

# 4 WHY DO PEOPLE LEAVE SOUTH AFRICA?

All of them, white and black alike, recounted the same litany of motivations that made them leave SA: security, security and more security ... fear, it seems, is the most potent currency of our time – Peter Godwin<sup>1</sup>

Yet, we must think about our futures and we fear for it in South Africa ... We just want a better life ... Free from racial conflict, bombs, Third World economy and hair-raising crime rates – M Carstens<sup>2</sup>

Sometimes I lie awake at night worrying about our future. What would happen to my children if I was hijacked or shot during a mugging? ... Crime is not the only reason for my decision. Standards of health and education are dropping and child abuse is rife ... If wanting the basic rights of security, safety and prosperity makes me a coward, then I am one – F Nkwanvana<sup>3</sup>

They no longer feared for their children. They had realised part of their parental responsibility of creating an environment where their children were relatively safe from harm. It had meant leaving South Africa – Journalist Phylicia Oppelt, who previously held the view that emigrants were simply cowards<sup>4</sup>

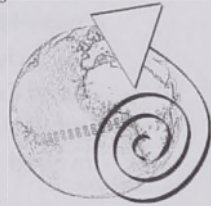
South African emigrants are motivated by a number of typical 'push' factors and these are countered by many 'pull' factors. The typical emigrant will list various 'push' factors in order of importance, among which will be uncertainty about the future, falling standards, the economy, affirmative action and bleak job prospects, and loss of faith in the ANC-led government, but most importantly, as the quotes above indicate, he or she will list violent crime as the real reason for wanting to emigrate. Surveys indicate that 60% of emigrants regard crime as the major reason for leaving South Africa, while 19% cite concern for their children's education. A total of 15% of emigrants said that they were looking for a better quality of life, 14% wanted better prospects in general, 20% were concerned about healthcare, and 10% cited the government, the economy and affirmative action as reasons for emigrating.<sup>5</sup>

In this chapter each of these issues will be examined in the context in which it contributes to emigration from South Africa. The main focus is on crime and the lack

of personal security insofar as these are the major driving forces stoking the exodus from South Africa. Other concerns raised by emigrants revolve around other socio-economic and political problems, which in reality are problems which most countries share with South Africa to greater or lesser degrees. On the whole they are non-life-threatening issues which can be debated in Parliament, can be exposed by a free and objective media, and ultimately can be viewed as challenges to overcome – in other words, these are issues which in theory should not constitute compelling reasons for emigrating. Nonetheless, they are consistently raised by emigrants, in conjunction with crime, to explain why they are leaving South Africa.

Therefore, while few South Africans would emigrate purely on the grounds that some Mpumalanga official stole a few million rand or a director-general runs a soccer team from his office, hundreds of thousands leave because they fear for their lives in a country infested with crime and lawlessness. Crime has reached such epidemic proportions that it extends way beyond what is acceptable and bearable to ordinary citizens. Crime has taken the country into a state of anarchy with the highest or second- and third-highest rates of rape, murder, car hijackings and violent crime in the world. This is not a normal state of affairs.

Of additional concern is the growing perception that the government is either unwilling or unable to do anything about it, and even if it was committed to changing matters, that the crime situation may have deteriorated to such an extent that it can't be turned around over the short term or even the medium term. These perceptions are the reasons that people lose hope and are the most potent push-factors behind emigration.



## 4.1 CRIME: 'THE CIVIL WAR THAT NEVER HAPPENED'

South Africa is sick. Apartheid is gone, but its evil social engineering has left behind a monster of crime and barbarous violence terrorising the country with fear, rape and death – editorial in Canada's national newspaper<sup>6</sup>

Let us not mince our words. This country is in a state of civil war, a war between the forces of law and order and the criminal class, and there is no doubt about who is winning – Stephen Mulholland<sup>7</sup>

Kill, plunder, rape, destroy – that's the language of the new South Africa ... We are in the heart of darkness – let nobody tell you otherwise – Liz Clarke, journalist<sup>8</sup>



I have always loved this country passionately, and always will ... But I am scared ... very scared – M Carstens<sup>9</sup>

Violent crime and barbarous violence, the 'monster' that is terrorising South Africa and devouring its people at a rate of approximately 25 000 per year, is described by journalist Mike Nichols as 'the civil war that never happened'. Nichols was referring to the widely held belief prior to the country's successful transition to democracy in 1994 that a bloody racial conflagration and civil war would be the natural outcome of the country's racial and political set-up. However, he argues, instead of a civil war South Africa is experiencing a wave of violent crime that is equal in intensity and in the number of lives lost to a full-scale civil war.

### **The killing fields of South Africa**

The killing fields of Cambodia under the Khmer Rouge regime cost the lives of over one million people in a murderous campaign to transform it into an agricultural socialist paradise. In 1997 in Rwanda a campaign of genocide by the extremist Hutus against the Tutsis led to the death of over one million people. Ethnic cleansing and the brutal secessionist wars in the republics of the former Yugoslavia led to the deaths of 10 000 people in Croatia in 1991, and 250 000 died in the vicious war in Bosnia-Herzegovina between 1992 and 1995.<sup>10</sup> Outside these volatile regions where civil war and genocide are the order of the day, South Africa, along with drug-crazed Colombia and gangster-ridden Russia, leads the world in per capita murder, and in sheer numbers the South African murder rate rivals even that of countries involved in civil war.

In the nineties South Africa's own killing fields led to the non-political deaths of approximately 250 000 South Africans who were criminally murdered in their homes, in their cars, on the streets, on sportsfields and even in places of worship. Of this number about 150 000 died during the six-year period of democracy between 1994 and the end of 1999. The victims were predominantly ordinary men, women and children going about their day-to-day business who became prey to ruthless killers who robbed, abducted, raped, tortured and murdered them at a rate and with a level of impunity that is almost beyond comprehension.

To put it differently: 25 000 innocent South Africans are being killed each year, or 67 each day. This is the equivalent of a fully laden jumbo jet, carrying 300 South Africans, crashing almost every four days and killing all on board. Should this happen, it would be a national disaster, air travel in South Africa would come to a dead halt, and the country would come to a standstill – people would then travel by

car or on foot only, setting the country back 90-odd years before the advent of air travel.

In all, about 750 000 violent crimes are reported each year, or one every 17 seconds. With regard to other types of crime, such as car hijackings, house break-ins, attempted murder, serious assault, and rape in particular, South Africa has also achieved the reputation of a world leader. About 49 000 cases of rape were reported in 1998, that is, about 134 per day, or one every 10 minutes.

Ironically, despite South Africa's former reputation as a country of extreme political violence, the number of political deaths in the country pales virtually into insignificance compared to South Africa's murder rate. For example, approximately 300 000 innocent people were murdered in South Africa during the 12-year period between 1985 and 1994. In comparison, the total number of deaths resulting from the low-intensity civil war between the ANC and the IFP in KwaZulu-Natal over the past two decades amounted to about 20 000. Furthermore, the total number of political deaths during the 12-year period between 1985 and 1996 was just over 23 000, of which 15 000 were incurred during the tense transitional period between February 1990 and April 1994.<sup>11</sup> In other words, the total number of political deaths during the struggle to free South Africa from the apartheid regime was significantly lower than the number of murders in the same period: for each political death in the cause of destroying apartheid, 13 innocent people were murdered by fellow South Africans. This pattern still persists, except that the number of political deaths had fallen to insignificant numbers by 1999.



By way of comparison, one look at the rest of the world will illustrate why emigration is such an attractive option to shell-shocked South Africans. The average South African murder rate over the past ten years hovers between 50 and 60 per 100 000 people, or about 65 murders per day, the third highest in the world after Russia and Columbia. The most recent murder rate (in 1999) is 55 per 100 000 people, and although it has dropped from 59 in 1997, it remains very high.<sup>12</sup> The world average is about 5 murders per 100 000 population, while in the USA the figure was 6 per 100 000 people in 1998. In 1998 the total number of murders in the USA, with a population of close to 300 million, was 17 000, which was less than South Africa with a population of 40 million. New Zealand, with a population of 3,5 million, recorded only 47 murders in 1998.\* The murder rate for Canada was 1,9

---

\* If New Zealand's murder rate was the same as that of South Africa, about 2 250 people would have been killed in New Zealand in 1998 instead of the actual figure of 47.



per 100 000 in 1997; for England it was 1 per 100 000 and for France 1,6 per 100 000. Canadian Justice Minister Anne McLellan commented ruefully on the 'unacceptably high' figure of 600 murders out of a population of 30 million – however, compared to the 25 000 killed in South Africa, this is a very low figure.\*

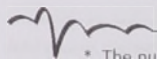
But even more illuminating is a comparison between South Africa and Zimbabwe, a developing country which has slipped into a virtual dictatorship with economic conditions bordering on anarchy: compared to South Africa's murder rate of approximately 55 and its sexual assault rate of 100 per 100 000 people, Zimbabwe's murder rate was only 5 and its sexual assaults only 24 per 100 000 population in 1997.<sup>13</sup>

The question is why should large-scale murder in South Africa be treated any differently from large-scale disasters such as jumbo jets crashing every few days? And if South Africa's murder and violent crime rates are higher than those in industrialised First World nations *and* higher than those in developing Third World countries, shouldn't a national emergency be called immediately and the country brought to a standstill until the killings and violence are brought under control?

### **The nature of violent crime in South Africa**

Violent crime takes many forms in South Africa, ranging from petty criminals who steal because it is a way of life; to those desperate to put food on their families' tables at night; to ruthless gangs that kill, steal and rape and often engage each other in open warfare for 'territory'; to organised crime syndicates that trade in drugs, stolen goods and cars; to white-collar criminals who devise schemes to defraud companies and the public alike; to corrupt civil servants who enrich themselves with public money; and the list goes on and on. These categories of crime will be found in various degrees in most countries, but what makes South Africa unique is the utter disregard for the sanctity of human life which characterises local criminal behaviour.

It was mentioned earlier that approximately 25 000 people are murdered each year in South Africa. Theoretically it would be possible to list every one of the 100 000 people who have been killed since research on this book commenced in 1996, but at about 30 entries per page that would have taken up over 3 300 pages. Instead, the author decided to list some of the categories of violent crime, each illustrated



\* The number of armed robberies in South Africa was 159 per 100 000 in 1996, compared to 23 in an industrialised nation like Canada.

with a randomly selected number of examples of brutal, wanton and merciless killings that exemplify violent crime in South Africa.

These examples are not meant to be sensationalist but merely to provide the reader with an insight into the nature of violent crime and to illustrate that no-one is safe from the attentions of violent criminals, and that there is really nowhere to hide. Only by comprehending the encompassing and brutal nature of violent crime in South Africa would it be possible to understand why so many people regard emigration as the only foolproof method of safeguarding themselves from the threat that it poses.

### *Gangsterism and vigilantes in the Western Cape*

The Western Cape is regarded as the region with the highest murder rate in the world, with a figure of over 80 per 100 000 people. Almost half of all Cape Town residents have been victims of crime between 1993 and 1997.<sup>14</sup> Not only does this region battle with large-scale unemployment and vast informal settlements filled with thousands of destitute and desperate people, but about 80 000 criminals belong to an assortment of gangs, while anti-drug and anti-crime groups like Pagad (People against Gangsterism and Drugs) have become part of the problem by targeting both gangsters and the police. In 1997, 667 cases of suspected vigilante incidences of violence were reported, mostly bomb attacks, but also the assassination of gang leaders and policemen. By early 2000 about 100 Pagad supporters were on trial in 55 separate cases of murder, intimidation, possession of unlicensed firearms and the manufacture of explosives. Amidst the violence, many members of the public became victims and many lost their lives. In January 1998, 20 people were killed on the Cape Flats as a result of drug and gang warfare and at least 12 children were killed in crossfire in 1998.



### *Attacks on the police*

Every country has its own 'thin blue line' that forms the barrier between law and order and anarchy. Because of the nature and goal of law enforcement, members of the police are obvious targets for criminals. In South Africa this thin blue line is thinner and more porous than most, because the police force are understaffed, underpaid and demoralised. On occasion and in areas where the police manage to form a credible presence against crime, criminals do not hesitate to shoot their way out. More than 400 members of the police force are killed each year in the line of duty. One of many such killings involved Sergeant Craig van Zyl, who was shot in



front of the Durban Supreme Court while trying to intervene in a shootout by rival taxi organisations. Van Zyl's image was captured in a photograph in a local newspaper where he lay in the street, fully conscious but bleeding to death, unable to comprehend why he had to become another of the murder statistics for 1998. Several policemen involved in investigations against Pagad have been wounded or killed in assassination attempts, including Bennie Lategan and Schalk Visagie, son-in-law of former state president P W Botha.

### *Car hijackings*

Car hijacking took on epidemic proportions in the 1980s and 1990s, especially in Gauteng, where many vehicles were hijacked by large syndicates, often in conjunction with corrupt members of the police. More than 15 000 car hijackings occurred in South Africa in 1998.<sup>15</sup> The odds of being hijacked are shockingly high, particularly in Johannesburg. For example, in recent years five of the 28 judges on the Witwatersrand Division of the Supreme Court had their cars hijacked<sup>16</sup>. Since these hijackers could not have known their victims were judges and therefore could not have targeted them specifically, it must be assumed that these represent average hijacking statistics, that is, one out of six (17%) motorists in Johannesburg will be hijacked over a period of a few years. As South African motorists began taking more effective precautions against having their cars stolen by installing car alarms, 'guerrilla locks' and even satellite tracking devices, car thieves responded by simply hijacking cars with their drivers inside and, under threat of death, forcing them to hand over the keys and disconnect the alarm and satellite systems. If it is a woman driver, the odds are high that she will be regarded as part of the loot and be forcefully taken with the car, possibly to be raped and murdered later on. Even babies or small children are not always spared and several babies have been thrown out of moving hijacked cars. In March 2000 the *unborn* Courtney Ellerbeck became the youngest-ever victim of a car hijacking in South Africa when her heavily-pregnant mother was shot in her car by hijackers in Boksburg because she did not leave it fast enough. Although a bullet passed through the bodies of both the mother and her unborn daughter, an emergency caesarean miraculously saved their lives.

Although Johannesburg remains South Africa's car hijacking capital, Cape Town and Durban have also become targets in the second half of the 1990s. Among the thousands of victims in Cape Town was South African Airways pilot André Viljoen, who had his car hijacked in Cape Town and was shot in the head by gangsters out on parole. Fellow pilots handed in a petition to the police for bail conditions to be tightened, and threatened to leave the country should the justice system not be put in order. The torture and murder of 28-year-old Marelise Holmes, a Johannesburg-

based businesswomen on holiday in Cape Town, and her American friend Edward Keim, shocked Cape Town, reverberated on the front page of the *Miami Herald*, and led to cancellations of hotel and air bookings by frightened tourists. The couple's car was hijacked on Signal Hill by a gang. After torturing and raping Ms Holmes, they shot the couple execution style on a desolate beach on False Bay. They stole only a cellphone and a CD player before burning the car. Two days earlier the same gang had hijacked another couple, Mike and Maggie Knot, in the driveway of their home in Somerset West. They were driven to the same beach, assaulted and shot execution style. What makes these crimes even more reprehensible is that the hijackers brutally and methodologically murdered their victims in addition to stealing their cars, as opposed to the normal modus operandi of hijackers, namely taking the vehicle and killing the driver only if he or she resists. A similar modus operandi was followed by the hijackers of Brenda Fairhead and her 11-year-old daughter Kia in Kleinemonde in the Eastern Cape in January 2000 – once again not only was their vehicle stolen, but they were assaulted, abducted and murdered as part of the hijacking.

Durban has also had its share of hijacking. In 1997 a young couple, Graham and Bernadette Ridge, and their two sons, who were two and four years old, stopped next to a highway outside Durban to allow the children to relieve themselves. No sooner had they got out of the car than two men stormed out of the bushes and shot both Ridge parents in cold blood – the murderers considered killing the two children as well, but eventually tossed them out onto the road next to their parents' bodies. It was dark and raining, but somehow the traumatised infants clung to their parents' bodies and managed to stay away from the speeding traffic until found by a passing motorist.



Among the thousands of victims of car hijackings in Johannesburg and Gauteng was top South African economist Ronnie Bethlehem, who was killed in 1997 by car hijackers at his home in Johannesburg's northern suburbs in broad daylight. Another well-known businessman, Yong Koo Kwon, President of Korean car manufacturer Daewoo, was killed in a botched car hijacking attempt in his driveway in Johannesburg in 1999. Seven-year-old Bianca Luwes was killed in 1997 by a stray bullet from a hijacker's gun while playing in her family home in Kempton Park – the hijacker was trying to steal a car at a neighbour's house. In 1998 Hennie Hancke died in his daughter's lap as he tried to shield her from bullets fired at them in a hijacking in Ogies in Gauteng. In January 1999 a prominent trade unionist, Jerry Moatshe, was killed by hijackers in his neighbour's driveway in Johannesburg, while television sports presenter David Williams was shot in a hijacking attempt at his



house in Johannesburg. In 1999 one of South Africa's foremost soccer administrators, Monwabisi Clarence, was killed in a botched car hijacking in Soweto.

In 1999 motorist Riaan Smith's car was hijacked in Johannesburg by two armed men. Smith offered no resistance and got out of his car on demand, but one of the hijackers pointed a gun at him anyway and pulled the trigger twice. Fortunately the gun jammed both times and they were later arrested by the police. What made the headline news later was not the brutal attempt on an innocent motorist's life, but that the hijackers had been manhandled by the police after they were apprehended (a BBC film crew accompanied the police and filmed the 'assault'). As a result six policemen were suspended and human rights activists had a field day exposing so-called 'police brutality' and pointing out how the rights of the 'poor hijackers' were trampled upon – nothing was said about the rights of the victim – fortunate to be alive – or about the dangerous task of the police who had to apprehend these two ruthless armed criminals. As Smith rightly asked: 'Where was the camera when the guy pointed a gun in my face and squeezed the trigger?'<sup>17</sup>

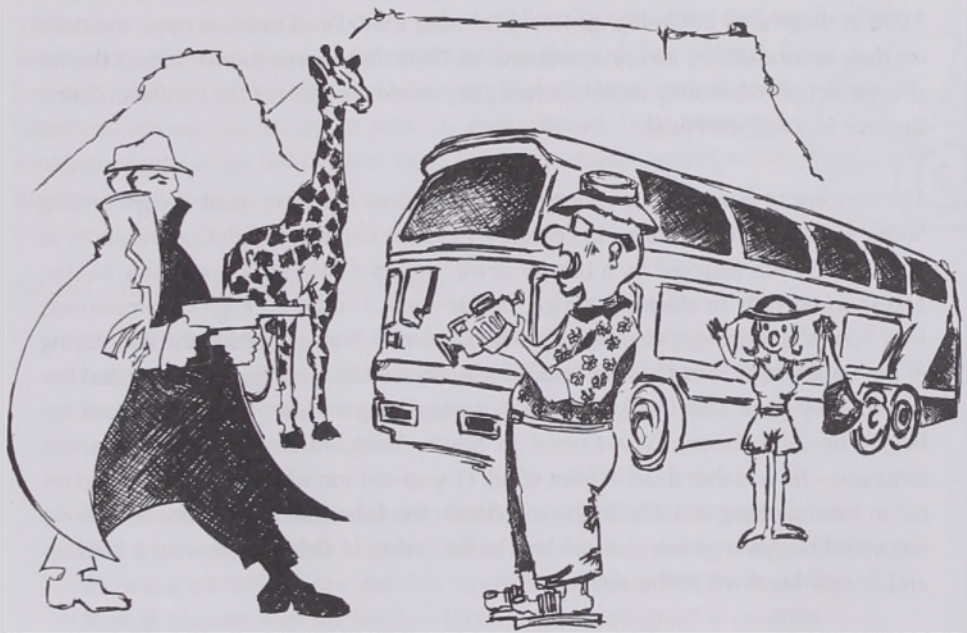
This case again confirmed the belief among millions of anxious South Africans that the scales of justice have tipped in favour of the perpetrators of crime, and against the victims, and probably convinced many others that only emigration will ensure the greatest distance between them and ruthless car hijackers. Others came up with innovative ideas to counter the problem: a new anti-hijacking device came onto the market in 1998. It throws a wall of flame from nozzles in the door with the aim of incinerating a hijacker. While the rest of the world could only look on in amazement, nervous South African motorists were clamouring to install this potentially life-saving device, hoping that they too would be fortunate enough to be able to roast a hijacker alive.

### *House break-ins*

Many suburbs in South Africa's more affluent areas remind foreign visitors of the sort of picture they frequently see on a CNN news item filmed in a war or militarised zone. The houses and housing complexes have walls up to 12 feet high often with an additional roll of barbed wire or electrified fencing on top. Heavy remote-controlled steel gates with video cameras complete the picture, and inside the property might be two or more fierce dogs or possibly a security guard. In certain neighbourhoods whole streets have been cordoned off and only residents with identity cards can enter. Most 'retirement' villages and other luxury developments are completely enclosed by walls with controlled access, and often have their own sportsgrounds, shops, community halls, etc.

In spite of such elaborate security measures for those who are lucky enough to afford them, robberies at homes continue unabated. In the Bryanston suburb of Sandton 10 out of 30 houses in one street were targeted by criminals in less than one year – what makes this more outrageous is that not even the presence of the home of the Minister of Safety and Security at the time, Sydney Mufamadi (complete with a phalanx of armed guards), could prevent robbers from targeting this street with virtual impunity.<sup>18</sup>

One of the most brutal cases of a house break-in and murder occurred on a smallholding in Nieuwoudtville outside Cape Town in 1996. In this incident, known as the 'Flower Murders', Julia Fairbanks-Smith, her four-year-old daughter, Emma, their host Gansie Louw and her friend Johan Viviers, were attacked while having supper by a gang of former convicts. The assailants brutally stabbed and clobbered the two women to death, sawed through the throat of the little girl with a blunt bread knife while she cried for her mother, and almost fatally injured Viviers.





## *Attacks on tourists*

Not even foreign visitors and diplomats are safe in South Africa. Tourists routinely become victims of crime, partly because they are not streetwise and because criminals expect them to carry valuables. In this category, South Africa has established itself as one of the most dangerous countries in the world to visit. The country's immense beauty still attracts growing numbers of tourists each year, but the growth is hampered by its reputation of danger. The German, Canadian, British and American governments, among others, have issued stern warnings to their citizens of the dangers of travelling to South Africa and the steps to take to lessen the odds of becoming victims of crime.

Not a day goes by without reports of attacks on tourists, ranging from murder, being forced off roads to be robbed and raped, to attacks in hotel rooms and knife attacks in CBDs by savage 'street children'. Among the many incidences of crime involving tourists and diplomats was the murder in 1998 of German tourist Helmut Kriegbaum, who was stabbed by robbers in front of his two children on Durban's beach front, and was then kicked by passers-by while he was lying in the street, dying. Two Swedish tourists, Anders Franson and Jan Anderson, were murdered in 1998 at their hotel in Umhlanga Rocks because they dared to leave open the door on their second-storey luxury apartment. In 1998 three Swiss tourists joined the list of rape victims when they were hijacked just outside the gates of the Umfolozi Game Reserve in KwaZulu-Natal.

The concept of diplomatic immunity apparently does not carry much weight among South Africa's criminal classes. In February 1999 the Canadian High Commissioner in South Africa was attacked by a burglar in his Sea Point Hotel in Cape Town, beaten and shocked with an electrical device, but survived. The British High Commissioner, May Fort, had a similarly close escape when a friend's house in which she was staying in the Cape West Coast town of Velddrif was attacked by a burglar who assaulted her friend. They were saved only after she managed to get to her cellphone to call for help. The Zimbabwean Vice-Consul in South Africa, Madzorera Meki, was less fortunate – he was shot dead in front of his 11-year-old son when robbers hijacked his car in Johannesburg in 1999. In the mid-1990s the Lebanese ambassador in Pretoria requested his government to recall him to the 'safety of Beirut', following a hold-up and several break-ins at the embassy.

In a historic world first, the first cricket test between South Africa and Pakistan was postponed by a day after two Pakistani players were apparently attacked and injured by muggers outside their hotel in Johannesburg in 1998.

## Farm killings

Between 1994 and 1997 a total of 554 farmers were killed on their farms, averaging almost 200 murders per 100 000 farming population. There were 1 400 violent attacks on farmers in the same period, in what appeared to have been a systematic campaign of violence against the white farming community.<sup>19</sup> The extent of this violence is evident when comparing the 800 farmers who were killed between 1994 and 1999 in 'peaceful' South Africa (an average of 11 per month) with the five white Zimbabwean farmers who were killed during the first six months of the violent occupation of farms in that unstable country up to June 2000.

Among the hundreds of farm attacks in 1997 was the incident on a farm in Burgersdorp when armed men shot Ansie Venter in cold blood in front of her four children. They then abducted and beat the children and sexually assaulted the eldest girl. The children eventually managed to escape from their attackers, but the image of the 11-month-old baby girl, Charlotte, being held by her grandmother and crying desperately for her dead mother next to the open grave will remain forever. In November 1998 a retrenched farm worker in George went on the rampage, torturing and killing four innocent people on the farm. In another rural killing in 1998, this time accidental, a baby girl, Angelina Zwane, was shot by a white landowner, Nicholas Steyn, who mistook the girl and her siblings for intruders and fired a warning shot. The acquittal of Steyn caused great bitterness among blacks, but it was an indication of how tense the situation in rural areas has become since the terror attacks against white farmers began.



## Sexual assault: 'a declaration of war'

What the hell is going on in this country? Things are getting worse. More babies are being raped and murdered – Director of People Opposing Women Abuse, Nthabiseng Mogale, following the rape and murder of yet another two-year-old girl<sup>20</sup>

Six months before we decided to leave, I received a letter warning me that if my wife, maid or daughter were in the house during a break-in, there was a 100% chance that they would be raped . . . I felt I was playing Russian roulette with my family – Richard Lister, emigrant in Australia<sup>21</sup>

South Africa has the highest incidence of rape per capita in the world with 120 rapes per 100 000 people. A total of 49 000 rapes were reported to the police in 1998,



but police estimates suggest that only one in every 20 cases is reported, so the figure could be closer to 1,2 million rapes per year, out of a population of 20 million women. These statistics also suggest that a South African woman will have a one-in-three chance of being raped in her lifetime, leading the Network of Violence Against Women to describe the pandemic of rape as a 'declaration of war' against South African women.<sup>22</sup>

President Mbeki publicly questioned the accuracy of these statistics, claiming that there was no actual proof of the scale of under-reporting, but the under-reporting of rape is a worldwide phenomenon – the British Home Office estimates that only one in 12 incidences of rape and sexual assault is reported, and that more than 300 000 women in England and Wales are raped or sexually assaulted each year, as opposed to the official statistics of 25 000.<sup>23</sup>

Being the world leader in the rape and sexual abuse of women, it is hardly surprising that South Africa became the first country in the world to launch a rape insurance policy. In 1999 CGU Insurance introduced 'The Rape Survivor' policy to assist rape victims with medical treatment and counselling.

The high incidence of rape in South Africa suggests that no woman is safe from this type of crime: victims range from young girls and sometimes babies, to those being raped by Aids carriers because they believe raping a virgin will cure them of this disease, to a grandmother aged 104 years being raped by her 14-year-old grandson. Women are raped in broad daylight in their houses, in parking lots, on streets, at concerts, in their houses. Even prominent journalists, foreign diplomats and tourists fall victim to rapists.\*

In August 1998 the daughter of a prominent ANC politician and her two friends were raped in Johannesburg, while in 1997 the wife of another prominent ANC MP was raped on Robben Island (prison home of Nelson Mandela for almost 20 years). In 1999 Sizakhele Zuma, a wife of South Africa's deputy president, Jacob Zuma, was raped inside her house in KwaZulu-Natal.

If even the wife of the deputy president is not safe from being sexually assaulted, is any woman realistically safe from rape in this country? And is the government taking sexual assault and rape seriously? If so, how do they explain the arrogant antics the



\* Makhaya Ntini, the first African cricketer selected to play for South Africa's national team, the Proteas, was convicted of rape in 1999, but his conviction was overturned on appeal.

Minister of Justice, Penuell Maduna, and the Minister of Sport, Steve Tshwete, when interviewed by an American television channel. Responding to the statistics that a South African woman is raped every 26 seconds, these gentlemen flippantly responded that cannot be true as 'they have been standing on the street for more than 26 seconds and have not seen any rapes'. This mind-boggling comment from senior members of Mbeki's Cabinet strengthens doubts about the government's commitment to stop this kind of crime, and one cannot but wonder how Deputy President Jacob Zuma, whose wife was raped, views his colleagues' attitude.

### *Bank robberies*

Banks and cash-in transit vehicles have become big targets for criminals in the 1990s. In 1997 there were 465 such attacks, involving R136 million. Crime prevention cost banks over R500 million in 1997.<sup>24</sup> Together it means that crime cost South African banks R636 million in 1997 alone. By 1998 crime-related losses and the cost of crime protection had increased to R1,1 billion, according to Bob Tucker of the South African Banking Council.<sup>25</sup> As a result of heightened security measures at banks, such as bullet-proof windows, delayed-time safes and armed guards, bank robbers are increasingly turning to cash heists, that is, targeting vehicles that transport cash between businesses and banks. Although these vehicles are always heavily protected by armed guards, robbers usually appear to have the upper hand in terms of firepower, numbers, ruthlessness and the surprise element. Frequently, sophisticated weapons like armour-piercing AK47s and R5s are used. It is not uncommon for robbers to cordon off sections of roads or to douse vehicles in petrol to force the security guards out of their vehicles, sometimes burning them alive. A typical cash heist occurred in January 1998 in broad daylight in Sandton in Johannesburg, when a 15-strong gang overpowered a security vehicle, seriously wounding four guards, stole R5m and for good measure sprayed passing motorists with bullets.



### *Attacks on small business*

The small businessman should be able to serve his customers without one hand on the .45 under his counter – Clem Sunter<sup>26</sup>

One of the cornerstones of a developing economy with a desperately high unemployment rate such as South Africa is the small business sector and the nurturing and development of entrepreneurial skills. In South Africa, however, apart from high interest rates and a lack of investment, this sector is facing an even more serious challenge in the form of violent crime.



Running a small business in this country has become a security risk and is a permanent trade-off between personal safety and economic survival. A small business owner may want to remain open for business for an extra hour or two at night to increase his turnover and income, but this exposes the owner to the very real risk of a robbery. Even then security measures are hardly a deterrent for the committed criminal, as the following statistics show: between 1997 and 1998 close to 68% of small businesses had experienced a burglary, 8% the hijacking of a vehicle, 5% muggings and hold-ups and 15% shoplifting and pilfering.<sup>27</sup>

Whereas personal safety is a relatively minor concern for a small business operator in Canada, Australia or New Zealand, South African entrepreneurs have to spend a sizeable portion of their income on installing security and insurance, in addition to fighting their competitors and suppliers and pleasing their customers.

Tens of thousands of criminal attacks were targeted at small businesses over the past few years. Mark Taylor, the manager of a pizza restaurant in Cape Town and father of a two-year-old baby, was shot by robbers after being overpowered on his business premises and taken on a death ride in the boot of his own car. In 1997 Stuart Gaskell, 26 years old, was killed by robbers at the transport business he was managing in Cape Town, minutes after his wife arrived at his workplace to tell him that they were expecting their first baby. In February 1999 a butcher, together with five of his colleagues and employees, was robbed at gunpoint and locked in the back of the meat transport van – they died of suffocation within half an hour, but not without first experiencing terrible stress and trying to use brute force to cut an opening in the impenetrable steel sides of the van. In 1998 a Taiwanese factory owner, Neng-shih Wang, was shot to death at his clothing factory in KwaZulu-Natal, while 20-month-old Danny Zhong was killed by a bullet when robbers attacked his father's store in Johannesburg – his father, heavily wounded himself, was too distraught to inform their family in China about his baby son's death, for in China being unable to protect one's child is a great dishonour.

In January 1998 the 33-year-old community doctor and former anti-apartheid activist, Aadil Moerat, was stabbed to death in his surgery in Guguletu. Moerat, who decided to return from Canada to South Africa to serve the black community, was killed by robbers for R60, after he gave them all the cash he had and offered them the keys to his car. In 1996 Gauteng rugby player Louis van Rensburg was seriously wounded by robbers at his family business in Johannesburg – he lost his father and brother in the same incident. Two years later his car was hijacked but again he survived. In February 1999, 27-year-old Carmen Weber, manager of a pizza restaurant in Constantia, Cape Town, was brutally murdered in her restaurant – she

was drowned in a sink by robbers while her small son and a baby girl of 16 months were waiting in vain for her to return home.

At least certain of the tormentors of small business appeared to have kept their ghoulish sense of 'humour', even if their victims haven't, as illustrated by the note from burglars to the owner of a ransacked Pietermaritzburg restaurant, Rasheed Khan: 'Please leave money because we will be back again. If *theys* (there is) no money, we will *ben* (burn) everything. That's all. Thank you'.<sup>28</sup>

## The perceptions and realities of crime

Not only do the extraordinarily high actual levels of violent crime contribute to emigration, but this is assisted by the perception among whites that crime has taken on a racial connotation; that the government is not really concerned about crime, that crime rates are not declining; and that the judicial and police structures are falling apart. These perceptions are based partly in fact and partly on the conclusions that people draw for themselves – either way, perceptions such as these listed below are what drive emigrants to search for safer havens.

### *The perception of crime as an act of revenge against whites*

Although in proportion blacks are victims of the largest number of crimes, many white victims feel that crime is targeting them in the form of a racially delineated redistribution of wealth from white to black, and as a form of retribution for past apartheid sins. As a member of a Johannesburg-based hijacking gang commented: 'I do not steal from a black man ... At the suburbs, we know that the white man, the settlers, do have money. We were the real comrades because we weren't stealing from a black man.'<sup>29</sup>



The perception that a large portion of crime is targeted specifically at whites is not that far-fetched. Adrian Guelke suggests that there is widespread fear in the white community that the crime wave is partially 'an expression of a demand for a racial distribution of the country's wealth, as well as of a disappointment at the economic fruits of liberation'.<sup>30</sup> According to Wimpie de Klerk's analysis of the 'psychology of crime' in South Africa, crime is committed predominantly by those who derive a deep satisfaction from crime and violence; by have-nots who are jealous of those who have; by those who believe that they are trampled, forgotten and abused by society; by those who act out of desperation for example for food and shelter; by those to whom crime and violence have become a reaction to years of apartheid



and injustice.<sup>31</sup> Although De Klerk does not spell it in so many words, three of these categories refer to those viewed as previously disadvantaged and in these cases criminal actions are targeted specifically against whites who are perceived to have obtained wealth through the exploitation of blacks and are deemed legitimate targets because of their support of apartheid.

While it is understandable that a destitute and desperate man might need to steal to feed his children, this does not explain the extent of violent crime and the large number of needless murders that often accompany housebreak-ins and car hijackings.

### *The perception that the government does not really care about crime*

Violent criminals are not the only ones who do not understand the difference between stealing out of need and resorting to violence and murdering when stealing. In his inauguration speech in June 1999 President Thabo Mbeki made a confusing attempt to justify the actions of the 'millions who have no jobs' who, he claimed, are forced to 'beg, steal and murder' in order to feed their families – Mbeki's inclusion of 'murder' in his equation indicates his inability to understand the extent of violent crime and murder in this country. Nobody is forced to murder as well as to steal to feed his family and the question is how anyone, and particularly the president of South Africa, can imply that it is understandable that people can murder in order to feed themselves and their children. No criminal, once he or she has overpowered his or her victim and stolen what he or she wanted, should have the need to continue to kill that victim – unless murder has become a case of revenge and a wanton act by those who derive a deep satisfaction from crime. Mbeki appears to have missed this point, and this is the sort of message which a country with 25 000 murders per year simply cannot afford.

In a country in which crime is seriously out of control, the government's response, unlike that of the terrified citizenry, has been indecisive and weak. President Thabo Mbeki blamed crime on a 'Third Force' and suggested that crime has only now become a public or media issue because it has spilled over to white areas, and is better reported under the new government. He also accused the South African Chamber of Business of being 'racist' because the Chamber's Business Confidence Index claimed that business confidence was declining partially because of crime. Furthermore, the government had harmed the cause of combating crime when former president Nelson Mandela released 8 000 prisoners on his eightieth birthday in 1998, some of whom immediately went on to kill again.

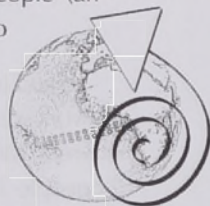
## The perception that crime is on the increase

There are conflicting points of view between those who claim crime is on the decrease, usually the government, and those, including the overwhelming percentage of the population, who believe it is on the increase. Statistics can be used to prove anything, but at first glance it seems that some categories of serious crimes have stabilised or declined slightly between 1994 and 1998. For example, the Institute of Race Relations claimed that between 1994 and 1997 the murder rate declined by between 10% and 15%, theft of cars by 10% and robbery with aggravating circumstances by 25%.<sup>32</sup>

However, temporary declines in crime appear to be mere aberrations in a pattern of steadily increasing crime. For example, armed robberies increased from 73 to 90 per 100 000 people between the first six months of 1997 and the first six months of 1998, while vehicle theft increased from 110 to 117 per 100 000 people in the same period.<sup>33</sup> The most recent statistics pointed to an increase in serious crime in nearly all categories for the three-month period between November 1998 and January 1999 compared to the corresponding period one year beforehand. For example, car hijackings increased from 7,6 to 9,2 per 100 000 (an increase of more than 20%), armed robberies increased from 44 to 56 per 100 000 people (an increase of 25%), while intrusions in private homes increased from 159 to 170 per 100 000 people (an increase of 7%).<sup>34</sup>

The majority of South Africans firmly believe that crime is increasing or, at best, has stabilised at unacceptable levels which are among the highest, if not *the* highest, in the world. They simply refuse to believe official statistics or use their own statistics to prove the opposite. For example, 77% of Cape Town residents believe that crime has increased over the past five years, according to the Institute of Security Studies.<sup>35</sup> Countrywide, the percentage of whites who feel unsafe rose from 30% in 1994 to 80% in 1997.\* Among blacks this figure rose from 11% in 1994 to 43% in 1999.<sup>36</sup> A survey conducted for *Rapport* indicated that crime was the biggest problem for 63% of Afrikaners, 70% of English-speaking whites, 31% of blacks, 34% of coloureds and 66% of Asians.<sup>37</sup>

Laurie Schlemmer of the South African Bureau for Racial Affairs argues that the current unacceptably high levels of crime will remain at these levels for the next 30 years if an economic growth of at least 4% to 6% per annum cannot be sustained.



\* Contrary to other surveys, the Institute claimed that this number had declined to 56% in 1999.



With the current economic growth rates ranging between 0% and 2%, and with about 400 000 new job seekers entering the job market each year in vain, Schlemmer's prediction is probably not too far off the mark. The previous Commissioner of Police, George Fivaz, agrees with Schlemmer's estimate: 'We will sit with the culture of violence in South Africa for another decade or two, until we are free of the systems of the past'<sup>38</sup>.

### *The perception that the police and justice systems are inefficient*

Crime has become part of South Africa's way of life. Two thirds of Johannesburg's citizens and half of Cape Town's were victims of crime between 1993 and 1997. The police force is underpaid and demoralised. The justice system fails to convict criminals and ill-judged amnesties have made the problem worse. The government's response has been woeful – editorial in the *Sunday Times* (UK).<sup>39</sup>

Nationally, police make arrests in only 45 per cent of murder cases and 12 per cent of robberies in South Africa, compared to 70 per cent of murders and 30 per cent of robberies in the United States<sup>40</sup>.

To add to the problem of high crime levels, the South African justice system does not work well either: only one in 20 serious crimes results in a conviction. By 1996 there were 180 000 unsolved murder cases in South Africa, while by 1999 about 300 000 people had warrants out for their arrest for crimes committed. For every 1 000 crimes committed only 77 people are arrested and only 8 will spend more than a year in jail. For each of the 25 000 murders committed in 1997 only 15% resulted in convictions; of the close to 50 000 rapes reported, only 7% resulted in convictions; only 6% of the 86 500 businesses robbed resulted in convictions; of the 250 000 houses burgled, only 4% resulted in convictions; of the 12 000 cars hijacked in 1997, only 2% resulted in convictions.<sup>41</sup>

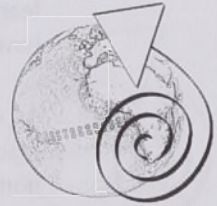
Other sources, such as the Institute of Security Studies, confirm how inefficient the investigative, judicial, and legal systems are. In 1998 only 24,5% of murder cases, 17,7% of rape cases, 6,4% of domestic burglaries, 3,1% of car thefts and 2,8% of car hijackings that were given to prosecutors were actually prosecuted in court. Of every 6,1 murders recorded by the police, only one resulted in the perpetrator being found guilty, and for rape this figure is one in 11 and for vehicle theft one in 53.<sup>42</sup>

## The financial implications of crime

In 1996 the direct cost of crime to South Africa was estimated by the Nedcor Project at approximately R31 billion per year.<sup>43</sup> This includes financial losses, medical costs of victims, insurance premiums, security costs and others, but if indirect costs such as the loss of investments, the loss of tourism and the cost of emigration are included, it would certainly be vastly higher. The Durban Chamber of Commerce estimates that fraud is costing South Africa R40 billion per year, equalling the household income of 100 000 families<sup>44</sup>.

As a result of having to put up with the highest crime rates in the world, South Africans are paying much more than their counterparts in other countries for insuring their possessions against criminals. Premiums have gone up from 2% of household income in 1976 to 10% in 1999, while crime costs the insurance industry an estimated R4,5 billion per year in claims. The private security industry has a turnover of R11 billion per year, constituting a whole separate industry comparable in size with certain other major sectors of the South African economy. Today it is virtually impossible for the average homeowner to obtain home insurance without a proper electronic security system linked to armed response, and it costs up to R600 per month for such a service. In addition, insurance firms penalise car owners who do not possess anti-theft devices.

There are numerous examples of the financial effect of crime on the South African economy. International credit rating agencies such as Fitch IBCA (1998) have rated South Africa as a more risky proposition and cited crime as the reason – this relates directly to higher borrowing costs to South Africa.<sup>45</sup> In 1997 British car manufacturer Landrover cancelled the unveiling of its Freelander model in Cape Town because of security issues and instead invited 3 000 dealers and foreign journalists to Spain. More than half of the directors of German companies in South Africa have been victims of violent crime and about 80% of German companies in South Africa were reconsidering their position in South Africa because of crime.<sup>46</sup>



Crime acts as a deterrent to local and foreign investors because uncontrolled crime equals anarchy and creates the perception of ungovernability, and ultimately questions the viability and the long-term prospects of the post-apartheid South African state:

Crime is a barometer of much more than the safety of the individual and his possessions. It is an indication of the degree to which the state has the



capacity to manage the often tumultuous social forces in which it is enmeshed. A state which, like SA, struggles to bring to account those who refuse to play by the rules cannot be relied on in the sense that the pillars of the market are being eroded – editorial in *Finance Week*<sup>47</sup>

A measure of a civilised society is the extent to which it safeguards its people from violent crooks and crazies in their midst. This is a basic requirement that the 'new' South Africa is manifestly failing to achieve – Gavin Bell, former Southern African correspondent of *The Times*, in response to the murder of world-acclaimed photographer, John Rubythorn<sup>48</sup>

Clem Sunter agrees: 'If crime continues unabated we will revert to a wasteland as severe as the one we predicted before . . . With the high level of crime there will be no business revolution.'<sup>49</sup>

### The psychological effects of crime

We now find that a tiny minority [of criminals] is ruling the majority by fear. People are leaving and I cannot blame them. Those who are staying have to live behind locked gates and locked doors – golfer, Gary Player<sup>50</sup>

An epidemic of armed robbery, aggravated assault and car hijacking has made South Africans of all ethnic backgrounds virtual prisoners in their homes, cars and offices – *Toronto Star*.<sup>51</sup>



In addition to the monetary costs of crime, violent crime affects the psychological state of victims and non-victims alike. Most people in South Africa, to a degree, live like prisoners in their homes, even if they do not always realise it – on the surface people appear to go on with their everyday lives, and seemingly are accustomed to barbed wire around their properties, to burglar bars, to looking over their shoulders all the time, but feelings of unease, stress and fear have become part of the South African psyche. A 1997 report by the Institute of Security Studies claimed that because of crime in South Africa '[t]he average person in the street has a fear level associated with countries experiencing war'.<sup>52</sup>

Violent crime causes fear and results in profound psychological stress in most South Africans, not unlike citizens of warring countries. The symptoms of this stress are anxiety, fear of the unknown and suspicion of strangers and, according to Don Foster, a professor of psychology at UCT, result in paranoia about security measures, feelings of helplessness and hopelessness, and anger and revenge expressed in renewed calls for the return of the death penalty and a desire to emigrate to get away from crime.<sup>53</sup> Other symptoms include sleeping problems, headaches, spastic colons, depression, aggression, an over-protectiveness towards loved ones, and an identification with the plight of victims.<sup>54</sup> Psychologists use the term 'post-traumatic stress' to describe the feelings of powerlessness, fear, guilt, irritability and anger/vengeance which victims of violent crime display after an attack.

When he began his counselling sessions, he said he was fine. He did not, however, want to talk about the robbery ... Eventually he broke down. 'It was his son,' he said. He was devastated by the thought of not being able to protect his son.<sup>55</sup>



Between half and two thirds of people in Cape Town, Durban and Johannesburg have been victims of crime over the past five years. Because of the widespread nature of crime and because it touches the lives of most of South Africa's citizens, it is not inconceivable that a large part of the population could be suffering from a collective post-traumatic response similar to a population of a country involved in a major war. The frequency and the violent nature of crime in South Africa may also explain the growing trend for revenge and street justice, as well as the overwhelming support for the return of the death penalty.<sup>56</sup>

In June 1999 the South African Society of Psychiatrists requested the government to acknowledge that violent crime has become a national disaster for South Africa because its citizens are being denied their constitutional right to safety and security



as a result of crime – this in turn causes a threat to the mental health of South Africans. The Society claimed that 20% of the population suffered from violence-related mental problems such as post-traumatic stress, conditions related to anxiety and depression, and schizophrenic tendencies. In addition, the culture of violence has become such a part of South African life that it will be very difficult to eradicate and it leads directly to emigration, a general feeling of apathy, and to victims taking the law into their own hands. Furthermore, having to deal with the victims of violent crime on a daily basis also takes its toll of mental healthcare workers and many leave the profession and even the country, leading to a growing shortage of professionals in this field.

Anxiety and other symptoms of stress are very real feelings which have become part of the psychological make-up of many South Africans. In most cases the feelings of anxiety subside to a degree after a while, but settle at higher levels than before, and rapidly reach intolerable levels after they become aware of the next incidence of murder or hijacking and especially if they witness a crime or become a victim themselves. As a result, the percentage of South Africans who are anxious about crime and who fear for their personal safety has risen from 20% in 1994 to 50% in 1999.<sup>57</sup>

A characteristic of such high levels of anxiety is that they remain part of people's psychological make-up for long periods, depending on the individual personality. Often such anxiety and fears are transferred to their children, shaping their personalities as they grow up.<sup>58</sup> Some emigrants recall how it took some years in their adopted countries to shake off their paranoia about security and how their obsession with finding (mostly in vain) fenced or walled properties in the safe suburbs of Sydney, Perth and Toronto often resulted in peculiar looks from estate agents and neighbours.

The worst aspect of South Africa's crime wave is that it permeates all aspects of the lives of its citizens. From security at home, to getting to work, to leisure and recreational time, the dangers posed by violent crime are omnipresent and never far from the mind of the average person. Consider for example the position of a middle-class white man who might be living in Cape Town or Johannesburg, with the initials PE (Potential Emigrant). The odds are 50% or greater that someone in his family would have been the victim of a crime against his or her person or property in the past five years – this will have had an effect on his or her psyche and he or she is now experiencing heightened levels of anxiety and stress. As head of the household Mr PE lives in fear of house break-ins at night. If he could afford it, he would have burglar bars in front of all his windows, walls and a gate around his property, and access to a 24-hour security firm. Getting to work is not only a matter of avoiding

rush hour traffic – there is the extra problem of ruthless car-hijackers outside his driveway or waiting at the first traffic light – if he lives in Johannesburg his chances of being hijacking on his way to work are about 100 times higher than his friends in Sydney. While at work he would worry about the safety of his wife and children at home or the quality of their education at school. After a stressful day at work, having to cope not only with the normal rigours of the workplace, but also with the stress of an affirmative action appointee taking over his job, he might meet friends for a drink. The odds are good that during such a social gathering the talk will revolve around crime and the latest gruesome stories of hijacking, murders and rapes, making everyone more depressed and anxious:

Tales of violence have become the new pornography in which episodes gain in horror at every hushed retelling, like a Chinese whisper. We've all done it. But it has a serious multiplier effect on emigration – Peter Godwin<sup>59</sup>

At weekends Mr PE knows that even his leisure pursuits have become fraught with danger, as the spate of deadly attacks on isolated and even populated beaches in Cape Town and the surrounding mountains have proven. For tens of thousands of Cape Town residents, walking on the slopes of Table Mountain is a pastime spanning generations, a pleasant way to take exercise and to get away, even briefly, from the stress of living in a city ravaged by crime. For many it is almost a spiritual experience, but after several criminal attacks in 1999 police have warned hikers not to walk in groups of fewer than five or not to walk at all. Hikers have described this threat to their way of life as akin to 'cutting off an arm', 'like the severing of the umbilical cord', and as something which seriously affects the quality of their lives.<sup>60</sup>



The implications are clear – crime is destroying the quality of life for many South Africans, and even ordinary stress-relieving recreational activities like walking on a mountain have come under threat, with very negative consequences to the psyche of South Africans and their ability to live normal lives.

## The responses to crime

These days, every house is a fortress with burglar bars on the windows and a steel 'rape' gate separating the bedrooms from the rest of the house at night ... Garden walls are topped by ever-evolving forms of razor wire ... Carrying a gun is ever more commonplace ... Dinner parties have become a frenzy of horror stories ... Should we stick



around and risk our children's lives? – a prospective South African emigrant<sup>61</sup>

Reactions of South Africans to the death and destruction caused by violent criminals are threefold: additional safety precautions such as higher walls, burglar bars, security firms and moving away from the most dangerous areas; demands for corporal punishment and sometimes a reversion to street justice; and emigration.

The first response was discussed in detail in chapter 1 under the heading 'Pseudo emigration', which leaves us with revenge and emigration as responses to intolerable levels of violent crime. In a society with levels of criminality such as South Africa and a perceived inefficient justice system, a large proportion of citizens have demanded the return of the death penalty and many others have opted for street justice. Whereas the government refuses to reinstate the death penalty or even to permit a referendum on this issue, ordinary citizens are clamouring in ever-greater numbers for murderers to be hanged or, as the leader of the Pan African Congress, Stanley Mokgoba, pleaded in the run-up to the 1999 elections, for their heads and limbs to be chopped off. Between 1995 and 1997 the percentage of blacks favouring the death penalty increased from 49% to 76% and among whites from 80% to 94%.<sup>62</sup> In addition, the people of Alexandra township in Johannesburg, Guguletu in Cape Town, and elsewhere have been taking the law into their own hands to deal swiftly with criminals and to ensure punishment – after suspects are caught and pointed out by witnesses and victims, they are severely beaten and handed over to the police, if still alive, or, in some cases, simply put to death.

It is difficult for someone who has not personally been a victim of violent crime to truly understand why crime is such a strong push factor to emigration. One can only imagine how mortally wounded hijack victim Graham Ridge felt as he was lying next to a dark freeway, knowing that his wife was already dead and that he himself was bleeding to death, incapable of comforting his traumatised and helpless two- and four-year-old sons who were clinging to his body. Multiply this scenario by 25 000 each year and it becomes clear why so many South Africans are so desperate to put as much distance as possible between themselves and the deadly menace of violent crime through the only really effective method, by emigrating to safer havens.

To conclude, fear of violent crime and the way it pervades every aspect of their lives are the reasons 60% of emigrants leave South Africa. Violent crime is not only life-threatening but it also limits freedom of movement, makes people virtual prisoners in their own homes, and adds a financial burden to every South African. Their counterparts in Australia for example do not have to turn their homes in fortresses,

spend exorbitant amounts of money on insurance, sleep with guns under their pillows at night, drive around in cities with doors locked, and drive through red traffic lights at night to avoid being hijacked. Nor do they usually have to harden themselves mentally to be able to endure living in a country brutalised by crime and held hostage by criminals who appear to be a law unto themselves.

Crime in South Africa has become the country's Achilles' heel – no matter what progress has been made in reconstruction, reconciliation, nation-building and even economic miracles, these will remain empty words if the citizens of this country are subject to a levels of violent crime akin to a 'civil war that never happened'. As a result, people will keep on leaving the country for places where they can feel safe and conduct their lives in a normal fashion. Although it is correct to assume that much of today's crime is the product of apartheid, that is little consolation for hapless victims, both black and white. The demise of apartheid did nothing to change the material position or the mindset of the perpetrators of the countless crimes of South Africa's killing fields. To a crime-weary South African with the skills and ability to emigrate, it serves no purpose to look for blame for the origins of crime – all that matters is finding a solution or, if that is not possible, finding a way to 'get the hell out of here'.

But although crime is currently the most important push factor for South Africans leaving the country permanently, this was not always true. White emigrants from the 1950s up to the mid-1980s lived in whites-only suburbs which were unrealistically low-crime environments because of heavy police protection, pass laws and other apartheid legislation that kept black and white apart. Violent crime as it is experienced in South Africa today was certainly not evident in white suburbs or even in the CBDs of the main cities before the 1980s, and white emigrants in those days left largely because of political violence and uncertainty, not because of crime. Crime has therefore become a serious issue for white emigrants only in the past ten years or so when it was perceived to begin spilling over into white suburbs and when whites began to experience it to the same extent as black areas had for decades. Whether or not this is a merely a perception, an HSRC study indicated that the proportion of whites who felt unsafe because of crime rose from 30% to 80% between September 1994 to February 1997.<sup>63</sup>



## 4.2 CONCERNS OVER THE ECONOMY

About 10% of emigrants list the 'perilous' state of the South African economy as a reason for leaving the country. They feel that taxes are too high, their savings are being eroded by inflation, and the falling currency could 'trap' them in South Africa



by turning their money and life savings into worthless paper. In addition, they fear that the South African Communist Party and the trade union federation, Cosatu, are exerting a disproportionate influence on the government. Nor do the ill-considered comments by the secretary-general of the ANC, Kgalema Motlanthe, contribute to the confidence of whites or foreign investors. At a Workers' Day ceremony Motlanthe argued that South Africa should follow the socialist examples of Cuba and China, and that workers must develop a 'hatred' of capitalism.

Some of these fears have substance, but a look at the broader picture tells a less pessimistic story. The South African economy, like most emerging economies, had been negatively impacted by the Asian, South American and other crises and subsequent recessionary conditions in 1998, but this appears to have been a temporary setback. The economy has rebounded in 1999 and has entered the new millennium with remarkable resilience and strength in the face of adversity, considering South Africa's status as a developing country. The country's relatively developed economic infrastructure, sophisticated banking system and stock market, and a number of world-class companies all contribute to an economy with huge potential which offers exceptional entrepreneurial opportunities. The country boasts the largest and by far the most industrialised economy on the African continent and compares well with other emerging nations. For example, its per capita GDP of \$3 200 in 1998 is higher than that of Thailand, equal to that of Slovakia, and is not too far behind Mexico and Brazil. Its inflation rate fell to below 5% in 1999, the lowest since 1970 and among the lowest of the emerging economies, and even its currency had stabilised in 1999 after a sharp decline over recent years, before slipping against the US\$ early in 2000.

Although the economic growth rate was just over 1% in 1999, it is expected to improve significantly to above 3% in 2000. It is widely believed that Trevor Manuel is the best Finance Minister the country has ever had, and in a tough economic climate, he has managed to stabilise the currency, lower company and personal taxes, greatly relax foreign exchange controls, and restore South Africa's slipping credit rating in world markets. Even the sceptics have been surprised by the moderation of the first black governor of the Reserve Bank, Tito Mboweni, while the vastly increased efficiency of the South African Revenue Service has ensured greater government revenues and resulted in lower tax rates. In addition, government attempts to address the basic needs of most impoverished sectors of the population have been reasonably successful, with welfare payments to unemployed and poor families having been increased, resulting in the creation of a more sturdy social safety net. Not even the presence of six members of the South African Communist party in Mbeki's Cabinet, another 60 in the ANC's parliamentary caucus, and two provincial

premiers is cause for concern – virtually without exception they demurely follow the ANC's market-friendly policies without a murmur of socialist protest.

However, at least four distinct problems continue to bedevil the South African economy and these are frequently cited by some emigrants as a rationale for leaving the country.

The first concerns the South African currency. A stable currency tends to boost business confidence and calm the nerves not only of investors but also of wealthier individuals. In South Africa the rand has lost about half its value between 1994 and 1999 (against the British pound it declined from R5 to R10). The white population which make up the bulk of the emigrants has viewed the depreciation of the rand with a degree of concern, not only because it makes its frequent overseas visits prohibitively expensive, but because its South African holdings lose value in foreign terms. This causes anxiety among those who have accumulated wealth in South Africa because much of this wealth can become worthless in international terms if the local currency continues to depreciate (for example if it loses half its value every five years). A worthless currency makes it difficult for emigrants to take along sufficient amounts of capital to comfortably start a new life elsewhere, and for those with high net worth to 'buy' their residences in foreign countries by investing there. R W Johnson wrote how the rand's decline 'has locked middle-aged and older people in a country with a problematic future and away from their children', many of whom are already living overseas.<sup>64</sup> Although the rand has stabilised in 1999 to approximately R6 to a US\$1, it remains relatively weak, undervalued and overly sensitive to market fluctuations, and has breached the R7 to US\$1 rate by May 2000.



The second problem is a high personal income tax rate and a marginal rate as great as 42%, which is relatively steep when compared to the USA, Australia, New Zealand and Canada (although not so high when compared to some Western European countries such as Sweden). In these countries taxpayers receive sizeable social benefits and services from the state in return for their taxes, for example free healthcare (excluding the USA), inexpensive education, generous pensions and, above all, governments which fulfil their part of the 'social contract', that is, to protect citizens and provide law and order. In other words, while taxes in South Africa are generally higher than in most Western countries, South Africans receive far less in return from their government.

The third issue is high interest rates, with the prime lending rate reaching 23% at one stage in 1998. Although it has declined in 1999, at 15%–16% it still remains



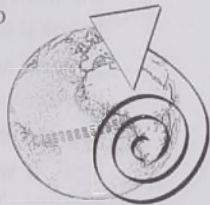
unacceptably high and consumes an extraordinarily large portion of the average household income. Interest rates are as low as 1% to 5% in most developed countries, which provides a huge incentive for a South African to buy property in Sydney for example as opposed to Cape Town, all things being equal.

The fourth issue concerns unemployment and affirmative action. Unemployment, alongside and related to crime, is South Africa's most daunting problem. Millions of mostly unskilled people simply cannot find work, with the unemployment rate almost 40% or close to six million people. The Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) found that only one in 30, or 3,3% of the 250 000 new job-seekers can expect to find work in the formal sector of South Africa's beleaguered job market.<sup>65</sup> Since 1990 the South African economy has shed more than one million jobs, of which 500 000 have been lost since 1995.<sup>66</sup> In the latter half of the decade the economically active population grew by 1,4 million and unemployment has increased by close to 2 million. Stephan Mulholland, columnist to the *Sunday Times*, perhaps harshly, commented that millions of those who are unemployed are actually 'anemployed' or unemployable, that is, they have no education and no prospects, and simply turn to crime.<sup>67</sup> One would like to believe that this is not the case and that many of the unemployed can eventually be equipped with skills, given the commitment and availability of resources, and that the informal economy will also help to soak up a part of the unemployment.

The fight against unemployment is not helped by restrictive labour laws such as the Employment Equity Act, which further discourages companies from employing people. In addition, the militancy of trade unions also scares off investors, and strikes are often accompanied by violence and intimidation. This is a growing trend which recently adversely affected Parmalat, an Italian food company in South Africa. Parmalat invested R1 billion in the South African economy, but was rewarded for its gesture by a strike by the Food and Allied Workers' Union. The workers were offered an above-inflation increase of 8% but demanded absurd wage increases of between 21% and 185%. The strike turned violent and led to shots being fired at delivery trucks, fire-bomb attacks, stone throwing and death threats, all aimed at the company's non-striking workers and its capital assets. The company's managing director was told by workers that they will 'kill him, rape his wife and burn his house'. Matters became so bad that the company's management contacted President Mbeki's Office to intervene and warned that disinvestment from South Africa had become an alternative.<sup>68</sup> Volkswagen South Africa experienced similar disruption to production and export orders through an illegal strike early in 2000, and also threatened to withdraw from South Africa.

Affirmative action is another obstacle which confronts white job-seekers in South Africa and contributes to the increasing number of emigrants. Affirmative action is defined as a series of temporary measures and policies designed to create equal opportunity within an organisation through the recruitment, selection, training and promotion of competent black people, women and disabled people. Although it is difficult to argue against the rationale behind affirmative action, namely to redress past wrongs and imbalances in the labour market through government intervention, it remains a concept with which many whites have a problem\* – they view it as reverse discrimination, aimed solely at whites, which affects their employability, earnings and career prospects. It is estimated that affirmative action and the Employment Equity Act will eventually force 800 000 whites out of the formal economy, to be replaced by blacks<sup>69</sup>. As Adrian Guelke mentions, not only do whites perceive affirmative action as threatening their standards of living, but it has been 'associated in white minds with perceptions that the efficiency of all manner of services has been declining, with consequent pessimism about the country's future economic prospects'.<sup>70</sup> However, on the whole, affirmative action appears to be only a minor emigration issue, as only 10% of prospective emigrants cite it as a reason for wanting to emigrate.

While it is true that young white school-leavers find it increasingly difficult to find work and cannot rely on an automatic job in the civil service, as their parents could under the NP government, only about 4% of whites are unemployed and only 1% of whites live below the breadline. The door that has been opened for young South Africans to work in the UK for two years is helping to temporarily alleviate the youth unemployment rate, especially for those (predominantly whites) fortunate enough to be able to buy airline tickets to London. Some unemployed whites are teachers who have been retrenched or taken packages, and many of them have joined their fellow professionals overseas where their teaching skills are in demand.



With affirmative action being part of life in South Africa, an opportunistic white South African woman, Lynn Rutherford, tried to use it as a reason for demanding political asylum in the USA – she unsuccessfully claimed that she would be discriminated against on grounds of her race if she was forced to return to South Africa.



\* For example, 60% of South Africa's foreign diplomats and more than 65% of the SANDF's officer corps are white.



### 4.3 FALLING STANDARDS AND AIDS

Falling standards, mismanagement, incompetence, the Aids pandemic and a growing decline in morality are issues which give South Africa a bad name internationally and make many South Africans desperate about their future. A considerable number of South African emigrants view falling standards and general moral and physical decay as part of their reasons for leaving the country – up to 19% give declining standards of public education and healthcare as major reasons, while 10% cite corruption and an inefficient government and civil service.<sup>71</sup>

Housing, education and healthcare in particular appear to provide opportunists and thieves with great scope for enriching themselves and are the areas in which standards are slipping the fastest. While close to three-quarters of a million homes for the poor have been built since 1994, many are substandard and falling apart, while corruption in tendering procedures is rife. Although free healthcare has been extended to sections of the population, public hospitals are generally in shockingly poor conditions because of inadequate funding, poor management and theft. Patients recall horror stories of having to bring their own linen and food to hospitals, of deadly unhygienic conditions, of understaffed facilities and of danger lurking in the form of criminals viewing hospitals as easy prey. In a children's cancer ward in a hospital in Johannesburg thieves stole clothes, toys and Christmas decorations from patients and even robbed a toddler of his toys on his way to chemotherapy. In one of Durban's former top hospitals, the King Edward VIII Hospital, the parents of eight-month-old baby, Ningi Khomo, were horrified when they discovered that a chunk of flesh, a wound of 5 cm by 4 cm, had been bitten out of her foot, apparently by rodents. This allegedly happened to another three babies in the same week in February 2000, while ten nurses were on duty in the paediatric ward.<sup>72</sup>

With respect to health trends, many South Africans nervously look to Zimbabwe, and check for early warning signals for the falling health standards in South Africa – Zimbabwe's health system is a frightening example of what can happen to a country ruined by corruption and mismanagement. The number of Zimbabweans who died of malaria increased from 100 in 1981 to 2 800 in 1997; deaths from tuberculosis increased from 5 000 in 1986 to 35 000 in 1997; rampant Aids has resulted in the average life expectancy of Zimbabweans falling from 61 years in 1993 to 49 years in 1999.<sup>73</sup>

However, it is not even necessary to look further north in Africa to experience the absolute horror and the scope of the Aids epidemic. More than 80 000 South Africans died in 1999 because of Aids-related diseases, overshadowing the 25 000 annual

murders. Because of Aids, the number of deaths in KwaZulu-Natal in 1998 exceeded the number of births, resulting in a decline in the province's population for the first time in recorded history. As a result of Aids the average life expectancy of South Africans declined from 65 to 55 years and by 2005 only 13% of South Africans are predicted to reach the age of 40 and over. By mid-2000 4,2 million people in South Africa were infected with HIV/Aids. This represents 10% of the country's population and the highest number anywhere in the world. By 2005 five million South Africans (one in eight) will be HIV-infected.<sup>74</sup> The figures released by the Institute of Race Relations are even more gloomy – these suggest that 250 000 South Africans will die from Aids this year and six million will be HIV-positive. By 2005 more than 700 000 people will die from Aids-related diseases and by 2015 more than 10 million South Africans would have died from this disease. By 2005 one million South African children will be orphans because of Aids, and it is predicted that most of these will be driven to violent crime through sheer desperation. According to a report titled 'Age and Aids: South Africa's crime time bomb', the juvenile prison population increased from 6 000 to 25 000 in the three years up to 1999.<sup>75</sup>

Apart from limited increases in funding to assist the fight against the disease, the government's otherwise lame response to the Aids crisis was to stage an Aids awareness play costing the taxpayers R13 million. At the same time it refused to fund a programme to provide pregnant mothers with an anti-Aids drug, AZT, which helps to prevent the unborn child from getting the disease. In 1999 a NGO sent out free condoms to thousands of South Africans, but put metal staples through the condoms to adhere them to the accompanying brochure – these were later recalled. To exacerbate matters, early in 2000 Thabo Mbeki caused an international uproar when he suggested that the possibility must be considered that Aids might not be caused by the HIV virus.



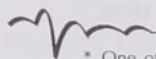
Education fares little better. New and supposedly innovative outcomes-based educational programmes which are based on standards of the industrialised world are in the pipeline, but many children in schools in South Africa have not received textbooks for two consecutive years, while teachers' salaries consume virtually 100% of the education budget, leaving little money for equipment and books. In some cases teachers are not properly trained, they are intimidated by school gangs, and generally are underpaid and demoralised. Not only government schools are suffering – state subsidies to private schools have been cut by 65% between 1995 and 1998.<sup>76</sup>

Corruption, self-entitlement and nepotism have become a major part of the problems facing South Africa today, just as they were part of the apartheid regime –



the scandals caused by NP Cabinet Ministers like Connie Mulder, Pietie du Plessis and countless others are still fresh in the mind – except that there is greater transparency and corruption is exposed much more rapidly. Between R21 and R36 billion were lost because of corruption between 1994 and 1998.<sup>77</sup> The Special Investigating Unit headed by Judge Willem Heath is investigating over 90 000 cases of government corruption and has already recovered R10 billion of state assets. Heath's efficiency and lack of respect for corrupt officials, irrespective of their status, quickly made him some powerful enemies – Finance Minister Trevor Manuel accused him of wanting to be a 'Don Quixote', Justice Minister Penuell Maduna threatened to close his office down or to banish him to the Eastern Cape, and former Justice Minister, Dullah Omar, accused him of 'political bias' against the ANC.\* In a similar vein and smacking of arrogance bred out of a too-powerful majority party, is the the refusal of Justice Minister, Penuell Maduna, to apologize, or be censured, for his slander of the Auditor-General, Henri Cluver – this is in spite of the fact the the Public Protector, Selby Baqwa, condemned Maduna for acting improperly and for undermining the Constitution.

Individual examples of corruption are not hard to come by. These include the thousands of 'ghost' civil servants and dead people who are drawing salaries and pensions in the Eastern Cape. One resourceful Eastern Cape family even took the dressed-up body of their recently deceased relative to the post office to draw his pension, pretending that he was alive and just a bit sleepy – a suspicious clerk alerted the police. Another example is ANC MP Steve Mbuyisa, who was found guilty of theft after stealing a cellphone in Parliament in 1999, although MPs like him are earning in excess of R300 000 per year. A typical example of the government's nonchalant attitude to corruption is that of the Director-General of Home Affairs, Albert Mokoena, who was under investigation for using his office to run a professional basketball team and freely handing out passports to foreign players to allow them to play for his team. To exacerbate matters, Minister of Home Affairs Mangosuthu Buthelezi appointed Khulekani Sitole, director of Correctional Services, to investigate the charges against Mokoena. At the time Sithole himself was under investigation for corruption and misconduct for inter alia running a soccer team from his government office, wrongfully giving himself a bonus of over R140 000, spending 200 days outside the country in 1998, and handing out severance packages to 40 officials in his department who did not qualify for these. He was eventually forced



\* One of Omar's friends, Alan Boesak, was openly supported by Omar when he was charged with fraud. Boesak, a former ANC leader in the Western Cape, was found guilty of stealing millions of Swedish donor funds meant for poverty-stricken children to build his wife a new recording studio in his house.

out of office and promptly threatened to sue the government for unlawful dismissal. Fidelia Maforah, the chief director in the Department of Welfare (a department which recklessly failed to disburse over R200 million of poverty relief funds in 1999) used her office and working hours to sell Amway products for her own gain<sup>78</sup>.

Then there was the Deputy-Speaker of Parliament, Baleka Mbete, who obtained her driving licence without completing a proper driver's test because she insisted that she was too busy to stand in a queue. In what turned out to be another blow to the government's moral high ground, Ndaweni Mahlangu, premier of South Africa's most corrupt province, Mpumalanga, in an attempt to justify his re-appointment of three discredited and corrupt officials to his government, brazenly declared that it was acceptable for politicians to lie. His exact words were: 'Many politicians deny they did certain things but then later admitted to them. It is accepted and not unusual anywhere in the world . . . I personally don't find it to be a very bad thing.'<sup>79</sup> Jessie Duarte, Gauteng's MEC for Safety and Security, was forced to resign because she drove and crashed a government car without being licensed to drive, and failed to report the accident. As a 'reward' for her behaviour she was appointed as a High Commissioner in Mozambique. In July 2000 the chief executive of South Africa's Civilian Aviation Authority, Trevor Abrahams, was arrested on charges relating to pilot licence fraud.

As an example of how the malaise of dishonesty has permeated South African society, one has to look little further than South Africa's under-14 soccer team's magnificent victory when they claimed the World Cup in 1998 – the only problem was that the team captain was actually an under-19 player who played under a fictitious name. In 1999 a black runner switched places halfway with his identical twin brother in order to cheat his way to a gold medal and a few thousand rands of prize money in the Comrades Marathon. In April 2000 the South African cricket captain, Hansie Cronje, caused the greatest scandal in the country's sporting history by admitting that he acted improperly by accepting money to provide information on cricket matches to Indian bookmakers – he was dismissed as captain and player in the South African side, but the damage to South Africa's sporting reputation and loss of national self-esteem will be felt for years.



Falling standards are not confined to education, healthcare and the public service. Unmistakable signs of decay, degeneration and public disorder permeate South African society, ranging from relatively harmless issues to more serious incidences of neglect. Once-thriving central business districts in Johannesburg, and to a lesser extent Durban, Pretoria and Port Elizabeth, have turned into dangerous, crime-



infested wastelands mostly devoid of office workers, banks and restaurants, and occupied instead by criminals, informal traders, squatters and beggars. Most large companies opted to move to the suburbs, and landlords battle to fill office space, shops and whole buildings. As the CBDs are becoming 'ghost towns', squatters soon fill these spaces illegally, sometimes with their livestock. In addition to the closure of the Johannesburg landmark, the Carlton Hotel, recent 'evacuations' from the downtown area included the Johannesburg Stock Exchange, which displayed its displeasure with the crime situation by relocating to the safer haven of the northern suburbs. Another casualty could be the world-famous Ellispark Rugby Stadium – because the area is regarded as unsafe, declining spectators numbers are forcing the Golden Lions Rugby Union to consider selling the stadium and possibly moving to Midrand. Even Cape Town's CBD, still relatively habitable in the daytime, is being threatened by the same danger, and empty office and retail space is becoming the norm – the local tourism office wanted to leave the CBD for the Waterfront area to escape crime, but reconsidered after public outcry; a major banking group, BoE, is vacating its offices in the CBD after more than a century; South African Airlines former offices in a prime spot in the heart of Cape Town's CBD have been vacant for two years.

Roads lack urgent repairs – the N2 highway through the Transkei has become virtually impassable because of potholes, while cattle and horses walking freely over the N2 outside Cape Town are potentially lethal to motorists. Drivers without licences, a 100 000-strong minibus taxi fleet with total disregard for speed limits and the rules of the road, and poorly maintained vehicles that cause death and destruction on the roads are the norm. Parking in the streets of cities and towns is controlled by self-appointed parking attendants (commonly referred to as parking terrorists), who demand protection money for 'looking after' the parked vehicle – refusal to pay often leads to damaged vehicles, verbal abuse and physical threats. Other examples are the concept of 'African time', a convenient excuse for tardiness, especially by government officials arriving late for meetings; bureaucratic inefficiency, for example the waiting time for a new passport has increased to up to three months, as opposed to a few days; declining municipal services reflected in uncollected refuse piling up in suburbs; electricity and telephone interruptions – thieves openly dig up copper telephone cables, a 'business' worth tens of millions of rand each year. Recently one of the two runways at Cape Town International Airport was rendered virtually useless and flights had to be diverted because the electrical wire which powered the approach lights had been stolen. Slow delivery and theft in the mail service are other examples – most companies use only courier services to ensure that important documents arrive safely and on time.

The signs of a slow decay and decline are omnipresent. In June 2000 the Cape Symphony Orchestra and the State Theatre in Pretoria finally closed down because of the decline of state sponsorship for what is presumably regarded as a 'Eurocentric' cultural activity. Even the dead are not spared: in addition to the overturned tombstones at Heroes Acre in Pretoria, in a scene reminiscent of a horror movie, in 1998 squatters settled in Walmer cemetery in Port Elizabeth and shacks were built on graves, tombstones smashed, coffins exposed and skeletons dug up by scavenging pigs and dogs. In a different sphere, and a further example that embodies the questionable values of the government and the decline in South Africa's international status, Libyan leader Muhamar Ghadaffi was more or less the most important foreign dignitary at the inauguration of President Mbeki in 1999 – as one of South Africa's 'best friends' the leader of this terrorist state was given VIP treatment throughout his visit.

Still, one's views on the issue of falling standards in morality, education, healthcare and the public service depend to a large degree on one's political orientation. While the ANC will acknowledge that there are problems, the organisation tends to blame it on the legacy of apartheid and as a temporary result of the transformation process, and is quick to accuse white critics of being racist and of wanting to perpetuate the old order. On the other hand, there is little doubt that political opportunism tends to cloud the objectivity of the DP, NNP and other opposition parties when exposing government weaknesses in these areas.

Ultimately, however, it is indisputable that there are serious problems in the areas of corruption, healthcare, education and the public service, and that standards have deteriorated dramatically over the past few years. Whether this will continue will depend on the Mbeki government's will and ability to address these problems. Whether falling standards are really sufficient reasons for leaving South Africa is open to debate, but many emigrants point to these declining standards and many fall back on the cliché that South Africa is 'becoming just another African basket-case' and is turning into a 'Third World country'.



They draw unfavourable comparisons, perhaps unjustly, between conditions in South Africa and First World standards in Australia, UK, USA, Canada and elsewhere in the developed world. In this regard the comparisons with popular emigration destinations explain the lure to South Africans of these countries. The year 2000 United Nation's Human Development Index rated 174 countries in terms of their standard of living (measured by GDP per capita), life expectancy and educational attainment. Canada has been rated first for the past seven years (96 out of a possible 100 points), with the USA fourth, New Zealand ninth, the UK fourteenth, and



Australia fifteenth. All these countries received more than 93 points out of a possible 100, while South Africa was rated ninety-eighth with 71 points.<sup>80</sup>

#### 4.4 MBEKI'S 'TWO NATIONS': THE 'RE-RACIALISATION' OF SOUTH AFRICA

Wait till Madiba is gone. We are going to push them back into the sea –  
journalist Lulama Luit<sup>81</sup>

If a new racism is a reality or becomes a reality, the scenario for South Africa is one of destruction. The polarisation and confrontation between black and white population groups will lead to an unbridgeable mistrust, merciless conflict that develops into violence, a wave of white emigration, the disintegration of stability and an economic desert –  
Wimpy de Klerk<sup>82</sup>

President Thabo Mbeki has argued that South African is a country of two nations, consisting of a black majority characterised by their poverty, and a financially well-off white minority. According to Mbeki there can be no real peace and reconciliation unless the gap between the standards of living of whites and blacks is narrowed. Until such time, Mbeki warns, whites will not be able to sleep well at night, the implication being that the danger of a poverty-driven black-on-white civil war or revolution is a very real one.

For most whites, Mbeki's warning brings back unpleasant memories of the pre-1990 years when the possibility of a bloody civil war between black and white was strong. Threats such as the following one from journalist John Qwelane do not go unnoticed among whites:

While whites may beat their breasts in anger and declare they have given up everything, and 'so far and no further', they might do well to consider that numerous young blacks, in particular, are proposing something even more drastic . . . Now it is being openly said – and it is no idle boast, we might add – that white South Africa can do its damndest and 'we will meet them bullet for bullet' – John Qwelane.<sup>83</sup>

Other prominent black commentators such as Kaizer Nyatumba and Cyril Madlala have added their voices to those of Mbeki and Qwelane, in particular with regard to demands for speedier redistribution and warnings that a conflagration is awaiting the country should the frustrations of blacks be ignored:

For almost six years now, the masses have been waiting patiently ... Those who have more than their fair share of wealth and the resources of this country should understand why it is not right that the cake has not been distributed equitably. If they do not understand that now, and help the government to implement its corrective action programmes, before long the peasants, the workers and the hungry will lose patience and grab for themselves – Cyril Madlala<sup>84</sup>

Frustration is likely to multiply among the African majority whose political leadership is so desperate to please the white minority that a few years down the line a terrible conflagration may yet erupt – Kaizer Nyatumba<sup>85</sup>

The message to whites is clear – play along and make economic sacrifices, or put up with a racial Armageddon.

The question that occupies many white minds today is what do they still have to do and which sacrifices should they still make to meet the economic demands of millions of their poor black compatriots and the government? And if these sacrifices are not bearable or feasible, do they really see a future for themselves in South Africa if the alternative is a class-based civil war between the 'haves' and the 'have-nots', which will closely resemble a racially based civil war between black and white?



To answer this question one has to analyse the validity of Mbeki's claim that South Africa consists of two nations. It must be stated emphatically that the large numbers of poor whites and wealthy blacks and the assimilation that has occurred in South Africa among races, ethnic groups and cultures refute a simplistic two-nation explanation. It is true that almost 90% of the control of companies on the Johannesburg Stock Exchange is in white hands, but this control rests in a very small number of white hands and not with the white population or 'nation' as a whole.

It can be argued therefore that Mbeki's view tends to be too simplistic in ignoring the relative success of Nelson Mandela and his vision of forging a rainbow nation and a common South African identity. It also gives too little recognition to the fast-growing black middle class and the moderate successes of black empowerment which have created a 'third nation' consisting of well-off blacks and black intellectuals who are probably closer to the 'white nation' in lifestyle and aspirations (if not ideology) than to the poor 'black nation'. For example, the percentage of blacks who fall within the

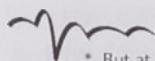


wealthiest section of the population has increased from 9% to 22% between 1991 and 1999<sup>86</sup>. The black share of total national income increased from 42% in 1991 to 48% in 1996<sup>87</sup>. It can be assumed that it will have increased to over 55% by 2000. By 1996 there were already more blacks than whites in the top 20% income bracket in the 12 largest urban areas – 1,85 m blacks versus 1,65 m whites.<sup>88</sup>

Yet race and class still largely coincide in South Africa, in spite of years of nation building, the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) and GEAR (Growth, Employment and Reconstruction). The average per capita black income is only about one fifth of that of whites, and blacks are still greatly under-represented in most spheres outside politics and the civil service.\* The transformation process in South Africa therefore has a long way to go to alter the fundamental imbalance between white wealth and privilege and black poverty and apartheid-induced disadvantages. The ANC is committed, and rightly so, to changing this state of affairs in spite of white resistance.

The ANC's basic goal with transformation is to speed up economic upliftment of the black masses, to ensure greater black control of the economy through black empowerment and affirmative action, and to provide basic services to those in need faster than before. It wants to ensure that blacks are represented on all levels of society in numbers proportional to the demographics of the country. It also includes enforced racial quotas in areas as diverse as the workplace, sports teams and schools. Entry to medical schools at most South African universities is now carefully controlled to ensure that it also reflects the demographic composition of the country. Sports teams, including the provincial and national rugby and cricket teams, are coming under considerable pressure to pick players of colour in all teams irrespective of merit (the so-called merit with bias principle).

While most reasonable whites will not oppose in principle the broader goals of transformation, and view it as a necessary part of making up for 45 years of institutionalised racism and injustice, they are concerned about the method and the timeframe of the process. They are also concerned about the subtle threats made by Thabo Mbeki to the effect that the alternative to transformation and 'dreams deferred' (quoting American poet Langston Hughes) would be a 'racial explosion' and a racial civil war which could erupt within three to five years. Even the great

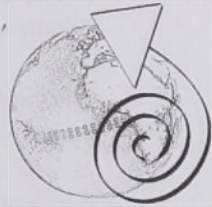


\* But at over \$3 000 per annum the GDP per capita of black South Africans is still considerably more than that of most blacks elsewhere in Africa.

conciliator, Nelson Mandela, caused ripples of anxiety among whites when he denounced 'white privilege' and called for a redistribution of wealth to blacks.

Many whites fear that an over emphasis on transformation and less emphasis on reconciliation and nation building will result in substantial and threatening changes to their lives. Even six years after the 1994 elections and majority rule, some whites still harbour fears of 'apartheid taxes', the confiscation of land, wholesale nationalisation, 'Nürnberg trials' (instead they got the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, a very mild version indeed), altered street and city names and the dismantling of monuments reflecting white history. On the contrary, the ANC has been remarkably restrained in eliminating apartheid and white symbols such as statues, city and street names, but even so, some white residents of the former Transvaal still battle to come to terms with black mayors ruling 'their' towns and others still battle even to pronounce the names of the new provinces of Gauteng and Mpumalanga, while the vast majority of whites still have no idea of the African words of the national anthem, *Nkosi Sikelel' I-Africa*.

The majority of whites and many blacks are not hesitant to criticise disconcerting aspects of the transformation process, and in turn the ANC is quick to denounce such criticism as racist and disloyal. One of South Africa's top businessmen, Johann Rupert, denounced transformation as a 'wonderful' but useless concept which 'nobody wishes to define'.<sup>89</sup> The DP rejected aspects of transformation as being the equivalent of the 're-racialisation' of South Africa.<sup>90</sup> Its leader, Tony Leon, also complained that critics of aspects of the process of transformation are being smeared as racists and counter-revolutionaries. The head of the liberal Helen Suzman Foundation, R W Johnson, and office bearers of the liberal Institute of Race Relations, such as Themba Sono, Lawrence Schlemmer and Herman Giliomee, were accused by SACP spokesman Blade Nzimande of being 'reactionaries' and 'threats to transformation'. Even the Archbishop of Cape Town and successor to Desmond Tutu, Njongonkulu Ndungane, was accused by Mandela of being 'disloyal', because he criticised the performance of civil servants and the government's record on crime – Mandela's words were: '[T]hose people who challenge the (government) statistics are those who are not loyal to the government and the country.'<sup>91</sup>



These are only a few examples of the phenomenon of re-racialisation that has emerged since 1994 and also the notion that criticism of the government and its alliance partners can be parried effectively with accusations of racism, elitism, disloyalty and Eurocentrism.



The role that 're-racialisation' and an overemphasis on race play in obfuscating decision making in South Africa today can be illustrated by some recent examples. A prominent liberal white judge and one of the greatest jurists in South African legal history, Edwin Cameron, was excluded from a position on the Constitutional Court, apparently because he was white. This led Dennis Davis, a long-time liberal with impeccable credentials and a prominent anti-apartheid judge to protest that race, rather than merit, has become the only criterion in South Africa: 'Cameron is so brilliant and so highly regarded that his rejection sends a clear message to whites that race has indeed become the only factor. That is not the inclusive society that we had hoped for.'<sup>92</sup> Davis himself had been accused of being a racist few years previously by Barney Pityana (later head of the Human Rights Commission).

A second example in which obsession with race has interfered with common sense was the announcement in 1999 by Minister of Security Steve Tswete that it had become a 'priority' to reduce the percentage of white management in the police force from 72% to 50% before the end of 1999. Tswete's obsession with the racial composition of the police force instead of focusing on crime was ill timed, considering that the crime situation is bordering on anarchy. The question that should be rightly asked, one which forces people to question their future in South Africa, is why should racial balances and equity in the police force be viewed as a priority when the country is bleeding to death because of violent crime?

The third example is disconcerting and potentially more dangerous. This refers to the actions of various newly created bodies resembling the archetypal 'Thought Police', as well as legislation to limit free speech that borders on the absurd. One such organisation is the Human Rights Commission, which was trying to force newspaper editors and other media figures to participate in an Inquiry into Racism in the Media – the flimsy report on which the commission based its decision has been widely discredited and the perception was growing locally and internationally that it could have been a government ploy to use alleged racism in the media to control and curtail press freedom.

To conclude, many whites fear that they are in a no-win situation: transformation as envisioned by the ANC will result in the 'new racism' against which Wimpy de Klerk warned, and too-slow progress of transformation will result in a revolution in which whites will be pitted against millions of desperate blacks. From this perspective, crime is merely a substitute for the 'revolution that never happened', and today's political threats could conceivably progress into tomorrow's full-scale revolution. These whites are not prepared to stay around only to become involved in another racial cauldron – in their opinion Australia, Canada, the UK and elsewhere are much less risky options.

## 4.5 THE GLOBAL VILLAGE

Just as I'm a South African, I'm also a citizen of the world. A world which is getting ever smaller, ever more attainable. We're no longer isolated, we're bona fide members of the world community, and there's a whole world out there to conquer – Jurgen Gregerson, former acting news editor of the *Independent on Saturday*<sup>93</sup>

I want him to grow up as a citizen of the world, something to which many young Afrikaners are aspiring. Since the election we are part of the global village – (author Marita van der Vyfer, describing why she and her son chose to live in France)<sup>94</sup>

In the 1990s the increasing process of globalisation meant that the borders of countries became less of a barrier to the free movement of skilled people. The explosion of information technology has made knowledge of career opportunities instantly available through the Internet and even applying for these overseas jobs can now be done through the Internet. The process of globalisation has resulted in people moving all over the world in search of jobs and often staying permanently – South Africa is no exception.

Even Australia, an important immigration destination for the British, South Africans and Chinese, is experiencing outflows of people because of skilled and adventurous people searching elsewhere for opportunities. In 1997–98 Australia had an outflow of 12 800 people to the UK, New Zealand, the USA, Hong Kong and Canada.<sup>95</sup> Canada has also been suffering from a similar brain drain to the USA for decades. Canadian professionals are attracted to the USA because of higher pay and lower taxation. Between 1986 and 1996 about 39 000 Canadian professional and technical workers emigrated to the USA, costing Canada about C\$11 billion (R44 billion) in lost contributions such as taxes and social welfare, and in money spent on their education. However, unlike South Africa, Canada is a popular emigration destination for skilled and other approved (as opposed to illegal) immigrants – more than ten people immigrated to Canada for every emigrant in the 1990s, while for every skilled emigrant from Canada that went to the USA, four entered Canada from elsewhere.<sup>96</sup>



Thousands of younger South Africans in particular are currently living and working abroad on what is supposed to be a temporary basis – while some will come back after a two-year stint in the UK or elsewhere, others will stay on indefinitely,



depending on whether they find permanent work and/or obtain residency or citizenship in another country, and on unemployment levels and other problems in South Africa. For some, this kind of temporary 'emigration' should be encouraged, because it transfers internationally acquired skills back to South Africa:

A new wave of semi-permanent emigrants who are leaving South Africa to make hats in New York, work in London banks, run rafting operations in Uganda . . . Now these are the emigrants we should be taking notice of and celebrating . . . They are leaving because they see themselves as part of a global village of opportunity – Max Du Preez<sup>97</sup>

In 1997 Britain granted 8 500 working visas to young South Africans under the age of 27. In 1998, 14 000 working visas were issued and about 23 000 would have been issued in 1999 and, considering the increasing trend, probably an even greater number in 2000.<sup>98</sup> It is estimated that South African youth on working visas probably number 50 000 at any given time. The benefit to South Africa is that when these people come back they bring with them new-found skills, experience and often capital. In addition, for the period that they are outside the country, their absence helps to lower short-term unemployment levels in South Africa.

For thousands of other professional people, transferable skills and job mobility are a crucial part of their career choices and leaving South Africa for better-paid jobs becomes as natural as moving to another local company. In 1998 between 10% and 15% of South African executives left their companies to emigrate.<sup>99</sup> When comparing the salaries of South African employees with those of their overseas counterparts, especially in IT and managerial positions, it is easy to understand why financial incentives entice them to go abroad – the average salary of a top manager in South Africa is about R1,5 million, compared to R3,25 million to R5 million in the USA.<sup>100</sup> Even taking into account the undervalued local exchange rate, the real pay that most employees take home for similar jobs in the USA implies a considerably higher standard of living for American employees. Apart from higher pay, professionals, especially scientists and researchers, have access to much greater resources in First World countries, where there is also a greater capacity in these economies to absorb them.<sup>101</sup>