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Environmentalism, Development and British Policy in the Middle East 1945–65

Gregory A. Barton

Britain attempted to create an informal empire in the Middle East and used the British Middle East Office to sponsor development work precisely to attain a significant influence in the region, one that would salvage a fair share of rapidly declining imperial power. Environmental initiatives, many of them focusing on forestry, composed a key element of this programme. However an informal empire did not ensue. This led the Foreign Office, and many historians, to overlook the importance of the BMEO. This article explores how the environmental reforms proposed by British advisers radically changed land use in the Middle East between 1946 and 1970, and left behind a remarkable legacy of conservation.

Forests may not be the first thing that comes to mind when one conjures up an image of the Middle East, particularly Yemen, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Iran, Jordan, Israel, Egypt and the Gulf states.¹ Yet Britain maintained to help create massive forest services with authority to manage approximately 10 per cent of the landmass of the region. The Foreign Office launched the British Middle East Office (BMEO), as the world's first postcolonial development programme, preceding the development efforts of the UN and the United States, including the Marshall Plan and the 'Point Four' programme. To date historians have little studied the trailblazing efforts of the BMEO, with the exception of Paul Kingston's book, *Britain and the Politics of Modernization in the Middle East 1945–1958*.² Most scholars who study British imperial policy in the Middle East, such as Roger Louis, Paul Kingston and Wesley Wark, agree that Britain tried—and failed—to create an informal empire in the region through development programmes after the Second World War.³ This paper reinforces this stance but with a significant caveat. While Britain sponsored the BMEO to gain influence through development initiatives, an informal empire did not in fact ensue. Many of

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the BMEO's development policies, however, attained the goal of advancing modernisation, particularly with one key aspect of the BMEO development initiatives—environmental reforms focused on forestry. Today, governments of the Middle East have saved and protected most of the forested land in a region where forest, tree and soil protection has proven critical. Thus, while the BMEO did not meet the political expectations of the Foreign Office, it did meet many of its own stated goals for modernization and environmental protection and—despite the largely deserted landscape—these efforts successfully initiated most of the countries of the Middle East as responsible practitioners of conservation and environmental principles.⁴

The Middle East is not all desert. Forests cover approximately 4 per cent of the Middle East compared, with, for instance, 28 per cent of Europe, 33 per cent of Africa and 22 per cent of the Far East. In Turkey, Cyprus and Iran the natural forested area exceeds 10 per cent.⁵ Yemen follows in order of forested area (4 million hectares) then Saudi Arabia (1.6 million hectares of forest), Iraq (1.5 million hectares), Syria (452,000 hectares), Jordan (125,000 hectares), Lebanon (76,000 hectares), Egypt (2,000 hectares), Kuwait (2,000 hectares) and the United Arab Emirates (2,000 hectares). This does not include plantations, poplar and eucalyptus windbreaks, the all-important fruit and shade trees or small trees and shrubs in grassy areas that also provide for the local population.⁶ The critical lack of forest resources, the high wood consumption of the population and the connection between water flow from catchment areas and soil erosion made forestry the most important aspect of agricultural development in the Middle East after the Second World War.⁷

Historians of colonial forestry have convincingly argued that environmental reforms in the British Empire influenced how modern states manage and control nature. By 1928, 50 separate forest departments managed massive nature reservations that amounted to approximately 8 per cent of the land surface of the world.⁸ British imperialists had launched the world-wide conservation movement, considered by many environmental historians as the first stage in the modern environmental movement.^{9,10} That the BMEO considered environmental reforms to constitute its main thrust, and that the origins of the world's first development programme outside formal empire arose in the context of an imperial projection of power, has profound implications for both imperial and environmental historians.¹¹ Tracing the full impact of these environmental reforms requires searching outside the confines of formal empire. This is the first study to look at how British advisers in the Middle East and the governments that they advised investigated and applied the principles of the global environmental movement.

I

Britain used a number of administrative instruments to govern the Middle East. The Anglo-Iraqi Treaty (1930) and the Anglo-Egyptian Treaty (1936) gave the peoples of the Middle East after the First World War 'a modicum of independence', to use Salisbury's phrase from an earlier era.¹² But by the end of the Second World War Britain had brought much of the region under outright military occupation. It held Aden

and Cyprus as crown colonies, Somaliland, Qatar and Kuwait under a British protectorate and TransJordan and Palestine under a British mandate. The Anglo-Egyptian condominium, created in 1899, still administered the Sudan. The Second World War, however, had drained substantial resources from the British economy, and public opinion, as well as the Treasury, increasingly balked at the idea of sacrificing domestic social programmes to retain vast colonial possessions in the face of mounting nationalist resistance. Giving up control over this strategically important region did not prove easy.

The Second World War and the tide of rising nationalism changed the imperial picture for ever. Churchill accused the Labour Party after the Second World War of scuttling the British Empire, but as Roger Louis pointed out, Labour attempted to build a replacement for the loss of India with an informal empire of influence and prestige in the Middle East and Africa. Foreign Office personnel assumed that Britain would recover its old position in the Middle East and much of the world. Arabs, Iranians and even Jews would get used to the idea that Britain, by reason of her long experience, possessed the natural gifts to govern them, to define their various needs, including defence, and to guide them on their way to prosperity and security.¹³

Labour's Foreign Secretary Ernest Bevin, while differing from his predecessor Anthony Eden on formal empire, had an imperialist and certainly cold warrior view of countering Soviet influence in the Middle East. He attempted to secure American aid to assist in the British projection of influence as a re-defined imperial power—in this case with a development agenda that appeared friendly to democratic aspirations and masked any imperial impulse. The permanent undersecretary of the Foreign Office, Moley Sargent, argued that Britain must bring the United States over to support Britain, and the 'tricky' part would be to 'demonstrate to the American public that our challenge is based on upholding the liberal idea . . . and not upon selfish appreciations as to our position as a Great Power'.¹⁴ The United States pursued development in the region for the very same reasons—countering Soviet expansion, gaining secure access to oil and constructing a network of influence that would draw the Middle East under the umbrella of American power without igniting nationalist resistance.¹⁵

Development held out the hope for maximising influence while minimising resistance. In 1945, the Foreign Office intended the British Middle East Office to carry out this agenda.¹⁶ The Foreign Office based the management model for the BMEO Development Division on the wartime Middle East Supply Centre (MESC). This wartime office dictated overall policy and direction of nominally independent wartime governments in the Middle East. Officials at the Ministry of War transferred key personnel and offices, including all the old contacts and files housed in the MESC headquarters in Cairo directly to the BMEO without—at first—even a change of offices. The Foreign Office hoped to replace MESC with a scaled-down version of its former self, offering a far friendlier face to the Americans and to anti-British nationalists in the region.¹⁷ Foreign Office officials believed that they could forestall the loss of British influence in the region by putting Britain's imperial expertise—in the form of unemployed

technicians and managers, many of them from India—to work. Development rather than imperialism provided the vehicle for power.¹⁸

This friendlier presentation of development masked the great game played out under the surface. The head of the BMEO after the Second World War also served as chair of the Joint Intelligence Committee of the Middle East. This dual role insinuated a political and intelligence agenda directly into the development and diplomacy initiatives of the BMEO. Many of the functions of development held substantial military and intelligence potential in the Cold War setting, with reports sent from the BMEO often sent directly to the foreign secretary for analysis.¹⁹ As early as 1946 Sir Arnold Overton, BMEO head, claimed that the BMEO ‘is of help to the military in a variety of unspectacular ways’. But, since Arabs suspected that the British intended to substitute economic domination for political and military domination, they would have to ‘tread very warily’ and quietly work ‘behind the scenes.’²⁰

Overton rightly suspected Arab unease. Until 1950, the head of the BMEO furnished intelligence and security reports, and collected and collated intelligence throughout its area of direct responsibility. After this date the BMEO political officer oversaw the covert propaganda committee that met under the director of the BMEO to ‘review covert propaganda activities in the Middle East and make recommendations to the Foreign Office or Heads of Missions.’²¹ This reveals an intersection of development, intelligence and power with the world’s first development agency outside formal empire.

II

The Foreign Office took active measures to launch a propaganda campaign for ‘development and democracy’ immediately after the war.²² It envisioned a development programme that would raise the general standard of living for the region. Officials understood however that a small budget required a small staff. Bevin had in mind the launch of a ‘Middle Eastern New Deal’. He called and chaired, as one of his first acts as foreign secretary, a London conference of officials on the Middle East to assert Britain’s strategic interests and to define the role that development would play.²³ He understood that a small number of advisers did not equate with little influence.²⁴ Advisers maximised influence by focusing on a few key areas that resulted in legislative and bureaucratic structures and—of course—influence. Those advisers who focused on statistics acted first as general consultants and identified the most critical needs for the host government and for the BMEO. J. Murray, for instance, advised Iraq in 1947 on a range of issues from the need to balance the budget to setting up effective banking regulations and equitable tax structures. Other advisers then followed. In practice the agriculture and forestry advisers issued most of the development reports. These had the largest impact because they dealt with issues that affected the bulk of the populations—land use, forestry conservation, afforestation, soil erosion, land settlement, land tenure and the development of parklands, among other issues.²⁵

Bevin insisted that the BMEO focus its efforts on agriculture—of which forestry took a leading role.²⁶ Thus forestry fell under the general authority of the agricultural

adviser who in turn oversaw most of the land use questions involved. The reports of the first agricultural adviser, Herbert Stewart, bear out this out clearly.²⁷ In Egypt, where he began his work, he visited senior officials from the Ministry of Agriculture including the heads of the various departments and agricultural education, research and district development. The Egyptian agriculture minister allowed Stewart to visit each section where he then culled information on staff, projects and problems. Based on his experience in India he then made a series of suggestions for practical application and offered help in 'securing materials and information' and then disseminating it. Egyptian officials in turn promised collaboration and agreed to turn to the BMEO for assistance and advice. Stewart also spent time at the livestock breeding farms for the improvement of stock for 'work, meat, milk, wool, hides, skins, egg production . . . [and issues] relating to buffaloes, cattle sheep, goats and poultry'. Since the forestry adviser served under the agricultural adviser, the reports often overlapped similar concerns.²⁸

BMEO projects remained stable, and often small, throughout its tenure, up to 1981 when budget cuts in the Thatcher administration abolished the office. While Wesley Wark and Paul Kingston point out that nationalism forced the BMEO to scale back imperial ambitions in the Middle East, they miss an important point. The BMEO experts did not in any way scale back the advice that they gave or the ambitious schemes for environmental reform. If they did not achieve the imperial dream of power, they did advance broad changes in land use that greatly benefited most of the countries involved with the BMEO.

Consistently from the late 1940s through the 1960s, forestry specialists from the BMEO worked hard to establish *bona fide* forestry programmes in the Middle East. Department heads in the respective countries often initiated contact with the BMEO to initiate programmes of interest, including forestry. In Iran, forestry advisers had conversations with the shah of Iran, as well as the Iranian Prince Abdul Reza. Stewart often met directly with heads of government and agency directors. He discussed issues on the appointment of an agricultural officer at length with the Sheikh of Bahrain. Officials met multiple times with the Iraq prime minister and with representatives from the British firm of Sir Alexander Gibb and Partners, to discuss overall development strategy.²⁹ Examples of meetings with government officials, both before and after Suez, show a high level of cooperation and make it apparent that Middle Eastern governments on the whole welcomed the technical expertise for development activities that came to them free of political control.

By far the most far-reaching land use initiatives involved forestry and the setting up of huge reserves and afforestation projects, many of the latter in the form of plantations. The BMEO Development Division head, Ferguson Crawford, wrote to Bevin that the return of the forestry adviser, Victor Maitland, from the FAO Forestry Commission meeting in Rome on Mediterranean land use, convinced him that '[i]t cannot be too heavily emphasized that, with the exception of the forestry services of Cyprus, the Development Division is the only body in the Middle East which has any real idea of the needs of proper land use.'³⁰ Maitland, under Stewart, issued many of the first reports to Middle Eastern governments outside Cyprus that urged far-reaching reforms.

Herbert Mooney, the single most prominent forestry adviser during this time period at the BMEO, began most of his reports with an acknowledgement of invitation. Invitations from ministers of agriculture, finance or the interior and local rulers and sheikhs steadily trickled in. Sometimes foresters did meet directly with the heads of state, as Mooney did in 1955, when he met personally with the shah, discussing forestry on the royal estates.³¹

As with a number of other BMEO forestry advisers, Mooney found that the colonial arguments for afforestation in the formal (and former) colonies applied neatly to the conditions of the Middle East. The Middle East desperately needed forestry programmes to protect against adverse climate change and desertification, soil erosion and reduced stream flow. Advisers also advocated the protection of wildlife and the establishment of scenic national parks. These ecological arguments underlined the need for economic development, both national and local, that wood products provide. The reports issued by the BMEO forestry advisers also made explicit how forestry programmes served the stability and security of the region.

The reports exude a sense of historic mission that Maitland and later forestry advisers G. W. Chapman, Herbert Mooney and D. F. Davidson brought with them from the tropics.³² The dream of setting aside—and creating—large tracts of forestland had a gigantic precedent in the formal colonies where the conservation movement had begun. The example of India haunted Mooney and other administrative consultants, revealing a romantic attachment that suggested advisers wanted a new India in the Middle East to replace recent losses.³³ Mooney argued that France, Germany and Switzerland have for centuries seen the need for forest management, as has India since 1865 and most of the world since 1900. In the Middle East, he wrote, the need had not become apparent until after the end of the First World War. The excessive destructiveness of war, the heightened use of resources and the demand for reconstruction made the need for forest conservation more urgent. He concluded that adverse weather conditions and thousands of years of deforestation rendered the ‘Near and Middle East . . . [as] one of the worst forested regions on the face of the earth.’³⁴

Publicity followed hard on the heels of these reports. The BMEO headquarters in Cairo and then later in Beirut shipped films, along with lecturers and slide presentations, to schools and government agencies. Organisations such as the Society of the Friends of the Trees gave regular press reports—a key element linking British administrative help to local support groups. British intelligence also ran radio stations and published newspapers throughout the region, giving forestry propaganda ready outlets as news items and ‘pro development’ articles placed without the appearance of British involvement. Foresters prepared lectures, slide shows and mobile exhibits for government officials, often teachers, to tour villages by jeep. With schoolchildren in attendance teachers then suggested essay assignments on conservation and donated printed material to their school officials. The BMEO easily persuaded governments to offer special forestry commemoration stamps and to sponsor Arbor Day as a spring holiday for tree planting.³⁵ Mooney pointed out in his Iraq reports the indispensability of publicity in the Middle East. If it worked for forestry in Cyprus, he reasoned, it would work in the rest of the region. ‘People have been educated—they have been

indoctrinated—by the incessant and untiring efforts made by the forest staff to “sell” forestry . . . the same *can* be achieved in Iraq.³⁶

The British capitalised on a ‘deep and widespread respect for Great Britain throughout the whole Region’,³⁷ and hoped to place their own personnel in key positions to give them influence, enable them to gather intelligence and gain contracts. But fear that middle easterners would botch the execution of development plans haunted the British as well, and led them to push for the placement of British personnel to make sure the job was done right. W. Russell-Edmunds, a treasury official, expressed a view held by most at the BMEO when, in relation to a village loan scheme he remarked that the project was ‘too valuable to us, as a means of bolstering up the Jordanian economy, for us to risk its collapse under a Jordanian’.³⁸ In 1962, the BMEO Development Division’s P. P Howell mocked the Lebanese government, who have ‘now officially agreed to let us do the thinking for them’, for its ‘unusually comic’ attempt to run its own development proposals.³⁹

The push for British personnel went against a natural resistance on the part of Arabs and Iranians to giving up authority or to submitting to further British direction. British advisers required tact and subtlety when attempting to place British personnel in key posts.⁴⁰ They preferred that the top officials of a forest department train in a British institution such as the Imperial Forestry Institute at Oxford, while the rangers trained in India, Cyprus or Pakistan, countries where the British still maintained forestry schools with British instructors. They preferred that the forest guards, at the bottom of the structure and locally trained, at least speak good English. Faithful to their mission and to their superiors, each forest service would then provide dependable administration over a massive land area.

The BMEO dreamed big dreams. While the hopes and motivations of the Foreign Office shifted over the next few decades, and the dreams of power faded in the 1950s, particularly after Suez, the dream of having a useful influence did not fade. The agriculturalists and most particularly the forest advisers did not scale back their advice. Wesley Wark argues that Sir John Troutbeck, the second BMEO chief, concentrated on political and intelligence issues, leaving the new development division within the BMEO to ‘plod along in relative obscurity’.⁴¹ While obscure, perhaps, the advice, and the actions that followed on environmental reform, continued. On land use, small numbers did not deter bold plans nor did a small number of advisers equal small influence. Mooney for instance, well after the shift away from imperial dreams of informal empire, and indeed well after the Suez crisis, proposed that forest services create ten-year plans, over fifty-year periods, and set aside approximately 10 per cent of the country for environmental purposes, which in turn would play a leading role in the ‘physical, economic and social aspects’ of the country. Mooney, as discussed below, envisioned a forest guard for every seven square miles of Middle Eastern territory: for every five or six guards, a forest ranger trained by British instructors; over the forest rangers either British administrators or local administrators with British advisers.

Key to the operation of this forest service, and of clear strategic value to the British, was the suggestion that each forest service should operate independently of the

Department of Agriculture with its own chief conservator and answerable only to a high official—preferably a cabinet member. The Forest Services would ‘co-ordinate’ with other departments, but not serve under them. Even:

The fund[s] would be financed by income from forest revenues, augmented by grants or loans from the Treasury and from it would be paid all the money needed for the costs of the Forest Service and the various forest development works. The fund would be run as a semi-independent department account.⁴²

This financial independence, augmented by British personnel and advisers, would have given the Foreign Office tremendous influence over a department that in turn controlled a significant amount of territory. If imperial dreams faded after the first two directors of the BMEO retired the drive to reform the Middle East environmentally lived on and had a major impact on land use and forest preservation in the region.

III

Herbert Mooney laid out in plain terms the rationale for undertaking ambitious forestry programmes in all the countries of the Middle East. In Egypt strong nationalism and resistance to British experts in advisory roles impelled Mooney to argue clearly and strenuously for the BMEO development initiatives.⁴³ He noted that most of the countries of the Middle East retained at least some natural forests, particularly in stretches of mountainous terrain. This describes Iraq, Jordan, Syria and Lebanon. But, unlike these areas, in Egypt, he argued, ‘there is no natural forest at all’. The result: desert terrain with an acute scarcity of wood in all forms. That meant lack of fuel for villages, lack of construction material for cottages and the lack of material for the manufacture of small tools.

This scarcity of wood substantially affected the national economy, he wrote. Egypt, like all the countries of the Middle East, lacked the balance between woods and agriculture so ‘necessary for the satisfactory survival of the farm’. Even areas of the world like Holland and Denmark, where farmers utilise the land intensively, required woods and trees to preserve the ecological stability of the landscape. The Middle East had lost this essential protection through centuries of deforestation. Weather conditions make ‘large compact blocks of forests’ out of the question, but creative forestry yields the clear solution. Roadside and canal planting, afforestation and farm forestry provided the key to giving the Middle East balance. Governments needed to look at the Indian forest service as the model for the Middle East in organisation, conception and method. A mix of indigenous and foreign instructors should train students in Britain or British-aligned schools in India or Pakistan.⁴⁴

While the reports on Egypt provided the most eloquent plea for development by the BMEO, the development division began its work in Transjordan. In the 1950s, the Transjordan east of the Jordan River had made the most progress. The West Bank faced an environmental catastrophe with large numbers of refugees desperate for food and fuel digging up shrubs, felling trees, even saplings, and denuding the hillsides. The BMEO reports in this region began when the conservator of forests for Cyprus,

Victor Maitland, toured in 1946. G.W. Chapman followed with two later tours. Most of the work undertaken revolved around afforestation, or tree farming. Unlike in his report for Israel Chapman did not suggest the utility of planting trees by roadsides in Jordanian territory for reasons of defence, which strongly suggests that the BMEO briefed the touring forest inspectors on the strategic and political uses of forestry policy for each region. While he saw 'no scope for the formation of any large sized National Park' in Transjordan, Chapman did suggest small recreation areas. He recommended forest rest houses with guards who watched the property, collected travellers' fees and sent the money to the government. Since the British had planted plantations of pine immediately after the First World War this gave the Jordanians a head start over many of their neighbours. They also served as a model for getting villages to 'ballot' against the goat and keep the farm and woodland areas free from grazing.⁴⁵

In 1951, the BMEO sent Chapman to inspect and advise on the new state of Israel in terms of forestry and soil conservation.⁴⁶ Empire foresters in the 1930s had taken a decidedly anti-Zionist position, with the Palestine Royal Commission rejecting out of hand in 1937 a request from Joseph Weitz, forestry officer of the Jewish National Fund, to expropriate 800 square miles of Palestinian agricultural land for reforestation. While empire forestry involved limiting the right of access, foresters also had a long record of making a fair attempt to protect indigenous rights. But Chapman possessed a less tender conscience and took a decidedly anti-Arab line in his reports. He excitedly renewed old contacts with foresters he had known in the region during the British Mandate and sent a copy of his glowing report to the Foreign Office, his superiors at the BMEO and to every forestry adviser in the Middle East. He saw amazing progress on all sides, from safe water to electricity, highways, pipelines, irrigation and afforestation. He could 'predict with confidence' that 'Israel may well become in the future a kind of land use laboratory for the whole Middle East region'.⁴⁷

The head of the BMEO after the Second World War also served as chair of the Joint Intelligence Committee of the Middle East. This dual role explains why the BMEO considered Iraq extremely important. It had large reserves of oil, but also lay adjacent to Iran to the east and Turkey to the north, and stood in the direct path of a potential Soviet invasion. Forestry reports stressed strategic concerns: Maitland wrote the first report for Iraq in 1948 and he arrived with a clear list of forestry development ideas that would greatly extend Britain's reach over the territory. They gave much attention to aerial surveys, which saved time over ground surveys and thus saved money, but also gave strategic advantages. Since advisers turned in copies of these forestry reports not only to the Foreign Office and the BMEO, but also to the host government, they chose their words carefully and avoided direct reference to long-term foreign policy strategy. The Foreign Office wished to maintain a string of airbases linking the Middle East and Africa, and this objective aligned with environmental development goals. It also gave the host government a reason for extensive British intelligence knowledge of a terrain that both the Americans and the British foresaw as a future battle ground with the Soviet Union.⁴⁸

The British established the forestry service of Iraq in 1934 and, until a new law passed in the 1950s, the forest service operated according to an 1867 Ottoman law, in turn

modelled on the India Forest Service. Reports in 1950, 1951 and then 1954, the last two by Herbert Mooney, followed a 1948 report by Victor Maitland. These reports served as a method of supervision over newly established forestry departments. The visiting inspector met with the minister of agriculture and other officials to see that the host government carried out proper procedures—often, not always, to comply with the terms of a development loan. Certain aspects—the strategic sections—seemed to receive a disproportionate amount of attention.⁴⁹ Iraq had trees in the catchment areas east of the Tigris River bordering on Iran, which the forest department protected. This region had ongoing surveys, road construction projects and very select personnel chosen for special training in Britain. Clandestine operations in Iran made great use of this region of Iraq. Agents slipped across the border and into Iran where they stayed in safe houses and—depending on the operation—stored arms caches. The roads, dam construction, afforestation, surveying, all provided not only ecological and economic resources, but strategic ones as well. It certainly helped that the severe flooding of the Tigris River in 1951 provided an opportunity to emphasise to the press the protective importance of forestry in protecting mountainous areas.⁵⁰

Other parts of Iraq received attention too, even though the lowland plains had few trees. Mooney recommended an ambitious programme of afforestation in the middle and southern plains where ‘five percent of all agricultural land could be devoted to the growing of trees in the form of windbreaks, village fuel areas and small farm woodlots; this would have a most beneficial effect on the general agricultural economy’. It would provide soil protection, wind protection, firewood, wood for tools and housing, and the farmer could save ‘his farm yard manure for his fields instead of burning it as fuel’, a reference to the organic methods of farming popularised by Sir Albert Howard in India. Mooney wanted 10 per cent of Iraq managed by the forest service, even ‘merely as an amenity to beautify the landscape . . . all or any one of these [reasons] is sufficient to justify a portion of the land being dedicated to trees’.⁵¹

In Saudi Arabia the British reports followed up on work by FOA officer Dr K. H. Oedekoven, who toured the country in 1960 and 1961. A British-trained Palestinian forester, Mr Kemal Borno, ran the country’s small forestry department. Mooney made two tours, in 1965 and 1966. The reports came after disbursement of modest loans for development. In each tour he saw an alarming environmental disaster in the making. As foresters in India had done, he observed abandoned cities and agricultural systems in the dry deserts of the north west. Additionally, ‘relict forests’ found in the Asir highlands in the south-western section of the country suggested massive climate change. ‘Everywhere I have visited I have been impressed by the evidence of serious continuing depletion in the country’s resources of perennial vegetation by excessive grazing and cutting’. These ‘relict forests’ and ‘open Acadia’ with perennial vegetation proved forests once grew in portions of Saudi Arabia. The author recommended that officials set aside these degraded forests and ‘natural range’ areas for both forestry and grazing. He strongly recommended that foresters should concentrate on tree farms to begin the process of reforestation. Misuse of the ‘forests and the natural range’ by Arabs so relentlessly reduced vegetative growth that ‘serious economic loss’ threatened supplies of wood, fuel, grazing and soil and

water conservation. The only solution lay in a sound forest policy backed by a forest law with properly trained personnel. Under this structure, the 'technically trained personnel' could protect high-level catchments areas and rangeland. Farm forestry would provide windbreaks, soil conservation and water conservation.⁵² In this report he also alluded to recreation, revenue, wildlife and employment opportunities that, if pursued, would fit the BMEO's goals of development for the region. For domestic heating and cooking he urged the burning of oil instead of wood, 'in view of the limited sources of wood fuel at present', and a prohibition on the use of wood fuel in urban areas and for many industrial purposes.⁵³ BMEO advisers laid out similar blueprints for widespread environmental development in Syria, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Aden, Bahrain, Libya, Eritrea, Ethiopia and Somalia.⁵⁴

Aden protectorate, which did not become independent until 1972, proved a particular challenge for afforestation schemes. In his reports on Aden, D. F. Davidson mentioned numerous times the difficulty of touring the mountain regions due to local armed forces fighting for independence. This included mines planted in the road. Often he had to fly into certain districts 'because ... the rebellious state of the tribes inhabiting the country' closed all communications outside heavily armed convoys and an 'escort of soldiers'. Development projects in the independent states simply did not face such difficulty.⁵⁵

When Davidson explored 'Aden town' he found a city surrounded by blowing sands with no soil cover save small tamarisk trees and acacia shrubs that clung to the bottom of the ravines. Forestry programmes commenced, however, despite only two to four inches of rainfall a year, thanks to a relatively high atmospheric humidity. Additionally, foresters had already planted species from around the world from other dry environments that thrived in the Middle East. Mesquite grew well when protected from grazing and regenerated on its own, without replanting, and would also tolerate a high saline level. The 'Aden Apple', native to central America (*Pithecellobium saman*), grew successfully as a shade tree, also provided a hard workable wood and provided seedpods for cattle fodder. The tamarind tree, native to Africa and grown in India for its fruit, he also recommended for planting. A previous attempt to plant eucalyptus had failed however. These had been brought in from Australia and 'all of them were of poor form and looked decidedly unhealthy'. In the mountainous areas, twelve to fourteen inches of rainfall allowed for the growing of cotton, sesame, sorghum, bananas, papayas, guavas and custard apples and a successful variety of trees, such as babul, *Acacia Arabica*, nim (*Azadiracta indica*) and tamarisk. Davidson recommended further planting for shelter belts and windbreaks, farm woodlots and avenues in the cities for scenic value. He recommended that the Cyprus Forestry College train a student to oversee this work, under the supervision of the forestry adviser to the Colonial Office in London and the agricultural adviser (Mr Horn), who in turn 'works through the resident British Political Advisers'.⁵⁶

Mooney visited Ethiopia many times and his inspections for the BMEO kindled a private interest, which led him to play a founding role in the Ethiopian National Herbarium. The various reports from the BMEO may reflect a strategic interest in the Horn of Africa, but also a private one on Mooney's part. Ethiopia sported more

plants than Saudi Arabia and Mooney had a passion for botany. While calling on the Ethiopian government to institute forestry, he knew that it had accomplished nothing despite his reports, and his various return visits may indicate a desire of the BMEO to establish forestry in the area for strategic reasons. By 1961, the author had laid out a point by point analysis of the principles involved in environmental forestry with strong echoes of the Dalhousie forest charter of 1855 and the empire forestry model. He expressed arguments with clarity rare in reports of this nature, perhaps due to his own exasperation with the lack of progress. He felt the need to convince the Ethiopian government of the compelling reasons for conservation, and wrote a brief philosophical justification for forestry and environmental development: the greatest good for the greatest number; the principle of maximum sustained natural yield; the principle of state ownership of land; the principle of integrated forestry; the principle of substitution—finding ways to gather fuel and graze animals without ruining forests—as well as the principle of community involvement; of building reserves against calamities; and the indirect benefits of forestry such as climate protection.⁵⁷

In 1955, Mooney toured the forests bordering the Caspian Sea at the request of the Iranian government. He consulted with an agent of the FAO, the Minister of Agriculture and the shah of Iran, who held extensive private woodland estates. Mooney's reports followed those of Victor Maitland who had toured Iran in 1948 and 1949. He reiterated the same programme as Maitland: the importance of a 'written National Forest Policy' backed by the legislature and published publicly. To this effect Mooney wrote a sample preamble and forest law as a model for Iran.⁵⁸

The best forests in the Middle East grew on mountain sides in northern Iran, bordering the Caspian Sea, with some strands along the coast.⁵⁹ Waste was endemic. Goats grazed uncontrolled, eating saplings and dooming existing forests to extinction by destroying their ability to regenerate. Erosion on the hillsides caused flooding and silting. Sawmills, set up for one industry—such as the production of oak staves for the manufacture of barrels—used only a small portion of the valuable tree and discarded the rest. Mooney also criticised workers for cutting trees high rather than low to the base and criticised the government for the lack of 'off limit' reserved forests for protection against goats and cattle.⁶⁰

In order to set up a forest service in Iran, the government needed the legal structure of a reserved forest system—and this meant demarcation, surveying and planting under 'regular, systematic management'. The government should appoint:

three or four experienced foreign foresters with knowledge of this type of work, which is generally best, gained in countries such as Africa or India. Each of them would work with a small team of Iranians—one team in each province . . . I think it would suffice if each team consisted of a foreign expert, an experienced Iranian forest officer and the local ranger.

Aerial surveys would also assist in the process. Iranian candidates at the officer level should train at the Oxford Forestry Institute, then run by the renowned empire forester Harry Champion, or at the Forest College at Dehra Dun, the long-established school that produced foresters for India. British personnel at an Iranian forestry

school should oversee the training of rangers.⁶¹ The government should establish a new forestry school for training rangers and guards in the city of Gorgan, he advised, near the Caspian Sea, strategically safe from the upheavals in the capital, Tehran, close to the porous border with Iraq. He placed an emphasis on making the school at Gorgan meet western standards for clean water supply, sewage, kitchen and sleeping facilities, with good roads to and from the school, a washing house, a cook house and dorms—all of course of great importance to westerners as well as useful for Iranian students. He also added the suggestion, quite odd from a question of pure forestry management, that the finances of this college remain semi-independent of the Iranian Forestry Service, and that its finances (and accounts) even operate semi-independently from the Iranian government. Further, the forestry school should consist of three professors, one British, another French or German and another Dr Hejazi, an Iranian of whom Mooney very much approved and who lectured on forestry. Dr Hejazi should spend time training at the Imperial Forestry Institute at Oxford under Harry Champion to obtain the post-graduate diploma in forestry, and then return. The British Council in Iran could pay his scholarship. The forests in these regions and throughout Iran should additionally not depend upon local or government security personnel but have armed guards, around 200 of them, to protect the facilities and the authority to enforce the law. In a strategic region at the height of the Cold War, the security and intelligence implications of these BMEO suggestions call attention to far more than the containment of communism in the region by economic development alone; rather, to the direct and practical strategic usefulness of environmental and forestry programmes operating as a semi-independent agency staffed by British managers in a tense cold war setting.⁶²

IV

The influence of the BMEO never rivalled that of MESC or approached the level of imperial power. London simply did not answer expectations with ready loans and hefty direct aid. British influence in the region declined to a handful of experts resisting the rising tide of nationalism—in vain after the Suez crisis. The British vastly overestimated the degree to which Middle East governments would request and defer to British judgement and advice, even on seemingly neutral matters such as forestry. In this tense atmosphere Britain, the United States, the Soviet Union and Arab nationalists jockeyed for power, and this made the attempt to transplant an ambitious forestry programme directly from the imperial nursery a surprising development. That this bold conservation programme actually took root and at times succeeded is also surprising.

The effect of the BMEO presence far outlived and outpaced the drive for influence and power in the region. While informal empire did not result, widespread and long-lasting environmental reforms did. The *Unasylva* reports produced by the FAO, give a scant but essential outline for the formation of Forest Service protections. With Orwellian silence, the FAO reports never mention the BMEO, even though—and perhaps because—the BMEO had a vastly more effective development programme for

agriculture and forestry in place. As a direct response to the BMEO forestry reports, most of the forest regions of the Middle East had come under environmental management by 1970, based upon the training and the legal and bureaucratic structures put into place in the 1950s and 1960s.

In Iran, thousands of forest guards and a professional forest service protected the Caspian slopes in the north and the wooded groves in the east.⁶³ In Iraq, following BMEO advice, the state owned all forests areas and had a forestry service in place in nine out of fourteen provinces. It had additionally, internationally trained forest officers and rangers and an forestry faculty at the agriculture college as part of the University of Baghdad, replete with a forest police division and a developed and well-funded National Development Plan, with springtime tree festivals and plantation projects, including grazing laws that allowed large re-growth of grasses, shrubs and trees.⁶⁴ In Jordan, substantial afforestation projects in the north (Karak) and the West Bank (Wadi el Kuf) had with 161 forest guards as early as 1952. By 1957 officials had mapped, indexed and marked forest lands under the state forest domain (10,000 hectares in 1957).⁶⁵ In Syria, MESC created a new forest department in 1943. By 1952 it had a director and officers overseeing eighty-four forest guards under the Agricultural Department and five horticultural and forest nurseries in Damascus and Aleppo among other places.⁶⁶ Following BMEO advice Lebanon instituted a forest code in 1949 and by 1952 had in place communal forests, fire protection, plantation projects and a forest administration under the Agriculture Department that oversaw afforestation, soil conservation and wildlife protection. It also boasted a college of agriculture.⁶⁷ In Libya, building on the Italian fascist record of conservation, the forest service managed reserves scattered over sections of the whole of the coast and initiated afforestation projects that focused on dune fixation schemes. In Somaliland (British) officials constructed a forest department with training protocols and demarcated reserves by 1957.⁶⁸ In Ethiopia, officials formed a forest service in 1951, with a forest school for rangers established at Ambo, and a national park at Managasha near Addis Ababa created in 1958.⁶⁹

Summing up the influence of British development efforts is difficult. Certainly attitudes changed after Suez. The loss of optimism rather than the loss of will explains the change in attitude among British personnel. Before Suez, the Foreign Office required accountability and the BMEO reports boasted accomplishments by all advisers in and even outside their 'vast parish'. But immediately after Suez the Foreign Office questioned the whole operation and requested country reports from ambassadors. These flooded into the Foreign Office answering the pertinent question, 'is the BMEO useful?' Most of the ambassadors, though loading their answers with caveats, said 'no'. To the Foreign Office, and the ambassadors in the region, the successful environmental reforms that transformed land use in the Middle East did not count as success.

The British surveyed a Middle East 'littered with the remains of grandiose American schemes'. But historians cannot place the record of environmental development, despite the misgivings of the Foreign Office, in that same tragic context.⁷⁰ The massive changes in land use and environmental policy put into place from 1945 to 1970 leave a clear trail of development work. Also, the Foreign Office, despite its

misgivings about the political influence of the BMEO, showed no hesitation in using the agency as a paradigm for other regions. A wide array of development efforts followed that the Foreign Office modelled on the BMEO—particularly efforts defined by a mission to provide technical assistance ostensibly free of political influence.⁷¹ The environmental reforms sponsored by the BMEO in the Middle East shed light on the interconnections between foreign policy, development aid and national power and raise questions about environmental reforms and western power that are also valid today. Just as officials used colonial environmental discourse in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries to construct imperial power, so too we see in a largely postcolonial setting the use of both development aid and environmental initiatives to replace at least some of the influence lost after the collapse of formal empire. Africa today has more Europeans advising and managing the continent through government and private aid programmes that did all the European imperial powers in 1910. A sheikh elite, with European management at the top and cheap subcontinent labour at the bottom, run Dubai and other areas of the Middle East. The issue of how development, including environmental development, provides support for informal empire, and a convenient cover for local elites who do not wish to display their collaboration with leading foreign powers, will remain an important question well into the future.

Notes

- [1] This article focuses on those countries targeted by the British Foreign Office and the British Middle East Office for development initiatives. They are: Egypt, Iraq, Palestine—Transjordan, Syria, Lebanon, Cyprus, Persia, Saudi Arabia, Aden and Aden Protectorate, Cyrenaica, Tripolitania, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Sudan, The Somalilands—British and French—and the Arab States of the Persian Gulf. See FO 371/52318.
- [2] Kingston, *Britain and the Politics of Modernization in the Middle East*, 51; see also Wark, 'Development Diplomacy'.
- [3] Roger Louis points out that Anthony Eden sought to preserve British power in the Middle East by creating a line of defence from the Mediterranean to the Himalayas. See Louis, *Ends of Imperialism*, 646. As late as 1966, American intelligence reports suggest that Britain after Suez had a similar strategic position in the region, as adjunct to American power. For a discussion of how Iranian leaders continued to be suspicious of British imperial designs as late as the 1960s, see National Intelligence Estimates, 'Iraq', Director of Central Intelligence, 6, National Security Files, Box 6, Iraq Folder, Lyndon Baines Johnson Presidential Library [hereafter LBJ Library].
- [4] John Darwin's work often treats of the interplay between imperialism and the construction of the modern world. Darwin, 'Imperialism and the Victorians', 614–42, *Empire Project*.
- [5] 'Wood Requirements in the Near East by FAO staff'.
- [6] Mohamed Ahmed, 'Portrait of a Dry Region'.
- [7] The Food and Agriculture Organization actively advised on forestry in the Middle East, and, though far behind the British in environmental influence, provided the only known available summary of progress throughout the region. These summaries, found in the journal *Unasylva*, are sparse, with an almost Orwellian censorship that barred all mention of the BMEO. They did, however, provide a brief look at the progress of legal structures, land set asides and forestry statistics for the region. The FAO had the most impact, sponsoring regional forestry conferences in the Middle East. FAO Staff, 'The Work of the FAO'.

- [8] Barton, *Empire Forestry and the Origins of Environmentalism*, 1–2.
- [9] *Ibid.*, 1–8. The development of conservation policies within the British Empire is traced by a number of scholars. See Anker, *Imperial Ecology*; Barton, 'Resisting Environmentalism', 38–55; Drayton, *Nature's Government*; Dunlap, *Nature and the English Diaspora*; Grove, *Green Imperialism*; McNeill, *Something New Under the Sun*; Richards, *Unending Frontier*; Tyrrell, *True Gardens of the Gods*; Williams, *Deforesting the Earth*. Tim Forsyth challenges orthodox environmental narratives that pose as universalistic scientific narratives free from political bias. Forsyth, *Critical Political Ecology*, 224–26, 230. See also Davis, *Resurrecting the Granary of Rome*, 166–75.
- [10] The historical background of security issues in the region has been discussed in Peterson, 'Historical Patterns of Gulf Security', 7–31.
- [11] Bamberg, *British Petroleum and Global Oil*, 76. Development aid also played a role in encouraging countries during the Suez crisis to keep supplies of crude flowing to Britain. Such was the case in Kuwait, Iran and Iraq. See Bamberg, *British Petroleum*, 85.
- [12] Salisbury used the phrase 'A Modicum of Independence' to describe the essential control of a region with a façade of self-governance. See Cecil, *Life of Robert Marquis of Salisbury*, vol. 2, 239. Sir John Shuckburgh used a similar phrase when, immediately after the First World War, he described the protectorates of the Middle East as an unnecessary 'pantomime'. See Sluglett, *Britain in Iraq*, 31.
- [13] Northedge, 'Britain and the Middle East', 11.
- [14] Saville, *Politics of Continuity*, 25, 31.
- [15] For an American discussion of Soviet designs on the Middle East, declassified in 2004, see National Intelligence Estimate, 'The Arab-Israeli Dispute: Current Phase', Director of Central Intelligence, 4/13/67, 7–8. For Saudi Arabia see National Security Files, Box 6, Middle East Folder, LBJ Library; National Intelligence Estimates, 'The Role of Saudi Arabia', Director of Central Intelligence, 12/8/66, 9, National Security Files, Box 6, Saudi Arabia Folder, LBJ Library; for Jordan, see National Intelligence Estimate, 'Jordan', Director of Central Intelligence, 8/13/64, 1–8, National Security Files, Box 6, Jordan Folder, LBJ Library.
- [16] For a good survey of the history of development, see Arndt, *Economic Development*; Cowen and Shenton, *Doctrines of Development*; Latham, 'Introduction'.
- [17] Kingston, *Britain and the Politics of Modernization*, 4.
- [18] A number of scholars have pioneered the investigation of imperial careerism, and the intersection of science, technical expertise, and imperialism. For the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries see Gascoigne, *Science in the Service of Empire*. For the mid-Victorian period, see Barton, "'Men of Science'", 73–120. See also Worboys, 'Science and British Colonial Imperialism'; Ashton and Stockwell, *Imperial Policy and Colonial Practice*; Harrison, 'Science and the British Empire', 56–63; Hodge, 'British Colonial Expertise', 24–46.
- [19] See also Wark, 'Development Diplomacy', 235.
- [20] Note on the British Middle East Office, Overton, 4 July 1946, FO 371/6536.
- [21] 16 May 1949, FO 371/6174.
- [22] 15 Aug. 1946, FO 371/8052.
- [23] FO 371/5332; CP (45) 174, 17 Sept. 1945 CAB 129/2; CP (45) 130, 28 Aug. 1945, CAB 129/1.
- [24] The Development Division within the BMEO had a steadily rising budget between 1947 and 1951 and this held steady from 1952 to 1954. See FO 371/1052/12.
- [25] 'Report on Statistical Advisor', July 1947, FO 371/6462. For an understanding of how British officials linked development with agriculture, see Hodge, *Triumph of the Expert*.
- [26] Wark, 'Development Diplomacy', 233.
- [27] Previously Stewart served as the agricultural adviser to the viceroy of India. He then joined the BMEO staff on 15 Nov. 1946.
- [28] Sir Herbert Stewart, 'Agriculture in Tripolitania, Notes and Future Developments', 10 March 1947, FO 371 1015/86.

- [29] FO 371/6731; 6 July 1947, FO 371/6462.
- [30] BME0 to Bevin, FO 371/1245. V. K. Maitland served in the Indian Forestry Service as assistant conservator, deputy conservator, conservator and chief conservator in the Central Provinces and Berar from 1921 to 1939. He then ran the Ministry of Supply 1940 to 1945. See FO 371/4183. The Development Division within the BME0 was launched in Aug. 1948. See FO 371/68388. Forestry programmes on Cyprus were based on the Indian model of empire forestry and were the most advanced in the region. In 1941, the United Kingdom Colonial Development and Welfare Act provided grants for afforestation on Cyprus and a Ten-Year Development Plan began in 1946. A declaration of forest policy was announced in 1950, and in 1951 a professional forestry college opened for the training of new forest rangers. By 1952 Cyprus had a staff of 150 permanent rangers and forest guards overseen by professional foresters. Cyprus particularly stood out as a model for the region because of its success in reducing goat grazing in forests. See Chapman, 'Afforestation Techniques in Cyprus'; Staff, 'Forestry in the Middle East'.
- [31] In Somalia in 1950, he thanks a number of officials for his invitation, 'His Excellency Ahmed Haji Dauleh, Minister of Agriculture and Mr. Nur Ahmed, head of the Department of Agriculture and Forestry' and 'Mr. Akram Rikaby, Director general of Agriculture'. See Mooney, *Notes on a Tour in Somalia*, British Middle East Office, The National Archives, Kew [hereafter BME0], 1950, 24, 25. In Eritrea he thanks Dr. Nastaso, Director of Agriculture and Forestry. See Mooney, *A Report on Forestry in Eritrea*, BME0, 1. In Iraq, Mooney followed Chapman's fifty-year plan for forestry (submitted in 1949) with another extensive tour, meeting personally with Darwish al-Haydari, director-general of agriculture. See Mooney, *Notes on a Tour in Iraq*, BME0, 1951, 1. In Ethiopia, he met with Balambaras Mahtemi Selassie Wolde, vice-minister of agriculture. See Mooney, *Report on Forestry in Ethiopia with Special Reference to the Forests of Arussi and Sidamo*, BME0, 1. Mooney visited Egypt in 1949 at the request of H. E. Hefnawy Pasha, adviser to the ministry of agriculture. See Mooney, *Some Proposals Regarding the Possibilities of Forest Conservancy and Development in Egypt*, BME0, 1951, 1. In Jordan, Mooney met with Abdul Rahman Pasha Khalifa, minister of finance, and Abdullah Pasha Pulaib, minister of state. See Mooney, *Some Notes on Forestry in Jordan*, BME0, 1954, 1. For Bahrain, D. F. Davidson wrote his report on the invitation of 'His Highness the Ruler Sheikh Isa bin Salman al Khalifa', to begin a tree planting forestry programme. See Davison, *Report on the Tree Planting in Bahrain*, BME0, 1964, 1. In Aden, Davidson had many conversations with local emirs and together they laid out plans for afforestation. See Davidson, *Second Report on the Possibility of Forestry Development in the Aden Federation*, BME0, 1964, 10.
- [32] V. K. Maitland served as forestry adviser from March 1947 to April 1950, and died on the job inspecting forests in Iran. He was followed by G. W. Chapman, from January 1950 to November 1951, then by H. F. Mooney, from 1951 to March 1961 and finally by D. F. Davison, who took the position of adviser on forestry and soil conservation. The first agriculture adviser, Herbert Steward, served from Nov. 1946 to May 1950, followed by J. C. Eyre. Ferguson Crawford served as head of the BME0 Development Division from May 1946 to July 1960, followed by P. P. Howell. See FO 371/103/553/29.
- [33] Mooney, Chapman and others who had trained in India recommended protocol for new recruits that closely paralleled their own experience. For more information on how the Indian Forest Service recruited and trained foresters, see C. G. R. 'Recruitment of Officers for the Indian Forest Service', 'Recruits for the Upper Controlling Staff of the Forest Department'; *British Empire Forestry Conference*, 23.
- [34] Herbert F. Mooney, *Some Proposals Regarding the Possibilities of Forest Conservancy and Development in Egypt*, BME0, 1951, 21. Former Indian forestry officials like Mooney argued strenuously against deforestation. See Barton and Bennett, 'Environmental Conservation and Deforestation in India', 83–104.

- [35] Partner, *Arab Voices*, 29–55; Carruthers, *Winning Hearts and Minds*, 195–212; Shaw, *Eden, Suez and the Mass Media*; ‘Mobile forestry exhibit in Ethiopia’; ‘World Forestry in Stamps’.
- [36] Herbert F. Mooney, *Notes on a Tour in Iraq, April–May, 1951*, BME0, 23; Victor K. Maitland, *Notes on a Tour in Iraq, 19th March–8th April 1948*, BME0, 5.
- [37] 10 July 1946, FO 371/6414.
- [38] FO 371/1052/14.
- [39] 4 July 1962, P. P. Howell to Alan Dudley, FO 371/2504/72/62.
- [40] For example, Ibrahim Kaibni, Director of the Jerusalem Office of the Transjordan resisted the appointment of an agricultural assistance ‘if he had to relinquish some of his authority’. J. C. Eyre, to Sir John S. Bennett, 2 April 1954, FO 371/1052/14.
- [41] Wark, ‘Development Diplomacy’, 283.
- [42] Herbert F. Mooney, *Memorandum on Forestry in Iraq*, BME0, 3; G.W. Chapman, *Forests and Forestry in Iraq*, BME0, 2, 4.
- [43] V. K. Maitland had made a similar plea in a report in 1949, with no success. Herbert F. Mooney, ‘Some Proposals Regarding the Possibilities of Forest Conservancy and Development in Egypt’, 1951, BME0, 1.
- [44] Herbert F. Mooney, *Some Proposals Regarding the Possibilities of Forest Conservancy and Development in Egypt*, 1951, BME0, 3, 10, 11, 14. See also V. K. Maitland, ‘Forestry and Soil Conservation in Egypt’, 1949, BME0.
- [45] Herbert F. Mooney, *Notes on a Tour in Jordan, Ms. 15th July, 1951*, BME0, 1, 2, 21; Herbert F. Mooney, *Some Notes on Forestry in Jordan, June 30, 1954*, BME0, 15, 29.
- [46] The British worked feverishly in Palestine until independence, scheduling a ten-year forestry plan beginning in 1946. This partially explains the smooth transition from British rule to an effective Israeli state. See El-Eini, *Mandated Landscape*, 204–05.
- [47] D. E. Hutchins describes early British environmental concerns in Cyprus in *Report on Cyprus Forestry*. Robert Scott Troup describes the tension between Zionism and British-led conservation efforts in *Palestine in Colonial Forest Administration*, 399. G. W. Chapman, *Recent Developments in Forestry and Soil Conservation in Israel, February 1951*, BME0, Appendix II, 3.
- [48] V. K. Maitland, *Notes on a Tour in Iraq, 19th March–8th April, 1948*, BME0, 1; Louis, *British Empire in the Middle East*.
- [49] G. W. Chapman, *A Report on Forests and Forestry in Iraq, Part 1, The Forests in Relation to their Environment*, BME0, 100; Herbert F. Mooney, *Memorandum on Forestry in Iraq*, BME0, 1–2. See also J. Smith, *Report of Forests and Forestry in the Northern Liwas of Iraq*, BME0; G. W. Chapman, *Forests and Forestry in Iraq*, BME0; Herbert F. Mooney, *Notes on a Tour in Iraq, April–May, 1951*, BME0. Forestry inspectors from the BME0 also went to Turkey where the Iraqi forestry law originated. See Herbert F. Mooney, *A Brief Note on Forestry in Turkey, August 3, 1960*, BME0.
- [50] The British intelligence service, MI6, used forest areas in Iraq and Iran for ‘safe houses’ where arms were stored and agents could stage operations without easy detection. Development officials, working with both BME0 and Point Four, often provided British and American intelligence agents with ready contacts for special operations. See Dorrill, *MI6*, 575, 577, 587. Forestry expertise proved particularly helpful for intelligence operations of the sort carried out in Iran. MI6 had a history of occasionally recruiting foresters from India to work in the timber trade and provide intelligence information in other parts of the world. Dorrill, *MI6*, 426. Dorrill also traces how priorities within the BME0 shifted from development and towards ‘political intelligence work’ under the head of the BME0, John Troutbeck. But it is important to keep in mind that the intelligence focus then shifted back again to development after Troutbeck’s term as head ended. See Dorrill, *MI6*, 538. While Dorrill provides the most comprehensive look at British intelligence operations in the Middle East, see also Cable, *Intervention at Abadan*.

- [51] Herbert F. Mooney, *Memorandum on Forestry in Iraq*, BMEQ, 6. Barton, 'Sir Albert Howard and the Forestry Roots of the Organic Farming Movement', 168–87. Herbert F. Mooney *Notes on a Tour in Iraq, April–May, 1951*, BMEQ, 25.
- [52] Herbert F. Mooney, *Report on Two Visits to Saudi Arabia in February and May 1965*, BMEQ, 1, 2.
- [53] *Ibid.*, 3.
- [54] The American State Department also shared British concern for these specific countries, consciously linking development aid with the containment of communism. Since the Soviet Union offered technical advisers in 'Iraq ... Jordan ... Syria ... and Turkey', these countries were high on the list for aid for advisers to 'provide strategic leadership in the economic and political development of their countries'. This same report emphasised the need for 'food, agriculture and forestry' personnel. See Confidential, Declassified 21 March 1978, Eisenhower Presidential Library, Joseph Rand Records, Folder: Human Resources. Memorandum. Department of State, Confidential, 18 Oct. 1957, 6, 14.
- [55] See D. F. Davidson, *Second Report on the Possibility of Forestry Development in the Aden Federation*, BMEQ, 1964, 10.
- [56] D. F. Davison, *Some Observations on Tree planting in the Aden Protectorate*, BMEQ, 1961, 1–3.
- [57] Herbert F. Mooney, *Report on Forestry in Ethiopia with Special Reference to the Forests of Arussi and Sidamo, March 31, 1954*, BMEQ, 30, 31. Compare these principles with those found in the Indian Forest Charter of 1855. Gregory Barton analyses the importance of Dalhousie and the Forest Charter in the British Empire and beyond in *Empire Forestry*, esp. 48–62. See also a number of reports on Ethiopia that repeat the same assertions and show how little progress had been made from 1954 to 1961. See Herbert F. Mooney, *Report on Forestry in Ethiopia with Special Reference to the Forests of Arussi and Sidamo, March 31, 1954*, *A Note on the Forests in and Around the Aruanna Mountains in Bale Sub-Province and on Forest Co-operatives, Addis Ababa, May, 1958*, *A Report on the Bamboo Forests of Wallega Province with a View to Their Possible Utilization for Paper Pulp, Addis Ababa, March 1959*, *A Preliminary Report on the Possibilities for Forestry in Eritrea, September 11, 1959*, *Report on the Forests of Southern Bale in Harrar Province of Ethiopia, January 1960*, *A Report on Forestry in Eritrea, Addis Ababa, June 1960* and *Report on the Forests of Kaffa and Illubabor, January, 1961*, all BMEQ.
- [58] Herbert F. Mooney, *A Report on the Forests of the Caspian Provinces in Northern Iran*, BMEQ, 1–9.
- [59] These included hornbeam, alder, maple, lime, oak in areas and beech trees, many over 100 feet tall, leaving Mooney to exclaim, 'I have never seen finer beech'. Herbert F. Mooney, *A Report on the Forests of the Caspian Provinces in Northern Iran*, BMEQ, 13.
- [60] Herbert F. Mooney, *A Report on the Forests of the Caspian Provinces in Northern Iran*, BMEQ, 57, 59.
- [61] Herbert F. Mooney, *A Report on the Forests of the Caspian Provinces in Northern Iran*, BMEQ, 32, 34, 45.
- [62] Herbert F. Mooney, *A Report on Forestry in Iran, November 1957*, BMEQ, 18, 19, 13, 14. See also Herbert F. Mooney, *Report on a Visit to Iran, 1959* and *A Note on Various Aspects of Forestry in Iran July 1960*, BMEQ.
- [63] 'News of the World', 1956.
- [64] Chapman, 'Ten Years of Forestry Progress in Iraq'.
- [65] Staff, 'Forestry in the Middle East'; 'News of the World', 1959.
- [66] Staff, 'Forestry in the Middle East'.
- [67] *Ibid.*
- [68] 'News of the World', 1959.
- [69] Staff, 'Forest Grazing: Principles of Management'; 'News of the World: Ethiopia', 1958.
- [70] 26 Feb. 1962, FO 957/243.
- [71] 'The Council for Technical Education and Training for Overseas Countries'. This council was founded on the BMEQ model. See FO 957/243. The Caribbean Development Division was also based 'on the analogy of the Middle East Development Division'. See FO 957/243.

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