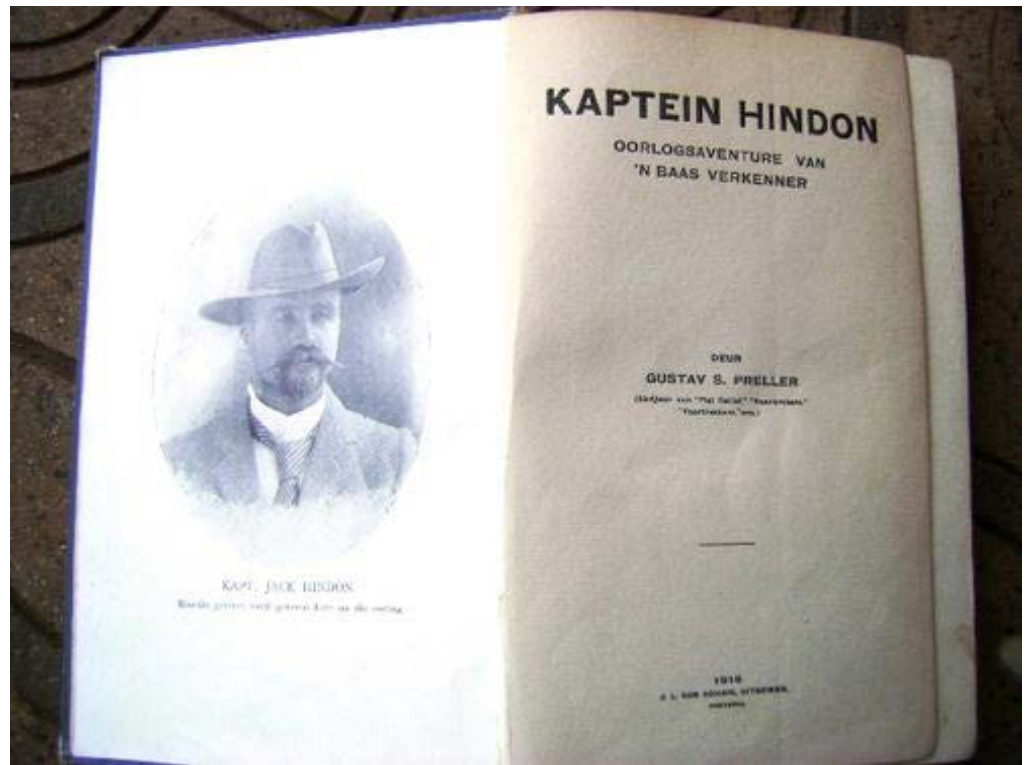


FIGURE N° 9



### *Kaptein Hindon*

use of interesting fonts, and the use of imagery. The paratextual elements also highlight both the author and the publisher as important agents for the production of these texts: under the author's name (for example, 'deur Gustav S Preller') appears 'Uitgewer JL van Schaik, Pretoria'. This lends the new publisher the authority of the already established and well known author, and associates their names for the reader and book buyer.

In fact, the interesting question is not so much how Van Schaik traded on this association with his authors, but how an unknown and untested publisher was able to attract such significant authors so quickly? The answer lies partly in the fact that Van Schaik built local networks very early. Some of these were family members, such as his brother-in-law, Bot, who was able to introduce Van Schaik to a variety of important educationalists in Potchefstroom – many of them Dutch (Van Schaik & Raubenheimer 1992; Steyn 2014:442). The family network overlapped with a religious network, as Van Schaik was a member of Gereformeerde Kerk, and indeed met his wife through the church. A second network was largely cultural. At JH de Bussy, Van Schaik worked with the artist Pieter Wenning, who worked as a clerk



for De Bussy from 1905, first in Pretoria and then in Johannesburg. Wenning was part of a group of Pretoria-based artists, which included Pierneef, known as the Individualists (Duffey 2010:19). He even worked for Van Schaik for a while, in his bookshop, when he was struggling to make ends meet as an artist. De Bussy also made his bookshop in Van Erkom's Building available for art exhibitions, and Van Schaik is likely to have met a number of important artists and writers there.

A third network relates to the confluence of politics and culture, and especially those involved in the Second Afrikaans Language Movement. In Pretoria, the Van Schaik bookstore was located close to the offices of the newspaper *De Volksstem*, and the two shared a common printer, Wallach's. This proximity certainly brought many political figures into contact with Van Schaik. These included several authors who were leading figures in the Tweede Taalbeweging (Second Afrikaans Language Movement), including Gustav Preller and C Louis Leipoldt.

Eugene Marais, also a member of this network and a friend of Van Schaik, relates an anecdote that reveals how Van Schaik made use of his networks to commission new works:

Dat dr. Visser sy verskyning as 'n Afrikaanse digter gemaak het, is in die eerste plaas te danke aan die persoonlike bemoeïing van die heer Van Schaik. Hy sou na alle waarskynlikheid daarby gebly het om nou en dan 'n oorspronklike gediggie in 'n Afrikaanse tydskrif te publiseer, of vir sy eie genot 'n vertaling of oorsetting te maak. Maar die toeval het dit teweeggebring dat mnr. Van Schaik met dr. Visser in aanraking gekom het tydens 'n besoek aan my in Heidelberg ... (Marais 1981:42).

*('Dr Visser's appearance as an Afrikaans poet is in the first place thanks to the personal efforts of Mr Van Schaik. He would in all likelihood have continued to publish an original poem in an Afrikaans magazine from time to time, or do a translation or adaptation for his own enjoyment. But as chance would have it, Mr Van Schaik came into contact with Dr Visser during a visit to me in Heidelberg.')*

Marais goes on to relate how Van Schaik actively worked with Visser to assemble his first collection. Such evidence of networking and canny commissioning shows how Van Schaik managed to insert himself into the – admittedly small – literary and artistic circles of Pretoria, which must have been a key factor in his managing to attract and publish some leading figures. Importantly, this network was fairly confined, geographically, at least in the early years, to Pretoria and surrounds. An examination of the publishing list for about the first ten years shows few authors from outside of this sphere, although it then does begin to expand. Pienaar (1919:45) suggests that 'Suid-Afrika is egter nie rijk aan ondernemende uitgewers nie' ('South

*Africa does not have a wealth of innovative publishers*'). I would speculate that, as Van Schaik as a publisher provided an opportunity to young, especially Transvaal-based Afrikaans writers, his new publishing house may have become a sought-after platform for their views and literary works.

But, importantly, the firm was not dedicated only to Afrikaans titles, and also published English books, as well as eventually moving into African-language titles – a fact that is highlighted in current corporate histories in an attempt to show that the publisher is as acceptable post-apartheid as it was in earlier periods. As a bookseller, Van Schaik also catered for the English-speaking market, as can be seen from the many orders from local English-language publishers such as Maskew Miller and CNA in the archival records (e.g., Letter Book, March – July 1919, JL Van Schaik Publishers Papers). An early photograph shows Van Schaik standing outside his bookshop, which advertises 'English and foreign literature' (Figure 10). Other advertisements show that 'foreign' mostly meant Dutch, German and French books. The journals and other papers of the Van Schaik bookstore in the years leading up to 1920 reveal a great diversity both of products and of clientele – showing that Van Schaik served a real need in Pretoria and farther afield (JL Van Schaik Publishers Papers). Farmers and travellers made a point of visiting the bookstore when coming to Pretoria (Ploeger 1984). In addition to sales through the bookshop, the bookseller catered for customers all over the country, through mail orders. However, this diversity did not appear to stretch as far as black customers. The archives also reveal minor details about life in Pretoria at this time, with complaints about *dominees* being slow to respond to bills and to pay them, and complaints about non-delivery by the Post Office or Railways (e.g., Letter Book, March – July 1919, JL Van Schaik Publishers Papers:327, 331, 341). The diversification evidenced by the historical records suggests that the publishing philosophy always contained elements of both mission-driven and profit-driven publishing.

Another form of evidence of the professionalism and business-minded approach taken by Van Schaik may be found in the 'Publikasie Boeke' which detail the turnover of the bookshop as well as details of every book published. These handwritten ledgers provide information on the royalties, print runs, and costings for books. They show that, instead of royalties as such, Van Schaik at first paid his authors a once-off honorarium, which helped to lower the risk of his upfront investment. By the mid-1920s, he had moved to a sliding scale of royalties or honoraria, which both helped to spread the risk and ensured that his authors were receiving a fair return (Publikasie Boek 1, 1914–1924, JL Van Schaik Publishers Papers). The print runs for the early works are often large, even by today's standards, revealing that there must have been a ready and receptive market for Afrikaans works, and that



FIGURE **Nº 10**



JL van Schaik outside his bookshop, c. 1914.

(JL Van Schaik Publishers Papers).

Van Schaik was prepared to take a risk early on. A few examples of poetry collections, which hardly sell nowadays but were popular at the time, show just how large the market was:

C Louis Leipoldt's collection *Dingaansdag* was published in 1920, with a print run of 3,000 copies (Publikasie Boek 1, 1914–1924, JL Van Schaik Publishers Papers). With a cost price of just over two shillings, and a sales price of four shillings, the work sold slowly but steadily, and the first print run was sold out by early 1927. This was thus a profitable venture, but even less celebrated poets did well: as mentioned previously, Van Schaik commissioned a collection of poems by Andries Visser in 1925, which was the winner of the Hertzog Prize in 1926. Visser's *Gedigte* had a first print run of 1,000 copies. The book sold 300 copies in six months, and had sold out by mid-1926. It was immediately reprinted (Publikasie Boek 1, 1914–1924, JL Van Schaik Publishers Papers).

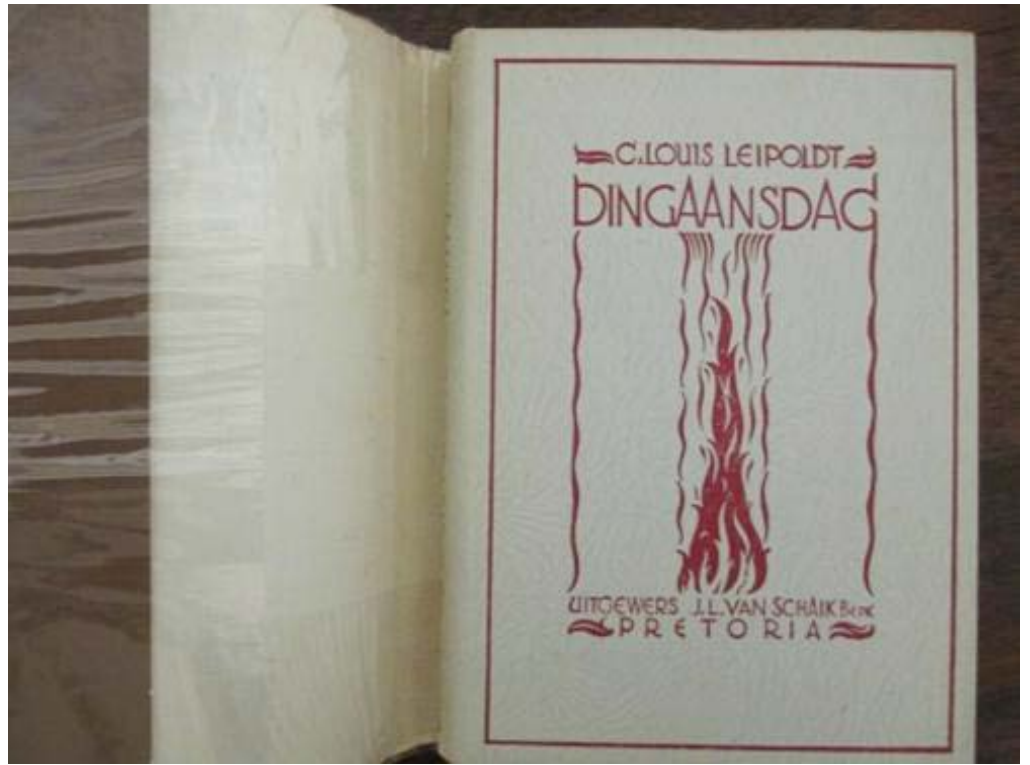


FIGURE **Nº 11**



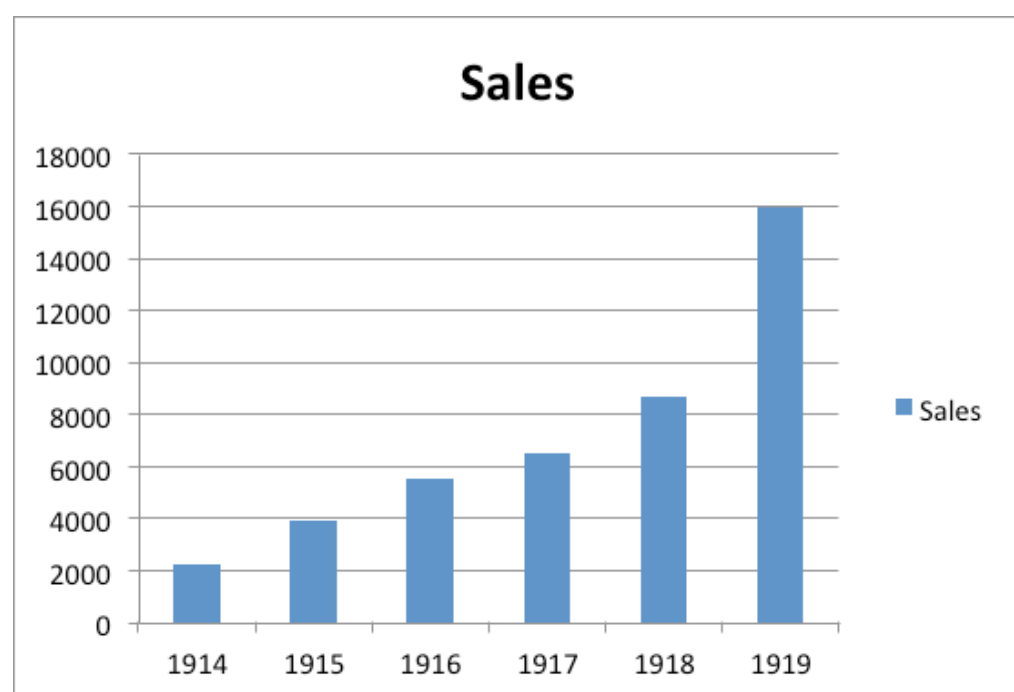
Leipoldt's *Dingaansdag*

The schoolbooks were even more successful. For instance, AK Bot's *Algemene Geskiedenis* (1918) had a rather conservative first printing of 1,000 copies. It was an expensive work, costing £50, and the author was paid an honorarium of £25. The Publications Book lists six printings in the first five years, rising to 3,000 copies per print run. There was a big first print run of 5,000 copies for the hugely successful Kritzinger-Steyn Woordeboek (a bilingual Afrikaans-English dictionary) in 1921, and as many as 6,000 copies per printing for some schoolbooks (Publikasie Boek 1, 1914–1924, JL Van Schaik Publishers Papers). These figures support the contention that Van Schaik cross-subsidised some of the less popular but highly meritorious literary and political works with the publishing of schoolbooks and reference works.

The sales and reception of these works clearly shows Van Schaik's eye for profit. The contemporary reception may be traced to some extent through book reviews. The Publikasie Boek retains only a few of these, but the books were widely reviewed in newspapers and magazines both throughout South Africa and in the Netherlands. Newspaper clippings of the reviews show that his books were reviewed in both the English and Afrikaans press. The publisher was praised for his 'lengthening list of

first-rate schoolbooks in Afrikaans' (*Star*, 1926), while a 'Boeke-tafel' review of *Bilingual Education* by Aucamp suggests that 'Die firma Van Schaik word in Suid-Afrika by uitstek die uitgewer van proefskrifte' ('*The Van Schaik firm is becoming by far the best publisher of dissertations in South Africa*') (MSB Kritzinger, writing in *Die Volksstem* in July 1926). The reviews also show an awareness of the growth of 'die lesende publiek' ('*the reading public*') in South Africa, as in a review from June 1926 in the *Tydskrif vir Wetenskap en Kuns*.

In the early years, turnover grew rapidly, in spite of war and disrupted distribution channels (Publikasie Boek 1, 1914–1924, JL Van Schaik Publishers Papers). The effects of the end of the First World War, when normal postal service and shipping resumed, can be clearly seen in this table:



(Publikasie Boek 1, 1914–1924, JL Van Schaik Publishers Papers).



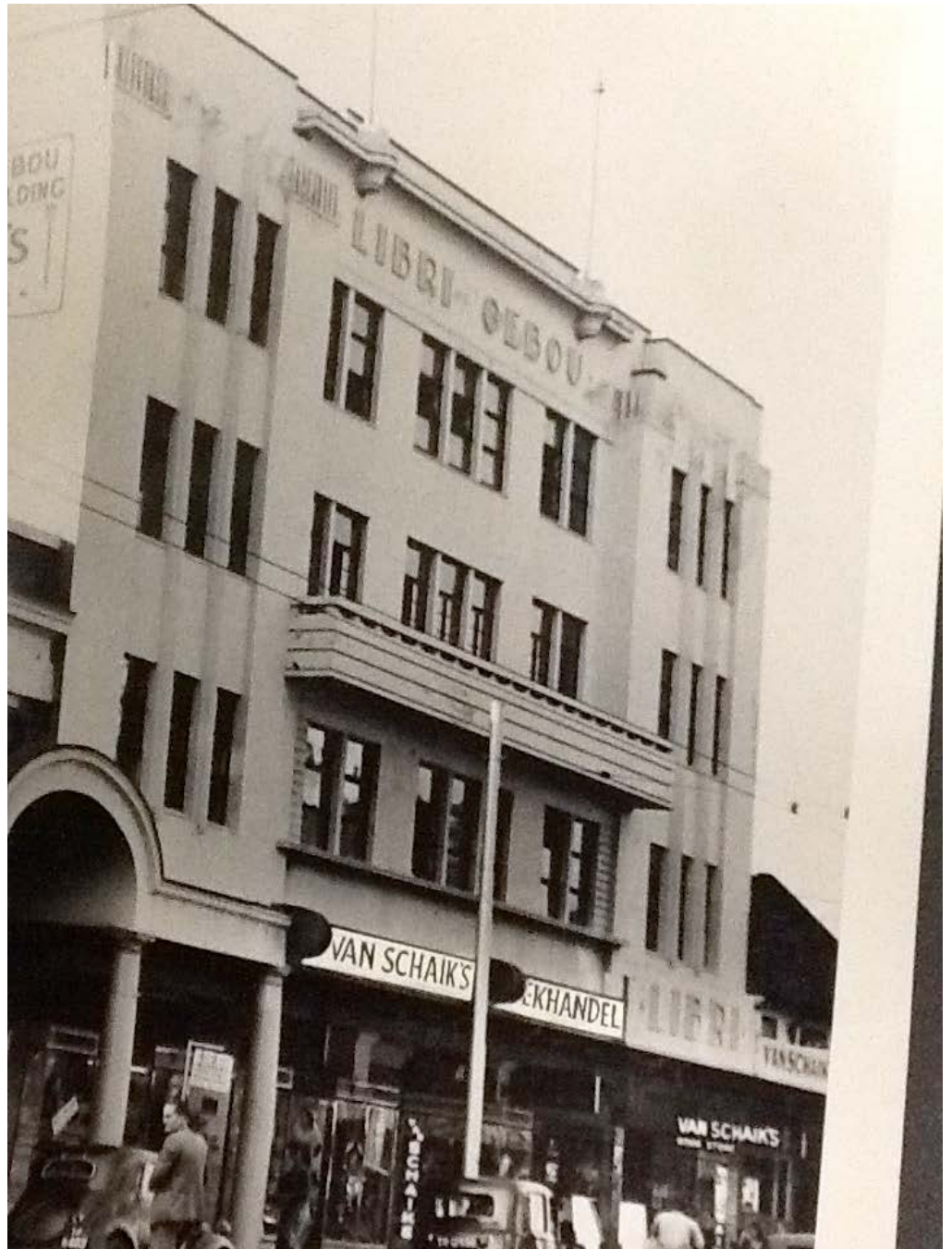


FIGURE **Nº 12**



Libri building.

(JL Van Schaik Publishers Papers).



This success may also be seen in the expansion of the physical buildings of the bookseller, with the eventual design and erection of the Libri building in 1938 (Figure 12). Van Schaik commissioned Burg, Lodge and Burg to build the Libri building in Central Pretoria in Church Street to replace an earlier building by Wim de Zwaan. (The name Libri would also be used for a highly successful series of children's books by the publisher.) And he developed branches in Sunnyside and Hatfield, which were residential areas as well as the site of the University. Thus, Van Schaik could with some accuracy describe themselves in 1930s publicity as 'The leading booksellers of Pretoria'.

## Conclusion

A copy of the magazine *Die Nuwe Brandwag: Tydskrif vir Kuns en Lettere* of February 1929 (part 1, no. 1) reveals in microcosm both the influence of the Dutch publishers in South Africa and their support for the Afrikaans nationalist cause. The magazine was published by JH de Bussy in Pretoria and HAUM (formerly J Dusseau & Co) in Cape Town. It features advertisements for South African-made products, artists such as Pierneef, and the SA Nasionale Lewens Assuransie Maatskappy (now the insurance giant Sanlam), as well as the educational institutions of the Transvaal University College (now the University of Pretoria), Potchefstroom University and Stellenbosch University. Among the articles by figures such as Gustav Preller, CL Leipoldt and MSB Kritzinger, are book reviews and advertisements for new books – including one for Van Schaik. The latter reads: 'Soos die brandwag se werk is om raak to sien al wat hom aan die horison vertoon, so is die regte boekverkoper altyd op die uitkyk na alles wat nuut is in vorm van inhoud' ('As *the sentry's work is to see all that appears on the horizon, so the real bookseller is always on the lookout for all that is new in the form of content*') (*Nuwe Brandwag* 1929:viii). This publicity material draws a direct comparison between the role of the publisher and bookseller in promoting local culture, and that of the *Brandwag* and the Afrikaans Language Movement associated with it. In the same way, scholars now associate Van Schaik's publishing with the rise of Afrikaans literature and nationalism.

Van Schaik developed a highly successful business as both a bookseller and a publisher, largely thanks to print networks that already existed between South Africa and Europe, which he in turn further developed. The records suggest that Van Schaik was successful owing to both his ability to develop networks through the associations of family and political sympathies, and his attention to the details of his business. It is clear that Van Schaik gained an early understanding of the

local market and tapped into a growing Afrikaner nationalist spirit, which was facilitated by acceptance into a fairly elite, professional network. Internationally, the firm's success was supported by family connections with the Van Schaik bookselling firms in Bussum and Amsterdam in the Netherlands, although more research is needed on this subject.

It is difficult to disentangle business motives from the ideological motivation associated with the promotion of Afrikaans. Huigen (2004, in Van Coller & Odendaal 2005:21) has argued that the infrastructure provided by publishers played an important role in the establishment of Afrikaans as an official and cultural language in South Africa: 'Hierdie infrastruktuur van uitgewers en publikasies sou later 'n baie belangrike rol speel in die vestiging van Afrikaans as 'n amptelike en 'n kultuur taal in Suid Afrika' (*This infrastructure of publishers and publications would later play a very important role in the establishment of Afrikaans as an official and cultural language in South Africa*). An examination of Van Schaik's publishing philosophy and list shows that such early publishers played an important role in developing an 'imagined community', especially within the nascent Afrikaans community.

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