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Rebels for the Soil: The Rise of the Global Organic Food and Farming Movement.

Reed, Matthew. 2010. Earthscan, 8–12 Camden High Street, London, NW1 0JK, U. K.; www.earthscan.co.uk; distributed in the USA by Stylus Publishing, LLC, 22883 Quicksilver Drive, Sterling, VA 20166–2012; www.styluspub.com. x + 168 pp. (hardcover). USD 84.95. ISBN 978-1-84407-597-3.

After having written the history of England's Soil Association in his previous book, Reed presents a historical sociological analysis of the organic food and farming movement in Western Europe. The “organic movement” is a social movement to promote zero-chemical, ecological farming principles, and organic food as a choice for health-conscious consumers. Reed argues that “the organic movement is a cultural movement” (p. 3), which seeks to change our economic worldview and perception of our relationship with nature.

This book gives a brief account of the origin and unfolding of today's organic movement. In the late nineteenth century, British scientists discovered the principles of organic farming in indigenous farming practices of India. John Voelcker's (1883) report, which Reed identifies as the Urtext of organic agriculture, eulogized the technical finesse of India's traditional agriculture, but critiqued the social arrangements and lack of facilities that thwarted its efficiency. The merits of traditional Indian agriculture were more cogently elaborated by Sir Albert Howard (1940). Howard's explanation of organic agriculture in scientific terms, and his insistence on improving scientific rigor of the organic farming methods was adversarial to what he called “muck and mystery” of biodynamic agriculture (p. 43), developed in the 1920s along the spiritualist ideas of Rudolf Steiner (1860–1925).

Reed has drawn biographical sketches of some colorful personalities who pioneered organic agriculture in Europe – Gerald Wallop, Rolf Gardiner, and Lady Eve Balfour. While identifying a parallel stream of the movement outside the British Empire, Reed missed Alwin Seifert who is

largely forgotten in ecological historiography. He also overlooked Karl Marx's critique of industrial agriculture (cf. Foster 2000).

Reed follows the trajectory of the organic movement in the UK and Europe, with only allusions to the United States. The organic movement has primarily been a struggle over the mode of resource use, over the materials and means of production, and access to safe food. However, “the struggles over resources, even when there are tangible material origins, have always been struggles over meaning” (Guha and Martinez-Alier 1997, p.13).

Reed has captured the ideological underpinning of the organic movement, but appears at times to indicate that the organic ideology is a by-product of the green rhetoric and propaganda tactics (p. 116). Such narratives may convey that the GM food market shrank due to irrational customer demand, shaped by the activists' advertising campaign to promote organic food. The scientific basis of the public perception of potential and empirical risks from GM foods, which framed anti-GM sentiments, is lost in this account. Perhaps Reed's unfamiliarity with biology constrains his analysis. His description of Bt crops is incorrect: “toxins of a bacillus was inserted into a plant with the result that the toxin would be released when the plant would be bitten by an insect – an inbuilt insecticide” (p. 113). Reed means the Bt toxin, which is not inserted into a plant; instead, the *Cry* gene complex that translates into toxins is inserted. Secondly, the toxin is released throughout the transgenic plant's life, and in all its tissues – from the roots to the pollen, causes ecological concern, no less than the concern for unintended effects of imprecise control of transgene regulation events (Schubert 2002). Failure to understand this ecological concern is likely to construe the anti-GM movement as a Luddite fad against techno-industrial advancements.

Reed's account is devoid of reference to the scientific literature that validates the organic movement's fundamental claims and opposition to monocultures. Readers are not informed that a body of scientific literature has informed and reinforced the movement, or that pro-GM institutions aggressively oppose evidence of adverse impacts of GM crops (Waltz 2009). However, these omissions do not undermine the value of Reed's sociological insights into the forms and contents of the movement. Green activists on all continents will benefit from Reed's analysis of the rhetoric and dynamics of a vibrant social movement of our time.

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Fungi from Different Environments. Misra, J. K. and S. K. Deshmukh, eds. 2009. Science Publisher, Inc., c/o Enfield Distribution Co., 234 May Street, PO Box 699, Enfield, NH 03748; <http://www.scipub.net/>. xii + 393 pp. (hardcover). USD 109.00. ISBN 978-1-578085781.

The book is the first volume in a series related to mycological research, presenting scientific knowledge derived primarily from the Asian continent, but also from Europe, Latin America, and Australia. In its 393 pages there is a wealth of information related to fungi in fossil remains, in the air, in saline environments, and in marine environments in particular.

One chapter deals with the genus *Achlya* that encompasses fungi living in alkaline and sewage polluted aquatic environments, whereas there is also a chapter devoted to *Microsporium canis*, a fungal pathogen that infects cats and its control through environmental management. Research findings on the termite egg mimicking fungi underline an interesting relationship between termites and fungi.

The fourteen chapters of the book also cover the following topics—keratinolytic and keratinophilic fungi in sewage sludge, fungal pathogens of plants under snow, fungi from high nitrogen environments, novel enzyme activities in fungi from extreme environments, hallucinogenic mushrooms, thermophilic molds in environmental management, and

environmental impact on fatty acid composition of fungal membranes. There are also two necessary indexes, a subject index, and a genus and species index. This hardcover book is characterized by its versatility in its content and chapter layout, and certainly contributes to the gathering of scientific information on fungi from different environments.

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Effective Ecological Monitoring. Lindenmayer, David B. and Gene E. Likens. 2010. Earthscan, 8–12 Camden High Street, London, NW1 0JK, U.K.; www.earthscan.co.uk; distributed in the USA by Stylus Publishing, LLC, 22883 Quick-silver Drive, Sterling, VA 20166–2012; www.styluspub.com. xii + 170 pp. (paperback). USD 41.95. ISBN 978-1-84971-145-6.

Effective Ecological Monitoring is a brief, but valuable review of what makes for effective ecological monitoring, pitfalls and problems to avoid, and changes needed to improve future monitoring efforts. Given the increasing interest in and funding for ecological monitoring both domestically (e.g., US Forest Service Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program - CFLRP) and internationally (e.g., REDD/Climate Change) this clearly written, practical book is a welcome resource. The authors are world renowned for their long-term research in Australia and Hubbard Brook, NH, respectively, and address a wide range of topics, including achievable objectives, experimental design, database management, engaging relevant parties (including policy makers and managers), excessive bureaucracy, and many others.

I was particularly impressed by the author's forthright assessment of some very well-funded research programs, such as the Terrestrial Environmental Research Network (TERN), which they assert “lacked testable and readily tractable scientifically based questions,” did not pose “any *a priori* predictions about how ecosystems ... might respond to environmental change or management interventions”... and that “the ‘real’ questions...[were]...posed after the money had been allocated, like unfortunately so much of ecological science.” Ouch! The authors are equally straightforward regarding what makes for

Organic Farming A Promising Way of Food Production By Petr Konvalina. Organic Farming An International History By W. Lockeretz. Organic Farming for Sustainable Agriculture By Dilip Nandwani. Dispersal Ecology and Evolution Edited By Jean C Lobert, Michel B Aguiette, Tim G. B Enton and James M. B Ullock. Practical Tools for Plant and Food Biosecurity Results from a European Network of Excellence By Maria Lodovica Gullino, James P. Stack, Jacqueline Fletcher and John D. Mumford. Textbook of Microbiology and Immunology 2nd Edition By Subhash Chandra Parija. Archives. Search. The global organic farming and food movement arose in an earlier ecological, environmental and economic crisis. During the late 1920s and early 1930s a diverse network of people, working separately in the British Empire and Germany, began to develop alternative answers to the growing ecological fears caused by soil erosion and the poverty of the diet eaten by most of the world's population. This ethical consumerism saw the organic movement adopted by the emerging powers of the new food system, the multiple retailers or supermarkets. Organic food found its way into the lives and onto the dinner plates of more people than ever before, creating a burgeoning organic industry and government policy framework. In organic farming, crops, meat and other food are produced without chemicals. Fertilizers, pesticides, growth hormones and antibiotics are forbidden. During thousands of years of civilization the raising of animals and growing of plants have always been organic. Clover, for example, has a lot of nitrogen in it and farmers use it to make the soil better. Manure from animals and compost are also used to enrich the soil. These fertilizers also help conserve the soil, not destroy it after a few years. Clover has a lot of nitrogen in it - Alvesgaspar. Organic farmers also use crop rotation to preserve the good qualities of soils and avoid monoculture. Chemical pesticides destroy or weaken many of the natural enemies of pests, like birds or frogs.