

**HUNGRY PEOPLE AND EMPTY
LANDS: AN ESSAY ON
POPULATION PROBLEMS AND
INTERNATIONAL TENSIONS**

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Hungry People and Empty Lands: An Essay on Population Problems and International Tensions by S. Chandrasekhar & William Vogt

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S. CHANDRASEKHAR & WILLIAM VOGT

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HUNGRY PEOPLE AND EMPTY LANDS

AN ESSAY ON POPULATION PROBLEMS
AND INTERNATIONAL TENSIONS

BY

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Preface by William Vogt

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*To the Memory
of My
Father and Mother*

*Printed in Great Britain
by Bradford and Dickens
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PREFACE BY WILLIAM VOGT

As an Asian who has studied in the West, Dr. Chandrasekhar speaks from both worlds with wisdom and understanding. His thesis, which we shall all do well to heed, is: "The population of Southern and Eastern Asia . . . cannot be confined to its present geographical limits as long as there are empty spaces around the world." Whether or not we inhabitants of the "empty" spaces agree with him, millions of Asians undoubtedly would. And while he soundly considers the multiplicity of factors that contribute to the problem and its solution, he makes a strong case for emigration. (Whether he, or anyone else, could educate our own ineffable Senator McCarran, is doubtful; here is a limiting factor he has overlooked.)

It behoves us of the free world to give especial heed to his warning since the people for whom he speaks are the third—800,000,000—of the world's population not yet committed to either the Kremlin or Democracy. Their orientation during the next few years may determine the very survival of our children; this orientation is sure to be influenced by population-resource dynamics.

There are two aspects of the situation to which he might have devoted more space, had it been available, and that the reader should bear in mind: physiological control of human fertility; and the ecological vulnerability of many areas into which he would encourage emigration.

Birth control by an oral pill is almost certainly not more than a few years away. It will, presumably, be cheaper than, and as effective as, other mass health efforts. The unwanted child may become as unusual as a case of cholera, yaws or malaria. The only effective obstacle is religion, and the people of the world are not likely to tolerate, much longer, intimidation by a minority sect. Widespread use of such a pill will change not only economics but, more importantly, attitudes.

Much of the "empty" land Dr. Chandrasekhar would use as a home for surplus peoples is as undependable as a pair of paper shoes: expose it to the rain and it melts away. As other students of the tropics, such as Dudley Stamp and Marston Bates, have also pointed out, we simply do not know how to use most tropical soils without destroying them. Agricultural surpluses in the United States are symbolic—i.e. economic,—rather than real. Were their production a function of sound land use rather than of printing presses at the mint, we should probably have no surpluses; North America must within a few years markedly improve her agriculture to meet the demands of her own mushrooming population.

The empty lands are not nearly so empty as some of us wish they were!

WILLIAM VOGT

February 1954

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My thanks are due to the following publishers for their kind permission to reproduce some of their charts and maps: The Bureau of Current Affairs, London, for their maps on "World Density of Population" and "A Difference in Calories, 1939"; *The Scientific American*, New York, for their charts on Comparative Food Production and Food Needs in Various Countries and Regions; and the *Institut National D'Etudes Demographiques*, Paris, for their maps found on pages 66-67.

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Above all, I am indebted to my wife for her constructive criticism and for having seen the book through the press.

Baroda,
June 1952.

S. C.

