

Bomb Kills An Opponent Of Apartheid

Ruth First Is a Victim Of Mozambique Blast

By *AP Wire*

LISSON — Ruth First, one of the most prominent white South African opponents of apartheid, was killed Wednesday when a parcel bomb exploded in her office in Maputo, Mozambique, the official Mozambican press agency reported.

The agency quoted an official of Mozambique's foreign ministry as having said that two South African consular officers in Elizabethville, Swaziland, had been arrested "which was reported to be a result of the South African's operations."

Miss First, 52, was a leading member of the African National Congress and was married to Joe Slovo, generally regarded as the top group's leading strategist.

The press agency report said she

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was killed when she opened a parcel in her office at the Eduardo Mondlane University, where she was a lecturer. Three other persons, including the university rector, Aquilino de Braganca, who is one of President Samora Machel's close advisers, were injured by the blast, the report added.

History of Organization

Miss First was regarded by many as the intellectual power behind the African National Council. She and her husband, both hard-line Marxists, were believed by South African security officials to be key figures in planning sabotage attacks in South Africa. Mr. Slovo, a former Johannesburg attorney, was reported here to have organized guerrilla training camps in Mozambique for blacks who had fled South Africa.

Miss First was one of the first persons detained under South Africa's stringent security law and in 1966 was arrested for high treason, a charge that was dropped two years later. Later she was arrested to the Johannesburg area under the Suppression of Communism Act, and two magazines she edited were banned.

Her subsequent detention in 1963 led her to write "117 days," a classic story of solitary confinement. She was allowed to leave South Africa the following year.

Both her brother and sister-in-law were detained and her father, Julius, alleged by the police to be a leading Communist, fled the country.

In her career as an author, Miss First also won praise for her examination of apartheid in "The Barrel of a Gun."

There was no immediate official comment in South Africa on her death.