

## STATEMENT ON MR. P. S. MAGANE

12 May 1978

**Archbishop J. P. Fitzgerald of Johannesburg (Chairman of the Southern African Catholic Bishops' Conference), arriving at Jan Smuts from a meeting of representatives of Catholic Bishops' Conferences of Africa in Dakar, made the following statement:**

“It was deeply disturbing to hear on my return to South Africa, of the detention under Section 6 of the Suppression of Communism Act, of Mr. Phelelo Simon Magane. He is being detained incommunicado; he is deprived of the right to see his family or even a lawyer; and there is no sign that he will appear in court. The ordinary right of being considered innocent until proven guilty does not seem to apply.

Another leader of the same Catholic Youth Movement, Molatlhegi Ntlokoa was recently held incommunicado for five months. Mr. Magane is the National President of the Young Christian Workers, a Catholic Youth Movement founded in 1913 by Joseph Cardijn, later a Cardinal, and a movement accepted and respected in all Western countries because of the work it has done to develop responsibility, leadership, a sense of dignity and mutual support among young workers. These are people recognised as responsible and are often consulted by public authorities elsewhere.

Surely Simon Magane and many others like him. Similarly detained in South Africa, are entitled to the due process of law. Without proper court procedure it can never be known with any certainty whether they are innocent people are being wrongfully held in prison for months on end. For me, as for many other loyal citizens of South Africa, it must be assumed that Mr. Magane and all others in like condition are innocent until proved guilty in open courts.

Surely measures such as these, are unworthy of a country that is professedly Christian, and are blots on the good name of Christianity.

I am told that eight police, headed by a major of the Special Branch, searched the offices of this Catholic Youth Movement and removed all documents, tapes and correspondence.

We have reached a sorry state when Church offices can be so treated.