

After Confederation, he gave organized labour unexpected scope to write labour legislation, including a *Workmen's Compensation Act* and a *Labour Relations Act* which introduced the labour standards of the 1940s to Newfoundland. The coming of industrial legality forced Strong to learn new skills, including book-keeping and the complexities of legal language. Again and again, Strong found that following the completion of negotiations employers did not hesitate to alter the text of agreements, shifting "shalls" to "mays" or simply omitting undesirable clauses; through experience, he learned to be vigilant, even to the extent of carrying an old typewriter and a pile of carbons with him to negotiating sessions around the island, so that contracts could be fully executed before he left town. The biggest adjustment for Newfoundland labour leaders, however, was Smallwood's vigorous opposition to the entry of the International Woodworkers' Association into Newfoundland. Strong devotes a full chapter to a discussion of the 1959 loggers' strike, which was such a significant turning point for Newfoundland labour. Like other union leaders of his generation, Strong was astonished by Smallwood's sudden reversal of attitudes towards labour and his "complete abrogation and disregard for the law". The story is told effectively, supplemented by a selection of pro-union cartoons from the pages of the *Corner Brook Western Star*; interestingly, the managing editor of that newspaper, Ed Finn, who resigned during the strike, went on to be a highly effective labour journalist on the national scene in Canada.

There is much more here in the way of local histories, episodes and observations which make up the raw material of history and will be of interest to students of 20th-century Newfoundland. Yet with the exception of the first two chapters, the focus is on public life. Between the lines, we can see that Strong's own personal history was itself one of perseverance and achievement, but we are left with the feeling that, at least among the more modest of public figures, this is one of the characteristic silences of public memoirs, which even the questions and answers of oral history cannot easily elicit. Strong, nevertheless, emerges as a thoughtful and engaging individual, well-remembered in the warm testimony of family and friends. This is an autobiography composed without cant or polish, the straightforward testimony of a man who served his cause with skill and dedication for many years. It is a useful contribution to a tradition of self-expression by Canadian workers, and the publication of this book marks a welcome collaboration between activists and scholars in the field.

David Frank  
*University of New Brunswick*

\* \* \*

Richard A. Lebrun — *Joseph de Maistre: An Intellectual Militant*. Kingston and Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1988. Pp. xi, 366.

Professor Richard A. Lebrun's study of Joseph de Maistre is the latest major monograph on that very important ideologist and great writer. Moreover, it is the first such study based on a rich and systematic use of the Maistrian family archive, hitherto generally closed to researchers. Indeed, together with the relatively recent appearance of the *Revue des études maistriennes* and some other works in the field, it signals, and is meant to signal, a new and higher level in the scholarly investigation of its subject.

The book contains an introduction, acknowledgements, eight mainly chronological chapters, notes relegated unhappily to the back of the volume, a bibliography and an index. The chapters move from "Savoyard roots" and "adventures of the mind" "to the eve of upheaval", and on to "Lausanne", "Italian interlude", "St. Petersburg" and "Turin" to conclude with an "epilogue" devoted to tracing the fortunes of the Maistrarian image and message after De Maistre's death. The book is, on the whole, well and fluently written, although the author refuses to decline "who" and at times prefers "neither...or" "to neither...nor" (twice on page 53). Nor does his expert translation of De Maistre's French begin to match the power and the point of the original. That, of course, could not be helped. But proof reading would have been very helpful: dozens of misprints of every kind mar this work of otherwise high scholarship.

In spite of unfortunate references in the advertising blurb and even in the introduction to "a need for a scholarly English-language biography" with popular appeal, the reader realizes soon enough that Professor Lebrun is primarily interested in the Maistrarian scholarship *tout court*, not with its English-language province, and that he is writing mainly for specialists. The greatest strength of the work is its relevant detail. The author examines closely De Maistre's reading, letter writing, language skills, published and unpublished manuscripts and drafts, friends and acquaintances. De Maistre apparently delighted in keeping extensive records and indeed notes of his enormous reading, as well as a register of his enormous correspondence; Professor Lebrun delights in telling us as much about all this as he can within the bounds of his volume; and this reader at least was delighted to be told. The author is extremely judicious and precise throughout his narrative, separating fact from conjecture and even possibility from probability. Nor is the book simply a collection of little facts, valuable though that might be. What emerges is the evolution of De Maistre's thought with a built-in stress on continuity, even when that thought moved eventually from Gallicanism to Ultramontanism, and from cautious liberalism to extreme legitimist and reactionary positions. As Professor Lebrun remarked in analyzing De Maistre's very first "formal 'composition'", *Éloge de Victor-Amédée III*, written and published in September 1775: "There are numerous passages that leave no doubt that in De Maistre's mind, the most dangerous opinions are those that tend to undermine traditional religion" (50). Yet change is also given its due in this dense and continuous setting. Thus, Professor Lebrun is rather convincing in demonstrating when De Maistre first acquired a providential view of the French Revolution. All scholars in the field will have to take into account *Joseph de Maistre: An Intellectual Militant*.

But some criticism of the study is also in order. Its structure is difficult because of the detail, and also because it devotes very little space to the content of De Maistre's main works. To be sure, these works are available elsewhere; also, Professor Lebrun lists in the bibliography seven other pieces he published on De Maistre, who has obviously been his occupation of a lifetime. But all that may be cold comfort to the reader without the requisite knowledge, especially as he reads, at times, specific critiques of the material he does not recognize (as in the case, for instance, of Catholic objections to *Du Pape*). On a different tack, the crucial St. Petersburg chapter is somewhat weakened by the fact that Professor Lebrun, like De Maistre never learned Russian, although he selected his secondary sources in English and French, not to mention French primary sources, reasonably well. Incidentally, it should be Karl, not Kurt, Nesselrode (207, 363).

One's attitude to De Maistre usually presents difficulties, and it does so in this case. The new and higher stage of Maistrarian studies alluded to above was meant, in

Professor Lebrun's opinion, to utilize novel material and also to bridge the gap between denunciation and hagiography so lamentably prominent in Maistrarian historiography. Professor Lebrun did utilize much material, and he wrote an honest, judicious, nuanced and scholarly work. Yet that work is almost entirely pro-Maistrarian. The ideologist is usually taken at his word, and his lapses, minor and explainable by his social background and the conditions in which he had to function, are not allowed seriously to detract from "this generally very attractive and admirable personality" (263-264). The reader even begins to miss the presumptuous and frequently misguided but at times perhaps penetrating fury of Professor Lebrun's predecessor and foil Professor Robert Triomphe's *Joseph de Maistre, étude sur la vie et sur la doctrine d'un matérialiste mystique*, Geneva, 1968. Well, perhaps in historiography as in law, truth is established through an adversarial process.

To conclude, Professor Richard A. Lebrun has written an important book, in his own, better than acceptable, manner, and from his own entirely legitimate (to be distinguished in this case especially from legitimist) point of view. We are very grateful to him for it.

Nicholas V. Riasanovsky  
*University of California, Berkeley*

\* \* \*

Ruth Mazo Karras — *Slavery and Society in Medieval Scandinavia*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988. Pp. x, 309.

This book takes up one of the great themes of medieval social history, slavery, and explores its history across an ambitious geographic and chronological scope — Scandinavia (here Iceland, Norway, Sweden and Denmark) from the ninth through the mid-fourteenth centuries. In the first chapter, Karras sets out a useful survey of the various theoretical approaches to the problem of slavery and also supplies a thumbnail sketch of slavery throughout medieval Europe. The analysis of slavery is perceptive and judicious. While taking into account broad economic and social aspects of slavery, the author also asks a good question — why did the category of slaves exist in the first place? Karras steers a middle course between the views of her two main authorities on slavery, M.I. Finley and Orlando Patterson, and insists that slavery is above all a conceptual category, a way to classify people and, naturally, a means to compel some people to work. The law helps to give shape to the conceptual category, but by itself does not provide a complete portrait of slavery. Karras accepts Patterson's emphasis on slaves as dishonored people and his view that there is more to slavery than the simplistic notion that the slave is merely a type of property. By insisting that direct exploitation is the key for distinguishing slavery from serfdom, Karras has a good model for investigating household, small-time slavery in agrarian Scandinavia. This approach may not be as useful for places where the masters benefited from slave labor in ways as indirect as the lords extorted labor services from serfs.

Slavery endured for a long time in Scandinavia, but the sources do not reveal much about the actual numbers of slaves or their economic significance. Karras accepts an estimate that perhaps 9 percent of the population of Anglo-Saxon England