12-1-1991

Insufficient Legal Representation for the Indigent Defendant in the Criminal Courts of South Africa

Albertine Renee van Buuren

Follow this and additional works at: https://brooklynworks.brooklaw.edu/bjil

Recommended Citation
Available at: https://brooklynworks.brooklaw.edu/bjil/vol17/iss2/7

This Note is brought to you for free and open access by the Law Journals at BrooklynWorks. It has been accepted for inclusion in Brooklyn Journal of International Law by an authorized editor of BrooklynWorks.
INSUFFICIENT LEGAL REPRESENTATION FOR THE INDIGENT DEFENDANT IN THE CRIMINAL COURTS OF SOUTH AFRICA*

I. INTRODUCTION

There is a sense of unfairness and injustice when criminal defendants stand trial without legal representation solely because of their indigency. The picture becomes bleaker when there is no jury and defendants are likely to be illiterate, unsophisticated, not versed in the official languages of South Africa,1 and of a non-white racial2 and cultural background.3 In South

* Special thanks to Anton Trichardt, an advocate and member of the South African Bar, for his invaluable assistance.


If a defendant or witness speaks neither official language, an interpreter is provided. Magistrate's Court Act, No. 32 § 6(2) (S. Afr. 1944); State v. Mzo, 1 S. Afr. L. Rep. 538, 539 (Cape Provincial Division, 1980) (it is the magistrate’s responsibility to decide how to explain the accused’s rights and their implications; it is an irregularity if this responsibility is delegated to the interpreter); State v. Mafu, 1 S. Afr. L. Rep. 454, 457-59 (Cape Provincial Division, 1978) (it is per se irregular if the court fails to provide competent interpreters, warranting the setting aside of the conviction and sentence). See also N. STEYTLER, THE UNDEFEENDED ACCUSED ON TRIAL 76 (1988) [hereinafter N. STEYTLER].

2. Under South Africa’s apartheid system, all South Africans are required to be designated to a racial group. Population Registration Act, No. 30 (S. Afr. 1950). The term “blacks” is used throughout this Note as a legal term of art of the South African legal system. That term, as well as the terms “whites,” “coloreds,” and “asiains,” carries legal consequences because specific laws apply to South Africans who fit the description of each of these groups. See Berat, Legal Aid and the Indigent Accused in South Africa: A Proposal for Reform 18 GA. J. INT’L & COMP. L. 239 n.2 (1988); Ream, 18 UCLA L. REV. 335 n.1 (1970); Seltzer, 8 GA. J. INT’L & COMP. L. 176 n.3 (1978). South African Presi-
Africa during 1987, eighty percent of all criminal defendants were unrepresented. In addition, because South Africa's judicial system is adversarial, it depends on lawyers to champion the parties' causes by presenting the main issues. If the defendant lacks effective assistance of counsel the attainment of a fair trial becomes more difficult. Moreover, when the state, represented by a prosecutor, tries an unrepresented defendant, a fair trial is


The total population of South Africa at June 30 this year was estimated to be 30.1 million, according to the Central Statistical Service. There were 21.1 million blacks, 4.9 million whites, 3.1 million coloureds and 941 thousand asians. The annual rate of growth in the population between 1980 and 1989 for whites was 1%, coloureds 1.8%, asians 1.74% and blacks 2.3%. Annual increase in the white population over the past four years amounted to only 0.65% because of the relatively high emigration and the relatively low immigration since about the middle of 1985.

The Star, November 24, 1989, at 1, col. 1 [hereinafter The Star].

3. The South African courts have taken judicial notice of this predicament: [n]or am I done yet with all the tribulations undergone by people defending themselves. Additional and grave hardships are suffered in this land by those who happen to be Black, as the great majority do indeed. Many are illiterate or barely literate. Few speak or understand either official language, or cope well enough to hold their own in a tongue that remains foreign to them. What is said in our courtrooms to each of the rest, what he in turn says there, must therefore be interpreted, word by word. But still he is not orientated. For much of our jurisprudence is alien to the culture and traditions of the society from which he springs. So are some of our procedures. Entangled in the workings of a legal machinery that bewilders him, he has the most to gain from a lawyer's help and the most to lose from the lack of it. Yet the barrier of poverty stands highest in his very case.


The Appellate Division of the Supreme Court became South Africa's highest court in 1961 and hereinafter in case citations to this court this will be abbreviated as A. Originally, there were seven provincial divisions of the Supreme Court; the Natal (N.), Transvaal (T.), Orange Free State (O.), Cape (C.), Northern Cape (N.C.), Eastern Cape (E.C.) and South West Africa (S.W.) provincial divisions (South West Africa was originally a mandated territory under the trusteeship of South Africa. In March 1990 South West Africa gained its independence and is known today as Namibia.) There are three local divisions of the provincial divisions: Witwatersrand (W.L.), Durban and Coast (D.C.L.), and South Eastern Cape (S.E.C.L.). See infra notes 35, 42 and accompanying texts on the Appellate and provincial divisions of the Supreme Court.

4. N. Steytler, supra note 1, at viii (quoting the Natal Mercury, Oct. 13, 1987). Natal is one of South Africa's provinces. Others provinces include: Transvaal, Orange Free State and the Cape province. In this Note, the self-governing territories and the independent homelands of Bophuthatswana, Ciskei, Gazankulu, Kangwane, Kwandebele, KwaZulu, Lebowa, Qwaqwa, Transkei, and Venda are not included in the references to South Africa unless specifically stated.

5. See infra note 21 and accompanying text on the adversarial and inquisitorial legal systems.
virtually impossible to achieve.⁶

Many countries have created various forms of legal assistance to balance the inequity of being an unrepresented defendant.⁷ South Africa has taken an unsatisfactory approach. While it has created a Legal Aid office,⁸ it does not fund it adequately to provide legal assistance to all who request assistance.⁹ South Africa’s statutory safeguards are few, insufficient, and vague.¹⁰ The courts have tried to define these safeguards through various decisions and to increase the protection afforded to the unrepresented defendant.¹¹ However, this has led to a dual system, with

6. The South African courts recognize this inequality in their judicial system: [b]ut the State for its part would never dream of dispensing with professional prosecutors . . . Its massive resources are mustered and brought to bear on the task, rightly since no amateur can competently perform that. Rank inequality is then witnessed, once the person charged is an amateur too, an inequality hitting no outlaw . . . but lying between a prosecutor who has still to prove his allegations and a man presumed, till the Court finds him guilty, to be quite as innocent as the one in the street.


7. Some solutions include legal aid, public defenders offices or an inquisitorial rather than adversarial legal system. For example, Great Britain uses a legal aid system, with matters referred to barristers. However, unlike South African lawyers, British lawyers have sufficient interest in giving legal aid and sufficient numbers of barristers to undertake the case load. M. Partington, Great Britain in Perspectives on Legal Aid 158-76 (F. Zemans ed. 1979). See generally E. Moeran, Legal Aid Summary (1978). The United States uses a public defender system, funded by the government. The prestige of being a public defender has been used as a stepping stone for lawyers in attaining political positions, thus making these positions attractive. Handler, United States of America in Perspectives on Legal Aid, 318-45 (F. Zemans ed. 1979) [hereinafter Perspectives on Legal Aid].

The inquisitorial system, used in Germany and France, relies on a judge to arrive at the truth of the situation. The attorneys are not adversaries, but aid the judge in the search for the truth. The prosecutor’s primary job is not to put the defendant in jail but to ascertain the truth. It is the court’s duty to take into consideration the defendant’s defense whether it is pleaded or not. See generally Perspectives on Legal Aid 134-57. See infra note 21 and accompanying text for a discussion of the inquisitorial system.


9. N. Steytler, supra note 1, at 21-22, 53; see also G. Hoexter, Commission of Inquiry into the Structure and Functioning of the Courts (1983) [hereinafter Hoexter Commission]. The Hoexter Commission was a government-commissioned team of lawyers and legal scholars asked to reassess the South African legal system and to present recommendations for fundamental changes in the administration of justice.

10. The statutory right to counsel exists. Criminal Procedure Act, No. 51, ch. 11, § 3(1) (S. Afr. 1977). The right to representation exists only at trial and if a defendant can afford it. E. du Trott, Commentary on the Criminal Procedure Act 11-1 (1989). However, there may be an automatic review of cases with sentences greater than three to six months if the accused was unrepresented at trial. Criminal Procedure Act, No. 51, ch. 30 § 302 (S. Afr. 1977). See infra note 68 and accompanying text on automatic review.

11. State v. Blooms, 4 S. Afr. L. Rep. 417 (C. 1966) (the trial which had at first been
one set of judicial duties for defendants with counsel and another for unrepresented defendants. For example, procedural and evidentiary standards are relaxed for unrepresented defendants, but strict standards are maintained for defendants with counsel.\textsuperscript{12} Ironically, this dual standard could make a defendant choose to be unrepresented rather than to be represented by a mediocre lawyer. This is contrary to the essence of the adversarial legal system.\textsuperscript{13} It also avoids the heart of the matter: the need for legal representation for all criminal defendants.

This Note describes the South African legal system, focusing on its criminal provisions and the statutory and common-law safeguards that attempt to protect the unrepresented defendant. It also explores the causes of the existing problems of underrepresentation. This Note then analyzes the current case law, as well as the solutions presented by the academic legal community. Finally, this Note concludes that South Africa’s government should increase funding for legal aid, educate its populace about the existence of this program, and create incentives for legal practitioners and law students to offer legal assistance to indigent defendants.\textsuperscript{14}

---

\textsuperscript{12} N. Steytler, \textit{supra} note 1, at 58-62. Another example is that only the defendant’s counsel may cross examine and call witnesses. With an unrepresented defendant, the judge is obliged to explain the importance of cross examination and to help the defendant to cross examine witnesses without actually acting on his behalf. This is a very difficult balance to strike. \textit{Id. See also} State v. Rudman, 3 S. Afr. L. Rep. 368 (E.C. 1989); State v. Johnson, 3 S. Afr. L. Rep. 368, 377-79 (E.C. 1989).

\textsuperscript{13} See infra note 21 and accompanying text on adversarial legal system.

\textsuperscript{14} This Note will focus on the unrepresented defendant in criminal matters only. It will not discuss the effects of the current state-of-emergency legislation on the legal system. Internal Security Act, No. 74 (S. Afr. 1982). While it is clear that the lack of interest in extending legal aid to all defendants is partially based on the political and racial problems faced by South Africa, these issues are beyond the scope of this Note.
II. SOUTH AFRICA'S LEGAL SYSTEM AND THE SAFEGUARDS CREATED FOR THE UNREPRESENTED DEFENDANT

A. South Africa's Legal System

1. History

South Africa's legal system is primarily based on customary law, with large areas re-enacted by statutory law. The customary law is Roman-Dutch, introduced by the Dutch in the mid-seventeenth century. The law has developed over time so that South Africa is the only place in the world where a truly uncodified system of civil law exists. Thus, its legal system is considered to be a hybrid of both civil and common law. During the period of Dutch rule, the legal system was inquisitorial. At this early stage, the system acknowledged the need to help the defendant charged with capital crimes who did not have the means of procuring legal representation by providing pro deo services.

With the advent of British rule, the adversary system re-
placed the Dutch inquisitorial system.\textsuperscript{21} The British also incorporated a dual-lawyer system in South Africa,\textsuperscript{22} consisting of advocates, who specialized in court practice, and attorneys, who functioned primarily as counselors and drafters of documents.\textsuperscript{23} Furthermore, the British introduced legal concepts such as precedent, trial by jury, and equal and impartial justice.\textsuperscript{24} The principle of impartial justice was not regularly applied, however, be-

\textsuperscript{21} The main difference between these two systems is the manner in which the "truth" is ascertained. In the inquisitorial system, the judge and legal counsel play an active role in an attempt to establish the truth. Snyman, \textit{The Accusatorial and Inquisitorial Approaches to Criminal Procedure: Some Points of Comparison between the South African and Continental Systems}, \textit{8 Comp. & Int'l L.J. S. Afr.} 100, 103 (1975) [hereinafter Snyman]. Police files are open documents, the court calls and examines witnesses, and the accused may also be questioned. \textit{Id.} at 104-05, 109-11. See Brouwer, \textit{Inquisitorial and Adversary Procedures — A Comparative Analysis}, \textit{55 Austl. L.J.} 207, 209, 212-14 (1981) [hereinafter Brouwer]. The defense lawyer and prosecutor may suggest further questions and evidence, but there is no onus on either party to prove the innocence or guilt of the accused since it is the court's duty to establish the "truth." Snyman, \textit{supra}, at 103-04, 106-07; Brouwer, \textit{supra}, at 212-14.

On the other hand, the adversary system is party-based and depends on the vigorous argument of two partisan and skilled lawyers to arrive at the truth. The litigants must advance the issues by selecting the evidence most favorable to their case. The issues this evidence presents is for a decision by an impartial and passive judge, and depends on the skill of the lawyers. Certoma, \textit{The Accusatory System v. the Inquisitorial System: Procedural Truth v. Fact?}, \textit{56 Austl. L.J.} 288 (1982) [hereinafter Certoma]. See also S. Landsman, \textit{The Adversary System 1-2, 4} (1984) [hereinafter S. Landsman]. In the adversary system, the litigants generally are responsible for "investigating and presenting the facts from a partisan perspective." Zeidler, \textit{Evaluation of the Adversary System: As Comparison, Some Remarks on the Investigatory System of Procedure}, \textit{55 Austl. L.J.} 390, 395 (1981). The facts thereby delineate the issues. Certoma, \textit{supra}, at 288. The litigants further refine the issues through plea bargaining and admissions. N. Steytler, \textit{supra} note 1, at 4. Usually, the accused cannot be compelled to testify under the adversarial system. Zeidler, \textit{supra}, at 395; Certoma, \textit{supra}, at 291. The credibility of the testimony presented must be tested by the opposing litigants. Zeidler, \textit{supra}, at 397. The judge may determine the admissibility of evidence and compliance of the parties to the rules of court. Snyman, \textit{supra}, at 110. Otherwise, the judge is passive and makes a decision based solely on the evidence presented by the parties. S. Landsman, \textit{supra}, at 3; Snyman, \textit{supra}, at 103; Zeidler, \textit{supra}, at 395. Thus, in an adversary system, the unrepresented defendant is afforded little protection due to the passive role taken by the judge and the onus on the litigants to raise the important issues. Brouwer, \textit{supra}, at 203.

\textsuperscript{22} 5 H. Hahlo \& E. Kahn, \textit{supra} note 1, at 42.

\textsuperscript{23} Advocates are given exclusive control of litigation in the Supreme Courts (each province has at least one provincial division of the Supreme Court), while attorneys have exclusive rights to draft contracts and other documents. See \textit{infra} notes 42, 52 and accompanying texts on the different provincial divisions of the Supreme Court and on advocates and attorneys, respectively.

\textsuperscript{24} The Roman-Dutch law recognized the principle of equality before the law. 5 H. Hahlo \& E. Kahn, \textit{supra} note 1, at 794. However, the principle was first directly accepted in the Cape Colony when the Cape was brought under British rule. N. Steytler, \textit{supra} note 1, at 12, 25-34.
cause the legal system had separate courts for blacks.\textsuperscript{25} These courts were abolished in 1984-85.\textsuperscript{26} In 1969, the South African Government abolished the jury system because it was too costly and time-consuming.\textsuperscript{27}

The present South African Government incorporates certain fundamental principles into its legal system: (1) equality before the law;\textsuperscript{28} (2) a presumption of innocence until proven guilty;\textsuperscript{29} (3) a requirement that guilt must be proved beyond a reasonable doubt in criminal matters;\textsuperscript{30} (4) the right to legal representation;\textsuperscript{31} (5) the right against self-incrimination;\textsuperscript{32} (6) the right to remain silent;\textsuperscript{33} and (7) the right to place one's case before the court.\textsuperscript{34} The South African legal system also uses the rules of

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{25} For a discussion of the racial designations of South Africans see supra note 2 and accompanying text.
\item \textsuperscript{26} "Black Laws" and "Courts of Chiefs and Headmen" still exist, however. While it seems alien to have a split judicial system in the same country, especially a division based on race, these tribal courts do serve a practical function: they are an indigenous cultural institution, supported by blacks and by experts in black customary law. They also tend to be in rural black areas not serviced by other courts. See Hoexter Commission, supra note 9, at part I, para. 3.4.3.8.
\item \textsuperscript{27} Abolition of Juries Act, No. 34 (S. Afr. 1969). There is more chance for bias with a non-jury system, not only because the defendant does not benefit from a jury verdict concerning issues of witnesses' credibility and the facts, but because personal prejudices of the presiding judicial officer can go unchecked. 5 H. Hahlo \& E. Kahn, supra note 1, at 260-64.
\item \textsuperscript{28} This principle is proclaimed in the preamble of the Constitution Act, No. 110 (S. Afr. 1983). It states as one of the national goals "[t]o uphold the independence of the judiciary and the equality of all under the law." Id. This goal has been tempered, however, by the "Judiciary [taking] cognisance of social relations in [South Africa]. It permits discrimination between different races — but it must not lead to substantial inequality." 5 H. Hahlo \& E. Kahn, supra note 1, at 135, 813.
\item \textsuperscript{29} Rex v. Ndhlovu, App. Div. Rep. 369 (A. 1945). See also 5 H. Hahlo \& E. Kahn, supra note 1, at 307. Some statutes do put the burden of proof on the accused but these tend to be political crimes. Id.
\item \textsuperscript{30} Rex v. Bolen, App. Div. Rep. 345 (A. 1941). See also 5 H. Hahlo \& E. Kahn, supra note 1, at 308.
\item \textsuperscript{31} Criminal Procedure Act, supra note 10, at § 73(2). The right to representation is available to those that can afford it. See supra note 10.
\item \textsuperscript{32} State v. Assel, 1 S. Afr. L. Rep. 402 (C. 1984) (the defendant has the right to refuse to give evidence and the decision to remain silent or to testify is the prerogative of the defendant); State v. Mdogana, 4 S. Afr. L. Rep. 46 (E.C. 1978) (the criminal defendant has the right to close without leading any evidence).
\item \textsuperscript{34} State v. Mabote, 1 S. Afr. L. Rep. 745 (O. 1983) (the defendant has the right to address the court before judgment on the merits and the opportunity to do so must be afforded him regardless of his prospects of success); State v. Hlongwane, 4 S. Afr. L. Rep. 321 (N. 1982) (the right for unrepresented defendants to subpoena witnesses is part of
precedence including stare decisis, as well as binding and persuasive decisions. Today, however, the rules of procedure have become more complicated, making it especially difficult for a person not schooled in the law to participate in adversarial proceedings.

2. Court Structure and Officials

The court structure in South Africa consists of lower and superior courts. The lower courts are the Magistrates' courts, the Regional courts, and the Black courts. The lower courts (their right to put their case forward). See also N. Steytler, supra note 1, at 156-57, 168-72.

35. van S d'Oliveira, The Administration of Justice in South Africa in Our Legal Heritage, at 145, 154 [hereinafter van S d'Oliveira]. The Appellate Division's decisions bind all divisions of the Supreme Court and the lower courts. It regards itself as bound by its own decisions unless a decision "has been arrived at on some manifest oversight or misunderstanding" or its attention "was not drawn in the previous decisions to relevant authorities." W. Hosten, A. Edwards, C. Nathan & F. Bosman, Introduction to South African Law and Legal Theory 230 (1983) [hereinafter W. Hosten]. The Provincial Divisions, Local Divisions and lower courts do not regard themselves bound by precedents of other divisions. However, courts are bound by decisions from higher courts in their immediate hierarchical line. Furthermore, a single judge court is bound by a decision of a full court (meaning two or more judges) within its division. Id. See generally W. Hosten, supra, at 230-45.

36. This difficulty has been expressed by the Natal Provincial Division court: [t]he odds are stacked against [the unrepresented defendant]. He knows nothing about the rules of evidence, rules mastered only through training and experience, rules that no tips he receives from the trial Court can equip him to understand fully or apply effectively. He knows nothing of the criminal law's subtleties . . . he has no real grasp of what counts in law and what does not. State v. Khanyile, 3 S. Afr. L. Rep. 795, 811-12 (N. 1988).

37. These courts are divided into Magisterial districts with 325 magistrates' offices throughout South Africa. These courts fall under the magistrates' section of the Department of Justice. Their jurisdiction is determined by the Magistrates Act, No. 32 (S. Afr. 1944). These courts have jurisdiction over all criminal cases in their district except treason, murder and rape. Penalties that may be imposed are limited to 12 months imprisonment, a fine not exceeding 1000 rand and corporal punishments with a cane only. These courts also have civil jurisdiction over persons resident, employed or carrying on business within its district, or where the entire cause of action arose within its district. The court does not have jurisdiction over matters which exceed 1500 or sometimes 3000 rand unless the parties have agreed to this in writing. The Act specifically excludes cases concerning marriage, wills and the mental capacity of a person. van S d'Oliveira, supra note 35, at 145-46. For the fourth quarter of 1990 the South African rand averaged 2.5325 rand to the dollar. Int'l Fin. Statistics, Int'l Monetary Fund, March, 1991.

38. The Regional courts have increased penal jurisdiction and were established in 1952. There are six regional courts. These are exclusively criminal courts with jurisdiction over all criminal matters except treason and murder. Penalties that may be imposed are limited to 10 years imprisonment, a fine not exceeding 10,000 rand, and corporal punishment with a cane only. van S d'Oliveira, supra note 35, at 146. See supra note 37.
submit their appeals and cases under automatic review\textsuperscript{40} to their respective Provincial Divisions.\textsuperscript{41}

The superior courts include the Supreme Courts,\textsuperscript{42} special courts,\textsuperscript{43} and the Appellate Division.\textsuperscript{44} The Appellate Division, situated in Bloemfontein,\textsuperscript{45} is the highest court of South Af-

\footnotesize{39. These courts were created because a conflict arose between South African law and native or tribal law. These courts deal solely with the adjudication of issues between blacks in terms of indigenous law and custom so long as these issues do not conflict with “civilized” legal norms. These courts include the Homeland courts existing in the self governing territories and the independent homelands of Transkei, Bophuthatswana, Ciskei, and Venda. van S d’Oliveira, \textit{supra} note 35, at 146, 149-50. \textit{See also} Hoexter Commission, \textit{supra} note 9, at part I, paras. 3.4.3.1-3.4.3.7. These courts have their own hierarchy: Courts of Chiefs and Headmen, and commissioners’ courts with right of appeal to appeals court for commissioners’ courts and, under special circumstances, to the Appellate Division. \textit{W. Hosten, \textit{supra} note 35}, at 229 n.64.

40. For a discussion of automatic review see \textit{infra} note 68 and accompanying text.

41. The Criminal Procedure Act, No. 51, ch. 28, § 294 (S. Afr. 1977). \textit{See also infra} note 42 on provincial divisions.

42. Presently, there are six provincial divisions of the Supreme Court: the Natal, Transvaal, Orange Free State, Cape, Northern Cape, and Eastern Cape provincial divisions. \textit{See supra} note 3. There are three local divisions: Witwatersrand, Durban and Coast, and South Eastern Cape division. These have concurrent jurisdiction with their provincial division counterparts. Judges of the provincial divisions preside over the courts of the local divisions. The Supreme Court has original and unlimited jurisdiction within its provincial boundaries. It is also empowered to hear appeals from lower courts and to review the proceedings of lower courts and administrative bodies. Murder, treason and very serious cases may only be brought before the Supreme Court. Penalties that may be imposed are generally unlimited, including life imprisonment and the death penalty. van S d’Oliveira, \textit{supra} note 35, at 150-51. \textit{See infra} note 57 regarding “serious cases.”

43. Special courts include the Water Courts (established in 1912 to hear any matter connected with use of water from a public stream or underground water), Special Income Tax Court (established in 1914 to hear all appeals from the rulings of the Commissioner of Internal Revenue), Special Court of Maintenance and Promotion of Competition Act (hearing appeals from the decisions of the minister and actions against persons who have applied restrictive commercial practices), Court of the Commissioner of Patents, and Court of the Registrar of Trade Marks. van S d’Oliveira, \textit{supra} note 35, at 151-53.

44. Prior to 1950, Appellate Division decisions were reviewable by the Privy Council in Britain. Thereafter the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court of South Africa became the final judicial tribunal subject to Parliament’s legislation. The Appellate Division consists of the Chief Justice of South Africa and 13 judges of appeal (this number is determined by the State President and has varied in the past). It is solely a court of appeal from the divisions of the Supreme Court only upon leave from the lower court judges. Its decisions are binding on all courts in South Africa. Generally, appeals of both criminal and civil cases are heard by three judges, while constitutional questions require eleven judges. van S d’Oliveira, \textit{supra} note 35, at 153-54.

45. Bloemfontein is the capital of the Orange Free State and the seat of the Judiciary. Both Pretoria (the capital of the Transvaal province) and Cape Town (the capital of the Cape province) share the seat of Government, which moves back and forth every six months.
rica. The Appellate Division, as well as all other courts, lack the power to contravene the laws passed by the South African Parliament. The courts' only role is to interpret the laws.

Presiding officers of the courts include the Chief Justice, judges, acting judges, and magistrates. Court officers include legal practitioners (advocates and attorneys), attorneys-
1991] INSUFFICIENT LEGAL REPRESENTATION 391
general (prosecutors), and administrative officers. Other officials include the State Attorney, State Law Adviser, Master of the Supreme Court, Registrar of Deeds, and other Registrars.

B. Safeguards For the Unrepresented Defendant

Statutory safeguards in the Criminal Procedure Act create the right to counsel and the automatic review of serious cases when a defendant is unrepresented at trial. Also, the Legal Aid Act was passed in 1969 to create a national system for the delivery of legal aid. This Act established the Legal Aid Board

proffered case. Advocates may not solicit business from these sources and this is so strictly enforced that they will not visit the attorneys at their firms; rather the attorney must visit them at their chambers. Id.

Attorneys draft all contracts and advise clients. Attorneys may not advertise their services but they are allowed to solicit business and they are responsible for the client relationship. They may choose which advocate to "brief." "Briefing" entails researching the legal issues, presenting them in a memo for consideration by the advocate and then discussing the strategy of how to present the case in court. Attorneys may argue issues in the District and Regional courts but may not argue in the Supreme courts. The attorney must pay the advocate's fees regardless of whether the client pays the attorney. Id. at 256-433.

This highly rigid, split-duty system means that a defendant who is only given an attorney cannot be represented in the Supreme Court, while the defendant with only an advocate will not benefit from the legal research normally done by the attorney.

53. Attorneys-general are under the jurisdiction of the Department of Justice and are subject to the control and instructions of the Minister of Justice. The State President appoints the attorney-general for each provincial division. The office has been non-political since the Union of South Africa was formed. The office is held by a public servant concerned solely with prosecutions. This position's duties are determined by the Criminal Procedure Act. Although the attorney-general may appear personally before any court, his power is delegated to his personnel of state advocates (for superior courts) and public prosecutors (in the lower courts). van S d'Oliveira, supra note 35, at 158.

54. Administrative officers include the registrar (Supreme courts) and clerk of the court (Magistrate's courts). van S d'Oliveira, supra note 35, at 160-61.

55. Additional registrars include the Registrars of Companies, Patents, and Trade Marks. van S d'Oliveira, supra note 35, at 161-64.


57. Serious cases are those cases where the defendant received a prison term of three months or a fine exceeding 500 rand from a Magistrate with less than seven years experience, or a prison term of six months or a fine exceeding 1000 rand from a Magistrate with more than seven years experience. Criminal Procedure Act, No. 51, ch. 11, § 302 (S. Afr. 1977). See supra note 37 for the United States dollar equivalent of a South African rand. See infra note 68 and accompanying text regarding the automatic review of cases.

58. Legal Aid Act, No. 22 (S. Afr. 69).

59. McQuoid-Mason, Legal Aid, in 14 THE LAW OF SOUTH AFRICA 181-82 (W. Joubert ed. 1981) [hereinafter McQuoid-Mason, Legal Aid]. Prior to the Legal Aid Act, a number of private and partially state-funded organizations provided legal aid services. However, they were based on charity and this explains why legal practitioners tended to
1. Statutory Safeguards

a) Criminal Procedure Act, No. 51 of 1977

The Criminal Procedure Act codifies some of the defendants' rights including: (1) the right to call and cross-examine witnesses; (2) the right to be present during the trial; (3) the automatic review of serious cases; and (4) the right to have legal representation. While the Criminal Procedure Act specifically included the right to counsel, no provisions were made for pro deo and pro amico systems, found in the

---

60. Applicants had to meet the “indigence” test. See infra note 86 and accompanying text.

61. The pro deo system is a well established practice observed by the courts that all accused in jeopardy of the death penalty shall be appointed an advocate at little or no cost to the defendant. The pro amico system permits legal practitioners to decide to take on a case for less than the required fees. See supra note 59, at 11-13. See supra note 19 and infra notes 97, 109 and accompanying text.


63. Id. at § 158.

64. Id. at § 302. See supra note 57 and infra note 68 and accompanying texts on serious cases and automatic review.


66. See supra note 57 and infra note 68 and accompanying texts.
defendants who could not afford legal representation.67

The Criminal Procedure Act also codifies the automatic re-
view system for criminal defendants.68 While automatic review
gives the unrepresented defendant some protection, its primary
function is to maintain control over the lower courts.69 The re-
viewing judge may only inquire whether the proceedings have
been conducted in accordance with justice and whether the de-
fendant has been prejudiced by a gross irregularity in the pro-
ceedings.70 The reviewing judge may not retry the case based on
the record, as this would be tantamount to an appeal.71 Only the
appellate judge may overrule a lower court's decision if the lower
court judge misapplied the law to the facts.72 The reviewing
judge may, however, amend or change the defendant's convic-
tion,73 thereby giving the defendant some protection from
injustice.

Regional court sentencing is not automatically reviewable.74
Many cases decided in the lower courts are sent to the regional
courts for sentencing.75 Therefore the sentencing judge must
sentence the defendant based on a trial record over which the
judge did not preside.76 The lack of automatic review of sentenc-
ing decisions presents a large gap in safeguarding the unrepre-
sented defendants' legal rights.77

67. It cannot be maintained that the pro deo system takes the place of statutory
incorporation of the problem of legal representation for indigent defendants. Although
the pro deo system is judicially upheld, it is not dictated by legislation. N. Steytler,
supra note 1, at 16. See also supra notes 11, 19, 61 and accompanying texts on the pro
deo system.

68. Automatic review is afforded to any conviction carrying a penalty of three
months imprisonment or 500 rand if the sentence was proclaimed by a magistrate of the
district courts with less than seven years service. All convictions carrying a penalty of six
months imprisonment or 1000 rand are reviewable if proclaimed by a district court mag-
istrate with over seven years experience. For any conviction carrying a penalty of a whip-
ning for an adult over 21 years of age, the punishment is subject to automatic review
regardless of the magistrate's experience. The Criminal Procedure Act, No. 51, chs. 28,
of the South African rand.


70. W. Hosten, supra note 35, at 810.

71. W. Hosten, supra note 35, at 810.

72. W. Hosten, supra note 35, at 810.

73. W. Hosten, supra note 35, at 809-10.

74. W. Hosten, supra note 35, at 810; N. Steytler, supra note 1, at 14-15.

75. The regional courts have higher sentencing jurisdiction than the district courts.
See supra notes 37 and 38 and accompanying text.

76. See supra note 38 and accompanying text.

77. W. Hosten, supra note 35, at 810:
b) Legal Aid Act No. 22 of 1969

In 1969 the Legal Aid Act was passed.\(^7\) Its charter established the Legal Aid Board.\(^7\) Since the Act did not dictate the structure of the legal aid system, the Board was free to create its own system for delivering legal aid.\(^8\) The Board is a corporate body and sets its own rules which are not subject to direct review or change by the South African Government.\(^8\) The Board is funded annually by the Government but may accept funds from any source.\(^8\) Legal aid is not regarded as a right but as a privilege.\(^8\) Legal aid is available not only for criminal cases but also for all cases in which the assistance of a legal practitioner is normally required.\(^8\) The Act's object is to "render or make available legal aid to indigent persons."\(^8\) Because the Act did not specifically define "indigence," it was left to the Board to create a definition. The *Legal Aid Guide*\(^6\) states the criteria for indigence, the funds to be contributed by the defendant, the fees to be paid to counsel, and the type of services that may be rendered. The Board also established a bureaucratic hierarchy of

However, with the increase in the substantive and sentencing jurisdiction of the regional courts to include offenses as rape, and sentences up to 10 years imprisonment, many cases which were previously tried in the Supreme court with the assistance of pro deo counsel, are now heard in the regional courts with the defendant unrepresented.


78. While the Legal Aid Act was passed in 1969, it was instituted in 1971. See *supra* note 6 and accompanying text. Legal Aid Act, No. 22 (S. Afr. 1969). See N. Steytler, *supra* note 1, at 17.

79. The Board consists of eleven members: one nominated by the Bar Council and appointed by the Minister of Justice, four nominated by the Association of Law Societies and appointed by the Minister of Justice, five civil servants, and a judge as Chairman. Legal Aid Act, No. 22, §§ 2, 4 (S. Afr. 69).


82. Legal Aid Act, No. 22, §§ 9(1), 9(3) (S. Afr. 1969). The Board currently does not receive funds from elsewhere, but the Legal Aid Act does not prohibit this. However, E. S. Sholtz agreed that no foreign government or organization is likely to contribute to a South African organization deemed to be under the direct control of a Government most foreigners believe to be invalid. Interview with E.S. Sholtz, Director of the Legal Aid Board in Pretoria, (Aug. 14th, 1989). [hereinafter Interview with E.S. Sholtz]


86. Guide, *supra* note 60. The GUIDE contains all the directives of the board and a set of rules to enforce the terms of the Legal Aid Act with the force of delegated legislation. McQuoid-Mason, *supra* note 59, at 195.
legal aid officers\textsuperscript{87} and adopted the British legal aid system of referring cases to attorneys in private practice and remunerating them at a set tariff.\textsuperscript{88}

A defendant qualifies for legal aid if he or she meets the Board's means test of "indigence."\textsuperscript{89} This test sets out the maximum monthly income that a person can earn before becoming ineligible for legal aid.\textsuperscript{90} Decisions to grant legal aid are made by the legal aid officers.\textsuperscript{91} There are also situations in which the defendant would be denied legal aid even if the means test was met.\textsuperscript{92}

The main problem faced by the Board is the acute inadequacy of its funding.\textsuperscript{93} Even if adequate funds were available to pay for all requests for counsel, there are not enough legally trained practitioners available to do the work.\textsuperscript{94} In addition, the number of criminal defendants eligible for legal aid is greater

\textsuperscript{87} Legal aid officers are usually civil servants, members of the same Public Service from which magistrates and prosecutors are chosen. This poses the problem of the officer not being considered impartial in the eyes of the defendant. Hoexter Commission, supra note 9, at part II, para. 6.4.4.3. Civil servants also undergo legal training but the scholarly degree obtained is of a lesser caliber than that obtained by advocates and attorneys. Sampson, Legal Education, in \textsc{Our Legal Heritage} 167 at 175-76, supra note 15. See supra notes 51, 52 and accompanying text on legal training of court officers.

\textsuperscript{88} \textsc{Guide, supra} note 60, at Annexure E. A portion of this fee may be payable by the defendant, depending on his income. \textit{Id.} at 2.5.1.

\textsuperscript{89} \textsc{Guide, supra} note 60, at para. 2.4, Annexure C.

\textsuperscript{90} \textsc{Guide, supra} note 60, at Annexure C. Currently, the cutoff point is 1000 rand per month for a married individual, with an additional amount earned of 150 rand allowed for each dependent. \textit{Id. See supra} note 37 for the United States dollar equivalent of the South African rand.

\textsuperscript{91} \textsc{Guide, supra} note 60, at para. 4.1. Decisions are appealable to the Director of the Legal Aid Board. \textit{Id.} at para. 4.12. The problem of the defendants' view of the legal aid officer not being impartial is especially relevant given the decision-making power the legal aid officer has in determining legal aid eligibility. \textit{See supra} note 87 and accompanying text.

\textsuperscript{92} Many criminal cases are turned down: (1) if \textit{pro deo} defense is available; (2) if the defendant admits guilt; (3) if the legal aid officer considers the offense or the defendant's defense to be so simple that it can be advanced by the defendant himself; (4) for any traffic offense; (5) in a preparatory examination (held where the "attorney-general is of the opinion that it is necessary for the more effective administration of justice." Criminal Procedure Act, No. 51, ch. 20, § 123 (S. Afr. 1977)); (6) for the institution of a private prosecution (this may be instituted in terms of Criminal Procedure Act, No. 51, § 13 (S. Afr. 1977); (7) if the legal aid officer considers the defendant to be unemployed for no sound reason; or (8) if the legal aid officer believes that the defendant leads a criminal life (for example, applicants with previous convictions). \textsc{Guide, supra} note 60, at para. 3.1. \textit{See supra} note 87 regarding the defendants' belief that legal aid officers are not impartial.

\textsuperscript{93} N. Steytler, \textit{supra} note 1, at 18-22.

\textsuperscript{94} N. Steytler, \textit{supra} note 1, at 21.
than the number that apply for legal aid, mainly because most South Africans are unaware that the Board exists.\textsuperscript{95} Finally, the wide-spread belief that legal aid officers are not impartial and cannot be trusted is another factor explaining why so few eligible indigent defendants apply for legal aid.\textsuperscript{96}

2. Common Law Safeguards

a) \textit{Pro Deo} System

The \textit{pro deo} system\textsuperscript{97} was instituted by the Supreme court\textsuperscript{98} and is not under statutory rule. The Supreme court generally will request its district’s bar association to appoint \textit{pro deo} counsel\textsuperscript{99} in all criminal cases where the defendant faces the possibility of capital punishment.\textsuperscript{100} Defendants represented by \textit{pro deo} counsel are not eligible for legal aid.\textsuperscript{101} The advocate\textsuperscript{102} is not paid according to the legal aid tariff, nor are any legal fees paid by the Board; legal fees are paid from state funds appropri-
ated for the court.\textsuperscript{103}

The main problem of the pro deo system is that it is only available for capital offenses in the Supreme court.\textsuperscript{104} Defendants who are tried in the Regional courts are not eligible for pro deo assistance, despite the fact that these courts have jurisdiction to hear capital offenses and to sentence the defendant for up to ten years imprisonment.\textsuperscript{105} Moreover, the appointment of pro deo counsel automatically precludes the unrepresented defendant from any legal aid from the Board.\textsuperscript{106} Thus, the defendant may only benefit from advocate assistance, but not assistance from an attorney.\textsuperscript{107} In addition, most of the advocates assigned to pro deo cases are young and inexperienced.\textsuperscript{108}

\begin{itemize}
  \item[b)] Pro Amico Services
  
  Pro amico services\textsuperscript{109} are rendered by the legal practitioners to “deserving” cases.\textsuperscript{110} If a third party pays for the services normal rates are charged by the advocate, but if the defendant will pay for the services a lesser fee is permitted.\textsuperscript{111} The main problem with these services is that it is up to the individual legal practitioner to offer them.\textsuperscript{112} This practice has generally waned because practitioners feel that these services should be provided by the Board.\textsuperscript{113}
\end{itemize}

\section*{III. Causes of Existing Problems}

There are four primary reasons why South Africa has such a large percentage of unrepresented criminal defendants. The first
is the rapidly growing number of indigent defendants, and the second is the scarcity of advocates and attorneys.\textsuperscript{114} The third is the lack of adequate financing of the Board,\textsuperscript{115} and fourth, the lack of public knowledge about rights of defendants to legal counsel and of the existence of the Board.\textsuperscript{116}

South Africa's economy has been declining recently because of a recession and international sanctions.\textsuperscript{117} This has increased unemployment among the lower paid laborers\textsuperscript{118} and also has contributed to the increase in South Africa's crime rate.\textsuperscript{119} Ninety percent of the criminal defendants are black and indigent.\textsuperscript{120} The predicament of under-representation becomes apparently critical with the increase in the number of criminal cases coupled with a shortage of lawyers.

In 1989, there were 6829 attorneys and 1006 advocates\textsuperscript{121} representing 30.1 million people.\textsuperscript{122} Civil matters compose ninety percent of the work done by attorneys and advocates.\textsuperscript{123} This is not only because the majority of cases in the courts are civil, but also because civil matters generally pay better than criminal

\begin{footnotes}
\item[114] See supra note 94 and accompanying text.
\item[115] See supra note 93 and accompanying text.
\item[116] See supra note 95 and accompanying text.
\item[117] See generally Dube, Bearing Pain of Sanctions; Blacks Hurt But See Need, World Times Inc., Sept. 1989, at 6 [hereinafter Dube].
\item[118] Id.
\item[117] South Africa's crime rate has traditionally been very high as has the number of blacks executed. In South Africa, Hangings are Routine Justice, L.A. Times, Apr. 17, 1988, at 1, col. 3. The reasons are generally due to the apartheid system and the lack of sufficient education of black South Africans. The lack of education, and, therefore, the lack of many skills, contributes to the high unemployment. Id. See also Bruck, On Death Row in Pretoria Central: Capital Punishment in South Africa, THE NEW REPUBLIC, July 13, 1987, at 18, and Dube, supra note 117, at 6.
\item[120] N. STEYTLER, supra note 1, at 19. "The low level of education and youthfulness of a substantial portion of the accused are indicators of low occupational status, which would place legal services beyond their means . . . [I]t is apparent that more than 90\% of [these indigent defendants] were black." Id.
\item[121] Telephone interview with a representative of the Johannesburg Bar Association (Aug. 5, 1989). These figures do not include lawyers in the homelands. See supra note 4 on South Africa's provinces and homelands.
\item[122] The Star, supra note 2, at 1, col. 1. The article quotes statistics from the South African Central Statistical Service. See supra note 2 for racial breakdown of South Africa's population.
\item[123] N. STEYTLER, supra note 1, at 21.
\end{footnotes}
cases, as most criminal defendants are indigent.\textsuperscript{124} Even if all defendants were entitled to legal representation there would not be enough lawyers, let alone proficient criminal lawyers, to handle the case load.

The foregoing problems are exacerbated by the inadequacy of the Board's funding.\textsuperscript{125} While the government has publicly stated it will not decrease funding,\textsuperscript{126} it is clear that the Board is vastly under-funded.\textsuperscript{127} The Board's 1987 budget was nine million rand,\textsuperscript{128} most of which was used for civil cases.\textsuperscript{129} Only 1,284,289 rand\textsuperscript{130} was spent during 1987 for a total of approximately half a million\textsuperscript{131} criminal defendants, while 150 million rand is currently needed if all criminal defendants are to receive legal representation.\textsuperscript{132}

Finally, the lack of representation results from the fact that the majority of South Africans are unaware of their legal rights, especially the right to counsel.\textsuperscript{133} Furthermore, most South Afri-
cans are unaware of the available legal aid sources. While traditionally it was not necessary for the court to inform the defendant of the right to legal representation, it was recently held that the judicial officer must inform the unrepresented defendant of the legal right of representation and of the opportunity to apply for legal aid.

Even if the defendants know of the right to counsel, they do not necessarily know that legal aid is available through either the Board or through pro amico services. The Board is aware of this problem and has started to distribute information pamphlets in police stations and to inform school children of the Board's existence. However, the funding received by the Board is insufficient for its legal work, let alone for advertising and other educational purposes. In addition, the legislature rejected the recommendation of the latest commission reporting on the structure and functioning of the courts that more legal aid sub-offices be created to publicize the scheme more effectively.

The greatest obstacles to representation are the racial, social, cultural, economic, and political rifts between the unrepresented defendant and the judicial system as a whole. The vast
majority of unrepresented defendants are black, illiterate, and young.\textsuperscript{142} Often they are intimidated by the judicial proceedings,\textsuperscript{143} not only because the vast majority of judges and prosecutors are white,\textsuperscript{144} but also because the defendant is likely to be going through the proceedings with an interpreter.\textsuperscript{145} Additionally, the defendant's illiteracy gives him little competence to try to defend himself in the court proceedings which involve many complicated rules of procedure.\textsuperscript{146}

IV. Solutions Presented by the Legal Community

A. Case Law

1. Historical Perspective

Prior to the codification\textsuperscript{147} of the right to legal counsel, the judiciary first recognized this right under the common law\textsuperscript{148} in a

\textsuperscript{142} See supra note 3 and accompanying text.

\textsuperscript{143} See supra note 1, at 18-19. See also supra note 3.

\textsuperscript{144} See supra note 3.

\textsuperscript{145} See supra note 1, at 15.

\textsuperscript{146} See supra note 3. See also supra note 1 discussing languages of South Africa.

\textsuperscript{147} The right was codified in Criminal Procedure Act, No. 31, § 218 (S. Afr. 1917), re-enacted in Criminal Procedure Act, No. 56, § 158 (S. Afr. 1950) and presently codified in Criminal Procedure Act, No. 51, ch. 11, § 73(2) (S. Afr. 1977).

\textsuperscript{148} In criminal cases, a defendant, if he was also “present in person, . . . can by permission of the judge employ the services of an advocate or the aid of an attorney if perchance he is without skill in the business of courts.” J. Voet, Treatise on Roman Law, para. 3.3.15 (1968). This permission was generally granted. See van der Berg, supra
1906 case, *Li Kui Yu v. Superintendent of Laborers*.149 This right was reinforced by subsequent cases.150 The question of the right of indigent criminal defendants to legal counsel has only been indirectly discussed in *Regina v. Mati* in 1960.151

The *Mati* court set the tone for interpreting the right to counsel as a negative right — a right that may not be hindered by the courts, but a right that is not required by the courts.152 While *Mati* recognized the need for legal representation, the court was unwilling to require representation for indigent defendants even if they faced the death penalty.153 The issue in *Mati* was whether an indigent defendant charged with a capital offense must be represented by counsel.154 The court held that there was no rule of law requiring representation; there was only a well-established court practice of appointing *pro deo* counsel.155 A number of cases since *Mati* have held that if the defendant requests legal representation, a court may not hamper the defendant’s exercise of this right.156 A court may not, how-

---

149. TS 181 (T. 1906); D. McQuoid-Mason, *Outline*, supra note 59, at 5.
150. Rex v. Beukes, E. Div. Local Rep. 112, 118 (E.C. 1939) (defendant’s attorney requested a postponement so as to be adequately prepared for trial; the lower court refused the request, and the reviewing court set aside the conviction as a result); Rex v. Zackey, App. Div. Rep. 505, 509-10 (1945) (the refusal to accede to a request for a postponement of a criminal trial can amount to a gross irregularity and form the basis of review proceedings); Regina v. Slabbert, 4 S. Afr. L. Rep. 18 (T. 1956).
155. The state of the law has been described by the South African courts as:

There is no rule of law that a person who is being tried for an offence [carrying the death sentence must] be defended by counsel. But it is a well-established and most salutary practice that whenever there is a risk that the death sentence may be imposed . . . the State should provide defence by counsel . . . It is disquieting to think that . . . [a person can] be sentenced to death after a trial in which by reason of his poverty he has had to conduct his own defence. *Mati*, 1 S. Afr. L. Rep. at 306-07.
156. *State v. Seheri*, 1 S. Afr. L. Rep. 29 (A. 1964) (the defendant cannot be denied the opportunity of having legal representation at trial merely on the ground of his attorney's negligent failure to carry out his mandate; the court committed reversible error by denying the defendant a postponement); *State v. Wessels*, 4 S. Afr. L. Rep. 89; *State v. Blooms*, 4 S. Afr. L. Rep. 417 (C. 1966); *Ndonozonke v. Nel*, 3 S. Afr. L. Rep. 217 (E.C. 1971) (lower court judge refused to allow the defense attorney to resume defense because the judge disliked the attorney’s conduct; the refusal was held to be improper, and warranted the setting aside of the conviction); *State v. Nqula*, 1 S. Afr. L. Rep. 801 (E.C. 1964).
ever, force counsel on a defendant who makes an informed decision to forego representation;\textsuperscript{187} that is, the defendant may waive this right of representation.\textsuperscript{188}

The right to legal representation was broadened by \textit{State v. Heyman} in 1966.\textsuperscript{189} In this case, the Appellate Division extended the right to legal representation to situations in which a person was summoned to be subjected to an inquiry under the Criminal Procedure Act.\textsuperscript{190} The court admitted to a trend in the case law allowing for legal representation of any defendant in danger of being detained whether due to arrest or questioning.\textsuperscript{161} The cases cited by the court also suggest a growing practice of recognizing the claim that indigent defendants should be represented.\textsuperscript{162}

Until recently, case law stipulated that once a defendant requested legal representation, a court could not interfere and must afford every reasonable opportunity for obtaining legal assistance. The court held in \textit{State v. Baloyi},\textsuperscript{183} that if the defendant does not request legal representation, there is no rule of law requiring a reviewing court to vitiate the proceedings merely because the presiding officer failed to inform the defendant of his or her legal rights.\textsuperscript{164} This position has been changed by two

\textsuperscript{157} State v. E, 2 S. Afr. L. Rep. 370 (C. 1981) (once a defendant has elected to proceed with a criminal trial without the assistance of counsel, he cannot later reopen the case merely because the result is unexpectedly adverse); State v. L, 4 S. Afr. L. Rep. 757 (C. 1988) (legal assistance cannot be forced onto a defendant by the court merely because the defendant is a juvenile).


\textsuperscript{160} \textit{Id.} at 602, 608.

\textsuperscript{161} \textit{Id.} at 603.

\textsuperscript{162} \textit{Id.}


\textsuperscript{164} "[W]here he does not seek it, and where no irregularity occurs by which he is deprived of it, there is no principle or rule of practice . . . which vitiates the proceed-
very recent cases: *State v. Radebe*\(^{165}\) and *State v. Khanyile*\(^{166}\)

2. **Major Developments in the Case Law: Radebe and Khanyile**

In *Radebe*, decided in 1987\(^{167}\), the Transvaal Provisional Division held for the first time that the court has a duty to inform unrepresented defendants of their legal rights, including their right to legal representation\(^{168}\). The defendant should be encouraged to exercise these rights\(^{169}\). Further, the judge should inform the defendants of the seriousness of the charge and the possible consequences if convicted\(^{170}\). If appropriate, the judge should inform the defendants that they are entitled to apply for legal aid\(^{171}\). Depending on the facts and circumstances of the case, failure to do the above may be considered an irregularity or a failure of justice warranting setting aside the conviction\(^{172}\).

The *Radebe* decision reviewed two lower court cases\(^{173}\). The first case concerned Radebe who was charged with car theft, and sentenced to four years imprisonment\(^{174}\). After the close of the state's case, the defendant asked for legal counsel and the court refused\(^{175}\). While the reviewing court could have held that the...
court's refusal was an irregularity, the court went even further and held that, because the magistrate failed to inform the defendant of his right to counsel at the trial's commencement, the conviction must be set aside.176

In the second case, Mbonani was charged with public violence and sentenced to ten years imprisonment.177 The trial was held a day after the incident.178 The reviewing court could have held that the speed with which the trial commenced deprived the defendant of the right to be adequately prepared for trial.179 While the reviewing court commended the magistrate for inquiring whether the defendant wished to obtain counsel, it set aside the verdict because the magistrate should have explained the seriousness of the charge to the defendant and also should have explained the "advisability of obtaining legal assistance."180

Radebe, a landmark decision,181 is significant because it established that the right to legal representation included the duty to inform the defendant of this right.182 Of greater significance is the court's recognition that an evolutionary process broadening the right of legal representation exists in South African case law.183

The Radebe decision, however, lacked concrete guidelines for implementation of the right to counsel. The facts and circumstances that require a judge to inform the defendant of these rights are unclear. Judges do not know when they are required to inform the defendant of this right and when the failure to inform constitutes an irregularity and a failure of justice, obligating the reviewing court to set aside the verdict.184

Three months after Radebe, a Natal Provincial Division de-

176. Id. at 197-98.
177. Id. at 198. Two years of the sentence were conditionally suspended. Id.
178. Id.
179. See supra notes 34, 149 and accompanying text on the right to be prepared for trial so as to put one's case before the court.
180. State v. Radebe, 1 S. Afr. L. Rep. at 198-200. The court felt that this was especially warranted because the defendant said that he did not understand the usefulness of obtaining legal counsel. Id.
183. Radebe, 1 S. Afr. L. Rep. at 192. This holding was used by the court in Khanyile to broaden the right still further. See infra note 205 and accompanying text.
cision, *Khanyile*, extended the right of legal representation to include free legal representation for indigent defendants facing heavy charges. The *Khanyile* decision held that a judge should refuse to proceed to try an unrepresented criminal defendant when based on equality before the law: (1) it is a complex case with regard to either the facts or the law; (2) the defendant lacks the maturity, sophistication, intelligence, or articulation to adequately defend himself; or (3) the gravity of the offense and the possible consequences are high. The court stated that when these factors exist, unrepresented defendants cannot effectively participate in defending themselves, thus rendering the trial "palpably and grossly unfair."

The unrepresented defendant in *Khanyile* was convicted of housebreaking with intent to steal and theft and sentenced to imprisonment for a year. The only issue at trial was whether the defendant had committed the crime. The state's sole evidence was the defendant's fingerprints which were found inside the house; there was no other evidence to link the defendant to the crime.

At trial, the defendant was not informed of his right to counsel nor afforded an opportunity to obtain it. The court could have decided the case on these grounds alone by following *Radebe*. Instead, the court went further and held that, in addition to the duty to inform defendants of their legal rights, the judge also has a duty to evaluate whether the indigent defendant needs counsel to prevent the proceedings from being "palpably and grossly unfair." The court found that counsel was warranted because there was no effective cross-examination of an expert witness to adequately test the state's key evidence,

---

185. 3 S. Afr. L. Rep. 795 (N. 1988). The appeal was brought on automatic review.

186. Id. at 797. The opinion did not specifically state how these factors were to be weighed nor against what standard. It left the decision up to the presiding judge based on the facts and circumstances of the case. Id. at 815-16.

187. Id. at 816, 818.

188. Id. at 796-97.

189. Id. at 797.

190. The court believed it was critical that the defendant should have the opportunity to properly cross-examine the fingerprint expert to establish the accuracy of the match of the defendant's fingerprints to those found in the house. Id. at 798, 800, 812.

191. Id. at 799.

192. Id. at 800.

193. Id.

194. Id. at 815-16. See also supra note 185 and accompanying text.
which was critical to the defense.\textsuperscript{195}

The \textit{Khanyile} decision is the first case to interpret the right to legal representation to be a fundamental right\textsuperscript{198} rather than a negative right.\textsuperscript{197} The court stated it would have demanded that all indigent criminal defendants be represented\textsuperscript{198} but did not do so because of the lack of both lawyers\textsuperscript{199} and sufficient funding of the legal aid system.\textsuperscript{200} The court also recognized that such a holding would create an immense backlog of trial court cases because cases would have to be suspended until representation had been obtained.\textsuperscript{201} Therefore, the court settled for the less desirable but more practical path of having the trial judge decide the need for legal representation based on a case by case basis.\textsuperscript{202}

Nonetheless, the \textit{Khanyile} decision still presents a number of practical problems. There are too few lawyers and inadequate legal aid funding to fulfill the requirement that only certain cases require legal representation.\textsuperscript{203} While the strength of the \textit{Khanyile} test is its flexibility, its chief weakness is its wide range of interpretations.\textsuperscript{204} The decision has also been criticized as being too radical\textsuperscript{205} not only because of the practical problems, but also because the court analogized South Africa's situation with that of the United States.\textsuperscript{206}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{195} State v. Khanyile, 3 S. Afr. L. Rep. 795, 800, 818 (N. 1988). See also supra note 189.
\item \textsuperscript{197} \textit{Khanyile}, 3 S. Afr. L. Rep. at 817-18. See also supra note 152 and accompanying text.
\item \textsuperscript{198} \textit{Khanyile}, 3 S. Afr. L. Rep. at 814.
\item \textsuperscript{199} \textit{Id}.
\item \textsuperscript{200} \textit{Id} at 813.
\item \textsuperscript{201} \textit{Id} at 814. In addition, statistics show that defended cases take up more trial court time. On the other hand, represented defendants' cases are not subject to automatic review and therefore would not take up additional court time. Criminal Procedure Act, No. 51, ch. 30, § 302 (S. Afr. 1977). See also supra note 68 and accompanying text on automatic review.
\item \textsuperscript{202} \textit{Khanyile}, 3 S. Afr. L. Rep. at 814-16.
\item \textsuperscript{205} McQuoid-Mason, supra note 203, at 57-58.
\item \textsuperscript{206} In arriving at the holding, the court reviewed international and North American standards concerning the requirements for legal representation of the indigent criminal defendant. \textit{Khanyile}, 3 S. Afr. L. Rep. at 801-10. The court based its test on the \textit{Betts v. Brady} decision. 316 U.S. 455 (1942); \textit{Khanyile}, 3 S. Afr. L. Rep. at 802, 805-06, 809, 814. The decision also discussed the similarities of the due process clause with the
3. Current Position of the Law

The judicial duties established by *Radebe*[^207] have been approved by the Appellate Division[^208] in the decision of *State v. Mabaso*,[^209] Natal's *Khanyile* test,[^210] which provides some unrepresented criminal defendants with counsel, has been overruled by *State v. Mthwana*.[^211]

In *Mabaso* the Appellate Division approved the judgment in *Radebe*, thereby recognizing that the right to counsel is one of the defendant’s legal rights of which he ought to be informed.[^212] As was held in *Radebe*, failure by a judicial officer to inform the defendant of this right may, in appropriate cases, constitute an irregularity which would vitiate the proceedings.[^213] In this case, Mabaso and his co-appellant were convicted of attempted robbery with aggravating circumstances and the unlawful possession of firearms and ammunition.[^214] Mabaso was also convicted of murder for which he was sentenced to death.[^215] While both appellants had pleaded guilty at the pleading proceedings, the magistrate held that the defendants had not adequately admitted all the charges and therefore entered a plea of not guilty for both defendants.[^216] At trial the appellants were represented by counsel and each defendant testified that the admissions had been extracted as a result of police violence and threats.[^217] The trial judge found that the defendants' testimony was not credible and sustained the convictions and sentences imposed.[^218]

[^208]: The Appellate Division is the highest court of South Africa and its decisions are binding on all courts. *See supra* note 44.
[^210]: *Khanyile* test, *supra* notes 184-85 and accompanying text.
[^211]: 4 S. Afr. L. Rep. 361 (N. 1989). This unanimous full bench decision directly overruled *Khanyile* because *Khanyile* was a single judge decision in the same court. *Id.* at 369.
[^213]: *Id.*
[^214]: *Id.* at 189.
[^215]: *Id.*
[^216]: *Id.* at 191, 193.
[^217]: *Id.* at 194-97.
[^218]: *Id.* at 198.
On appeal, the appellants claimed that when they appeared before the magistrate to plead in terms of the charges, they were not informed of their right to legal representation. The defendants claimed that "the nonobservance of this duty represented a gross irregularity vitiating the entire plea proceedings . . . with the consequence that the trial Court had erred in failing to 'set aside' the plea proceedings . . . [and the admissions made] . . . by the appellants." The majority opinion held that the judge's failure to fulfill his duty does not automatically create an irregularity in the proceedings. Assuming that there had been an irregularity in the judicial proceedings, the real question becomes whether, by reason of the magistrate's irregular omission to inform the defendants of their right to legal representation, the trial court committed an irregularity in permitting cross-examination of the defendants regarding the admissions made during the pleading proceedings and in relying on this evidence as proof of the guilt of the defendants. First, the majority held that the trial judge has no power to set aside the plea proceedings. Second, the majority held that "there is no unfairness in admitting a man's statements not otherwise inadmissible against him . . . and if his election to plead guilty results in the loss of the tactical advantage which a denial might have brought him, that is not an unfairness which the law can recognise." The minority opinion specifically disagreed with this last holding. In their view, the pleading proceedings were improperly allowed in evidence at the trial and this constituted a fatal irregularity.

The court specifically declined to decide whether, in addition to informing the defendant of his right to counsel, the judge must "take steps towards securing such representation for an indigent accused." The Appellate Division therefore missed a valuable opportunity to hold that indigent criminal defendants should be represented, which would remove one of the causes of

219. Id. at 199.
220. Id.
221. Id. at 204. "Whether or not an irregularity has been committed will always hinge upon the peculiar facts of the case." Id.
222. Id. at 205.
223. Id.
224. Id. at 209.
225. Id. at 210, 215.
226. Id. at 203.
injustice in the South African courts. Commentators feel that the Appellate Division opinion is disappointing not only because it did not state that a failure to inform defendants of their right to counsel is an irregularity of the judicial proceedings in all cases, but also because it declined to reinstate the Khanyile test.

Khanyile was overruled in the unanimous full bench Natal Provincial Division decision of State v. Mthwana. In addition to the Natal Division’s rejection of Khanyile, two other provincial decisions specifically rejected Khanyile.

In State v. Rudman the court rejected Khanyile because there was no statute that sanctioned the Khanyile holding and because the court interpreted prior Appellate Division cases to preempt the Khanyile court from deciding the issue differently. Furthermore, the court criticized the reasoning used in the Khanyile decision because it analogized the predicament of the unrepresented defendant in South Africa with that of the United States in 1945.

In Nakani v. Attorney General, the judge stated that the right to legal representation is an inherent right that cannot be subject to the discretion of the lower court judges. The court further stated that legal representation was a right that was in no way dependent on the facts and circumstances of the case, and therefore rejected Khanyile. While the Nakani decision could be considered an expansion of Khanyile requiring representation of all indigent defendants, the court merely held that there is a duty on the lower court judges to inform defendants of

228. Id. at 359-60.
236. Id. at 682.
237. Id.
their legal right to representation and about the availability of free legal counsel.238

Conversely, in State v. Davids,239 the Natal Provincial Division240 followed Khanyile and responded to criticisms in the decisions made by the Rudman and Nakani courts. The first criticism is that the Khanyile test was unworkable in practice.241 The Davids court reiterated that the Khanyile test was a compromise that took into consideration the insufficient number of legal practitioners available.242

Secondly, in determining whether the defendant should have counsel, the court would have to preview the entire case. This would require the defendant to plead his defense prior to the state's representation of its case.243 The Davids court responded that the Khanyile test did not require a full preview of the case. Instead, the court held that only a cursory review was needed and that, ideally, the prosecutor should assist.244 Furthermore, if the lower court determined that a defendant was unrepresented, the trial should be postponed until the defendant could obtain legal counsel.245 If no counsel was forthcoming, the judicial officer must proceed, leaving the trial decision to the Supreme Court on appeal, through either automatic or special review246 to decide whether the trial was "intolerably unfair."247 Finally, the court stated that once the reviewing court decides the conviction should be set aside, the prosecutor has the option to indict the defendant again because the reviewing decision

238. Id. at 664.
239. 4 S. Afr. L. Rep. 172 (N. 1989). This case reviewed two lower court decisions. Id. at 173.
240. This opinion, a Natal provincial division, full bench decision with one of the three judges dissenting, was written by the same judge that decided Khanyile.
242. Davids, 4 S. Afr. L. Rep. at 184. The court said that:
   [a] compromise was deemed necessary, one reached between the principle that the representation of accused persons was vital to the fairness of all trials in which it was wanted... and the stark reality that our current resources could never cope with the load they would have to bear if the principle were put into immediate and universal practice.
244. Davids, 4 S. Afr. L. Rep. at 188-89.
245. Id. at 190. The Davids court never stated how long a court should wait in order to allow the defendant to be provided with a lawyer.
246. Id. A magistrate can always request that his decision be reviewed under special review. Criminal Procedure Act, No. 51, ch. 30, § 304A (S. Afr. 1977).
would be based on procedural grounds and not on the merits. The court would not be required to "remit the case for trial de novo." A third criticism is that the Khanyile decision was decided wrongly because there is no statutory duty to provide counsel. There is only a duty not to hamper the defendant from seeking counsel. The Davids court held, however, that the judge is required by statute to conduct trials that comply with fairness and justice. In addition, the court found that to achieve a fair and just trial it follows from this duty that counsel must be provided for the indigent defendant. Finally, the court acknowledged the criticism that the Khanyile rule will create delays. The court held, however, that such delays are necessary for the sake of justice and that it is the defendant's choice to either opt for legal representation or a speedy trial.

The court in Mthwana ignored the discussion in the Davids decision and held in contrast that Khanyile was wrongly decided. The court gave three reasons for its holding. The first was that Khanyile's reasoning was based on the false premise that a denial of the right to representation necessarily results in an unfair trial. Second, the court held that Khanyile incorrectly interpreted two Appellate Division decisions, Mati and Chaane, to hold that the denial of the right to procure representation made the trial per se unfair. Last, the court held that Mati and Chaane precluded the court in Khanyile from holding that there is a judicial duty to procure legal representation for indigent defendants. While recognizing that a lower

248. Id. at 190-91.
249. Id. at 191.
252. Id. at 176, 180-82.
254. Id.
256. Id. at 368.
257. Id. at 369.
259. Mthwana, 4 S. Afr. L. Rep. at 366-67. The Mthwana court held that what Mati and Chaane really stood for was the proposition that it was irregular to deny the accused the right to legal representation. Moreover, if that irregularity was so fundamental, then it per se vitiated the trial. Mthwana, supra note 151, at 366-67.
court judge has the duty to inform the defendant of his right to counsel, the *Mthwana* court held that there was no further duty on the court to halt the trial until counsel was provided. The court specifically overruled the *Khanyile* and *Davids* decisions so that the *Khanyile* test is no longer the law in South Africa today.

**B. Academic Legal Community's Proposed Solutions**

The solutions to the problems of underrepresentation proposed by the academic legal community are to: (1) increase the judge's involvement in aiding the unrepresented defendant; (2) increase funding of the Board; (3) use law clinics, student lawyers and lawyers fulfilling their national service requirements to represent indigent defendants; and (4) educate the populace of the Board's existence.

The first proposal places additional duties on judges to help unrepresented defendants during trial. This solution does not tackle the problem of the need for legal representation of indigent defendants. It also does not recognize the difficulty and undesirability of a judge acting as an advocate for the defendant as well as an impartial decision-maker, as required by the adversarial legal system. Furthermore, it has been suggested that the prosecutor should also assist the judge in protecting the rights of the unrepresented defendant. This solution also seems impractical. Both of these suggestions would make the current South African adversarial legal system take on characteristics typical of an inquisitorial legal system.

The second solution suggested by the academic legal com-

---

263. Id.
264. Some of these additional duties include informing and assisting the defendant to exercise the right to consider his position before pleading; to participate in the remand and bail proceedings; to prepare for trial; to recall witnesses; to apply for a discharge at the end of the State's case; to subpoena witnesses; to subpoena material witnesses free of charge if the defendant is indigent; and the rights relating to appeal and review. N. Steytler, *supra* note 1, at 222-23.
265. This proposal is advocated by Professor Nico Steytler of the University of Natal. See generally N. Steytler, *supra* note 1.
Community is additional funding\textsuperscript{268} for the Board, coupled with a re-assessment of the way that the Board uses its funds.\textsuperscript{269} Instead, the South African Parliament has chosen to ignore the problem of the unrepresented defendant.\textsuperscript{270} Even if the funds are not forthcoming, one leading commentator\textsuperscript{271} suggests that the Board could use its current funds more effectively by hiring public defenders instead of legal aid officers, who, in turn, refer cases to legal practitioners.\textsuperscript{272} Generally, public defenders can process three times more cases than are currently being processed by the legal aid system, because most practicing lawyers do not specialize in the typical criminal cases faced by an indigent defendant.\textsuperscript{273}

A number of interim solutions have been proposed to solve the problems of the scarcity of lawyers relative to the number of unrepresented defendants. Allowing law students to work through a university's legal aid clinic to assist unrepresented defendants can indirectly increase the amount of legal assistance available to unrepresented defendants.\textsuperscript{274} The students would be responsible for preparing a defense or even for representing defendants, with supervision, in the lower courts.\textsuperscript{275} Additional manpower can also be generated by allowing candidate attorneys to appear for the defendant in Regional courts.\textsuperscript{276} Finally, lawyers who are fulfilling their National Service requirement could

\textsuperscript{268} See supra notes 82, 124-32 and accompanying text on Legal Aid Board's source of funding.

\textsuperscript{269} This proposal is advocated by Professor David McQuoid-Mason of the University of Natal. Professor McQuoid-Mason is the foremost legal scholar in the field of South Africa's legal aid system. See generally McQuoid-Mason, Legal Aid, supra note 59; D. McQuoid-Mason, OUTLINE, supra note 59; and McQuoid-Mason, supra note 202.

\textsuperscript{270} It has been written that:

Parliament has shown little concern for the position of the indigent accused and has exhibited a reluctance to extend legal aid to all accused persons. Concern for increased spending on legal aid, particularly in criminal matters, is not a politically popular cause and major increases in funding may not be forthcoming in the foreseeable future.

N. Steytler, supra note 1, at 22. A number of Commissions assigned the task to review the problems of the South African legal system have recommended ways in which the system can assist the unrepresented defendant, most of which the South African Government has chosen not to implement. See generally N. Steytler, supra note 1, at 42-53.

\textsuperscript{271} See supra note 280.

\textsuperscript{272} D. McQuoid-Mason, OUTLINE, supra note 59, at 122.

\textsuperscript{273} D. McQuoid-Mason, OUTLINE, supra note 59, at 122.

\textsuperscript{274} See D. McQuoid-Mason, OUTLINE, supra note 59, at 169-71.

\textsuperscript{275} See D. McQuoid-Mason, OUTLINE, supra note 59, at 139-63.

\textsuperscript{276} See infra note 299 and accompanying text. Candidate attorneys are second-year articled clerks or advocates under pupilage. N. Steytler, supra note 1, at 15.
be employed by the Board as temporary public defenders.\textsuperscript{277}
A long term solution would be educating South Africans about the Board's existence. For a number of years the legal community has noted the lack of public awareness of the Board's existence, therefore showing the need for more public education.\textsuperscript{278} As a result, both the Board and the legal community are working to educate South Africans about their legal rights and the services available to them.\textsuperscript{279} Pamphlets describing these legal rights and services are distributed in police precincts and by legal practitioners.\textsuperscript{280}

V. ANALYSIS OF REFORM

There are two main avenues for reform: the courts and Parliament. Although the Natal Provincial Division overruled the \textit{Khanyile} decision,\textsuperscript{281} that holding could be re instituted in a future case in any or all of the provincial divisions.\textsuperscript{282} Unless Parliament decides to enact legislation to the contrary, such a court ruling could prompt the appropriation of additional funds for legal aid. Unfortunately, because \textit{Khanyile} was overruled and Parliament has shown a lack of interest in ameliorating the plight of the indigent criminal defendant,\textsuperscript{283} this seems very unlikely. In the meantime, the proposed solutions presented by the

\textsuperscript{277} While their numbers are few, these lawyers could process an estimated 2000 cases a year. McQuoid-Mason, \textit{supra} note 59, at 63.
\textsuperscript{278} N. Steytler, \textit{supra} note 1, at 55; D. McQuoid-Mason, \textit{Outline}, \textit{supra} note 59, at 115.
\textsuperscript{279} High school students are being introduced to the legal system to try to dispel the distrust and lack of understanding that exists today. Publications are made available to teachers but it is up to them to use the materials. \textit{See generally} D. McQuoid-Mason, \textit{Street Law: Practical Law for South African Students} (1987).
\textsuperscript{280} Interview with Director of Legal Aid Board, \textit{supra} note 82.
\textsuperscript{281} \textit{See} supra notes 267, 273, 274, and accompanying text.
\textsuperscript{282} A number of legal scholars have heralded the \textit{Khanyile} test as both a challenge to the legal community and a landmark decision. They have argued that it is workable in practice if the legal profession, as a whole, supports the test by devoting a portion of its time to this type of case and if the community at large realizes the importance of further funding the Legal Aid Board. These scholars have also applauded the reasoning used by the \textit{Khanyile} court as having gone beyond the tendency of not applying the reasoning used in United States cases merely because South Africa has no Bill of Rights. \textit{Khanyile} looked at the fundamental basis for the United States decision and, realizing that the same principles and standards are to be found in South Africa's common law, applied the United States court's reasoning. Furthermore, these scholars have professed that the Appellate Division would be likely to uphold \textit{Khanyile} upon review. \textit{See generally} Grant, \textit{supra} note 204; McQuoid-Mason, \textit{supra} note 203; Steytler, \textit{supra} note 196.
\textsuperscript{283} \textit{See} supra note 270 and accompanying text.
academic legal community should be instituted. The two tiers of judicial duty would be an effective interim step to protect the rights of unrepresented defendants. The suggestion of having public defenders instead of legal aid officers should be implemented as soon as possible to use the Board's funds more effectively. Moreover, the increased use of law students and lawyers fulfilling their National Service duties would also help alleviate the shortage of lawyers in the immediate future.

While requiring representation of all indigent criminal defendants is the ideal long-term solution, there are a number of other steps that should be taken by Parliament, the Board, the universities, and the legal system as a whole to improve the situation. Parliament should pass legislation requiring the police to inform defendants of their various legal rights at the time of arrest. Ideally, the police would immediately inform persons held for questioning or on charges of all their legal rights. Not only should defendants be told of the right to counsel and of legal aid, but also of the right to remain silent, the right against self-incrimination, and of the right to have legal representation at the police questioning stage. To ensure enforcement, failure to comply with these requirements by the police would be grounds for acquittal. While the current duties imposed by the Radebe decision are clearly an important safeguard against the possibility that the defendant has not been informed of these rights,

284. See supra notes 264-81 and accompanying text.

285. The Judges' Rules, which do not have the force of law but are administrative directions designed for the guidance of the police, provide for a cautionary statement to be made to those that the police wish to question in connection with a crime.

The wording of a statement to someone to be questioned is suggested as being: "I am a police officer. I am making inquiries (into so and so) and I want to know anything you can tell me about it. It is a serious matter and I must warn you to be careful what you say."

The wording of a statement to someone in custody and who has been formally charged is suggested as being: "Do you wish to say anything in answer to the charge? You are not obliged to do so but whatever you say will be taken down in writing and may be used in evidence."

The wording of a statement to someone in custody and who has not yet been formally charged is suggested as being: "Before you say anything (or, if he has already commenced his statement, 'anything further'), I must tell you that you are not obliged to do so, but whatever you say will be taken down in writing and may be given in evidence."

The evidence obtained without such a cautionary statement is necessarily considered admissible evidence. Judges' Rules in Gardener & Lansdown, 1 South African Criminal Law and Procedure at 613-14 (Sixth ed. 1978). See also 5 H. Hahlo & E. Kahn, supra note 1, at 613-15.

this information should be given at the time of arrest or detainment.

Given the dearth of qualified advocates currently willing to undertake legal aid cases, greater participation by both lawyers and law students will be necessary in supplying legal aid. Therefore, Parliament should enact legislation creating various incentives to induce legal practitioners and students to offer their assistance to indigent defendants. Such incentives could include tax deductions for firms and practitioners for fees not recoverable for these services. Another incentive could be to allow attorneys in their second year of articled clerkship as well as advocates during their pupillage to take on these cases.

In addition, the Bar and Side-Bar can reinforce the governmental incentives by instituting mandatory pro amico undertakings for a specified amount of time per year. This could be considered as an interim situation until current student lawyers are trained and ready to take on the full-time positions of public defenders. This personal sacrifice can be justified, not only in that justice is being served, but also because the legal system as a whole will be elevated to a more trustworthy position in the eyes of South Africans.

An under-utilized source of legal assistance can be found in South Africa's university legal aid clinics. The main problem with using the university legal aid clinics as a source of legal representation is that most students are not interested in participating and offering these services. If Parliament created incentives such as academic credit, a preference for legal aid clinic participants when selecting students for public defender positions, and perhaps scholarships, this large source of manpower could be tapped. In response to the lack of public awareness of the Board's existence, Parliament should increase its funding for legal aid so that there are additional funds available for advertising and educating the public. In addition, Parliament should enact legislation to teach South Africans about their legal rights during school.

288. In the 1989 Amendment to Act 32 of 1944, this suggestion has been implemented, not solely for the purpose of assisting indigent defendants, but for all cases. Magistrate's Court Act, No. 32 (S. Afr. 1944) (amended 1989).
289. See supra notes 61, 97, 110 on pro amico and pro deo. See also supra note 52 on Bar and Side-Bar.
To insure proper legal representation, the Board should prioritize its spending for criminal cases, improve its current form of operation, use its funds more effectively, and solicit additional funds from other sources. Instituting a public defenders office as the method of rendering legal aid would resolve many of the Board's present problems. Not only should the Board switch to this system of legal aid, but also it should limit or prioritize its resources for criminal matters only. More efficient use of funds would enable additional lawyers to be hired. The creation of these jobs would entice more students to study law and to specialize in criminal defense. Salaries would have to be competitive with the private sector to make the public defender positions equally attractive. If that is not possible, making the positions more prestigious would also motivate students to choose the public defender's office. This could be accomplished by having the government and the Minister of Justice give preference to public defenders in their selection of magistrates, prosecutors, or other political positions. The Board would be able to service more applicants because the new system would be more efficient. With the increase in services rendered to unrepresented defendants in criminal trials, many cultural prejudices against the legal system could be lessened. The distrust of the legal system based on the perceived lack of impartiality would disappear through positive personal experiences with the system.

To help the Board solicit additional funds from other sources, Parliament should declare the Board to be a totally autonomous organization. This could be achieved by having the Board controlled by the legal community. The new Board should not adhere to any political policies supported by the government and the composition of the Board membership should be changed to reflect this new allegiance to the legal community.

291. The Legal Aid Act does not specifically call for legal aid to be rendered in the manner presently chosen by the Board. Therefore, the Act cannot prohibit this subsequent change. Legal Aid Act, No. 22, § 3 (S. Afr. 1969); Guide, supra note 60, at para. 1.4. See supra note 284 and accompanying text on instituting the public defenders system. In April 1991 a pilot project instituting a public defenders system started in the Johannesburg Magistrate's Court. Interview with A. Trichardt, advocate with the Johannesburg Bar (April 3, 1991).

292. Salaried lawyers are more cost-effective than using the referral method. D. McQuoid-Mason, Outline, supra note 59, at 122.

293. See supra note 284 and accompanying text on efficiency of public defenders.

294. N. Strytler, supra note 1, 14-15. See supra notes 87, 96 and accompanying text on the perceived lack of impartiality of legal aid officers.

295. The Board should contain fewer governmental ministers and a greater number
Even though the Board relies on the government for funding, Parliament should clarify that these funds are not dependent on the Board following political policies. Both local and foreign funding sources are more likely to be granted to such an independent organization.

Ideally, changes made in the legal system must include the institution of a bill of rights protected by the judiciary which would give the judiciary the power to strike down "unconstitutional" legislation. While this change may be forthcoming, it cannot realistically be expected to occur soon. In the meantime, the changes listed below would improve the situation and should be instituted.

Changes in the selection of the lower court presiding officers would greatly improve the image of the impartiality of these positions. The magistrates for the District and Regional courts are presently chosen from the ranks of civil servants. This is the same pool from which prosecutors and government bureaucrats are chosen. This causes a great deal of distrust of the legal system's impartiality by the majority of South Africans. Instead, Magistrates should be chosen from the ranks of criminal advocates and public defenders. In this way, defendants will feel that
there is a greater likelihood that the magistrates are impartial or, at least, do not favor the government. This will also add prestige to the position of a public defender and may induce advocates to choose this position over the better-paying private sector positions. Finally, the professional caliber of the magistrate would be increased because the education required for advocates (and, presumably, public defenders) is higher than that of civil servants.\textsuperscript{301}

A practical consequence of instituting legal representation for indigent criminal defendants will be the drastic decrease in the number of cases requiring automatic review. This is because only unrepresented defendants convicted of serious charges\textsuperscript{302} are entitled to automatic review.\textsuperscript{303} In addition, criminal cases with represented defendants usually have a much higher acquittal rate, thereby alleviating the state of the costs of incarceration.\textsuperscript{304} Both of these factors will save the state time and money, which can be used to support the increase in legal costs and court time that it takes to try a defended case.\textsuperscript{305}

VI. Conclusion

Confidence in South Africa’s legal system will continue to decline because of the growing number of unrepresented defendants in the criminal courts.\textsuperscript{306} The statutory and administrative safeguards at present are inadequate.\textsuperscript{307} Justice cannot be done while the current situation continues to degenerate due to the unique social, racial and economic conditions prevalent in South Africa today.\textsuperscript{308}

As long as this situation continues, South Africa must institute more drastic measures to protect the unrepresented defendant. If the courts and the government recognize that all criminal defendants should be represented, confidence in the legal system will improve.\textsuperscript{309} Funds will have to be appropriated, but some

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{301} See supra notes 51, 52 and accompanying text.
  \item \textsuperscript{302} See supra note 57 and accompanying text on serious cases.
  \item \textsuperscript{303} See supra note 68 and accompanying text on automatic review.
  \item \textsuperscript{304} D. McQuoid-Mason, Outline, supra note 59, at 121-22.
  \item \textsuperscript{306} N. Steytler, supra note 1, at 14-15.
  \item \textsuperscript{307} See supra note 10 and accompanying text.
  \item \textsuperscript{308} See supra notes 140-45 and accompanying text.
  \item \textsuperscript{309} “No man is so violently anti-social as the man who believes he has not had a fair trial.” Note, 100 S. Afr. L.J. 681, 689, (1983).
\end{itemize}
savings will be achieved by the decrease in the number of cases on automatic review and the higher acquittal rate.\textsuperscript{310} Also, the additional jobs created by an improved legal system will entice students to enter the legal profession, thus alleviating the shortage of lawyers in the long run. In sum, the improvement of the legal system requires the participation of the Board, the universities, the police, governmental agencies, as well as the involvement of the private sector.

\textit{Albertine Renée van Buuren}

---

\textsuperscript{310} See supra notes 302-305 and accompanying text.