

“traditional,” “peasant-based husbandry,” “household firms,” “poor school attendance,” and “low level of income per capita” (Metzer, 10).

*Men of Capital* is an attempt to dismiss Metzer’s thesis by using two methods: first, by presenting new archival evidence and second, by deconstructing the language and concepts by which mainstream economic historians measure nations. In that sense, *Men of Capital* is part of a growing body of literature that challenges the way Western observers—realists, liberals, Marxists, or developmentalists—perceive the Arab world.

*Men of Capital* does a very good job in shaking the prevailing conceptions regarding Palestinian society during the British Mandate. Seikaly presents new evidence that supports her argument regarding the existence of a liberal commercial elite and a nascent national identity emerging in the 1930s. However, the book stops short of debunking the prevailing paradigm. What is missing is convincing systematic comparative research assessing the *depth* and *scope* of the role of these Arab liberal ideas and practices within socioeconomic spaces in Arab society other than just within the commercial elite’s sphere.

Arie Krampf  
*The Academic College of Tel Aviv Yaffo*  
[arie.krampf@gmail.com](mailto:arie.krampf@gmail.com)

DAVID SWIFT. *For Class and Country: The Patriotic Left and the First World War*. Studies in Labour History 9. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2017. Pp. 230. \$120.00 (cloth). doi: 10.1017/jbr.2018.50

This is an important contribution to the ever-fascinating subject of the history of the British left with particular attention to the development of the Labor party. It is also timely as we are in the process of marking the centenary of the First World War and how it affected British society. Swift argues convincingly for its significance not only in dramatically changing the nature of the British left but also for sowing the seeds for the post-Second World War welfare state. Through showing its patriotism, the working class greatly strengthened its position in British society, demonstrating its worthiness to be well treated. But Swift argues that this change was more sudden than I believe it was. As David Roberts and others argued many years ago, the British state has always had paradoxical elements. It might well appear to have become a *laissez-faire* society in the nineteenth century, but Benthamism and its influence led the state to play an increasing role in the shaping of society, as in the changes in the Poor Law in 1834 that certainly affected the working classes. Jumping forward to the period shortly before the war itself, 1906–10, the Liberal party, supposedly the party of *laissez-faire*, spearheaded by Lloyd George and Winston Churchill, moved ahead the interventionist state in its inauguration of old-age pensions. But Swift is undoubtedly correct that the exigencies of the First World War significantly changed the role of the state and laid important groundwork for the welfare state that was to come after the Second World War.

Before the war itself, Beatrice and Sidney Webb had advanced the idea that all the poor, not only the deserving poor, were entitled to help from the state. Although it is not a theme he explores, Swift almost seems to be arguing that the patriotism of the working class during the war itself demonstrated their entitlement to play a more central political role. In effect, the Labor party and the workers strengthened their status by being on both sides of the debate about the war. The more traditional story emphasized opposition to the war, particularly by some of the prominent figures on the left. Although his career suffered in the first instance because of his antiwar stand, ultimately Ramsey MacDonald was highly credited for having seen the tragic consequences of the war and having opposed British participation.

At the same time Labor leaders, most notably Arthur Henderson, gained valuable experience through being part of the wartime cabinet. Henderson demonstrated that a Labor leader could be an effective and significant political figure as part of the government. The great contribution of this study, however, is not at that leadership level. Using a wide range of primary sources, Swift clearly demonstrates how extensive and intense was the patriotism of the working class and their local leaders and how willing so many of its members were, if of the appropriate age, to join the forces. Nothing came of the faint hope held by some when war was threatened that the international working class would refuse to go to war. Swift argues convincingly that the war made the working class and the Labor party more supportive of the state. The richness here is in the many examples Swift provides of the ways in which the working class and its various organizations helped the war effort. There is an impressive use of primary sources, both personal and institutional, most notably the records of the War Emergency: Workers National Committee. There are wonderfully detailed accounts of activity in support of the war in constituencies, as well as other war-related events involving the working class and local leaders. Reacting to the demands of war, various left-wing groups became much more cooperative with one another, although of course there were also disagreements and tensions. Swift does mention the various prominent Liberals who moved to the Labor party. But it is not part of his story to discuss the disastrous effect on the Liberal party of having Lloyd George become prime minister in the middle of the war. After the war, he virtually destroyed his party. Without the fatal weakening of the Liberal party, it would have been far less likely that Labor would have replaced the Liberals as the alternative governing party.

This is a very valuable book, presumably based on Swift's dissertation. It would, in my view, have been better presented if it were further removed from its origins. As graduate students we are generally instructed to inform the readers of our dissertations what we are about to say in a chapter and then in the conclusion of the chapter say what we have said. But in the study's revised, published form, I believe that this scaffolding should have been discarded in favor of a more sophisticated text. Similarly, we are instructed as students to demonstrate that we are deeply familiar with the historiography of our subject. In this book, there are too many quotations from other historians. Swift is a good enough historian that he should have relied more on his own voice. But these are minor defects that do not significantly weaken a book that demonstrates the importance and significance of the patriotism of the working class during the First World War.

Peter Stansky  
*Stanford University*  
[stansky@stanford.edu](mailto:stansky@stanford.edu)