

THE EMIGRATION DEBATE

A man who changes his country is like a dog who changes his bark ... not to be trusted – *The drifters* by James Michener¹

We are convinced that real South Africans are being sorted out ... in the process (of emigration) – former president Nelson Mandela²

Leaving your country is in some way a desertion – Winnie Madikizela-Mandela³

If some no longer feel 'secure and free in their person' as a result of various forms of violent criminality don't they have the right to emigrate? – Themba Sono, President of the South African Institute of Race Relations⁴

Under NP rule emigration was viewed as a 'disease' unique to white English-speaking South Africans and was dismissed as being of no great consequence because the number of immigrants virtually always greatly outnumbered (official) emigrants. There was also a perception that Afrikaner hegemony over South Africa would be better off without these emigrant 'traitors', 'chicken runners' and 'liberals'. In the 1970s and 1980s the NP used emigration to question the loyalty of the liberal opposition of the time, the Progressive Federal Party, on the spurious grounds that its English-speaking liberal supporters constituted the bulk of emigrants – hence the joke that PFP was an abbreviation for 'Packing For Perth'. However, many emigrants were white liberals who left because they refused to put up with the authoritarian rule of the NP and because they opposed apartheid. Others emigrated because they feared what they perceived to be the natural outcome of the NP government's intransigent policies, namely a racial conflagration.



In contrast to previous emigration waves, the vast majority of emigrants who leave now do so because of crime and fears for their personal safety, not for political reasons. In a survey conducted by Idasa, two thirds of the 68% of skilled South Africans who have given consideration to emigration indicated a strong desire to help build South Africa, and stressed that they leave under duress because of their fears for their physical safety.⁵ As a result, many emigrants experience conflicting

feelings – relief at being able to escape from violent crime and other problems, but also guilt for what they and others perceive as a dereliction of their duty and disloyalty towards their country, families and friends.

Emigration has always been an emotional issue in South Africa largely because it has always been viewed from a political perspective, rather than as a social or economic phenomenon. As the numbers of emigrants increased and surpassed the numbers of immigrants in the second half of the 1990s, emotions rose to new levels and the opposition to emigration grew fiercer – arguments for and against emigration became even more politicised and personal and took on a racial flavour. This is not surprising as the vast majority of emigrants are white and most whites voted against the ANC in both post-apartheid elections. In the current political climate, the anti-government sentiment of many whites is too easily construed as disloyalty to the country – the perception is that emigrants are disloyal South Africans.

The debate is structured as follows: while one side is questioning the loyalty and patriotism of those who are leaving, the other side points to the socio-political conditions that cause people to leave the country and insists that emigration is a constitutional and human right. The emigration debate was fuelled by Nelson Mandela's comments in 1998 that 'real South Africans are ... not going to run away'. While Mandela received a great deal of support for calling a 'spade a spade', his comments also drew sharp criticism from some South Africans for what they perceived as interference in their democratic right to emigrate, and others demanded that the president address the underlying causes for emigration rather than attack emigrants.

Despite the arguments between those who criticise emigration and those who defend the freedom to emigrate, which are based mostly on abstract emotional terms such as patriotism, racism and anger towards the government, the real issue revolves around the impact that emigration has on the South African economy. In other words, what is the cost to the country in terms of the outflow of skills and capital, especially in the absence of a compensating inflow of skilled immigrants?

5.1 THE IMPACT OF EMIGRATION ON SOUTH AFRICA

President Mandela's response to whites who leave because of the high crime rate is blunt: 'Let them go. It's good riddance.' We disagree. The whites who leave are usually highly educated people. Their departure is a loss to the country – Editorial in *Financial Mail*⁶

Not without good reason, emigration is referred to as a brain drain, for it is normally the people with the highest levels of skills and education that constitute the bulk of emigrants – this is primarily because they find it easier to meet the strict entry requirements of emigration destinations. For this reason emigration costs South Africa very dearly in terms of the loss of skills and knowhow, loss of revenue and the outflow of capital.

The magnitude of the current brain drain and the potential flight of skills is truly shocking. Surveys commissioned by the *Sunday Times* in 1998 and in 1999 concluded that between 71% and 74% of professional people were considering emigrating.⁷ The survey found that almost a similar percentage of skilled blacks also considered leaving the country, although three quarters of these would do so for study purposes, that is, not permanently. The survey was extensive and received 11 000 individual responses from those with professional qualifications and, despite some criticism against its methodology, provided a fairly representative sampling of the opinion of professionals⁸.

A survey conducted among 725 respondents by Idasa found that 68% of skilled people have thought about emigration but that only 20% were prepared to go through with it.⁹ A total of 2% responded that the chances of them emigrating were 'very good' and a further 28% said that the chances were 'good'. The responses of Afrikaans and English-speakers were similar, while only 2% of blacks responded with a 'very good' and 19% said the chances of them emigrating were 'good'. A follow-up survey by the Idasa in 1999 indicated similar numbers, namely that 69% of skilled people had *considered* leaving South Africa and that 28% *had a desire* to leave, but that only 20% were *very likely* to leave¹⁰. A 2000 Business Industry Survey conducted among 3 250 businesses found that 41% of South Africa's business leaders and managers would leave the country if offered a good job overseas.



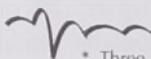
The findings of these surveys are not surprising, when one considers the findings of a survey conducted 11 years ago in 1989 by Jannie Gagiano, a professor at the University of Stellenbosch. Gagiano's findings indicated that as many as 32% of Afrikaner students and a further 38% of English-speaking white students would emigrate, should an ANC government come to power. Combining the two language groups, the survey suggested that one third of white students at South African universities would leave the country under a black government and that they had already made up their minds in 1989 when PW Botha was still president and an ANC government was a very remote possibility indeed.¹¹ If one considers that today between 35% and 75% of graduates in professions such as doctors, veterinarians, IT

specialists and chartered accountants leave after graduation, it appears Gagliano's figures were not far off the mark, and that the relatively benign nature of ANC rule had done little to halt the desire of educated whites to leave South Africa.

An International Monetary Fund (IMF) report published in 1999 found that 8% of South Africa's total pool of educated professionals have left to settle in the USA.¹² If the USA is the destination of close to 40% of all professionals who have left South Africa (see Table 2.4), it can be assumed that up to 20% of South Africa's educated professionals have left the country in recent years.* A study by Kaplan, Baptiste-Meyer and Mercy Brown of the Development Policy Research Unit of UCT confirmed these estimates – they found that between 12% and 20% of South Africans with tertiary qualifications have left the country.¹³ They also found that 28% of UCT's current doctoral students were living overseas, along with 43% of its contactable (those on alumni lists) medical graduates, 30% of commerce doctorates, 27% of education doctorates and 26% of science doctorates.^{14**} Furthermore, that emigration by professionals was up by 56% for the five-year period between 1994 and 1999 compared to the five years between 1989 and 1994.¹⁵

The higher the skills level and the greater the demand for the skills, the easier it is for a potential emigrant to find work overseas and therefore the greater the emigration in that category. For this reason South Africa is experiencing a tremendous outflow of emigrants in the information technology (IT) sector with about 200 to 260 IT professionals leaving the country each month, according to recruitment house CPL.¹⁶ About 15% of all IT personnel who left their jobs in 1998 did so to emigrate.¹⁷

The Institute of Directors, representing many of South Africa's top businesspeople, lost 3% (45) of its 1 500 members in 1997 because of emigration.¹⁸ This may not sound like much, but added up over a ten-year period South Africa will have lost one third of the driving force in its economy, the top managers, because of emigration. In 1997 and 1998 10% of overall personnel turnover was a result of



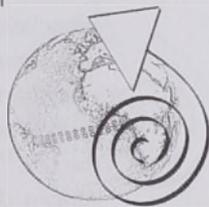
* Three African countries account for more than one third of highly-educated emigrants to the USA: Ghana with 26%, South Africa with 8% and Egypt with 2,5%, *Sunday Times*, 1 August 1999.

** To cater for the many skilled South Africans living abroad, UCT's Science and Technology Policy Research Centre and the French Institute for Scientific R&D, founded the South African Network of Skills Abroad (SANSa) with the aim of sourcing the skills and knowledge of expatriates to assist the development of the South African economy. By 1999 it had 1800 members spread over 57 countries and its website is at <http://www.uct.ac.za/org/sansa/>.

emigration, while 6%–10% of middle management and 11% of top management who resigned gave emigration as the reason.¹⁹ Other sources estimate that up to 20% of executives who left their companies in 1998 did so to emigrate.²⁰

Accountants are also in high demand overseas. One recruitment agent complained that it was becoming virtually impossible to find young chartered accountants 'because they are all in London'.²¹ If this sounds like an exaggeration, in 1999, 19% (3 365 CAs) of the members of the Institute of Chartered Accountants were living overseas, with a further 300 joining the exodus each year – one large unnamed auditing firm claimed that it was losing up to 75% of trainee CAs shortly after they qualified.²² In addition, the laws of supply and demand and the scarcity of local CAs have been pushing their salaries to absurd heights and way beyond their relative worth to companies.

Scientists in all spheres of research have also joined the exodus with a considerable degree of enthusiasm. They are in huge demand overseas because of the excellence of South Africa's top universities and the world-class scientists produced by them, as well as the international transferability of scientific knowledge. In 1998 the country's premier veterinary research institute, Onderstepoort, was unable to supply certain veterinary medicines because so many of its personnel had emigrated. In 1996 almost half of graduates at the Department of Veterinary Medicines at the University of Pretoria had either left the country or were planning to do so shortly after graduation.²³ At the World Fisheries Conference in 1997 South African and Australian delegations were very compatible and the camaraderie was reminiscent of an 'Old Boys Club' – this was not surprising as half the Australian delegation consisted of ex-South Africans.²⁴ A recent survey found that 27% of specialist science/technology staff who left their jobs in 1998/1999 gave emigration as the reason.²⁵ The same study found that one-third of specialist engineering and artisans who resigned during this period cited emigration as the reason.



Teachers too find emigration an appealing option, and many leave to find better-paid jobs overseas. Recruitment agencies have been actively recruiting South African teachers for positions in the UK. According to Statistics South Africa, between 50 and 60 teachers are leaving each month and a total of 1 300 had left between 1994 and August 1997, mostly to New Zealand and the UK.

The number of medical graduates and doctors that choose to emigrate is high by any standards. A 1998 survey by Idasa suggests that about 35% of doctors in South Africa will leave the country within the next five years.²⁶ A total of over 500 doctors left

officially in the three years between 1996 and 1998, but as many leave unofficially, and this figure should be between 1 000 and 1 500.²⁷ About 12% of medical students who graduated in 1998 failed to register for compulsory community service in 1999 – since new doctors cannot practise in South Africa without doing community service, it is quite certain that this percentage, about 140 in total, have left the country. Professor Max Price, dean of Wits Medical School, estimated that about 35% of his medical students emigrate after graduation.²⁸ This figure could even be higher, according to the South African Journal of Science – this body claimed that 45% (about 2 000 professionals) of medical students graduating at Wits Medical School over the past 35 years have left South Africa.²⁹ By the end of 1999 about 600 South African doctors were registered in New Zealand.³⁰ Since New Zealand is the destination of choice of about 10% of South African emigrants, the total number of doctors that have left South Africa could be well in the excess of 6 000. In the province of Saskatchewan in Canada there were 218 registered South African doctors in 1996, accounting for about 14% of the province's medical practitioners. By 1995 there were 1 129 South African general practitioners and specialists in Canada, constituting about 2% of all medical professionals in the country.³¹

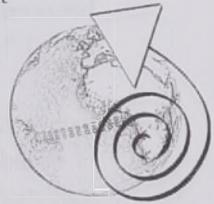
Dentists are not immune to the emigration bug either. The South African Dental Association claims that 2 000 of the 4 200 dentists registered in South Africa were also registered in the UK (apparently a common safety net for South African medical practitioners), and that at least 800 of them were already working there.³² Other sources suggest that by 1999 about 3 000 South African dentists lived and worked in the UK.³³ The discrepancy between these two figures might be because many South African dentists live permanently in the UK and have presumably allowed their South African registration to lapse. In 1999 more than half of the 220 South Africans who qualified as dentists left the country for a variety of reasons, according to Melmut Heyd of the South African Dental Association.³⁴

South African nurses are also in great demand overseas, and many leave the country as a result of poor pay and stressful working conditions. As a result, the outflow of nurses, particularly to the UK and Saudi Arabia, reached such high proportions that former president Nelson Mandela tried to persuade the British government to halt the recruitment of South African nurses in the UK – his efforts did not appear to be hugely successful, as more than 600 South African nurses applied for registration in the UK in 1998.³⁵

The extraordinarily high crime rate and the accompanying brain drain and skills shortage were identified by the American Chamber of Commerce in South Africa as

the principal reasons behind the slow rate of foreign investments in South Africa. In more quantifiable terms, PE Corporate Services calculated the cost of emigration and the loss of skills at about R2,5 billion a year.³⁶ It is estimated that each graduate emigrant would have contributed R7,4 million to the economy in his or her lifetime. Economist Azar Jammine claims that the departure of every skilled emigrant results in the loss of ten unskilled jobs.³⁷ Therefore, using Jammine's reasoning, it can be said that if at least half of the estimated 20 000–30 000 people that leave each year are skilled or highly skilled, about 100 000–150 000 unskilled jobs are lost each year. According to Dawie Roodt, an economist with PLJ Financial Services, the taxes paid by a family who earn about R300 000 per year are used by the government to support 12 other poor families with healthcare, education and social assistance – the loss of this revenue because of that family emigrating means that government has to find money elsewhere to support these families.³⁸

A study by Thys Fourie and Reynold Joubert suggests that emigration has already cost South Africa R8,4 billion in the form of loss of income tax and a further R285 billion in the form of the loss of potential contributions to the country's GNP. In 1997 alone the estimated 11 000 emigrants with university education (earning on average R200 000) resulted in the loss of R800 million in income tax and over R2 billion in the loss of potential contributions to the GNP. The authors claim that between 1994 and 1997 South Africa's GNP suffered a loss of 1,55% because emigrants with university degrees left the country.³⁹ These figures become even worse if one adds the emigrants without degrees but with other income-generating skills such as artisans, farmers and nurses.



A study by the Development Policy Research Unit of UCT found that emigration lowered South Africa's GDP by 0,37% each year (slightly less than the estimate of Fourie and Joubert above, but it refers to GDP). Considering that South Africa's economy had shown minimal growth of less than 1% over the past few years, an additional shrinkage of a third of a percentage point has serious consequences. The study also found that almost R68 billion of investment in 'human capital' (education, training and experience) was lost to the economy because of emigration in 1997 alone, and a further R2,5 billion per annum was lost because of the turnover of skilled personnel due to emigration.⁴⁰

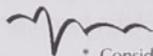
In addition to the loss of potential tax revenue and job creation potential, emigrants cost South Africa millions of rands in terms of the cost of their education. Skilled emigrants are educated and trained in South Africa with taxpayers' money and, for example, it costs about R600 000 to train a doctor. An editorial by Daniel Ncayiyana in the South African Medical Journal argued that the 600 South African doctors that

have settled in New Zealand amounted to a direct aid transfer of R600 million from South Africa to New Zealand.^{41*} Should these doctors leave the country before they actually work and pay taxes, some argue that they have not fulfilled their moral obligations to the country which paid for their studies.

However, the converse is also true. South Africa gains skills from immigrants and it is irrefutable that for a long time officially South Africa had a net gain of skilled people because of migrants. These people came to South Africa with their degrees, skills and capital to the great benefit of the country – referred to as the ‘brain gain’. For this very reason it is so difficult to understand or justify the bureaucratic bungling of the Department of Home Affairs when issuing work and residency permits to foreign skilled workers.

While the decline in immigration in the 1990s was partly the result of the unstable political situation, violence and crime, it was also the result of the Department of Home Affairs’ absurdly stringent immigration policies and restrictions on work and residency visas. While South Africa has an urgent need for professionals in most categories, official policies have led to a decline in the number of professionals such as doctors, managers and engineers entering the country over the past five years: between 1993 and 1998 the number of professional immigrants declined by 74%, from 1 171 in 1993 to 307 in 1998.⁴²

Rather than try to counter the outflow of skilled emigrants with an increased inflow of skilled immigrants, the government appears to be doing exactly the opposite – legislation and rules by bureaucrats in the Department of Home Affairs are making it difficult for bona fide immigrants to enter the country.** Prospective immigrants find they sometimes have to leave collateral and overcome tortuous regulations and that the application fee has increased from zero to R7 700 and to R11 000 in 1999. By 1998 the average waiting period for a foreign academic to obtain a work permit had increased from less than two months to close to a year, according to Helen Zille,



* Considering that the training cost for a doctor is close to R600 000, the actual loss in favour of New Zealand would be less, in other words, R360 million. However, considering that only about 10% of South African emigrant doctors go to New Zealand, the total monetary loss of due to South African doctors emigrating from South Africa, amounts to about R3,6 billion.

** According to Hennie Meyer of the Department of Home Affairs, South Africa does not encourage immigration and would only allow a skilled immigrant into the country if nobody in South Africa cannot be trained to do the job that an immigrant is trained to do.

MEC in the Western Cape Legislature.⁴³ In one case of bureaucratic madness, a highly skilled British citizen, Esmee Sargeant, working in South Africa legally, was deported in January 1999 when her work permit was withdrawn apparently without just cause and contrary to government regulations. Sargeant was working as a financial manager in a medical centre in a black suburb, Alexandria. She was treated like a criminal and thrown in the back of a police van, before being put on the next plane back to the UK.

In an article titled 'Economic suicide in one easy step', Adrienne Roberts of the *Financial Mail* explained the sheer stupidity behind the attempts by Home Affairs officials to keep foreign skills out of South Africa by delaying the processing of permits or by simply refusing applications on flimsy grounds.⁴⁴ Even foreign companies opening subsidiaries here are battling with the department to bring their skilled staff with them – Roberts describe this bureaucratic obstruction as akin to 'deliberate sabotage' which is costing South Africa dearly in lost opportunities in foreign investment and in the inability to replace the emigration exodus with skilled immigrants. Ironically incident happened while between four and eight million illegal unskilled aliens from Africa live and work here almost with impunity.

As a result of the constant pressure from employers, the government was considering easing the immigration policy by allowing skilled immigrants on shorter-term job assignments to enter the country on a more easily obtainable business visa. By the end of 1999 it appeared that the Minister of Home Affairs, Mangosuthu Buthelezi, finally realised that his department's incompetence had cost the country dearly in terms of skilled immigrants who gave up trying to get visas and investors opting to go elsewhere because they cannot bring skilled employees into South Africa. Buthelezi, prompted by Mbeki, finally promised to address the issue, and in February 2000 a White Paper on immigration was released. This document suggested the creation of an immigration service, the issuing of flexible residence permits for some businesses and short-term residence permits for tourists, potential investors and some traders.⁴⁵ However, the new approach still appears to be inadequate, for it fails to recognise the need to actively encourage an influx of badly needed skills and places too much discretionary power in the hands of notoriously over-zealous bureaucrats.



5.2 THE EMOTIONAL CAMPAIGN AGAINST EMIGRATION

Criticism voiced against emigration in South Africa can be divided into three broad categories which span the ideological spectrum and coincide at certain junctures.

The first is the ANC's view (shared by many others to the left and the right of the spectrum) that emigrants are unpatriotic, disloyal and cowardly – ironically, the ANC uses phrases similar to those used by the former ruling NP, except that the 'chicken run' is now described by some as the 'chicken marathon'. The second is the view of the ANC and those to its left that emigrants are racists who are leaving the country simply because they cannot tolerate living under a black government. Third, from an Afrikaner nationalist and religious angle emigrants are weakening the Afrikaner nation or the 'white' racial group by numerically and proportionally reducing their numbers in South Africa and are acting against God's wishes.

An appeal to patriotism: 'Real South Africans won't emigrate'

We who have stayed ridicule those on the chicken run. We condemn their convenient escape from the realities of a country in transition. We detest their desire to be South African on the day the rugby, cricket or soccer team comes to town – sports journalist Mark Keohane⁴⁶

In 1996 Nelson Mandela, on a visit to France, made a passionate plea to South African expatriates to return home – he confidently predicted that expatriates would return once they saw that his government had ensured stability. This was a recurrent theme of the Mandela presidency: 'Many of them are going to come back as they see that their fears were baseless and their concerns are being addressed.'⁴⁷

At the same time he was not averse to criticising emigrants. In September 1998, perhaps stung because so few of the one million-plus expatriates were prepared to accept his repeated invitations to return, he derided emigrants as being unpatriotic and not 'real' South Africans, and suggested that their departure was 'good riddance': 'Let them go. In that process we are convinced that real South Africans are being sorted out. The real South Africans are those who are saying "This is our country."⁴⁸ Mandela also argued that the fear of crime was a 'mainly white preoccupation' which was 'fermented by a white-owned press' and that crime was no reason to emigrate.

His comments drew strong criticism from across the political spectrum and, perhaps as a result, he later acknowledged that crime was indeed a 'very serious problem' and one of the factors fuelling emigration.⁴⁹ In May 1999 Mandela again referred to the 'duty that whites had to serve South Africa' and suggested that those who leave the country have no 'loyalty and no patriotism'.⁵⁰ He was echoed by the then deputy president, Thabo Mbeki, who said that those who constantly threatened to emigrate should just go ahead and do it: 'My only response is that it is probably better that they leave.'⁵¹ Mbeki's comments were clearly aimed at those whites whom he regarded as

intransigent, not only because the vast majority of emigrants are white, but also because he mentioned emigrants in the same breath as those 'South Africans who did not want to see transformation'. The natural assumption was that whites critical of his government and those who emigrate are the same people.

The use of patriotism, or supposed lack of it, as a litmus test of the patriotism of emigrants has been widely supported by ANC supporters and others alike:

Good citizens will not emigrate – Khudu Mbeba⁵²

The President is correct in his statement that real and true South Africans, who have the interests of the country at heart, will not allow themselves to become chicken-runners and rats leaving the South African ship which they perceive to be sinking – T Gubaha⁵³

It even struck a chord among some whites who presumably are not ANC supporters, but feel that emigrants, as a rule, cannot possibly be patriotic. Their view is clearly evident from the numerous letters and articles in local newspapers:

I am a middle-aged, white, Afrikaans-speaking Nationalist mother of three and a South African patriot ... I concluded that they [emigrants] were losers, people without whom South Africa could only be better off – L Veldtman⁵⁴

I have always been angered by what inevitably does seem like an unwillingness to stay and make this place work. The post-1994 emigrants are the ones that stir my patriotic gut like a witch's cauldron – Max du Preez⁴⁹

Often the undertone is faintly threatening: '[W]e have the skills and capital and if we don't like the way the game is being played, we will take it all and go and play somewhere else ...' Mandela is right: whites are consummate whiners and many lack any real commitment to South Africa ... The shallowness of white commitment is reflected in the queues of applicants to consult emigration experts – William Saunderson-Meyer⁵⁶



Even foreigners and immigrants to South Africa sometimes self-righteously assume the authority to attack emigrants as being 'disloyal to South Africa', in spite of being migrants themselves, as the following comment from Mike Thorne illustrates:

I am an Australian emigrant who has immigrated to Cape Town . . . Who is leaving? Mainly young white people with children . . . Anybody, and in particular, young, white people, leaving or attempting to leave South Africa is betraying a country that gave whites a lot more than it gave its blacks. Now, when it is their turn to give something back, they want to duck their responsibility, do not want to pay their dues to their country – immigrant Mike Thorne⁵⁷

Others use the term patriotism in a more positive way in an attempt to reassure emigrants that they will be much better off staying in South Africa – they point to the country's outstanding natural scenery, the beaches and climate, the political achievements since 1994, the rainbow nation and cultural diversity, and often fall back on the cliché of 'braaivleis, sunny skies and rugby':

For those white South Africans playing with the parachute chord: don't jump! Stay for the wide open African spaces and the most magnanimous president in the world – Bradley Bordiss⁵⁸

However, we would urge all South Africans toying with the idea of emigrating to factor into their deliberations a sense of historical perspective. Less than three years ago . . . predictions of gloom and doom abounded. Some alarmists even took to hoarding bully beef and baked beans in their cellars and pantries. [However] many South Africans who sold up and left the country lived to regret it – Editorial in the *Cape Times*⁵⁹

Other critics emphasise the aspect of 'guilt' in their definition of patriotism and in their criticism of people leaving – their argument is that emigrants should feel guilty for living off the fat of the land, enjoying the fruit of taxpayers' money in the form of subsidised education, and then emigrating when things get difficult. It is interesting to note that both blacks and whites, including Afrikaners, hold this point of view:

They owe it to South Africa not to emigrate because it was taxpayers' money that made it possible for them to qualify as doctors – P Swart⁶⁰

Graduates should not leave the country. They obtained their degrees because of the sacrifices and tax contributions of their fellow-South Africans – John Hlophe, Judge-President of the Western Cape⁶¹

These cowards [emigrants] . . . should be called on to pay reparations to the disadvantaged masses – T Gubaha⁶²

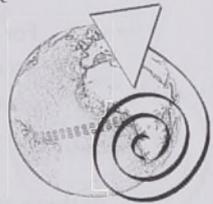
Please go on to explain why you have chosen to leave this beautiful country when it needs you the most ... If you and all others who have left had decided to stay and give a little back, maybe you could have made the difference – D Jubber⁶³

[Those who leave] are rats who fattened themselves on the indigenous masses – anonymous⁶⁴

Those who are leaving the country are the people who benefited from the notorious apartheid government under which they were so well protected – M Vuko⁶⁵

South Africa will be well rid of these people who acquired their skills and qualifications at the expense of the indigenous masses. The sooner they leave the sooner the real transformation can begin – N Ndeker⁶⁶

Another category of critics of emigration presumptuously choose to attack the messengers who carry the bad news about emigration and who expose the hard facts behind emigration. One such example is Anna Christensen, who, in her review of the (Booker) award-winning novel *Disgrace* by J M Coetzee, wrote that she was sorry that Coetzee had won this prestigious award, because (she claimed) he conveyed the wrong message about social conditions in South Africa. Christensen argued: 'We don't need Coetzee to tell us that ... South Africa is a violent society' and claimed that the book will encourage emigration: 'For any white South African still straddling the fence on the issue of emigration, it is a must-read; the proverbial straw that will break his will and send him hobbling off to the Australian embassy for emigration forms.'⁶⁷ Similarly, journalist Max du Preez not only attacked emigrants for being 'unethical', but also heaped scorn upon the authors of articles on emigration. According to Du Preez, these authors are guilty of fear-mongering and of using the statistics behind emigration to scare the 'soft underbelly of (the wealthy whites in) Saxonwold and Constantia'.⁶⁸



Condemnation: 'Emigrants are racists'

The ANC and those on its left support a view that emigrants are leaving the country because they are not comfortable living under a black-dominated government, and inter alia, that emigrants must be racist. This view was shared by Nelson Mandela, who suggested that emigrants left the country 'because they were not prepared to reconcile themselves to the new dispensation'. Certain political commentators such

as William Saunderson-Meyer demurely follow this line: 'Whites also adhere to the openly racist position that a South Africa led by the ANC will inevitably sink into failure and disaster.'⁶⁹

A senior journalist for Independent Newspapers, Paddy Harper, and others virulently concur:

They [emigrants] are, quite frankly, scared [and incapable] of living without the many layers of unearned protection and privilege ... they cannot stomach the reality that their days of dominating every facet of life in South Africa are over, that they are not the chosen race ... [it] is a sickening cocktail of racism, laziness and cowardice – Paddy Harper^{70*}

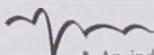
[White emigrants are] fed-up ... with the insecurities of no longer holding the trump card in the new order – journalist Charlotte Bauer⁷¹

No. It's pure and simple self-interest. They stayed in the old SA because they benefited from these unjust laws. Now they have lost that privileged position and that's it for them: 'Let's go' – R Jones⁷²

For some South Africans, the need to give up some of their privileges, to accept that they cannot continue to get a disproportionate share of this government cake, is simply too much to bear ... Some simply pack up and go – Former Australian High Commissioner to South Africa, Ian Porter⁷³

Is there any factual basis for the contention that emigrants are racist by nature or by virtue of their choice or that they are more racist than any other segment of the population? Unless the fear of crime can be equated with racism, the answer is decidedly 'no'. A large portion of emigrants continually express their desire to return to South Africa and to make a contribution to its prosperity, but insist that life-threatening crime prevents them from doing so. A typical comment is:

Initially we were very excited over our arrival in Canada, but we miss our family and South Africa very much. I have the impression that 90% of South Africans here are considering eventually returning to South Africa,

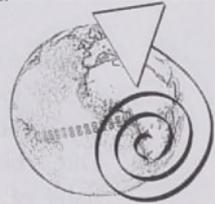


* An indignant reader, Bernie Slater, responded: 'What passport are you on, Paddy, me old lad?', referring to the fact that Harper was originally from Ireland and probably had his European Union passport safely tucked away while trying to be holier-than-thou.

should conditions stabilise. However, having just read about another cruel murder in the hometown, it is obvious that we have a long wait before this happens – Gerhard Malherbe, Alberta⁷⁴

That is not to deny that a sizeable percentage of emigrants do display contempt for and a hatred of the society that they have left behind. This type of emigrant is likely to hold the opinion that black South Africans are not capable or civilised enough to govern the country and that South Africa will inevitably go the same way as ‘the rest of Africa’. They also hint that they feel more comfortable in foreign countries where whites form a majority of the population and where the English language is the national language, so that they ‘at least can understand what is said on television’.

Notwithstanding, the percentage of racists among the emigrant community would probably not be much higher than the percentage of whites that harbour racist sentiments and stay put in South Africa. It is difficult to verify this contention as no such poll exists, but the general sentiment of emigrants appears to be one of a benign sense of ‘boredom’ with the relative homogeneity of for example England or New Zealand – accompanied by a sense of longing for the multitude of races, cultures and lifestyles of South Africa – rather than expressions of racial prejudice. Furthermore, criticism levelled by emigrants and locals at decaying social conditions and the direction of the government cannot per se be construed as racism, contrary to what the ANC says.



Objections by Afrikaner nationalists and the DRC

As it did under Nationalist rule up to 1994, the sentiment still exists that emigrants are committing ‘treason’ against the Afrikaner *volk* and that they weaken the strength of the white population group as a whole. The argument is that emigration reduces the numbers of Afrikaners and consequently will adversely affect the survival of the Afrikaans language and culture. Others hold the view that Afrikaners relinquish their right to be called Afrikaners once they live overseas and that the Afrikaans language cannot survive outside South Africa. Among those adhering to this view are the following (author’s italics):

What bothers me is the fact that they [emigrants] view it as an achievement to emigrate – they have forsaken themselves and *their language* – S Lombaard⁷⁵

You can’t just run away from your country’s problems ... you should remain here and help to solve the problems if you emigrate you desert

your own people [Afrikaners] and you contribute to the decline of their language which is already under threat – P Swart⁷⁶

The children of Afrikaner emigrants quickly forget how to speak Afrikaans and without their language they cannot be Afrikaners ... An Afrikaner who emigrates therefore weakens and impoverishes the Afrikaner nation – Anonymous⁷⁷

Slightly less chauvinistic but in a similar vein was the objection to emigration raised by the Dutch Reformed Church (DRC) in 1998. A DRC Commission took a stance against emigration by declaring that emigrants are forsaking their 'duty and calling' as Christians and that the Church was obliged to speak out and deter emigration. It also expressed its concern over the 'negative' attitude of many of its members towards the new dispensation as reflected in the 'large numbers of whites leaving the country'.

To be able to evaluate the DRC's condemnation of emigrants objectively, it is important to look at the history of the Church. Although the present altruistic and patriotic motives of the DRC on this issue cannot be questioned *per se*, the moral foundation from which it launches attacks on emigrants should be put into perspective, with reference to the role of the Church in the apartheid era.

All three Afrikaans Reformed churches were actively involved before and after 1948 in the formulation of apartheid ideology and provision for the NP of scriptural justification for racial segregation and white domination. From this perspective, the DRC's blanket condemnation of emigrants appears very similar to the former NP's habit of classifying anyone who disagreed with its ideology as disloyal to the Afrikaner cause. In addition, the Church's use of religion to criticise emigrants is in principle not so different from its historical use of the Bible to justify apartheid.

The DRC's view led to widespread reaction and opposing responses. Those who agreed with the DRC's stance held the following view:

Too many people who are now running away are forsaking their call as Afrikaners and as Christians and they create the impression that they do not care what happens to those left behind – A van der Merwe⁷⁸

However, others strongly resented the DRC's interference in the emigration issue:

I regard the opinion of the DRC as extremely arrogant ... This is not a subject in which the Church must interfere – C Liebenberg⁷⁹

I cannot believe that a small group of people [the DRC] in South Africa would decide what the calling of others should be . . . My calling is to find a safe environment for my children. If I did not do everything in my power to do so, I would have forsaken my calling – former SABC radio and television presenter Norma Odendaal, who emigrated to New Zealand in 1997⁸⁰

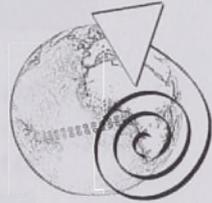
By early 2000 the three Afrikaans Reformed Churches appeared to have accepted the inevitability of the Afrikaner exodus and were considering assisting emigrants by establishing congregations in Australia to be headed by ministers from South Africa.⁸¹

5.3 THE CONTRARY VIEW: REAL SOUTH AFRICANS ARE FREE TO EMIGRATE

Do you owe any loyalty to a country where your life is worth nothing? – Anonymous⁸²

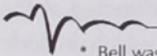
Apologists for today's South Africa are reduced to citing braaivleis and blue skies as a compelling reason to stay . . . Patriotism is surely the last desperate refuge of any government – R Lockwood⁸³

People are seldom openly in favour of emigration – by definition it is not something which one can strongly argue for (although some argue strongly against it), but there are powerful arguments for emigrants being freely allowed to leave their country of birth without being morally judged, prejudiced against or financially penalised by the state. One such argument is based on emigration as a basic human and constitutional right, another on emigration as a just response to unbearable social, economical or political conditions, and another that South Africans have always been a nation of migrants.

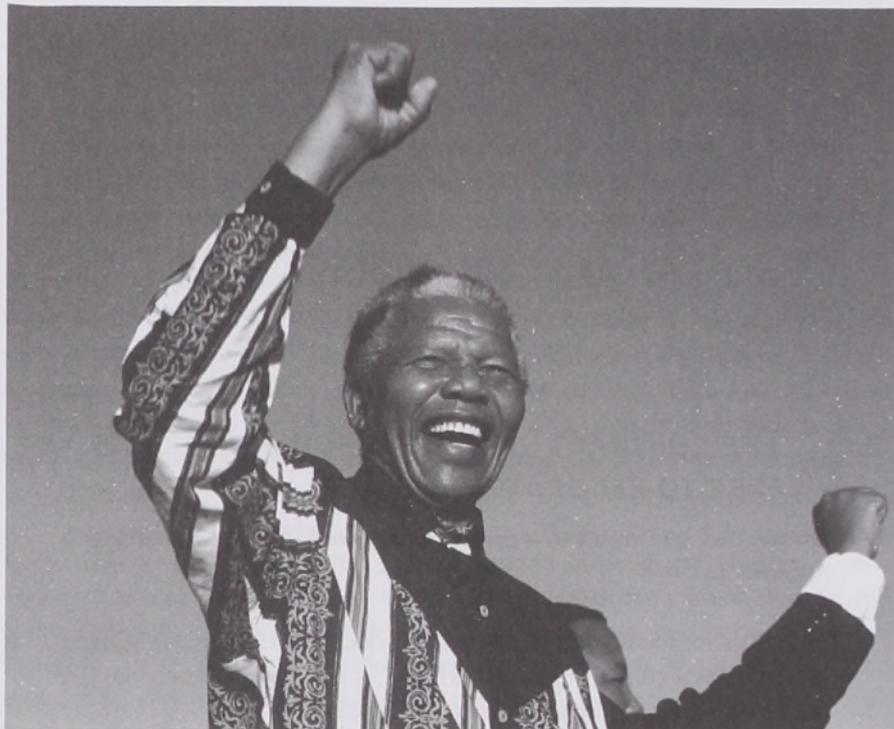


'Blame the government'

There comes a time where civilised men and women turn their backs on barbarism and if they have the option, they leave the madhouse. In South Africa this time has almost come – Gavin Bell, former Southern African Correspondent of *The Times* (UK)*



* Bell was commenting with great bitterness on the murder of his friend and local photojournalist, John Rubython.



Mandela would do well to remember that [the current wave of emigrants] are the people who stayed on when South Africa went through its transition to democracy . . . they stayed on believing that the incoming government would be the antithesis of the old regime. What did they get? Violence on an unprecedented scale, racial discrimination in the workplace and collapsing social infrastructures – R Lockwood⁸⁴

The strongest argument in favour of allowing emigrants freedom of movement without placing undue moral, legal or other constraints on them is that the government is unable or unwilling to fulfil its responsibility to protect its citizens from crime and social disorder, and that it has allowed conditions in the country to deteriorate to such an extent that it created strong push forces that drive people out of South Africa. The premise is that emigration is merely a symptom of a deeper malaise over the deteriorating socio-economic and political problems that threaten the wellbeing of the country and its citizens, and as such, emigrants are acting rationally. Therefore, if blame should be apportioned, it should be directed at the causes of emigration, and not at emigrants themselves – causes which include rampant crime, corruption, affirmative action and the other issues discussed in the

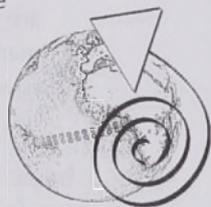
previous chapter. The leader of the Official Opposition, Tony Leon, and others concur:

The government should address the causes of emigration ... Mandela makes a big mistake if he thinks that real South Africans will not leave the country ... the truth is that thousands of highly skilled people have already emigrated and many more from all racial groups will follow if the government cannot defeat crime – DP leader, Tony Leon⁸⁵

And he [Mandela] has chosen to use their decision to leave as a litmus test of their patriotism. To what end? It does not serve any useful purpose to deny ... that the conditions which cause people to leave the country are real and compelling – editorial, *Cape Argus*⁸⁶

There is a growing number of people of all races who believes that even now, after that special year of 1994, South Africa is not a country where justice, peace and prosperity rule – and they too are leaving – C Smith⁸⁷

Emigrants and other disgruntled South Africans who are fed up with crime and deteriorating standards and morals take particularly strong exception to the accusation by Nelson Mandela that they are not 'real South Africans'. On the contrary, they regard themselves as just as patriotic as any other South African and insist that their criticism of the government and their decision to exercise their constitutional right to leave the country do not imply that they are second-class citizens. Some draw convincing comparisons between their ties with South Africa and the loyalty of the Jewish Diaspora towards the state of Israel. In addition, the argument goes, no-one has the right to unilaterally define patriotism and dismiss those as unpatriotic who do not fall within this definition.



Mandela's comments drew sharp criticism from across the spectrum, including editorials in business newspapers and newspapers normally sympathetic to the government, the South African Institute of Race Relations and ordinary people of all races:

I would like to suggest that what this country really needs is a real president – R McGregor⁸⁸

No, Mr President, it's not those running in fear that aren't 'real South Africans', it's the ones chasing behind them with guns and knives! – R Arenson⁸⁹

President Mandela should quit while his reputation is still intact . . . It is a desperate man who resorts to cheap psychological tactics to try and keep his country's intellectual capital at home – A Strates⁹⁰

To add insult to injury, people of all colours who want to leave South Africa to avoid being murdered, robbed, hijacked or raped are accused of being unpatriotic. We are all sick of fat-cat government officials, who have phalanxes of bodyguards, assuring the average man in the street that all is well and that they should not be so 'unpatriotic' as to leave South Africa – R Khumalo⁹¹

But to suggest that citizens in a free country are not real citizens, are not patriots, by the simple device of their decision to shop for a new home in another country, is not only to betray authoritarian intolerance, but also to misconstrue the meaning of our constitutional democracy – Themba Sono, President of the South African Institute of Race Relations⁹²

Emigrants are not cowards . . . They are rational people who believe they and their children will be better off, and certainly safer, elsewhere; they are mobile because they are skilled, educated and employable. For too many useful, productive South Africans emigration has become not the cowardly option, but the sensible one – editorial, *Business Day*⁹³

A basic human right protected by the constitution

Surely if anyone feels it is in his or her interest and that of their family to emigrate, that is a matter of free choice – Stephen Mulholland⁹⁴

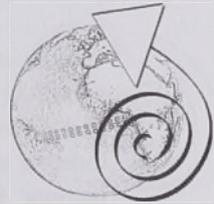
We are dealing here with people's lives. If they perceive that their safety and long-term prospects are better served by living elsewhere then they have not only the right to so arrange their affairs, but also an obligation to do so – Stephen Mulholland⁹⁵

Emigration is regarded as a basic human right recognised by most countries. In South Africa the right of emigrants to leave the country is enshrined in the Constitution. According to clause 21 of the Constitution's Bill of Rights all citizens have the right to leave the country without impediments, except of course for the financial constraints in the form of exchange controls: 'Everyone has the right to freedom of movement.' 'Everyone has the right to leave the Republic.' This is an unquestionable right that

applies to all emigrants, but even so, it does not deter politicians and others from demanding that the emigration regulations should be changed.

Governments the world over habitually feel obliged to interfere in the legal and natural flow of people across borders. Two such examples are the Soviet Union and China, which did not generally allow their citizens to emigrate in the past. Nazi Germany also made it difficult for Jews to leave the country in the 1930s, and this pattern has been followed by authoritarian governments ever since. F W de Klerk, Minister of Education in the 1980s, threatened to prevent emigrants from leaving the country unless they first repaid their study subsidies from the state. De Klerk never made good his threat, but the idea of making emigrants pay for their education is still alive. In 1998 the PAC suggested that a 'departure tax' be levied on all emigrants, while the president of the Medical Research Council, Malegapuru Makgoba called on Parliament to draft laws that will ensure that skills, knowledge and research which were funded by the government do not leave South Africa without the country having benefited in some way for its contribution. The ANC transport minister of KwaZulu-Natal, S'bu Ndebele, also called for legislation to curb emigration: '... South Africa continues to lose the crème de la crème of our skilled workers through emigration. I think some legislative mechanism should be made to reverse this exodus ...'⁹⁶

Taking into consideration that South Africa had received more immigrants than emigrants (official figures) over the past few decades, the country has therefore benefited more than it lost, in terms of gaining skilled people. For this reason, the demands of the PAC and Makgoba are shortsighted and miss the point completely, namely that migration is a two-way stream – for most of the post-1945 era many more skilled people entered the country than left, and logically South Africa should be paying foreign governments for the overall brain gain.



'Our ancestors were also emigrants'

Some emigrants justify their decision to depart by pointing out that white South Africans are in South Africa because their ancestors migrated here from Europe, often because of repression, like the French Huguenots. It is therefore not unusual, the argument goes, for them to emigrate if they feel under threat. This line of argument ties up with the idea that the migration of people has been an ongoing process in human history and that it is especially relevant as the world becomes a global village. This line of reasoning goes as follows:

Have they forgotten that our forefathers had emigrated to South Africa? – D Smuts⁹⁷

It cannot be argued that early emigrants such as the Huguenots and Voortrekkers left their people in the lurch . . . why view today's emigrants in a poor light? – Anonymous⁹⁸

I believe it is only people with great bravery who will emigrate, just like the Voortrekkers when they left the Cape – C van Vuuren⁹⁹

People always have been migrants. How many people in South Africa, the Americas, Australia and New Zealand are not descendants of emigrants who came to these countries over the past centuries? – M Smith¹⁰⁰

We live in a global village where it is natural for people to settle in countries other than their own – C Jacobs¹⁰¹

Qualified and skilled people, including Afrikaners, have all the choices available to them. Why begrudge them this? – C Gerke¹⁰²

To conclude, the tens of thousands of South African who are emigrating each year constitute a loss of people, skills and capital which South Africa can hardly afford. This causes real and understandable concern among many South Africans, and together with the subjective and emotional view that emigrants are not loyal and patriotic South Africans, has led to growing public resentment and the virtual disowning of emigrants in official circles. On the other side, most emigrants regard their decision to emigrate not as a reflection of their patriotism or lack of it, but rather as a reflection of unacceptable socio-economic and political conditions in the country, the blame for which they place squarely on the shoulders of the government.

SOUTH AFRICANS ABROAD – THE DIASPORA

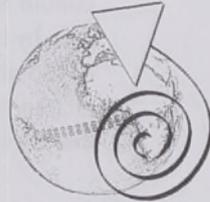
Our country is wherever we are well off – Cicero

The weather, it emerges, is a serious consideration. South African (emigrants) are a fussy lot who want first-world sophistication and third-world sunshine – journalist Charlotte Bauer¹

Well, run to Auckland or Canberra or Saskatoon or Hopeville if you want to be bored to death – Max du Preez²

As soon as you arrive at your destination join the local South African club – then integrate as soon as possible into your new environment and immediately leave the South African club – advice from a South African emigrant³

The process whereby an emigrant acquires the cultural characteristics of the host nation and is absorbed into it is referred to as acculturation. It is a one-way process whereby a host culture absorbs another, and acculturation is different from the concept of assimilation, a two-way process by which homogeneity is achieved through the exchange of cultural characteristics.⁴ South African emigrants, like emigrants all over the world, have the option of adopting and immersing themselves totally into the customs and culture of the host country as quickly as possible, or alternatively to try to retain their South African culture and identity for as long as possible and to make this part of the culture of their host countries.



While most emigrants will probably follow the golden middle way, this chapter will show that many emigrants choose the latter option, that is, a slow process of assimilation. This is evident from the vigorous attempts by such emigrants to maintain a variety of cultural links with South Africa and with fellow emigrants in their host countries. This is particularly true of first-generation emigrants and Afrikaners, and it manifests itself in the multitude of expatriate social clubs, stores that sell South African foods, attempts to get Afrikaans into the schools of

host countries, the founding of churches that cater for Afrikaans emigrants, and continued loyalty to touring South African sports teams – the proud wearing of South African colours at, for instance, a Springbok vs All Black rugby game in Auckland is an example of a very visible manifestation of this concept.*

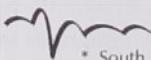
Flowing out of this is the tendency of some South African emigrants overseas to stick together in certain suburbs and to give these areas their own unique culture. These suburbs include St Ives in Sydney, Thornhill in Toronto and La Jolla in San Diego. This is of course a general emigration phenomenon found all over world and is evident in most large cities in North America, such as Chinatown in Toronto, Vancouver, San Francisco, New York and elsewhere, and 'little Italy' or 'little Greece' in many North American or Australian cities.

There is also a less visible, but equally persistent and probably more powerful emotional attachment to a South African identity – this attachment remains with many emigrants for much longer. For a sizeable section of expatriates, South Africa remains 'home' for a very long time, and a considerable part of their time and energy is spent in trying to recreate a 'Little South Africa' for themselves in their new country. For many emigrants the excitement of 'being overseas', and adopting a new culture and lifestyle is accompanied by a profound sense of loss, characterised not only by broken families and absent friends, but indeed by the loss of a unique sense of 'South Africanness' and, in some cases, an Afrikaner culture. Throughout this chapter the loss of identity and the longing for things South African form a recurrent theme, for example, as expressed by these emigrants:

My family has recently adopted NZ citizenship . . . However, I can never forget my roots, and miss family and friends I had in SA – Stan Silberbauer in Auckland⁵

My wife and three daughters have adapted well but I have this compelling urge to remain South African – emigrant Colin Dedricks in Canada⁶

Have been here for four years. We like it here but miss the old lingo . . . We miss shared humour more than anything – C Mellor, California⁷



* South African expatriates participated unofficially in the 1999 general election, by making use of a virtual poll run by an internet service provider <http://iafrica.com>. Not surprisingly, the result of this virtual election was heavily in favour of the DP (58%), followed by the NNP (13,6%) – the ANC trailed far behind at 4% of the vote.

You can't believe how much I miss the spontaneity of Africans – Richard Lister, Australia⁸

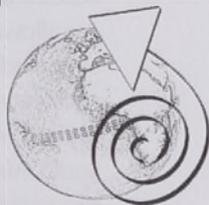
We ex-South Africans may be very happy here, but we all collect Africana, buy mieliepap to make pap en wors and watch the rugby! – Pam Nordon, in Sydney⁹

We miss the fun and sun of the home country, in fact Marlene gets a tear in her eye every time she sees a thorn tree on TV ... Thank goodness Baxters has Snoek, biltong, boeries, Mrs Ball's chutney and Pronutro or we'd have starved – Brian Peters, in Toronto¹⁰

I love Australia and its people and I'm happy to be an Australian, but you never get Africa out of your system – Gloria Jackson in Perth¹¹

Have been living in Southern California for three years and think it's a really great place ... I still miss South Africa, its culture and its people – I guess that Africa just gets into your blood – Tania Odes, California¹²

The latest wave of emigrants, that is, the post-1994 group, includes greater numbers of Afrikaners and many more family-sponsored emigrants such as the parents and grandparents of younger emigrants. Among Afrikaners and the older generation the attachment to South Africa is even stronger and their sense of identity and belonging to South Africa and Africa remain intact for much longer – they are the first ones to point out that 'Africa never leaves your blood' and proudly mention that the 'Van Wyks', 'Van der Merwes' or 'Le Rouxs' have been living in South Africa for 300 years. One of the distinguishing characteristics of South African emigrants is the use of the Afrikaans language as a mark of identification, irrespective of whether it is their home language or whether they can barely speak it. It is almost like an 'in joke', and for many it constitutes a badge of identification as prominent as a South African flag stuck on the back of a car.



South African emigrants overwhelmingly settle in five countries, all Western, English-speaking and part of the industrialised world. In the discerning eyes of many emigrants, the only real differences between these countries, apart from entry requirements and job opportunities, relate to culture and climate. These five destinations of choice are the UK, the USA, Canada, Australia and New Zealand, and those emigrants who are lucky enough to have a choice will often pick a country or even a city where the climate or lifestyle most closely resembles that of South

Africa. South African emigrants particularly prefer Australia for its sunny climate, rather than Canada and the UK, and prefer the UK, Australia and New Zealand for the cultural similarities in sport (rugby and cricket). Other emigrants feel that Australia and New Zealand are 'backwaters' and too isolated and opt for the UK and North America. Many prefer the UK for sentimental and family reasons (especially the 800 000-odd British passport holders). Other South Africans of dual nationality opt for their 'home countries' or countries to which they have some direct or even distant ethnic or cultural affiliation. For example many Jews emigrate to Israel, and thousands of first- or second- generation South African-based Portuguese and Greeks emigrate to corresponding European destinations.

About 5% of emigrants find that they miss South Africa and their friends and family so much that they eventually return. However, among the remaining 95% of emigrants who do not return to South Africa are tens of thousands who were driven out of their beloved country by crime, violence and fear, and who ultimately had to make a hard choice between emigration and living as a virtual prisoner of crime in their country of birth.

Although they tend to be 'homesick', South African emigrants are among the most successful groups of people in their adopted countries. One reason is that emigrants are allowed into other countries primarily because of their skills – South Africa's most educated and skilled people are in higher demand than those without such skills. As a category, these emigrants will be among the more successful members of any society, whether it is in Australia or South Africa or somewhere else. In general, South African emigrants tend to find jobs without too much trouble or they start successful businesses. They generally enjoy a higher standard of living than the local average but find that they have to work harder. On the whole they are accepted by locals in spite of minor cultural differences. They are largely content and happy with their decision to leave South Africa and most do not want to return permanently, but they miss South Africa, their friends and families.¹³

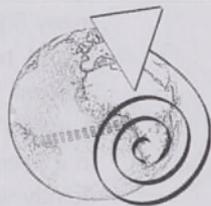
With more than one million South Africans living outside South Africa, the growth of the Internet has created a valuable tool, not only to facilitate interaction among South Africans in a particular country, city or across the world, but also to create a direct link between emigrants and the South African motherland. Not only can they read South African newspapers daily, but they are able to communicate with friends and family in South Africa by e-mail at a low cost and almost instantaneously. The Internet has also become the simplest way to draw together ex-South Africans in any overseas country or city and to disseminate newsletters and organise gatherings. One such website is 'South Africans World-Wide' (<http://www.saw.co.za>), which contains

the e-mail addresses of South Africans living outside South Africa and has a comprehensive database of information pertinent to South Africans living abroad. Among the thousands of other sites are 'Homesick South Africans' (<http://www.arrowweb.com/aris/rsa>) and the Boerewors Express, an electronic newsletter which facilitates interaction among South Africans living abroad.

This chapter then focuses on the South African diaspora and in particular, on the lifestyles, experiences and impressions of the estimated more than one million South African emigrants dispersed throughout the world. South African emigrants are just one small component of the worldwide diaspora of ethnic and cultural communities, but the issues and challenges that face different emigrant groups in their adopted countries are basically the same. Among the many issues relating to South African diaspora are the following:

- Why have emigrants chosen a particular country, province and city as their new home?
- How have they adapted to their new environments?
- In which economic spheres are they active and how successful are they?
- What do they miss the most about South Africa?
- What are their likes and dislikes in their adopted countries?
- How strong are their ties to the South African motherland?
- How strong are the social ties among South African expatriates?

A note of explanation – earlier in this chapter it was stated that more than 80% of South Africa's emigrants go to the top five emigration destinations. Therefore, if the estimate that more than one million people have left South Africa since 1945 is correct, at least 800 000 will be living in these five countries. However, the estimated numbers of South Africans in these countries, according to the findings in this chapter, add up to about 600 000 people. The discrepancy can be explained in quite logical terms: South Africans who have been living abroad since 1945, and even emigrants who arrived as recently as the 1980s, would probably not view themselves as South African any more and would therefore not appear as South African in the census statistics of the various countries. In addition, many others live and work illegally in these countries and will obviously not appear in any official statistics – they enter on tourist visas and then simply 'disappear'.



AUSTRALIA

South Africans are drawn to Australia for many reasons, not least because it offers all the comforts of home – outdoor living, a suburban

temperament and cold beer – *without the blacks* – journalist, Charlotte Bauer¹⁴

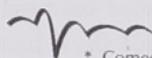
You can pack for Perth but you will never be an Aussie – Howard Donaldson¹⁵

Emigrating here isn't for sissies – anonymous South African immigrant in Australia¹⁶

Ek was bang in Suid-Afrika (I was scared in South Africa)
Die violence het my begin pla (the violence began to bother me)
So I packed for Perth and I moved to Australia
I took Buksie and my wife Sandra
And we went to live Down Under
Where I watched footy and put a prawn on the barbie, mate
Leon Schuster, from the CD *Gautvol in Paradise**

According to a 1997 Australian census more than 65 000 South Africans were living in Australia by the end of 1997 and the figure could have risen to more than 70 000 by the end of 1999.¹⁷ It might even be closer to 100 000 as it is possible that the many South Africans who have been living in Australia since the 1970s and 1980s would not have identified themselves and particularly their children as South Africans in the 1997 Australian census. South Africans make up almost 0,5% of Australia's population or, to put it differently, about one in every 213 people walking in a street in Sydney would be a South African emigrant. In 1997–98 South Africa (jointly with China) was the third-largest source of immigrants to Australia, (6% or roughly 3 000 per annum per country), with only New Zealand (19%) and the UK (12%) contributing more immigrants to Australia.

South Africans live predominantly in New South Wales (50%, or about 35 000 people), followed by Victoria (20%, or more than 18 000), Western Australia (about 15 000) and Queensland (about 10 000). A South African emigrant in Perth claimed that about 45 000 South Africans were living in the city, but this is probably an overestimation.¹⁸



* Comedian, film- and music producer, Leon Schuster, later said he would consider emigration if the crime situation did not improve and that he would have been gone by now if he was 12 years younger, because 'you have to think of your children in these times of lawlessness'. Schuster's views are ironic considering the lyrics on his CD that living with crime in South Africa is still 'better than living Down Under'.

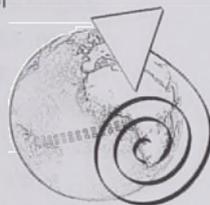
Throughout Australia the South African presence is being felt in suburbs, schools, businesses and social clubs. Roughly 70% of the pupils of the St Ives Jewish school are from South Africa.¹⁹ Bondi Beach in Sydney has several South African franchises, among which are Nando's, Sweets from Heaven, Spur and Mi-vami, a pattern which is repeated in malls all over Australia. The Sydney suburb, St Ives, has a high concentration of South Africans and is popularly referred to as St Ivesfontein.

South African immigrants in Australia have considerably higher standards of living than Australians, with a average income of A\$105 000 compared to the average Australian income of A\$38 000. About 26% of the South African immigrants had master's degrees, MBAs or PhDs, compared to the Australian average of 1%.²⁰ A total of 29% of these immigrants were professionals in the legal, medical and accounting fields. Of the remainder a large number are involved in manufacturing, property development, business services and especially the retail trade – half the executives of Australia's largest retail outlet, Meyers, are South Africans.²¹

During the 12-month period ending June 1995 South African emigrants entering Australia on a business visa made up 20% (441) of all business emigrants to Australia, second only to those from Hong Kong. Although this percentage declined to 8% in 1996, South African business immigrants created between 8% and 20% of the 7 700 new jobs which were created by immigrants in Australia, and were responsible for approximately 1,2 billion rand's worth of exports by Australia between 1994 and 1998.

That so many South Africans choose Australia as their new home is indicative of the similarities in lifestyle, climate, physical aspects such as open spaces, plentiful beaches and to some extent culture. One emigrant described his surprise at finding that Australians did not all fall into the stereotyped image of the uncultured ruffians that he expected: 'People think Australians are uncouth and uneducated but that's absolute nonsense. Professional people swear a lot less, drink less and tend to be a lot more sophisticated and cosmopolitan than South Africans.'²² Others agree: 'Australians are far less aggressive than South Africans, much more diplomatic and not nearly as materialistic.'²³

South African emigrants quickly learn to appreciate the different natural beauty of Australia: 'I missed [South African nature] a terrific amount at first but after a while you start appreciating the isolation and deserts of Australia.'²⁴ Another emigrant chose Australia because she wanted to be in the same hemisphere as her family who remained in South Africa: 'At least we will be under the same southern skies.'²⁵



One distinct difference that most South African emigrants initially have difficulty getting used to is the egalitarian nature of Australian society – the vast majority of Australians, including educated and skilled professional people, live a comfortable middle-class existence with only a small band in the really high income bracket and few poor people. Some South African emigrants are unwilling or unable to assimilate into a society that they regard as grey and bland – displaying their status symbols and wealth, they are painfully conspicuous in the streets and shopping malls of Australia, as described by a fellow emigrant:

Seeing expats in shopping centres in an upmarket Sydney suburb makes you want to cringe ... you can see them from a mile away ... many of them are loud, arrogant and bedecked with jewels. They stick together. It's as if they never left South Africa.²⁶

South Africans also have to get used to the idea that a similar job to one in South Africa will imply a relative drop in pay and status in Australia. 'It does not matter if you are a doctor, minister or ordinary worker, everyone is equal,' according to Brian Bath, former Transvaal cricketer and now managing director of the Western Australian Mint.²⁷ According to South African immigrant Adam Dabrowski, engineers, for example, do not have the same status in Australia as they do in South Africa: 'I definitely took a knock, status-wise and financially. I would be earning 30% more in South Africa.'²⁸ South African businessmen also find that they have to work harder to remain competitive with their Australian counterparts:

It's a hard country this, particularly if you are starting a new business. The first year was very tough. Operating costs, overheads and expenditure are high here, and one has to be very tough. Australians might come across as laid-back, but they are shrewd and the average Australian works harder than a South African.²⁹

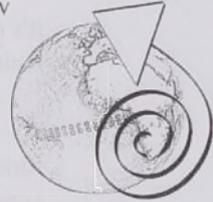
The privileged lifestyle which many white South Africans grew up with, including servants, pools in many backyards and two cars per family, is less common in Australia. The former Australian High Commissioner in South Africa, Ian Porter, warned emigrants that it is most unlikely that their 'high expectations' can be met in Australia:

I have heard of people talk about going to Australia as if they can continue to live the sort of privileged life there to which they became accustomed during apartheid. They should know that the sort of privilege they have in mind simply does not exist. If they go to Australia

they will find that they need to pay three to four times as much for a similar house, two to three times more for similar private education, three times as much for a restaurant meal . . . Chances are that they will also be like the vast majority of Australians for whom a BMW or Mercedes is out of the question and, unless very wealthy, they will have to wash the dishes, look after the kids and mow the lawn themselves.³⁰

Porter, perhaps not unintentionally, misses the point completely – most emigrants are leaving South Africa because of crime and personal safety, and not all of them are necessarily wealthy or have enjoyed the ‘privileges’ that he refers to. After all, how many young emigrants drove luxury German cars and had domestic servants and gardeners in South Africa? Furthermore, Porter’s claim that houses and private education cost three to four times more in Australia is only true if measured in rand terms – in fact, if South African emigrants earn Australian dollars, they will find that it is less expensive to live in Australia than in South Africa and that they will enjoy a higher standard of living on average.

While South African immigrants to Australia miss their families and friends and find it hard to overcome the longing for Africa, they thrive in a society that espouses an outdoor lifestyle and is obsessed with sport, while the low incidence of violent crime comes as a revelation to shell-shocked South Africans. This perception of personal safety is shared to various degrees by many of the South Africans in Australia and crops up in most accounts of the difference in lifestyle between the two countries.



There was no chance for a peaceful life in South Africa. Today I am living in peace and quiet – Walter Meyer, who imports tents from South Africa, in Perth³¹

The respect people have for institutions; the way people live their social contract in a willing way; the lack of huge political issues; the excellent manners of the public service workers – and the fact that I am leading a safe, peaceful, balanced life – Mark Stanbridge, former Natal University SRC President, in Sydney³²

The Australians who we have met so far are friendly, maintain a good standard of living and are much less concerned about personal safety than South Africans – Wiets and Juanita Marais, owners of a home-based hardware store in Sydney³³

The best thing I did was to go back to South Africa two years ago to see my mother. And I thought: now I know why I had left. I was so unused to all the alarms and locking. What I like about Sydney is that I feel safe. I can go walking at night on Balmoral Beach and I'll be fine. I don't have to worry about being carjacked – Cynthia Walley, former South African magazine editor, in Sydney³⁴

I didn't realise until I'd left how the climate of fear had traumatised my children ... Because they were no longer surrounded (in Perth) by security they felt scared and insecure ... Every time we hear of gruesome murders back in South Africa it just reinforces our view that we made the right decision – Patricia Passetti, immigrant from Johannesburg, now with the Perth Police Department³⁵

I was feeling more and more like a stranger in my own country ... I have four small children and it was getting increasingly difficult so see a future for them in South Africa ... Perth looked like a place that cared for its old people. I saw them sitting in trains going places and they weren't worried or nervous – Charles Kretzmann, in Perth³⁶

It's certainly not paradise – there's good and bad everywhere – but the main thing is safety for the kids – Graig Abrahams, in Sydney³⁷

We were looking for somewhere where we could duplicate the South African lifestyle as closely as possible ... Perth seemed to meet the criteria. If bland and boring means not having your house broken into, not having your car stolen, not being held up at gunpoint, not being raped, attacked and mugged, then (Perth) is bland and boring – and I love it – Colin Touyz, in Perth³⁸

The quality of life in Perth is very good – low crime, old people are looked after, good health care – Mike Thai, owner of Cape to Cairo specialising in South African foodstuffs, in Perth³⁹

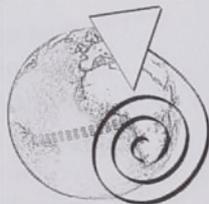
A number of emigrants from South Africa are less satisfied with the life in Australia and point out that the country also has problems of its own. Among these are former South African cricketer Peter Carlstein, who claims that he would return to South Africa if 'a solution could be found for the problems of crime, unemployment and squatters'.⁴⁰ Immigrant Gary Crisp prefers the excitement of living in Europe to life in Perth, and complains about social problems in Australia: 'There are downsides of

course. There's a high juvenile suicide rate. And teenagers get into drugs and break into homes to steal money. The problem with kids here is that life is perhaps too easy.⁴¹ Immigrant Janet Cook of Adelaide concurs: 'Australia certainly has many problems of its own. The work ethic is completely gone – kids are earning more on the dole than they would on a job. I think the education system is also lacking.'⁴² Emigrant Graig Abrahams of Sydney has a problem with the Australian people. 'On the whole Australia is a nice place, although I'm finding it hard to mix with Australians.'⁴³ Often older emigrants battle more than their children to adapt to their host country, but it becomes difficult to just pack up and leave Australia for that very reason. Stephen Mullholand commented that in his experience the 'odd SA emigrant would confide that he or she missed home and would happily return, but for the fact that the children now thought, spoke and acted like the Australians they have become'.⁴⁴

A frequent complaint among South African immigrants to Australia is about the 'lack of issues' and the absence of the unique 'challenges' and 'spirit' of Africa:

The only real problem we have living here is that there are no problems – unidentified South African immigrant interviewed by Dennis Beckett on SABC television, 1997

I just haven't found the same kind of soul here that you find in Africa. It's very easy to be here, but there is a blandness – Trish Murphy in Sydney⁴⁵



NEW ZEALAND

South Africans appear to be model immigrants ... Instant New Zealanders – just add water and mix – Iain Macleod, immigration consultant, in North and South⁴⁶

South Africans are rapidly becoming part of the New Zealand culture – and they make an impression – sports journalist, Mark Keohane⁴⁷

Until 1992 emigration to New Zealand proved to be difficult for South Africans because of strict entry requirements – it was difficult even to get a tourist visa as a result of New Zealand's strong opposition to apartheid and the absence of a New Zealand diplomatic office in South Africa. As a result, only about 1 400 South Africans managed to enter New Zealand as emigrants between 1986 and 1992. In 1992 only 400 South African emigrated to New Zealand, but this increased to 2 700

in 1993 and to 4 000 in 1994.⁴⁸ Since then the number of South African emigrants to New Zealand has remained steady at an estimated 3 000 per annum.

By 1995 it was estimated that approximately 6 000 South Africans were living in New Zealand, but the 1996 New Zealand census indicated that the number was 11 300, of whom 5 100 were Afrikaans-speaking.⁴⁹ With at least 3 000 more emigrants entering New Zealand from South Africa each year, a conservative estimate of the total number of South African living in New Zealand by the end of 1999 would be above 20 000. This estimate is backed up in a study by the Masey University of New Zealand, which claimed that there were at least 20 000 South African emigrants by 1998.⁵⁰

However, both of these figures could be an underestimation as many South Africans go to New Zealand as tourists for an 'LSD' visit 'Look, see and decide', (or, as the cynics call it, 'Look, see and deposit') and then formally apply for residency after being in the country as tourists for a while. Because South Africans have not required a visa to enter New Zealand since 1997, this has made it easier for them to enter and remain in New Zealand for longer periods and without actually being counted as residents or emigrants.

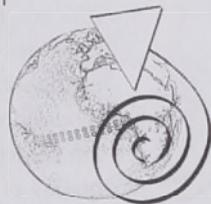
When one considers that New Zealand has a population of only 3,5 million, its intake of South African emigrants per capita is the largest of any of the top five emigration destinations. At current levels South African emigration represents about 12% of all immigration into New Zealand.⁵¹ After Britons, South Africans had become the second largest source of immigrants to New Zealand by 1998 in the 'general' category of immigrants, the route followed by most immigrants. By 1999 South Africans had become the third largest source of all immigrants to New Zealand, after China and Britain.

South African emigrants tend to settle in the North Island, and more specifically in the greater Auckland area, especially in the eastern suburbs. More than 16 000 South Africans live in Auckland (12 000 in North shore and 6 000 in Manukau). Many of the recent flood of Afrikaner emigrants live in the North Shore suburbs of Brown's Bay, Torbay and Howick in Manukau. Traffic congestion and a scarcity of jobs seems to force many further south to places such as Hamilton, Rotorua, Tauranga, Wellington and Christchurch.

South Africans do exceedingly well in the business world and the professions of New Zealand and their earning capacity is well above the national average. In part this may be because New Zealand is the only one of the top five emigration destinations

with an economy smaller than South Africa and, as such, might be a less daunting prospect for South African entrepreneurs than for example the USA. The average household income of South African emigrants is N\$50 000 compared with the New Zealand average of N\$30 000.⁵² South Africans have achieved some major successes in the New Zealand business world and elsewhere, among them James Boonzaier (Group MD of Tower Corporation Holdings in Auckland), George Deeb (Chairman of SANZ Charitable Trust and barrister and solicitor in Takapuna, North Shore), Terence Delaney (Executive Chairman of Warehouse Stationary), Stuart Fish (MD of Tower Retirement Investment in Wellington), Tony Glass (CEO of Ernest Adams Ltd in Auckland), Errol Haarhoff (Head of School of Agriculture at the University of Auckland), Lester Levy (MD of Calan Corporate Services and Chairman of Comunicado), Hugo Venter (CEO of Bendon in Auckland), Chris Parker (MD of BDM Grange Cosmetics in Auckland), Anthony Ratcliffe (former CEO of National Mutual and director of ACC), Derik Steyn (Intensive unit director of Taranaki Hospital), Nicky van der Walt (Professor of International Business, Massey University) and Gregory Fortuin (Director of Superannuation Services in Wellington).⁵³

Many South Africans choose to establish their own businesses, some of which cater for the tastes of South African immigrants. One such company is owned by Annie Vorster and is called 'Zebra Zu', a mail-order concern offering South African foodstuffs such as Ouma Rusks, *rooibos* tea, All Gold tomato sauce, Jelly Tots, etc. An Internet 'Yellow Pages' of South African-owned businesses and professional services includes Newmarket Auto Repairs Ltd (Auto Repairs); The Biltong Man (biltong); Bramax (boerewors); Stephanie Figg (clinical psychologist); David Osie Dental Centre (dentist); Winnie Koppers (desktop publishing); Dr Stephen Kruger (gynaecologist); Dr Leonard Breger, Dr Michele Foster (medical doctors); Tina Osie (speech & language therapist); Anton de Waal (website design).



Apart from informal business networks and 'Yellow Pages', there is a vast network of immigrant support organisations for South Africans in New Zealand, run mostly by other South African immigrants. According to emigrants Janet and Bruce Metelerkamp, the network of South Africans in New Zealand is 'pretty good as far as helping with contracts, accommodation, basic "refugee pack" furniture before your stuff arrives and networking for a job are concerned.'⁵⁴

One such support organisation is the SANZ Charitable Trust, a 5 000-strong immigration support organisation aiding South African immigrants to New Zealand. It has its own website at <http://sanztrust.org.nz/trust.html> or telephone 09-486 4442), and apart from organising beach braais on the first Sunday in February, the

Trust helps South African immigrants to adapt to their new environment. It puts newcomers in touch with well-established South African expatriates who serve as mentors and role models. According to Coenie de Villiers, the Trust draws largely English-speaking South Africans as members, and he knew of no Afrikaners who belonged to SANZ.⁵⁵ Another organisation which helps new South African immigrants is the non-profit Soft Landings at <http://www.softlandings.co.nz>. It publishes a useful A-Z guide for newcomers to New Zealand, dealing with issues crucial to emigrants, such as *arrival*: 'it is comfortable to be greeted by a familiar face at the airport, so try to arrange this if possible'; *appliances*; *budget*: 'a family of four should be able to live fairly comfortably on \$3 000–\$4 000 a month'; *knowledge*: 'be aware that things can work very differently in New Zealand – try to gain an understanding of the local practices as soon as possible after arrival'; *lifestyle*: 'be prepared for a change in lifestyle. New Zealanders are generally less extravagant and flashy than many South Africans ... full time maids and housekeepers are rare'; *objectivity*: 'try not to compare things to the way they are in South Africa, but accept rather the way they are in New Zealand'.

New Zealand has a small population of three and a half million, and apart from Auckland it has a 'small-town' and rural atmosphere which makes many South Africans feel at home instantly. For this very reason some of the sophisticated urbanites from Cape Town and Johannesburg may view the country as relatively unsophisticated and a bit of a backwater (as they may regard Pietermaritzburg or Bloemfontein). Yet all emigrants appreciate New Zealand's highly developed infrastructure, its industrialised economy and First World standards, and the high quality of its education and healthcare.

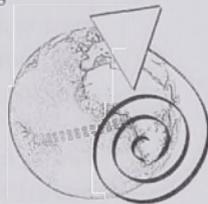
Similarities to South Africa in lifestyle, sport and language make it relatively easy for South Africans to adapt, while most are easily won over by the country's natural beauty – snow-covered mountains, green valleys, white sandy beaches and moderate climate, although the South Island can be wet and very cold. In addition, the high levels of personal safety and the low incidence of violent crime are a major boon to crime-wary South Africans. According to Rakes and Sangeeta Singh, emigrants from Durban, New Zealand was 'paradise' in so far as they could walk the streets or go to the park at night with their child without fear of attack'.⁵⁶ Others agree:

It's a whole different lifestyle here. One starts to lose one's paranoias after a while. Our kids can walk around safely at anytime – it's a great relief – emigrant Martin Ralph⁵⁷

I want my children to be able to play in the street. We just can't relax (in South Africa). We'll be able to do that in Auckland – prospective emigrant, Howard Phillips⁵⁸

It became impossible to live with the violence and crime in South Africa. You have to consider your children's futures as well. While I miss the South African countryside and my own people, we have made a good life for ourselves here in New Zealand – Anonymous⁵⁹

With Afrikaners making up almost half of South African emigrants to New Zealand (45% in 1996 and growing), their language and culture have become a distinct part of life in this island country. Afrikaner emigrants to New Zealand tend to stick together closer than their English-speaking counterparts. The reason for this is obviously their language, religion and, as a journalist mentioned, 'their love for dried coriander spice, the ingredient that constitutes the essence of boerewors and biltong'.⁶⁰ The Afrikaans language appears to be thriving in New Zealand and Afrikaners try to maintain and promote their language wherever possible with great commitment.⁶¹ Websites devoted to Afrikaans and Afrikaners, with their origin in New Zealand, can be found on the Internet, one of which is at <http://members.xoom.com/afrikaanse> – run by Magda Schoeman. Afrikaners have also founded their own Afrikaans church in Auckland – it is headed by Gawie Cloete and has close to 300 members. In 1999 the Afrikaans Club, with its 300 members, attempted to persuade education authorities to introduce Afrikaans as a subject at primary schools in the greater Auckland area. However, because of a backlash by several South African emigrants who were hostile to the idea, the club and its chairman, Francois Schoeman, put their plans on hold. The many hostile letters from fellow South African emigrants addressed to Schoeman included references to the 'arrogance and racism' of Afrikaner emigrants, while Ria Aucamp suggested that it would be sufficient for Schoeman to converse in Afrikaans with his children, teach them *Volkspede*, and feed them 'boerewors' and 'pap'.⁶²



Some Afrikaners claim that the hardest thing they had to do in their new homeland was to take the oath of loyalty to the Queen of Britain when they became New Zealand citizens (it is the same scenario in Australia and Canada where the Queen is also the head of state) – as emigrant Leoni Schmid says: 'When you swear the oath to the Queen, a part of you is born, but a part of you also dies.'⁶³

In the nature of its status as a country of emigration, New Zealanders generally are quite comfortable with emigrants and, in particular, the wave of South Africans

entering their country. Like the New Zealanders themselves, South African emigrants are mostly fluent in English, hard-working, hold similar values and love rugby and cricket. As one emigrant couple claim: 'Everyone here is very accepting of us as immigrants and usually comment 'That's great!' or 'Welcome to NZ''.⁶⁴ New Zealanders appear to be tolerant of the distinctive mannerisms and habits of South Africans and view them as 'direct and forceful people who dress in faintly old-fashioned attire, write quaint English, exude a Calvinistic uprightness and an air of disciplined humourlessness'.⁶⁵ New Zealanders often refer to South African emigrants as 'Jaopies', presumably because of their use of word 'Ja' in lieu of 'Yes'.

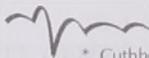
However, not all New Zealanders are equally welcoming – the violent anti-apartheid protests which tore New Zealand society apart during the Springbok Rugby Tour in 1981 still bring back bad memories for some New Zealanders. There is also a perception that South African emigrants may be importing racism to a country that already has a brittle relationship with its Maori population. In 1994 a New Zealander, Dick Cuthbert, led a campaign called SWAT (Stop White South Africans), which was initially a protest against a South African emigrant who had a racist history. However, it quickly became a broader anti-immigration protest targeting all South African emigrants.* The SWAT campaign was based on the assumption that all South African immigrants are racist: 'If they really are non-racists, why are they leaving as South Africa changes to a non-racial society?'⁶⁶ Cuthbert's self-righteous and ludicrous views conveniently ignored crime as the real reason that South Africans are emigrating, but fortunately few New Zealanders share his views.

Finally, many South Africans go to New Zealand only to settle later in Australia. As it is more difficult to obtain a visa to emigrate to Australia than to New Zealand, many South Africans use entry to New Zealand as a backdoor route into Australia. This is possible because New Zealanders can live and work in Australia without residence permits.

CANADA

There is a transparent recognizableness to Canada and South Africa that makes each other's citizens feel at home in them – Canadian journalist Michael Valpy

The local butcher made the spicy South African sausage especially for the residents of Doringkop (Thornhill in Toronto). Well, I thought, had I

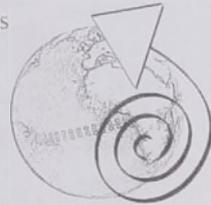


* Cuthbert was formerly a leader of an organisation called HART (Halt all racist Tours) which tried to prevent the 1981 Springbok rugby tour from proceeding.

really travelled so far to sit around a barbecue in 2 m of snow with a miserable bunch of ex-South Africans talking longingly about the things they miss? Apart from the obvious, like Marie biscuits and Mrs Ball's Chutney, there were some interesting thoughts, including 'the red African earth'. A young woman said: 'What I really miss is my house in Constantia and my maid' – journalist Ken Daniels recalls his impressions of the expatriate community in Canada⁶⁷

In spite of the widely held perception among sun-obsessed South Africans that Canada is an icy-cold, snow-filled, neglected cousin of the United States, the country is becoming an increasingly popular destination with South African emigrants. This is largely because of its immigrant-friendly policies and its reputation as the best country in the world in which to live, an accolade which Canada received for the seventh time in a row in 2000. The United Nation's Human Development Index selected Canada as the number one country out of 174 in terms of standard of living (measured by GDP per capita), life expectancy and educational attainment. It is also viewed by some emigrants as a gateway to the USA, as certain Canadian professionals can work freely in the USA.

A Canadian census showed that by 1991 a total of 24 000 South Africans were living in Canada. By 1995 this figure had increased to over 30 000, according to the Canadian High Commission in Pretoria.⁶⁸ Considering that the annual number of emigrants from South Africa to Canada is close to 2 000, a more accurate estimate in 1999 would be above 40 000, and could be more, as one recent estimate put the number of South Africans in Vancouver alone at 50 000.⁶⁹



South Africans live mostly in Toronto and Vancouver. In Toronto they tend to congregate in the city's northern and western suburbs such as Oakville and Thornhill, while increasing numbers are also settling in the suburbs and neighbouring towns as far east as Pickering and Oshawa, and to the south towards the Niagara peninsula. A growing number of South Africans settle in Calgary because of the job opportunities created by a booming Alberta economy and lower house prices. Many South African doctors settle temporarily in small towns in the sparsely populated and cold northern parts of Manitoba, Saskatchewan (218 South African doctors) and Alberta where there is a shortage of doctors and the high remuneration is supposed to compensate for the isolation and bitter cold. Fewer South Africans choose the province of Quebec mainly because of the language barrier, as French is the official language of the province.

British Columbia appears to hold a particularly strong attraction for South Africans opting for Canada, especially those originating from Cape Town. The relatively milder climate of Vancouver Island and its 'English-flavoured' capital, Victoria, with the mildest climate in Canada, ensure that many South African emigrants settle there. The province's largest city, Vancouver, is the most popular destination for South Africans in Canada. Although its soggy climate compares poorly with the Mediterranean warmth of Cape Town, the cities share scenic beauty in the form of stunning mountains, long beaches, a great outdoor lifestyle, a laid-back approach to life and a sense of splendid isolation from the rest of the country. The northern shores of Vancouver, in particular the suburbs of North and West Vancouver, are popular among South African immigrants and their proximity to the sea and the mountains (and the high rainfall) is reminiscent of the Newlands and Rondebosch areas of Cape Town. The popularity of Vancouver and its environs is illustrated by these comments from members of the large expatriate South African community:

I have been living in Vancouver for two years now. I enjoy a quality of life which I did not know existed. The people are wonderful and I have had no problem to adapt – Jonathan Bezuidenhout, Vancouver.⁷⁰

Except for the rain, we enjoy BC life ... safe! – Leon & Emmarentia Barnard, Burnaby⁷¹

[I feel] relief because of the peace and tranquillity afforded my children in BC – Steven Wright, Vancouver⁷²

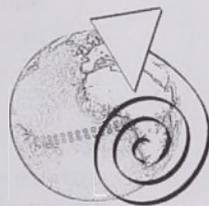
I live in Steveston, BC, where life is very laid-back and wonderful – Sid Schneider, Steveston⁷³

As with other emigration destinations, South African immigrants in Canada do very well for themselves financially and career-wise. They are among the top income earners and are mostly professional people or business people in their thirties, with young children.⁷⁴ The obvious reason for their above-average success is that, like emigrants to all destinations, the people with most skills and/or capital are allowed into Canada because of highly-selective points system. There appears to be a preponderance of South Africans in the legal, medical, managerial and entrepreneurial spheres of the Canadian economy.

The Soft Landings' support guide for newcomers to Canada provides evidence of the entrepreneurial nature of many South African emigrants. Jim Pattison runs an automotive leasing company in Toronto; Susan Trenkel, formerly from Henley-on-

Klip, owns her own bed and breakfast called 'Tree Tops' in North Vancouver; Nick and Dolores Thompson-Wood, formerly from Johannesburg, operate a 39-room bed and breakfast in Toronto; Charles Burden does videotape conversions in Kelowna; Shelley and Geoff Berkow run their own Playball franchise in Vancouver; Anita and Les Rudolph, formerly from Benoni, run an Academy of Learning franchise in Vancouver; Tricia Norman operates an employment agency called 'Select Placement Services'; Eddie Katz, formerly from Johannesburg, runs an auditing, accounting and tax consultancy firm in Toronto. Other examples from the South African Canadian Business Directory are Pam and Alan Skinner (estate agents), Dirk Odendaal (CA), Paul Maritz (electrical contractor), Daniel Gouws (physician), Colin Swanepoel (furniture), Marpole Meat Supply (biltong and boerewors) and Annale Snyman (in charge of a newsletter called *The Protea Club*). A major success story is that of John Klass and Russell Jacobs, who own their own packaging supply business, Arctic Packaging Industries, based in Ontario with 50 employees and occupying 60 000 square feet of business space.⁷⁵ Another successful emigrant is Carl Handley, formerly a senior manager with the Small Business Development Corporation in Johannesburg (now Business Partners), who bought two filling stations/convenience shops from Shell in North Vancouver with borrowed capital – Handley and his wife, Karen, successfully transformed both franchises and vastly increased turnover and profits within two years.

For the South African emigrant, Canada has many pros and cons, but its First World level of development, sophistication and social order are big plus points. South African emigrants in Canada quickly have to learn to cope with living in the second-coldest and second-largest country in the world (second to Russia each time), with long icy winters, vast distances between some urban areas, driving on the right-hand side of the road, getting to grips with sports such as ice hockey, baseball, American football, basketball, and generally learning how to cope with the North American way of doing things. However, in addition, they will quickly appreciate the excellent and virtually free healthcare and education, efficient postal service, low levels of crime, and bureaucratic efficiency and honesty.



Comments by South African expatriates about life in Canada almost always refer to the low levels of crime, the scenic splendour, the warmth of the people and the sense of stability that is an undeniable part of living in an industrialised and highly civilised society:

We are experiencing the joys of a clean country with such majestic natural beauty, such an incredibly high level of service, a stable economy

... and last but not least, we are enjoying sleeping with our back doors open at night. The Canadian nation must have the friendliest people with the best sense of humour and we have made many, many new friends – Elze Hugo⁷⁶

Been in Calgary for 10 years now – love it . . . We are happy here – Irene and Rik Boezaard, Calgary⁷⁷

Although I deeply miss SA, I think moving to Canada was the best thing we ever did – E Eckbo⁷⁸

I enjoy Canada and it is a wonderful place in which to live – Anrike Botha, Brampton⁷⁹

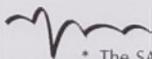
After two years in Canada we are really getting to love this place – Phil Hatting, Aurora⁸⁰

We have had a tough time settling in and getting established in Canada but have never regretted coming – Gerry Pieters, Oakville⁸¹

Audrey and I arrived in Canada in Feb 1997, and haven't regretted the move for one second. This is a wonderful country with great, great people. – Jacques & Audrey van Dyk, Oakville.⁸²

A survey by SA *Family Practice* dealing with South African doctors in the Canadian province of Saskatchewan is particularly enlightening. between 83% and 100% of these doctors indicated that their children adjusted very well in local schools, that their South African medical training served as an excellent basis for their jobs in Canada, that they have enjoyed their current practice situation, that they adjusted well to life in Canada and that the sacrifices made in emigrating were worthwhile given the gains. Only 7% said they will return to South Africa eventually.⁸³

As in other emigration destinations, South African immigrants in Canada have organised themselves in a myriad clubs and organisations, with websites, newsletters and even the odd business directory circulated regularly. One of these is the South African Society of BC, with its own website, which is used to exchange information and facilitate social get-togethers, at <http://www.proteaclub.vancouver.bc.ca>*



* The SA Society of BC for example organises expatriate touch-rugby games in Vancouver on Sunday afternoons inform expatriates of televised international rugby matches at the Vancouver Rowing Club.

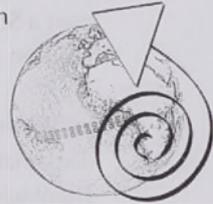
Another is the South African Canadian Business Directory, which appeared for the first time in 1997 and contains the names of hundreds of South African-owned businesses and professionals.

This well-organised South African network facilitates social interaction among people who share memories, a common culture and speak the same language (in the case of Afrikaners) or at least share a South African dialect. While it can be a mistake for emigrants to remain too attached to expatriate groups and friends (they risk missing out on making Canadian friends and assimilating into Canadian culture), maintaining close links with fellow-expatriates provides a sense of security and identity and gives South African emigrants a sense of community in an alien environment.

UNITED STATES

At the check-out counter of a supermarket in Virginia the woman sales clerk told me I must be a South African when I paid the equivalent of about R18 for a bottle of Marmite. 'How do you know,' I demanded. I was not, after all, wearing a safari suit with a comb in my sock. 'Nobody else eats this stuff,' she said – journalist Neil Lurssen, on a visit to the USA.⁸⁴

America has always been a popular emigration destination for South Africans, along with millions of other emigrants. Considerable numbers of South African Jews settled in San Diego and the rest of California in the 1970s and 1980s, while many members of the ANC and anti-apartheid activists ended up in the USA in the 1980s. With the advent of the information technology revolution in the 1990s, thousands of South Africans with IT qualifications were lured by huge salary packages to California and elsewhere on the Pacific Coast, while some of South Africa's top talent in the movie industry, such as Charlize Theron, arrived in Hollywood. Many South African investment bankers, lawyers and accountants have settled in the financial hub of New York, while a few hundred other South Africans move to the USA each year courtesy of the Green Card lottery.



By 1990 more than 35 000 South Africans were living permanently in the US according to a 1990 USA census.⁸⁵ The continuing and growing flow of emigrants since then would have ensured that by 1999 this number increased to between 70 000 and 125 000.* The most popular states for South African emigrants are

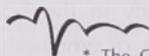
* Cliff Matheson, editor of the South African newsletter in the USA, Juluka, is in possession of the addresses of at least 40 000 South African expatriates in North America, *Die Burger*, 15 April 1998.

California, Florida, Texas, Washington DC and Georgia, but all things being equal, they tend to prefer the warmer climates of the sunbelt states, especially California, Georgia and Florida – the Sunshine State is the home of at least 25 000 South Africans.^{86*}

Large numbers of South African emigrants congregate in Atlanta, Georgia, where an estimated 4 000 families (roughly 16 000 to 20 000 people) have settled. In Atlanta expatriates have founded the South African Club with a membership of over 750 – its president is Henrietta Botha. They have even created their own South African business directory called 'Helpmekaar' (help each other), containing the names of South African doctors, brokers, estate agents, travel agents, accountants, locksmiths and many others. The expatriate community in Atlanta holds regular get-togethers attracting up to 1 000 people, where they play rugby, have braais and socialise. One of the more successful South Africans in Atlanta is Stephan Botes, who founded his own R400 million computer consulting firm with about 360 employees. Botes claims that over the past 15 years he has brought more than 1 000 computer technicians from South Africa over to Atlanta to work for him. Among the other South Africans in Atlanta are Liesel Wild, a former Dutch Reformed Church candidate minister, Chris Dillion who sells South African wines, Douw van der Walt who does landscaping, Ben Cilliers who does paving and builds retaining walls, the Anthony family who own a South African restaurant called 10 Degrees South Bistro and Bar, and Clifford Hodson who runs a South African food store called Cape Food and Beverage.⁸⁷

In Washington DC South Africans have founded an organisation called EINA (Expatriates In North America), and they celebrate American holidays such as Thanksgiving with boerewors, melktert and the more traditional American turkey. While South African ambassador over there, Franklin Sonn also made an effort to act as a conduit between the expatriates and the embassy.⁸⁸

A South African-oriented website in Boston lists the names of 300 emigrants in the greater Boston area in the state of Massachusetts.** The site is to be found at <http://www.amaboston.com/index.html> and its purpose is to 'connect' South Africans



* The CEO of a company called eWorldNetworks, former South African Clayton Johnson, recently suggested that more than one million South Africans were living in the USA (*Financial Mail*, 7 April 2000). This clearly is an exaggerated estimate, considering that the worldwide South African diaspora consists of between one and one and a half million people, but it is surprising that a respected financial magazine such as *Financial Mail* would publish such claims without verifying their accuracy.

** Of the 300 South Africans in the Boston area listed on this website, 24% are Afrikaners.

living in that area. It consists of a list of businesses offering South African goods or services, with information on events, news, sports, humour, and other links that are related both to Boston and South Africa.

Even the colder climates of the Mid-Western United States and the Great Lakes area attract some South Africans. In Chicago, South African expatriates have their own social club and website at <http://people.ce.mediaone.net/mafojani/index.htm>. They jovially describe themselves as:

... an informal group (Boertjies & Souties) of South Africans living in the Northwestern Suburbs of Chicago that socialize together. We would like to meet more ex-South Africans and PARTY together as much as possible, as summer is only 3 months long (if you're lucky). In winter we will carry on with red wine in front of a log fire. We can even braai in the snow.

As South Africans settled in the USA in larger numbers, their habits, tastes and cultural oddities followed them and are slowly becoming part of the American culture, an occurrence that led journalist Neil Larsson to comment: 'You are never far from tamatie bredie and Mrs Ball's in America.'⁸⁹ It appears that Americans are also developing a taste for South African food, as is evident by numerous restaurants offering South African fare – a South African vegetarian restaurant in San Francisco, called Joubert's, was described in glowing terms by an American food critic: 'Open the door to Joubert's and be instantly swept away to another world ... a taste of South Africa.'⁹⁰



Apart from South African restaurants and corporate presences such as Sol Kerzner and Gold Fields, hundreds of South African businesses can be found all over the USA, among them AA Biltong (Charlotte, North Carolina), Action Africa (Tucson, Arizona), Biltong Box (Dallas, Texas), Biltong Ranch (San Clemente, California), Cape Food & Beverage (Atlanta, Georgia), Cape Wine Selections (New York), Furniture Out of Africa (California), Protea Diamonds (Arlington, Virginia) RSA Wines (Pennsylvania), Setsoto Designs of Boston (Newton Highlands, Massachusetts), Springbok Pub (Fort Worth, Texas) and Witkrans Safaris (Tucson, Arizona).

BRITAIN

The latest tribe to colonise London likes lager, raw meat and rugby ... Whereas the Australians are merely fanatical about rugby, South Africans ... are completely obsessed with it. Whereas the Australians' national dish is more or less anything with chips, South Africans eat raw, dried meat

(biltong) and furthermore, enjoy doing so. They also like Ouma rusks, biscuits which come in very handy when trekking through the veld. They never become stale because they already are stale – journalist Andrew Martin commenting on the South African invasion of the British capital.⁹¹

The UK has always been a popular destination for South African exiles and emigrants, but more importantly at least 800 000 South Africans have British passports and probably many more can lay claim to British citizenship. This means that there is a virtual free flow of close to one million dual citizens/residents between South Africa and the UK. President Thabo Mbeki and ANC stalwart Siphosiso Pityana were among the tens of thousands of members of the ANC who spent some years there in exile while the NP was in power, and ironically they were joined by approximately 10 000 young white men fleeing conscription. Nowadays, the UK, and London in particular, is flooded with South African emigrants and refugees of another kind and they are motivated by other reasons:

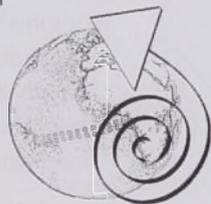
London is teeming with ex-South Africans who have given up on the country and would rather battle with Britain's lousy weather and sky-high prices than continue the struggle back home – David Lascelles, co-director of the UK-based Centre for the Study of Financial Innovation⁹²

By 1995 it was estimated that the UK was home to 120 000 South Africans.⁹³ Because of growing emigration, this number would have increased substantially by 1999 and the number of South Africans in London is now conservatively estimated at over 300 000. This figure excludes the approximately 50 000 South Africans younger than 27 who are on two-year 'work and travel' Commonwealth visas. This number almost equals the combined numbers of Australian and New Zealanders in the city.⁹⁴ The South African High Commissioner in the UK, Cheryl Carolus, estimates the number of South Africans in the UK at 350 000, while other sources suggest that it could be more than 500 000.⁹⁵

Over the years many well-known South Africans have made Britain their home and contributed greatly to British society, especially in the apartheid era. Among these were Laurens van der Post, zoologist Lord Zuckerman, cricketers Basil D'Oliveira, Alan Lamb and Robin Smith, actors Janet Suzman, Nigel Hawthorne and Antony Sher, businessmen such as Sir Michael Edwardes, Sir Mark Weinberg and Alister Morton, High Court judge Sir Johan Steyn, Sydney Lipworth – a chairman of the Mergers and Monopolies Commission, Sir Raymond Hoffenberg, former president of the Royal College of Physicians, Nobel Chemistry Laureate Sir Aaron Klug and many others.⁹⁶

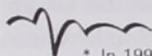
Those South Africans who settle permanently in the UK tend to be highly skilled and do well in the business world and in other professions. In 1995 the third most common university qualification in London's financial district and on the boards of the London Stock Exchange's top hundred companies, after degrees from Oxford and Cambridge, was from the University of the Witwatersrand.⁹⁷ Other emigrants use their entrepreneurial skills to open franchises such as chicken-based Nando's and a range of small businesses, including restaurants specialising in South African food, such as the Springbok Café in London. This restaurant is owned by Pete and Chantelle Gottgens from Cape Town and serves delicacies such as ostrich and springbok fillet, a variety of Cape/Dutch/Malay food and South African wines.

South African doctors, dentists and nurses and other paramedics are highly thought of and in high demand in the UK, with the British nursing profession in particular skimming off the cream of the South African crop. Dentists also flock to the UK – in 1998 over 200 emigrated to the UK, which was the largest group of dentists from another country, according to the British General Dental Council.⁹⁸ By early 1999 at least 2 000 South African dentists were registered both in South Africa and the UK, but some estimates put the number of South African dentists practising in the UK at 3 000.⁹⁹ South African dentists are earning at least £4 000 per month in the UK and many are working for large corporate dental firms such as Dr James Hull and Associates, which recruited 107 from South Africa in the first half of 1999 alone.¹⁰⁰ Although highly regarded for their skills, their professional reputation was slightly dented when five of them were caught defrauding the National Health system.



Teachers from South Africa are also in great demand in the UK, with recruitment agencies actively involved in luring thousands away from South Africa. This is particularly attractive option for teachers retrenched by the government or seeking better opportunities. A typical teacher could be earning more than £11 000 or about R112 000 per year in the UK.¹⁰¹

The opening up of the UK to South Africans after 1994 resulted in thousands going there on two-year working-travelling visas, with more than 14 000 leaving in 1998 alone.* Many of them do not return when their permit expires. As one of these adventurers, Allan Phillips, explained succinctly: 'I prefer the way of life here. It is an easy place to get a job and a reasonable salary. It is not good back home.'¹⁰² Many



* In 1996 British Home Office figures showed that 238 000 South Africans entered the UK however these were mostly tourists and business visitors.

of these temporary visitors reside in Earl's Court and Swiss Cottage and congregate at designated pubs such as the Castle Tavern in Shepherd's Bush, the Sports Café in the Haymarket and the Riverside Blues Bar onboard HMS President on Victoria Embankment on the Thames.

On the whole, South African emigrants and those with temporary work permits fit relatively easily into British society. Apart from the vagaries of the weather, South Africans feel at home and fit in easily because of cultural similarities such as language, sport, driving habits and historical ties. Britons recognise South Africans by their love for lager, biltong, rugby, cricket and their distinctive accent described as 'Seth Efrican'. This apparently places them in the same broad category as their southern hemispheric cousins, the Australians and New Zealanders, and therefore they are regarded as acceptable, if slightly odd.

Nonetheless, the South African invasion sometimes stretches British hospitality to the limits. For example, the Adams family from Port Elizabeth were hounded out of their house in Gateshead in north-east England by neighbourhood thugs who did not like their accents.¹⁰³ In Scotland newcomers from South Africa talk of a 'Tartan Curtain' to describe an inhospitable 'wall of Scottishness' that tends to exclude emigrants from certain spheres of Scottish life and society: 'Simple factors such as accent and customs can mitigate fairly heavily against new arrivals,' according to a recent emigrant, Iain McDonald. On the whole, however, according to McDonald, Scots remain tolerant of newcomers and 'along with the haggis, shortbread, tartan, bagpipes and whisky, they are becoming more willing to sell burritos, burgers and boerewors'.¹⁰⁴

Afrikaans-speaking South Africans in the UK have founded their own Afrikaans 'Protestant' church with more than 1 000 members throughout the country. In addition, an Afrikaans literary café was founded early in 2000, with the goal of promoting the Afrikaans language and culture in the UK. Apart from the frequent social events organised throughout London and elsewhere by South Africans for South Africans, certain local publications serve as a source of news and information for South African expatriates. The *SA Times*, with a circulation of over 62 000 is published weekly and caters for South African expatriates and British tourists to South Africa – its news content is slightly dated, but its South African sports scores are useful for those who have been away from South Africa for a while, while it also serves as a guide to tourists and emigrants from Britain who want to go to South Africa. For more up-to-date news and live contacts, South Africans in the UK are much better off visiting the Internet – here they can read most South African newspapers and magazines live and get in touch with fellow expatriates in the UK.