

2000

# Book Review: South Africa's "Black Market": How to do Business with Africans. By Jeffrey A. Fadiman

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and sweet, something like "he was born; he lived; now is no more" (p. 249). In that regard, he recounts the epitaph for a woman "who never lacked male company" (p. 249). When she died, according to Daniel, her tombstone bore the inscription "At long last, she sleeps alone!" (p. 249). Though Daniel does not seem to subscribe to aspects of Christianity, he shares an anecdote about a friend of his that reflects aspects of the author's own belief. According to Daniel, his friend argues that on the day of the resurrection, angel Gabriel's orders to the dead to wake up will be couched in the local language, "Ga to Gas, Fante to Fantes" (p. 248), and those who have been buried in foreign soil would not comprehend the angel's instruction. For this reason, when Daniel's friend died, he was buried in his ancestral home. By giving this example, Daniel plays upon the liturgical idea of "dust to dust and ashes to ashes" often used during burial services. Daniel thus reworks the liturgical statement to comment on the Akan indigenous belief that the burial of a deceased body in his/her ancestral land gives the individual easy access to his/her ancestral world. He also discusses the death of his first child and the consequences of having a name that carries some bad omens.

It is in his "Finale" that Daniel alludes to his childhood wish to be in theater. He discovers later in life that the job of the registrar was precisely that of a grand "stage manager" (p. 276). Here, Daniel's satisfaction and good humor again creatively mix with humility: he succeeded at what he did, but these accomplishments, he tells us, were also due to luck.

*Mr. Registrar* is a book of anecdotes and reminiscences. Though set in Ghana, Daniel's book is accessible to all who take interest in Africa and in the importance of education. Spiced with wit and humor, the episodes weave, leap, and skip to the book's end. Daniel's use of the episodic storytelling style provides interesting reading and new insights into the universal human drama at work in *Mr. Registrar*.

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SOUTH AFRICA'S "BLACK MARKET": HOW TO DO BUSINESS WITH AFRICANS. By Jeffrey A. Fadiman. Yarmouth, Maine: Intercultural Press, 2000. Pp. 216. \$24.95 paper.

Written by an American historian-turned-professor of "global marketing," this little book claims to equip the American "businessperson who is overscheduled, overworked, and must read on the fly" with *African* marketing methods to

move beyond South Africa's smaller (and shrinking) "White" market ... into the huge and expanding "Black market" of perhaps forty million Afri-

The author uses this section to discuss the circumstances that led to the establishment of the University of Ghana, the appointment of vice-chancellors and their contributions to life on the campus. At the same time, Daniel begins to prepare the reader for the next part of the book—"Registrar"—by describing the varying relationships between different registrars and the vice-chancellors and some members of the university's senior administration. In addition to such notables as university administrators, Daniel includes unforgettable people who were academics, hospital administrators, and doctors. For instance, he tells the story of Daphne Hereward, a classics professor "whose self-designed clothes [were] obviously copied from catalogues as old as her subject," who "once advertised that she was available to sew for a fee for any who cared for her services" (p. 99).

In his capacity as assistant registrar, Daniel was responsible for advising the Admissions Board, counseling parents whose children needed guidance about courses to take, and working with Boards of Faculty. At other times Daniel was the secretary at inter-faculty committee meetings. By 1976, he had been promoted to the rank of senior assistant registrar. He took on more responsibilities including recording examination results, handling cases of examination malpractice, and traveling abroad for further training and conferences. He was also the chief-of-staff for the university. Thus he was responsible for university professionals such as accountants, engineers in the estate organization, public relations people, medics, and others.

Despite his responsibilities as the chief-of-staff, it is clear that Daniels was sometimes upstaged by the vice-chancellor. He tells the story of a lion who invited the antelope for dinner. When the antelope arrived, bound by the lion's messengers, "the antelope began to knock things noisily about" (p. 164) to show that he would not allow himself to be killed without putting up a fight. Daniel tells another story about a man who threw another into the ocean from a sinking boat and then said it was in the interest of the person thrown overboard because the boat was approaching a shark-infested area. Death by the sharks would have been more painful than drowning. These stories show that there were times a vice-chancellor would mistreat the registrar and maintain that it was in the latter's own interest.

"When the Sun Comes Down" describes the problems the registrar faced when retired professors refused to vacate their faculty residences so that new faculty could move in. Some renewed their appointments and taught on a contract basis. Others had never made adequate preparation for retirement during their active service, and became the most difficult to deal with. It was the registrar who then had the difficult task of ensuring that the retirees vacate the university residence. In spite of the critical role played by the registrar, when one was dismissed by a ruling government, there was no protest from his university community. Yet when two medical school professors were removed from office by the government, the university held a convocation, protested, and caused the government to reverse its position. While both professors and registrars are employees of the university, it seems registrars are more easily dispensable.

Daniel also touches on religion and politics and seems to respect indigenous religion with its stress on ancestral veneration. He wants his eulogy to be short

cans—and then toward the estimated four hundred million other African consumers beyond South Africa's borders (p. xx).

Fadiman justifiably underscores the potential of South Africa's potential "Black market" as a basis for developing a healthy business with potential for profitable expansion northwards. He points out that innovative marketing and financial approaches, building on kinship and "rotation" funding (Grameen Bank-style), can empower rural and urban Africans to buy a range of products, from bicycles and radios to start-up technologies, to increase their own productivity and quality of life. He cites estimates that African township spending "may rise over the next decade to R278 billion—as compared to R190 billion by Whites" (p.130).

Based on his own research (and other readings), Fadiman offers tips that anyone planning to start a business in Africa might well take seriously: learn the language and culture of the people with whom you plan to work; work with locally based Africans to assess the sociological structure of communities where you plan to invest; do not rely on abstract "market forces" but establish friendly relationships with community leaders and members; employ Africans from the particular community where you intend to develop your business; and build your business by sponsoring community-related activities.

Given South Africa's high rates of unemployment—Fadiman cites figures of more than 50 percent unemployed among women, and almost 40 percent among men—any initiative to create productive employment activity by facilitating Africans' own initiatives seems welcome. Yet one wonders why Fadiman restricts his appeal to *American* would-be investors. He tells us he spent more than twenty years conducting research and teaching in and about Africa, and, after "The Turn" (the 1994 democratic elections), he taught and learned from over 300 students at the University of Zululand. Then why did he, himself, not work together with these African authors to spur *African* entrepreneurs to take advantage of these potentially expanding African opportunities?

Further review of Fadiman's booklet inevitably raises additional questions about the implications and validity of his analysis. Why, for example—citing horrific "statistics," almost all from white-owned financial and media sources—does Fadiman begin and end his little book with crime as the seemingly overriding "business problem?" He apparently does not seem to see the persistence of massive poverty and unemployment as the primary cause of what he calls a "crime wave." Instead, he focuses on the "tsotsi generation" (which, he asserts, learned to fight during the liberation struggle and now uses those skills to rob) and the restructured justice system after 1994 that replaced "white police at every rank ... by former ANC guerillas as well as semitrained soldiers from former homelands" (p. 171). That seems oversimplified at best, at worse a distorted Western view, one not only unjustified but counter-productive in discouraging the very investments he is calling for.

Or why, following his brief but revealing history of apartheid, rooted in the behaviors of European settlers going back four centuries, does Fadiman speak in the same breath of "tribalism" and "racialism" as equal "marketing risks?"

Fadiman suggests that investors should analyze what he characterizes as seven strata emerging among township residents. Why then does he lump together as homogenous the multivariate strands of "African culture" and "tradition," which he argues persist throughout the continent, two of which he headlines as "Time Conflicts" and "Do Favors: Create Dependence." According to Fadiman, Africans view time differently from Westerners; "Big Men" derive status from coping with big problems, viewed as "big" in terms of the time required to solve them: "Delay and absence were and still are accepted as prerogatives of power." (That reminds me of the time several Ghanaian students evaluating a course I was teaching at Legon in 1972 commented: "We liked the fact that the course always started on time—not like others where the European lecturers always come late!")

Fadiman suggests that investors should "Do Favors: Create Dependence," building on the notion that "In business, African relationships take the form of deliberately providing both personal and commercial services, intended explicitly to place receivers under obligation and thereby generate new relationships" (p. 71). American investors should "work to attain what Americans might call 'Godfather' status (and South Africans, 'Big Man' status) ... thereby gradually surrounding yourself with dependable clientele" (p. 71). Setting aside the inherent implications for corruption, would that proposal not foster dependence on foreign investors—a kind of neocolonialism—and undermine African efforts to create self-reliant productive employment opportunities?

Businessmen should read this little book with caution. Fadiman is correct to stress that sub-Saharan Africa constitutes a potentially important market. That insight should spur not only U.S. businesspersons but more especially Africans to invest in increasingly self-sustainable, productive employment opportunities to produce goods and services and improve the continental majority's quality of life. That does not require foreign investors enticed by an outsider's pop-analysis of alleged traditions to create new, dependent business relations. Instead, Africans themselves need to transform historically shaped dysfunctional institutions, using their own rich human and physical resources, to build self-reliant regional and, ultimately, continental development.

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ALFRED B. XUMA: AFRICAN, AMERICAN, SOUTH AFRICAN. *By Steven D. Gish.* New York: New York University Press, 2000. Pp. xvii; 305; 21 illustrations. \$40.00.

Alfred B. Xuma (1893–1962) earned a medical degree from Northwestern University in 1924 and opened a practice in Johannesburg in 1927, when there were only a handful of Western-trained African physicians in South Africa. From 1940 to 1949, Xuma served as president of the African National Congress (ANC).