Sommer met die intrap sorg Beukes vir 'n historiese onjuistheid. As hy sy navorsing goed gedoen het, sal hy weet dat Smuts, in teenstelling met dié wat hy as skrywer beweer, verre van 'n "brilliant military leader" was. Verbandhouende dokumente in die Public Record Office en War Museum in Londen getui gi hiervan. Sy Oos-Afrika kompanjie tydens die Eerste Wêreldoorlog is 'n verdere bewys hiervan. Smuts was maar te bly om van hierdie verantwoordelikheid ontslae te raak toe hy Londen toe moes gaan vir die bywonning van die Imperiale Oorlogskabinet. En toe Smuts die aanbod kry om die bevel oor te neem van die Britse magte in Palestina in hierdie tyd, het hy eers vir Botha geraadpleeg, wat teruggekak het: "Advise you to refuse. We both know you are no general."

Ek twyfel nie dat dié boek goeie verkoop sal hê nie. Goeie verkoop, nie omdat dit 'n goeie boek as sodanig is nie, maar wel omdat dit die soetsappigheid bevat wat vir 'n sekeres leespubliek bedoel is. Die feit dat Beukes dikwels met sy aanbieding in hierdie verband aan die banale grens, is hier van deurslaggewende belang. “The diary”, skryf hy, “also tells how Frederick slept in the nude and one night this nearly got her into trouble while a guest in Groote Schuur.” (p.129). Daar is nog tale ander soortgelyke voorbeelde. The Romantic Smuts kry nie 'n plek op my boekroete langs die ander boeke oor generaal J.C. Smuts nie. Beukes is 'n apologie verskuldig aan die nagedagtenis van Smuts en ook aan die Smuts-familie.

Ockie Geyser
Universiteit van die Oranje-Vrystaat


The making of the colonial order offers new insights into the troubled and violent world of the Eastern Cape colonial frontier. Unlike earlier works that have tended to see the eighteenth-century Afrikaner frontier experience as crucial to the shaping of racial attitudes in South Africa, Crais argues firmly for the dominance of the British settlers' frontier experience. He argues further that the settler presence ushered in a revolution in the development of class and race relations in the Cape and in the way in which power was exercised.

Crais is also more concerned than were earlier historians with cultural questions and the interdependence between culture and the structures of dominance within frontier society. He offers a post-modern critique of frontier society in which he explores the extent to which the settlers' views of Africans and other subordinate groups shaped developments on the frontier. He argues that these views, and the specific use of the language in which whites expressed them, encouraged imperial expansion and legitimized colonialism and racial capitalism. He further argues that, for their part, the Xhosa helped to shape the colonial order through the way in which they viewed themselves and settler society and through their own contest over power and identity.

Crais divides his discussion into four parts.

Part one is concerned with the frontier as a site of intensive social interaction and construction.

Part two looks at the consequences of British rule at the Cape during the early nineteenth century. The focus of attention is the extent to which the fundamental transformation of the conception and exercise of power during these years informed European perceptions of, and policies towards, colonial peoples. Crais argues that the optimism concerning the future of subject peoples that had characterized the anti-slavery crusade dissolved at this time into a cynicism and pessimism that coincided with the emergence of new conceptions of power. These new conceptions shaped the way in which Europeans viewed and exploited the colonial peoples and laid the foundation for modern conceptions.

Part three looks at the creation of a colonial society informed by these new concepts; at the complex processes of accumulation, conquest, dispossession and resistance. It culminates in the Frontier War of 1851-3.

Part four completes the analysis of the colonial conquest, examining the entrenchment of white supremacy and imperial rule. It further examines the way in which black people comprehended and often rejected the colonial world. It culminates in the Cattle Killing of 1856-1857.

Crais is interested ultimately in the way in which all of the inhabitants of the frontier associated with and comprehended each other. The stress of the book is on the way in which inhabitants within frontier society interacted. Dispossession and colonial conquest opened the way for subjected peoples, whether Xhosa, Khoikhoi or others, to begin to forge new identities which transcended but did not necessarily replace older and more ethnically based definitions of self. At the same time, the replacement of Dutch concepts of power with the British vision of the sovereign-subject relationship strengthened both the position of the state and of its legal butresses.

There is much of interest and value in The making of the colonial order. By offering a new interpretation of the early nineteenth century and laying stress on the importance of the settler presence in the development of racial attitudes and of an exploitative, capitalist and ultimately racially-based society, Crais has challenged traditional concepts of South African history. His forceful arguments and his perceptive analyses have already opened a debate on the formulation of racial attitudes that will have a marked influence on frontier historiography. But there is also much in the book that leaves a feeling of
That alcohol has played an important political, social and cultural as well as economic role in our history is clear, though whether in the 1990's, as the editors of this volume suggest, 'alcohol remains at the center of the complex struggles that will define the future societies of southern Africa' (p. 35) may be questioned. As seminal contributions to the recovery of the role of liquor in shaping the lives of black South Africans over time, three works now stand out: Charles van Onselen's essay 'Randlords and Rotgut' (1982), Paul la Hausse's booklet Brewers, Beerhalls and Boycotts (1988), and the new book under review. Van Onselen provided a classic case-study of the relationship between liquor production and the proletarianisation of black workers in the Transvaal. La Hausse attempted a sketch of the history of liquor from pre-colonial times to the present. Crush and Ambler now give us an important collection of papers on aspects of the history of liquor in the region. It will be unfortunate if the South African price, high for a paperback, prevents this volume obtaining the attention it deserves.

The book opens with an outstanding chapter, which cites an exceptionally wide range of sources, by the editors which tries to situate the role of alcohol in southern African labour history. Pamela Scully then, in the only chapter focused on wine, considers the role of the tot system in the Stellenbosch district of the southwestern Cape in the late nineteenth century. Julie Baker writes about illegal liquor of various kinds on the Rand in the early 20th century, but all the other chapters are mainly concerned with beer: the origins of beerhalls in Durban (La Hausse) and their removal in Johannesburg (Rogerson); protests over beer in the gold mines (Moodie) and by women in Natal (Bradford); the implications of beer production and consumption in the Transkei (Redding, McAllister); and beer-drinking and social control on the Natal coal mines (Edgecombe) and on the East Rand (Bonner). The chapters not on South Africa explore similar themes in the history of Salisbury (Parry), the Copperbelt (Ambler) the Havelock asbestos mine in Swaziland (Crush) and Botswana (Haggblade).

In their important introductory chapter, the editors correctly deplore the lack of systematic treatment of the role of alcohol in southern African history, but their volume only goes a certain way in providing such treatment. Selective by locality, time and topic, the individual papers brought together in this volume focus mainly on questions of access by blacks to alcohol: why whites sought to control that access, and the consequences of access, including black resistance to such controls. The use and abuse by blacks of alcohol is much more skimpily treated. The editors speak of the 'vibrant subcultures nurtured in beerhalls and shebeens' (p. 4), but the volume does not tell us much about, say, the relationship between alcohol and other aspects of marabi culture, such as music and performance. Nor is there much about alcohol and disease, or - though Bonner's excellent chapter is a partial exception here - alcohol and crime. State policy towards the supply of liquor is a major focus. Relatively little is said about, say, the effect of liquor on family life.

Even the link between liquor and labour, though richly illuminated by the editors' joint chapter and many of the case-studies, remains somewhat opaque. As Van Onselen showed so clearly in 'Randlords and Rotgut', capitalist producers who were concerned to maximise their profits through increased sales of alcoholic beverages knew that excessive consumption of alcohol by workers posed a threat to social order and productivity. How this contradiction played itself out over time is a fascinating theme, but it is one of many not explored in any comprehensive way. One concludes the volume grateful for the editors' contribution and the detailed case-studies, all useful in themselves, but also hoping that the appearance of the book may stimulate someone to be bold enough to follow where the editors have shown the way, and to tackle the role of liquor in southern African history more systematically than is done in this volume.

Christopher Saunders
University of Cape Town


A flood of books in which interviews with women about certain facets of their lives are published, have appeared on the South African market the past few years, e.g. Vukani makhosikazi South African women speak edited by Ingrid Obery (CIIR 1985); Women of Phokeng by Belinda Bozzi (Raven Press 1991); Vir 'n stukkie brood dokumentasie deur Sandra Kriel (Minotaurus 1983) to name a few. We have done with pleading joins these ranks - and historians of the future may consider some of these