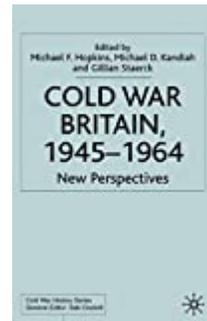




Michael F. Hopkins, Michael D. Kandiah, Gillian Staerck, eds. *Cold War Britain, 1945-1964: New Perspectives*. New York: Routledge, 2003. ix + 244 pp. \$95.00 (cloth), ISBN 978-1-4039-0121-7.



Effie G. H. Pedaliu. *Britain, Italy and the Origins of the Cold War*. New York: Routledge, 2003. xi + 239 pp. \$95.00 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-333-97380-6.



Reviewed by Richard Grayson (Goldsmiths College, University of London, United Kingdom)

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Britain: The Coldest Cold Warrior?

One of the strengths of a series of books such as the Palgrave Cold War History Series is that it can tie together a range of diverse subjects into a coherent whole. These two publications illustrate the merits of the “series,” rather than “stand alone” approach to publishing, in that readers are immediately able to put them in the context of a number of other related works. Meanwhile, both books themselves combine the merits of in depth research on relatively narrow fields, with clear nods towards the wider issues.

The Hopkins, Kandiah, and Staerck edited volume, *Cold War Britain*, is the most obviously diverse of the two studies. It covers strategic, diplomatic, military, and regional themes, while also examining the impact of the Cold War on British politics. Its overall aim is to contribute to the school of thought, associated with Donald Cameron Watt since the 1970s, which stresses the British role in the origins and development of the Cold War. That is in contrast to earlier work which tended to see the conflict as a more simple Soviet-American confrontation.

The first substantive chapter of *Cold War Britain* actually falls outside its 1945-1964 timeframe, but is a welcome, short piece from Erik Goldstein, focused on the 'first Cold War' of 1917-1925, when Britain sought to contain the threat of Bolshevik Russia. Goldstein argues that from this perspective, British policy towards the Soviet Union post-1945 was rooted in the traditional British approach to Russia, stretching back to the nineteenth century: a policy of containment. Two chapters then look at political responses to the USSR. Michael Hopkins argues that Herbert Morrison's brief seven-month term of office as Foreign Secretary at the tail end of the Attlee governments has been neglected. Moreover, he argues that there has been a failure to appreciate Morrison's role in foreign policy before he became Foreign Secretary. Hopkins highlights Morrison's anti-communism and his friendliness towards the U.S. as important influences on policy, and stresses his role in taking on the left within the Labour Party to secure support for government policy. Michael Kandiah also looks at domestic issues by examining the development of the Conservative Party's reaction to the rise of the Soviet Union, stressing the influence of the Cold War in forcing the Conservatives to describe a clear policy agenda.

Four chapters then examine broad themes in diplomacy. Ian Jackson uses recently declassified U.S. State Department documents and presidential papers to shed light on western multilateral expert control policy. In so doing he stresses the extent to which there was conflict, as well as cooperation, in the Anglo-American relationship in 1948-1954. In particular, Jackson says that Britain led the way in seeking to limit economic containment of the East to restrictions on trade in military goods, rather than trade more widely. John Jenks then examines the British response to the Soviet-backed peace movement, showing how the government sought to undermine the work of peace groups, and Juhana Aunesluoma documents British efforts to build a special relationship with Scandinavian countries, rooted particularly in the view held by many in the Labour Party that there was a "like-mindedness" shared by Britain and Scandinavia. The fourth diplomatic chapter is by Spencer Mawby. As Goldstein's chapter did relating to Russia, Mawby stresses continuities between British policy towards Germany both before and after 1945. He particularly highlights fears raised in the early 1920s about German-Soviet cooperation. Mawby also highlights a Germanophobic continuity in British foreign policy which led to a view that Germany was essentially unchanged despite defeats in 1918 and 1945.

Defense issues are covered in three chapters. Ian Speller shows how the Admiralty opted for a defensive policy rather than one of deterrence, believing the Soviet build-up to be offensive. He believes that the failure to build up a deterrent navy was a missed opportunity for Britain as it was the one aspect of military policy in which Britain had major advantages over other countries. Martin Longden then examines the place of western Europe in British "grand strategy" in the late 1940s, reminding us how desperate Britain and other European countries became for a clear American military commitment to western Europe. Wayne Reynolds concludes this section by arguing that there was a strong imperial dimension to military planning in the UK, Australia and South Africa, and that such planning was focused on nuclear, not conventional warfare.

The final section of *Cold War Britain* includes four regional studies. Sean Greenwood analyzes the British dilemma of 1946 about whether to allocate Ruhr coal to France or use it to bolster the German economy, which he admits is a relatively narrow subject. Gillian Staerck examines the place of the Algerian War in Anglo-American relations, stressing how Britain was concerned to keep France away from the UK's privileged relationship while the U.S. Stephen Blackwell challenges the idea that the UK-U.S. relationship in the Middle East in 1957-62 was one of simply transferring power, stressing that the relationship was much more complex and multi-layered. Peter Busch concludes the volume with his analysis of the creation of Malaysia in 1960-63, highlighting British fears of a communist-influenced Indonesia, which led Britain to pursue a policy of firmness with respect to Malaysia. That is contrasted to the American approach, which was more in favor of conciliating Indonesia.

Overall, the editors of *Cold War Britain* argue that there are three principal themes which emerge from their volume. The first is that British national interests were an important factor in British foreign policy from 1945 to the mid-1960s, beyond the pressures of the Cold War. Second, the changes in the international system wrought by the Cold War did not significantly alter the perceptions of British policy-makers regarding Britain's importance in the world. Third, British policy-makers were enthusiastic participants in the Cold War. The editors go so far as to conclude that "the United Kingdom was the coldest—and the most international—of the Cold Warriors in Western Europe" (p. 4).

The starting point of Effie Pedaliu's *Britain, Italy and the Origins of the Cold War* is that there has been too little

attention to the policy of the 1945-51 Labour government towards Italy. There are a number of studies of aspects of British policy, such as Martin Folly's 1987 *Review of International Studies* article on Italian membership of NATO, and Saul Kelly's *Cold War in the Desert: Britain, the US and the Italian Colonies, 1945-52* (2000), but there is no general overview. The author argues that not only was this an important period for Italy, but that such a broad study is revealing about the complexities of British policy.

Spanning the period from the end of the Allied Administration of Italy to Italian entry to NATO and the Council of Europe, Pedaliu's book aims to explain the development of British policy. In so doing it highlights a range of factors including the decline of British power in the Mediterranean, the overall Cold War policy context, and Italian domestic politics. Pedaliu argues that Bevin reoriented British policy away from seeing Italy in a pre-1943 hostile role, to aiming to reconstruct and rehabilitate it as a stable member of the western European community. A crucial underpinning of this policy was a desire to prevent the extension of Soviet influence in Italy through the Italian Communists, while also preventing the domination of a more American form of undiluted capitalism. In contrast, the Labour government sought to promote a social democratic regime. On the making of this policy, Pedaliu highlights the strong influence of the Foreign Office, showing that the Cabinet was rarely consulted on Italian policy, agreeing with the approach that Hennessy and Arends have previously taken on this issue.

Pedaliu's argument is developed over five chapters. The first deals with the prosecution of Italian war criminals. This was a frustrating issue for the British because there was ultimately little that the Labour government could do to force the Italians to hand over people for trial in, for example, Yugoslavia, especially because the Americans were unwilling to exert great pressure on the issue. It was ultimately the lack of U.S. support which made the British realize that there was little hope of progress on this issue, although that was not before there had been some damage to Anglo-Italian relations. The second chapter examines the reconstruction of the Italian military. It shows that Britain had an important role in 1943-46, but that thereafter, partly due to Britain's economic weakness, the Americans were more influential. The next chapter examines the crucial April 1948 election. This was far less overt than American engagement in the election, but activities included, for example, promoting specific factions within the broad socialist move-

ment, persuading the Italian government to adopt reformist industrial and agricultural policies, and promoting Britain as an example of a successful social democratic country. The penultimate chapter explores British opposition to Italian membership of NATO, on the basis that the inclusion of such a 'weak' country as Italy would weaken NATO overall. It was only when the U.S. made it clear that Italy must join that the British grudgingly went along with Italian membership as part of the price to pay for American engagement. The fifth chapter examines Bevin's quest for a form of European cooperation in the early years of the Labour government, showing how this foundered on British and wider European economic and military weakness. At the same time, it became clear that Italy supported a federalist structure which was antithetical to the British, and ensured that there was no Anglo-Italian cooperation on this issue. In her conclusion, Pedaliu ends by arguing that British policy can be characterized in two ways: first, it aimed to prevent Communism spreading in Italy; second, the UK aimed to preserve its own role in the Mediterranean as a power which could match the U.S. and the USSR. Of course, Britain was considerably more successful on the first goal than the second.

Although both books are in the same series, Pedaliu's book is very different from the edited volume also reviewed here in that its scope is deliberately narrowed by focusing on one specific policy area over a relatively short period of time. However, such narrowness of approach does not diminish the book's value, for two reasons. First, it is a very thoroughly researched monograph. The author has meticulously covered the government archives, researching the papers of several different departments in depth. Moreover, there is appropriate attention to official papers from other countries (obviously Italy, but also the U.S., Greece, and Yugoslavia). An invaluable bibliography also draws together an impressive range of materials written in both English and Italian. In covering all this material, Pedaliu has performed a valuable service and this study deserves to become one of the standard works on this surprisingly neglected period in British foreign policy. The second overall value of Pedaliu's book is that the author has not shirked from addressing the broader implications of her work for our understanding of British policy in the late 1940s. From this study emerges a very clear insight into the extent to which British policy-makers thought that they had the ability to project British power in the Mediterranean in a way that could compete with both the U.S. and the USSR. It is equally clear, however, that policy towards Italy was

one of many areas where the limitations of British power became readily apparent. The only criticism of the way in which these arguments have been unfolded in the monograph is that they could have been explored even more thoroughly in a longer conclusion, which at fewer than five pages is certainly capable of being usefully expanded.

Cold War Britain also has many merits, although they are different from those of Pedaliu's book. The virtue of any collection of essays is that it allows the drawing together of a range of different, even contradictory, perspectives, to illuminate a broad theme. Such broad themes can often be treated more satisfactorily in this way than in a single authored monograph. There is no doubt that the raw material is here for a very important analysis of the overarching themes of *Cold War Britain from 1951 to 1964*. However, for those themes to be developed satisfactorily, there needed to be a much more thorough summative and reflective chapter. Unfortunately, *Cold War Britain* contains only a four-page introduction, of which under half a page is given to treatment of the "three principal themes" (p. 7), and astonishingly there is no conclusion.

That is very much to be regretted, because the eminent editors clearly have the capability to produce an insightful and valuable conclusion. They might, for example, simply have expanded more on the three themes which they briefly suggest emerge from the essays. In arguing that British national interests were an important factor in British foreign policy from 1945 to the mid-1960s, beyond the pressures of the Cold War, there are many questions which need answering. For example, how far did the Cold War conflict with British national interests? How were such conflicts resolved? Which interests had priority? How far did policy-makers at the time understand the conflicts between national interests and the exigencies of the Cold War? These are all questions which would have helped to develop a more sophisticated argument about this issue. The editors might then have looked in more detail at their second theme, namely that the Cold War did not significantly alter the perceptions of British policy-makers regarding Britain's importance in the world. In particular, they at least need to consider how far the essays in their volume open up new debates on the impact of the Suez crisis. On their third theme, the editors need to substantiate and explore further their assertion that "the United Kingdom was the coldest—and the most international—of the Cold Warriors in Western Europe" (p. 4).

This leads to two opportunities missed by *Cold War*

Britain. The first is that the book could have made much more, perhaps in a more thorough conclusion or introduction, of what light is shed on the end of the British Empire through studying British policy towards the Cold War. The basis of this lies in the final two chapters which examine the Middle East and Malaysia, but there are also conclusions which could be drawn from the chapter on Britain's relations with France regarding Algeria. Meanwhile, Reynolds has pertinent points to make on this subject in his chapter on imperial defense strategies. Given the inclusion of chapters on both foreign and imperial issues in *Cold War Britain*, such a failure to make links is disappointing. Yet the absence of any significant consideration of imperial matters is not solely down to the authors. It also suggests a wider flaw of the discipline as a whole, with so many writers on foreign policy often failing to connect to relevant imperial themes. The same could be said of imperial historians, who sometimes neglect wider foreign policy considerations. There needs to be much more attention to "international" policy in its broadest dimension, rather than a narrower focus on "foreign" or "imperial" policy.

The second missed opportunity in *Cold War Britain* is that the editors might have developed further some of the themes in the excellent *The Myth of Consensus: New Views on British History, 1945-64* (1996), edited by Harriet Jones and one of *Cold War Britain's* editors, Michael Kandiah. That book was groundbreaking by attributing some of the shape of British social and economic policy after 1945 to the Cold War context. In *Cold War Britain*, Kandiah's own chapter on the Conservative Party takes the debate forward in useful ways, by showing how the Cold War encouraged the party to become associated with "individualism, freedom and choice" (p. 38), and explicitly use "Cold War language" to describe "Labour's extensive use of governmental controls" (p. 36). Meanwhile, Hopkins's chapter links both foreign and domestic policy in the context of Herbert Morrison's role. However, these two chapters, valuable though they are, do not do enough to prove the assertion in the introduction that UK policy-makers were committed "to fighting the Cold War international and domestically" (p. 4). Many more questions need to be asked about the purposes of policy-makers in constructing the post-1945 welfare state if its Cold War influences are to be gauged adequately. Again, that was something that the editors might have done in a more substantive summative and reflective chapter.

Despite these criticisms of *Cold War Britain*, it is still overall a very useful publication including chapters of high quality throughout. Along with Pedaliu's book, it

demonstrates just how broad studies of Britain's Cold War role can be, and how many links there are to be made between different policy areas. For the future of the discipline as a whole, that is encouraging indeed.

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