

# CENTER CITY<sup>©</sup>

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*The following is a portion of the BILL MOYERS' JOURNAL: INTERNATIONAL REPORT aired on WKNO/10 on March 20, 1975, entitled "Earthwatch from Nairobi." Courtesy of WNET/13 in New York, CENTER CITY has printed these segments of the broadcast in an effort to stimulate some thought and dialogue on this topic locally. We sincerely hope that it is self-evident to our regular readers why CENTER CITY should be interested in the ideas expressed below.*

**MOYERS:** Thirty miles from the Rift Valley, where primitive peoples began their struggle with nature, is the thriving young city of Nairobi. Seventy-five years ago, when the railroad snaked its way inland from the port of Mombassa, this was just a village. Now it is home for half a million people, and still growing.

It's also the home of a young organization commissioned to keep track of what all of us are doing to the world, the United Nations Environmental Program. Formed in 1972, UNEP, as it's called, monitors our relationship with the land, air and water essential to survival. The staff of earth-watchers, drawn from all over the world, is headed by an energetic Canadian, Maurice Strong....

You get a good view of Nairobi as a microcosm up here.

**STRONG:** Yes, and that's a good word for it. It is a microcosm. Nairobi really exemplifies so many of the issues that man faces all around the world. Now here, of course, you have some of the best conditions of life. I live here and I enjoy it. It's one of the finest cities in the world to live in. Some of the best residential areas, some of the most beautiful and well-planned and well-cared-for streets you could see anywhere in the world. Some of the buildings have taste and character, the modern buildings. At the same time, Nairobi is

## EarthWatch

experiencing all the pressures of growing urban life, all the pressures of population coming in, drawn in by this great magnet here. And it's difficult for any government to cope with these pressures.

**MOYERS:** So you have some of the worst here too.

**STRONG:** Indeed we have. You can see over here some of the parts of Nairobi where newcomers congregate from the rural areas.

You see, all around the world, what's happening to people is that they're gathering in cities. We've got an urban revolution on. In many of our countries that urban revolution has already reached the stage where most people live in urban areas. In the developing world most people continue to live in rural areas, but they're migrating at increasing rates to the cities.

Actually, the - just to give you some idea, the cities of the world are growing at double the rate of the world population growth, and cities of over 500,000 are growing at double the rate again.

**MOYERS:** What are the consequences if that kind of growth continues unchecked?

**STRONG:** . . . The cities of the developing world are growing beyond anything we have ever had to cope with in the industrialized world, and we know what trouble we're having coping with our urban problems. But in the developing world, countries at a very low - with a very low economic base, with very few resources, are trying to cope with pressures that are just threatening to over-

whelm many of them, the pressures of trying to provide decent water supply and health services, etcetera to populations that are expanding beyond anything any city has ever had to cope with.

The meaning is clear, I think, that with the right use of his resources and his talents and his creativity, man can cope with the problems of building better environments in human settlements, better urban environments, better rural environments. He can do this, but it takes the kind of commitment, the kind of priority that we give to warfare and other major societal priorities. We can do it, but right now we're being overcome by the problems. And some of the cities of the world are literally being threatened with being overwhelmed in the next decade or so with the kind of problems that we witness in microcosm here in Nairobi.

MOYERS: You talk about smokestacks, automobiles and factories, all of which are identified with the industrialized Western nations that have already achieved a high standard of living. The developing countries come along and they say: "All right, Mr. Strong. All of which you have said is good in theory, but in practice it means that you in the West, who have achieved this standard of living, want to protect the environment at our expense because we have not yet got to where you are, and you want to slow everything down to protect this environment and keep us at a level of undevelopment that would leave us significantly behind you in industrialization."

Now, how are you going to overcome that very significant problem?

STRONG: Well, there are a couple of things here. One is that we in the industrialized countries do have to recognize that we who have benefited from industrialization and urbanization are also the biggest contributors to global environmental problems. We have - if there's anybody who has to slow their growth, or at least control their growth and control its adverse consequences, it's us, because the larger global problems - we are the big - you know, the larger pollution problems really come back to us. We are the big polluters, and therefore we should accept the largest costs of dealing with global problems. It's only proper.

Now, by the same token, we can't leave it - leave the impression that even the problems of pollution are not important for the developing countries. They're not as important. They can't, obviously at this stage, afford the kind of measures that we can afford. They haven't had the benefits

yet.

MOYERS: Well, let's stay with that a minute, because right as we are talking here, representatives of 104 developing nations are meeting in Algiers to talk about industrial development, and they're making it clear that, quote: "Industrialization is the only path possible for developing nations."

STRONG: What we have to recognize is that the environment is simply one of several good reasons why we should be willing to see a much higher degree of industrialization in the developing world. We in the industrialized world, for our own interests and in the larger interests of this planet, should be willing to encourage a much better distribution of the world's future industrial capacity. We should be willing to see many of the new industrial plants built in the developing world, not only from the environmental point of view - it does make sense from the environmental point of view because, clearly, a better spread of industrial capacity means a better leveling of the impact on the physical environment, better attention to decentralization of locations, this sort of thing. It makes sense internationally as well as nationally.

MOYERS: But what you're saying, Maurice Strong, implies that the people in the industrialized nations are going to have to make sacrifices. Not long ago an unemployed worker at General Motors said to me, "To hell with the environment. I want a job."

And if we spread industry around, if we help the industrialization of the newly developing countries, that man may not have a job.

STRONG: I think this reaction shouldn't be a surprise to us. If we were that man, we might feel the same way. Why should a worker, a person working in an automobile plant, bear the brunt solely himself of the environmental changes that are necessary? Why should the workers in the developing countries be deprived of the benefits of industrialization and the opportunities that come with it?

What we really need is this new international economic order that the developing countries have been calling for. We need very major shifts in our whole economic process. And we can't do this on a piecemeal, haphazard sort of basis.

MOYERS: Well that's fine theory, but what does that mean to that worker in Detroit who doesn't have a job? What do you mean "new industrial order" or "new world order"?

STRONG: Well, what I mean, in essence, is this, that in the more industrialized countries we have got to reduce our emphasis on pure physical growth and we've got to pursue patterns of growth

which emphasize the less physical, the more sophisticated kinds of growth, the kinds of service-oriented industries, those that make much less of a demand on the physical environment, on the natural resource base.

Now, this requires a very significant retooling of our economy, a regearing of the system of incentives and penalties by which our economic life is motivated.

MOYERS: Are you saying that environment and the protection of the environment can create jobs?

STRONG: Absolutely, I believe environmentalists have been far too defensive about environment. We environmentalists and others have been accepting quietly the assumption that when you do something to protect or improve the environment, it's a cost.

Well, this is not a cost; it's an — the environment is our natural capital, and when we do something to preserve it or to protect it from deterioration or to improve it, we are adding to our capital, either to its preservation or to its improvement.

MOYERS: Take that a step further. In what way could a retooling of the economy help those who are fearful, rightly so, in the industrialized world that if the economy shifts and we stop or limit our growth, their livelihood is jeopardized?

STRONG: Well, for example, if we decide as an act — any country, the United States, Canada, decides as an act of national policy that improvement of the quality of life of the people of our societies, improvement of the natural and the physical environment, the man-made environment, is a matter of great national importance, we then can, through the instruments of public policy, construct a system of incentives that will lead — make it profitable for people, for companies, for private entrepreneurs, as well as for public bodies, to direct their resources into these areas, into building more beautiful, more habitable cities, improving recreational areas, improving public transportation systems.

After all, a job for the automobile worker in Detroit is just as good for him if he's producing public vehicles, vehicles for mass transit systems. Automobile companies have got to realize that they're in the transport business; they're not just in the automobile business. Even automobiles may become public service vehicles eventually.

In other words, a retooling of the industrial system.

MOYERS: Let me be sure I understand you, then. Are you saying that we're about to enter an era of no growth, or are you saying that growth will be limited either by our own decision or because of forces beyond our control?

STRONG: Well, I am not a no-growth man. I don't believe no growth is a visible alternative for anyone, for societies any more than for people.

It does require very significant changes, however, in the whole system through which we motivate our economic life. It has to make it, in effect, economically attractive, profitable to do the good things, to do the environmentally sound things, the socially desirable things. And correspondingly, it has to make it economically unattractive to do the bad things.

MOYERS: Well, does that mean if you go to this concept, some people are going to get hurt?

STRONG: Absolutely. In any process of major change, the people who don't adjust or don't adjust in time, some of them are going to be hurt. When we moved from the horse-and-buggy stage to the automobile age, some people got hurt, but others had vastly expanded opportunity. . . .

The commitment to building a better and more beautiful nation, a better way of life, a better quality of life, better cities, better rural areas, better connections between rural and urban life, better recreational areas, improved access to natural beauty, improved opportunities for cultural growth, for educational growth, these things aren't negative; this is going to be job-creating, it's going to be stimulating to the economy.

Just — you know, how can we accept the fact that a war, a destructive war is stimulating to the economy, but that something that improves the quality of life and increases opportunities for human beings to express their aspirations, that something like this is going to be negative to the economy? We simply have to change.

MOYERS: . . . As you call upon us to — Americans, Costa Ricans, Kenyans, Russians, Swiss, and others — to see ourselves as — well, as God sees us, aren't you flying in the face of human nature?

STRONG: Well, I have to be an optimist on this. I have to look at the positive evidences in our history that we can cooperate, though of course we compete.

Let's just look at the way man himself has developed. We've seen and talked about the Rift Valley. But as man has evolved over this approximately three million years that we know he's inhabited the earth, his loyalties have been gradually enlarged. His willingness to cooperate within larger and larger frameworks has been demonstrated by the fact that he has moved and his loyalties have moved from the family to the tribe to the village to the town to the city to the city-state and now to the nation-state. And each time — this hasn't been because he's suddenly been struck with a wave of idealism; it's because his growing self-

# earthly delights

## DOWNTOWN EXHIBITS

National Bank of Commerce (Lobby)

May 12-June 8 - Smithsonian Illustrated  
History of Bicycling

Sterick Building (Lobby)

May - Paintings by Mrs. Mabel Tual

## FILM

Peabody Library

May 30 - "Wagon Tracks," & "Battle of  
Elderbush Gulch"

Brooks Art Gallery

June 1 - "Julius Caesar"

## DOWNTOWN ACTIVITIES

Confederate Park and Tom Lee Park

May 27-June 1 - Memphis Waterfront Fair



SUNDAY, MAY 18 - The Downtown Churches celebrate Pentecost.



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interest has required it. . . .

MOYERS: If we do make it, will it take something new?

STRONG: It will take something new in a very special sense. It'll take a new sense of commitment to something very old: values that have been inculcated in the traditions of man, not in the physical traditions, but in the cultural, in the behavioral traditions of man from the very beginning, values that are common to most of the world's great religions and philosophies, values that call for caring, for caring for each other, for caring for the earth, stewardship, stewardship of our resources, of our power, sharing with our fellow man, being concerned about him, cooperating with him, not only for his good, but for our mutual good. These common values are values that we have to take seriously. . . .

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## CIVIC CENTER COMMUNITY CULINARY CLUB

*Serving from 11:30 to 1:00*

*First Presbyterian Church, 166 Poplar Avenue*

*PRICE: \$1.50 per serving, including drink*

### MENU FOR MAY 29 - JUNE 5

#### THURSDAY, MAY 29

*Ham, Macaroni-Cheese, Turnip Greens, Corn Bread*

#### FRIDAY, MAY 30

*BarB-Q Beef/Bun, Baked Beans, Pineapple/Cottage Cheese Salad*

#### MONDAY, JUNE 2

*Beef Stew, Tossed Salad, Corn Bread*

#### TUESDAY, JUNE 3

*Pork Chops, Potatoes Au Gratin, English Peas, Rolls*

#### WEDNESDAY, JUNE 4

*Spaghetti, Cole Slaw, Rolls*

#### THURSDAY, JUNE 5

*Fried Chicken, Rice with Gravy, Apple Sauce, Rolls*

#### FRIDAY, JUNE 6

*Meat Loaf, Whipped Potatoes, Congealed Fruit Salad, Rolls*

*Second-class  
postage paid at  
Memphis, Tennessee*