

Sir Albert Howard's 'War In The Soil' And The Origins Of Organic Agriculture. (Z06-heckman134555-Oral)

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Abstract:

Sir Albert Howard (1873-1957), born son of a farmer in England, educated at Werkin College and at Cambridge, taught agricultural science at Wye College, and served as an economic botanist in India. While in India, he developed a composting process, improved strains of wheat, and found solutions to some plant health problems that had been mistakenly assumed to be caused by pathogens. Although Howard was an effective agricultural researcher, he is better known for his passionate advocacy for organic farming. He wrote several books, including *An Agricultural Testament*, *The Soil and Health*, and *War in the Soil*, that publicized the concept that nearly any disease was caused by unhealthy soil and that organic farming techniques could make the soil healthy. Howard was extremely critical of the agricultural establishment and called the 'conflict between the birthright of humanity - fresh food from fertile soil - and the profits of a section of Big Business' (i.e., artificial fertilizers and poison sprays) 'The War in the Soil'. This rift that prevented a dialogue between the organic community and traditional agricultural scientists lasted for several decades. Recently, the growing popularity of organic farming has reopened a channel of communication.

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