accused of possessing a sharp tongue and a strong-headedness that often made it hard for fellow missionaries to live or work with her, Slessor was respected and honored by her colleagues, who produced an official compilation of her lifework as a dedicated servant of God. Slessor, who never married and had no biological children, was nonetheless a caring mother to the oppressed and exploited. She was also a great educator, a humanitarian, a fearless abolitionist, a promoter of free trade and entrepreneurship, and an unbiased judge, colonial officer, and civic leader.

Slessor’s role in the expansion of the British colonial project in southeastern Nigeria was appropriately rewarded by the British government, which conferred upon her the Honorary Associate of the Order of the Hospital of St. John of Jerusalem. In 1956, British monarch Queen Elizabeth II honored Mary Slessor by laying a wreath at her grave on Mission Hill, Calabar. Slessor’s missionary work is also commemorated on the £10 banknote issued by the Scottish Clydesdale Bank.

[See also Livingstone, David.]

BIBLIOGRAPHY
Buchan, James. *The Expendable Mary Slessor.*
Syme, R. *The Story of Mary Slessor: Nigerian Pioneer.*

Slovo, Joe (1926–1995), leading South African communist and antiapartheid activist, was treated by the apartheid regime as its key enemy. At the same time he had a heroic image among the oppressed black majority as a white person totally dedicated to liberation.

Slovo, whose birth name was Yossel Mashel, was born into poverty in Obel, a village in Lithuania, the son of Yiddish-speaking parents, who were isolated from the Lithuanian community by their language and by anti-Semitism. His father left Obel when Joe was two years old to find a better environment. Settling in Johannesburg, South Africa, as a fruit hawker, it was six years before the father could send for his family. Joe arrived in 1936, then ten years old. According to his daughter Gillian, the Slovo family “were on the lowest rung of the newly arrived Jewish community, but the color of their skin opened a world of opportunity denied the majority of the people in South Africa” (Slovo, 2010). Joe wrote in his autobiography that “we knew nothing at all about the black ghettos; they seemed to be in another world whose function was to belch servants” (Slovo, 1995).

There was a measure of improvement in their lives when Slovo’s parents opened a fruit shop in Yeoville. But when his mother died, the shop collapsed into bankruptcy. When Joe was twelve years old, the family lost their home, and he lived in various boarding houses with his father. Here Slovo first heard discussions about socialism and the oppression of the black majority in South Africa.

Initially, he had little formal education; his last year completed at school was Standard Six (one year above primary school) and his adult working
life began at the age of fourteen. He became involved in trade unionism and joined the Communist Party. When Germany invaded the Soviet Union, Slovo lied about his age and joined the army in 1941. On repatriation in 1946, he was awarded an ex-serviceman’s five-year scholarship to study law at the University of the Witwatersrand. Despite his limited formal education, he excelled and won his year’s class prize. From the shetel he had now risen into the privileged white elite, but unlike most of his contemporaries, he relinquished a life of privilege and high earning.

Slovo’s adult life manifested several distinct identities, and these changed at various times. At one moment he was outwardly a successful advocate/barrister but secretly active in the underground reestablishment of the South African Communist Party (SACP) in 1953. He was involved in legal activities of the Congress of Democrats, an organization allied to the African National Congress (ANC) in the 1950s, but preparing for the launch of the ANC’s liberation army Mkhonto we Sizwe (The Spear of the Nation, commonly referred to as MK) in 1961. In exile from 1962 on, he became a leading theorist on guerrilla warfare. Slovo rose to be chief of staff of MK and was responsible for some of the most spectacular acts of sabotage or attacks on police stations and other apartheid installations.

For scholars of liberation struggles and Marxism, his legacy will be in his writing. His work appeared in the SACP journal African Communist, and in ANC publications. He also wrote chapters in conventional books like No Middle Road, a text that became a groundbreaking work for strategists.

Slovo had earlier played a key role in developing the ANC’s strategy and tactics document in Tanzania in 1969. This was at a time of deep demoralization where the ANC was facing indefinite exile and limited resistance inside the country. The document argued that the “enemy” had a range of weaknesses, and through protracted guerrilla warfare, the strengths of the oppressed could be harnessed and attack apartheid forces in places of vulnerability.

Over time, Slovo wrote a great deal about the developing struggle against apartheid, the various permutations of armed struggle, and its relationship to other elements of strategy and tactics. At the end of the 1980s there was a stalemate, with the apartheid regime unable to make South Africa governable, but the liberation forces unable to achieve military victory. This paved the way for the unbanning of the ANC and SACP and subsequent negotiations leading to a democratic constitution.

Slovo was a key figure in the negotiations and proposed a crucial compromise (the “sunset clause”) calling for a government of national unity and guaranteeing the positions of white civil servants for five years. The offer was made to ensure a peaceful advance to democracy. This was a subject of debate within the ANC and evoked much controversy within the SACP.

His most important theoretical contribution, which continues to bear relevance to contemporary issues, is seen in Slovo’s writings on what is known as “colonialism of a special type.” The concept was used to characterize the South African social order. Deriving from the 1962 Communist Party program (and even earlier in other formulations), it was later adopted by the ANC. Apartheid South Africa was characterized as a form of colonialism, but “special” because the colonizer and colonized shared the same territorial unit. This informed Slovo’s strategic thinking, seeking to break from a class-determinist approach where the seminal importance of “race” was downplayed or a “race”-determinist position was advocated by various Africanist or Black Consciousness groups. He advanced an interrelationship between the two modes of oppression and exploitation and the need to build a broad coalition of oppressed people and democratic whites to defeat the “colonial bloc” comprising all classes of white people benefiting from apartheid. Gender issues were, however, neglected.

While not as open as Ruth First, who had criticized the Soviet Union and various positions of the SACP for a long time, Slovo responded quickly to the process of dissolution of the Communist Party states in Eastern Europe. His work Has Socialism Failed? explained the collapse as fundamentally related to these states’ separating socialism from democracy. The time of this political intervention was important even if superseded by later writings, with a less immediate objective.

After the end of apartheid and the first democratic elections in South Africa in 1994, Slovo became minister of housing in Nelson Mandela’s government. By then he had contracted cancer, and he died in 1995, receiving a state funeral in Soweto, the famous African township.

Slovo was a well-rounded personality, enjoying the good things of life, drinking whisky, telling jokes, and strumming his guitar. He had three daughters and two wives; the first, Ruth First, was assassinated in 1982, and the second, Helena Dolny, 
survived him. He was a wide reader, engaged with Eric Hobsbawm's *Age of Extremes* at the time of his death (Hobsbawm, 1994).

[See also First, Ruth; Mandela, Nelson Rolihlahla.]

**BIBLIOGRAPHY**


RAYMOND SUTTNER

**Small, Edward Francis** (1890/91–1958), Gambian trade unionist, journalist, and politician, was born in Bathurst (Banjul), the Gambian capital, on 29 January 1890 (or 29 January 1891). His father, John W. Small, was a prominent Aku (Creole) tailor and Wesleyan Methodist; his mother was not J. W. Small's wife, Ellen, but Annie Thomas, a small-scale trader originally from Freetown, Sierra Leone. Edward Small, who never married, was educated in Bathurst and then at the Wesleyan Boys' High School, Freetown (1906–1910).

After returning to Bathurst, Small was employed between 1912 and 1916 in two clerical posts and as a schoolteacher. By now seeking a career in the church, he was sent to Ballanghar, a small provincial town, in 1917 to serve as a probationary mission agent. Here he became embroiled in an initially trivial incident with a European trader, but when this escalated and involved the colonial government, the Wesleyan Church authorities dismissed him for insubordination in July 1918. Radicalized by his treatment, Small, together with other young Aku, founded the Gambia Native Defensive Union in 1919 to oppose unfair government policies, and then in 1920 represented the Gambia at the inaugural National Congress of British West Africa conference in Accra. After briefly returning to Bathurst and establishing the Congress's Gambia Section, Small traveled to London as part of a broader Congress deputation later that year.

Shortly after coming back to the Gambia in 1922, Small moved to Rufisque, near Dakar (Senegal) where he soon became embroiled in a bitter dispute with the British consul-general. Now turning to journalism, he published the first edition of *The Gambia Outlook and Senegambian Reporter*, the first Gambian newspaper to appear since the 1890s, in 1922 and would remain its editor (and later also its proprietor) until his death. The *Gambia Outlook* frequently criticized Gambian government policies and called for stronger African representation on public bodies. After living in London for a time (1923–1926), Small returned to Bathurst. He revived the *Gambia Outlook* before, in 1929, establishing first the Gambia Farmers' Co-operative Marketing Association (GFCMA) to fight for improved ground-nut prices for farmers; and then the first Gambian trade union, the Bathurst Trade Union (BTU), to resist significant wage cuts by private-sector employers. As BTU secretary, Small organized one of the most successful strikes in Africa before World War II, which culminated in November 1929 in the concession of substantial pay increases.

The strike brought Small to the attention of radical, pro-communist international organizations, including the International Trade Union Committee of Negro Workers (he was elected to its executive committee in 1930) and the League Against Imperialism. Small always denied that he had become a communist, and his links with such organizations were designed primarily to secure much-needed financial and other assistance. But the Gambian government now regarded him as a "link-subversive." Government pressure helped bring about the collapse of the GFCMA in 1932, and Small was ousted from the BTU leadership by a rival faction in 1933 with government assistance.

Unable to regain control of the BTU, Small founded the Gambia Labour Union (GLU) in May 1935, remaining its chairman and driving force until his death, but the GLU never achieved the same level of effectiveness as the BTU in 1929–1930. Small also established the Rate Payers' Association (RPA) in July 1932; by 1936, the RPA had captured all the elected seats on the Bathurst Advisory Town Council (BATC), but despite organizing protest meetings and petitions, it could not prevent the colonial government from enacting a series of unpopular legal and administrative reforms.