

# Prétoria protests innocence

From Michael Hornsby  
Johannesburg

A senior South African official yesterday dismissed as ridiculous suggestions that the letter-bomb which killed Dr Ruth First, a leading South African Communist, on Tuesday could have been posted to her by agents of the South African security police.

Dr First, who is the wife of Mr Joe Slovo, another leading Communist, was also one of the few white members of the African National Congress (ANC). She was killed in her office at Eduardo Mondlane University in Maputo, the capital of Mozambique.

Both the Communist Party and the ANC, the main black liberation movement, are banned organizations in South Africa. First had been living with her husband for some years in exile in Mozambique. A writer and academic of international repute, was director of research at the university's Centre for African Studies.

Despite the South African denials, there can be little doubt in the minds of most observers here that First was killed by Pretoria's agents, who are believed to have been responsible for the deaths of several other ANC activists in exile.

● **MAPUTO:** The Mozambican news agency quoted a security police official as saying that the attack was "similar to others in this region which have proved to be the work of the South African secret services (AFP reports).

● **OXFORD:** An Oxford don has accused the South African Government of being involved in the murder of Dr First (Our Correspondent writes).

Mr Gavin Williams, a politics don at St Peter's college, and also a South African, has just finished editing Dr First's last book -- a study of Mozambique miners who migrated to the South African gold mines.

Mr Williams said yester-

day: "Anyone who knows how the South African state operates will be 99 per cent certain that she has been killed by the South African department of dirty tricks."

● **AMSTERDAM:** Seven Dutch anti-apartheid movements yesterday condemned the attack on Dr First (Reuter reports).

A joint statement said that the killing was one of a series of murders and bomb attacks on ANC members.

● **ADDIS ABABA:** The Organization of African Unity

condemned the killing as a "cowardly and criminal act". (AFP reports).

"Dr First was killed because she was an activist and courageous person, who stood up against institutionalized racism, genocide and fascist dictatorship", the OAU said.

Giving a warning that Pretoria does not have a monopoly on violence, the OAU appealed to African states and "all progressive forces" to step up aid to the ANC.

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