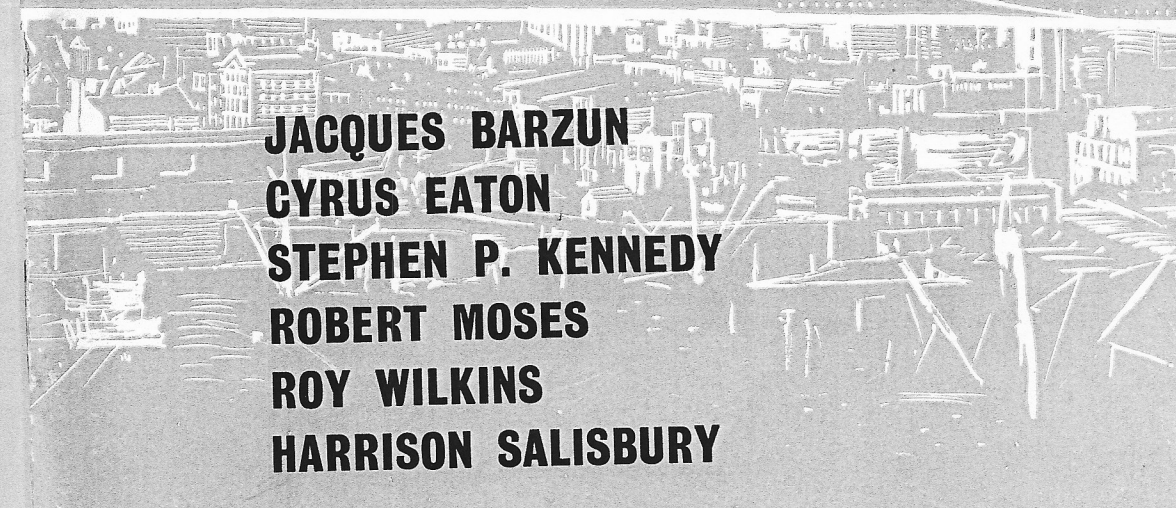




AMERICAN VIEWPOINTS



JACQUES BARZUN
CYRUS EATON
STEPHEN P. KENNEDY
ROBERT MOSES
ROY WILKINS
HARRISON SALISBURY

INTERVIEWED BY WILLIAM CLARK

*Texts of six television interviews
in ASSOCIATED TELEVISION'S
"Right to Reply" Series*



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CYRUS EATON

interviewed by William Clark
in ATV's "Right to Reply"
series on the Independent
Television Network

Clark: Good evening. In all of America there is no more controversial figure than Mr. Cyrus Eaton, a multi-millionaire who has for long been a personal friend of Nikita Khrushchev, a capitalist who has long maintained that there could be complete co-existence between the Communist system of Russia and the Capitalist system of America. Mr. Eaton—as Mr. Khrushchev once said, "What a Capitalist"—Mr. Eaton has visited Russia, and he has often brought Russians to this country to see something of America.

Mr. Eaton, you've had the satisfaction of seeing the idea of a meeting between Khrushchev and Eisenhower change from being a crazy notion of your own into being official policy; and yet I find that here in America

you are still criticised, on the grounds that perhaps you have somehow gone overboard in favour of the Russian system as against the American system. What is your reply to that criticism?

EATON: I'm a dyed-in-the-wool capitalist, both in theory and in practice, but I'm also old enough to realise that no one has yet found the final answers to all the problems of life. While I would not be a practising Communist, or Socialist, I do respect adherents to these systems for having their own convictions and ideas. I am sure they can go along with their system of Communism, and we in America with ours of Capitalism, and we can get along together if we want to. For five years, our Pugwash Conferences in Canada, especially those that have brought together eminent scientists from both sides of the iron and bamboo curtains, have been proving my long-held belief that men of profoundly different economic, political and religious beliefs can come together amicably and work out common problems to mutual advantage. These scientists from twenty-two of the world's great nations, including Japan, have agreed that modern weapons—nuclear, biological and chemical—constitute a terrible hazard to mankind. The unanimous sentiment has been that war must be outlawed lest mankind be annihilated.

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Clark: Mr. Eaton, from your experience in Russia, where you've travelled a lot, and in bringing Russians over here, which you have done very often, do you think that they are really prepared to accept co-existence?

EATON: I am sure they are willing and anxious to do that, because as they go along with their own system they become less fanatical in their dogmas. They are most anxious to get along in their own country, and to prosper. They want to have better homes and better schools, better factories and better universities. They can do all of that only if they are not fighting with us. And I'm completely convinced that no longer do their leaders or their people want to overthrow our system by force, or even change us by propaganda.

Clark.

EATON

Clark: Do you really mean that they are prepared to drop the idea of subversion, that is of using Communist Parties as instruments of Russian national interests abroad?

EATON: I am convinced that they are in that mood; and here's one of the reasons for it. For instance, in the early days they had contacts in America with people who were impoverished fanatical people. They discovered that people of that kind could not help them in the slightest in America. I think they have more confidence now in us Capitalists than they had in impoverished, unhappy people who were, maybe in theory, supporting

Clark.

their side. Because they have their huge programme for their own people, I think they feel that they will be better off if they are friendly with the Capitalist instead of trying to cultivate the Anarchist.

Clark: But, Mr. Eaton, do you think any of them are really prepared to accept a great big Capitalist like you?

EATON: I think so. They received Mrs. Eaton and me with great courtesy everywhere in the Soviet Union. That was not only true of the people in government, and in journalism, but with the man on the farm and in the factory and on the street. They are very friendly people, and I am satisfied that we Capitalists can reach an understanding with them and get along with them, if we want to. I think the difficulty is more with the Capitalist now than with the Communist.

Clark: So much for Russians accepting America. But what about America? Do you think, Mr. Eaton, that Americans are really prepared to accept Russia as an equal, as an economic equal?

EATON: The feeling of accepting Russia is growing by leaps and bounds in the United States. Of course, it has existed among the intellectuals, but now the businessmen—the group to which I belong—are realising that the Russians are here to stay, that the Soviet people's system is making great progress in the economic world, and that there will be mutual advantage to doing business with each other.

Clark: You were speaking for businessmen, as a businessman. How near do you think Russia can come to American standards of production and standards of living?

EATON: They have, of course, a long way to go. But the progress they have already made is stupendous when you realise that forty years ago eighty per cent of them could not read or write, and that many of them lived in poverty. The progress that they have made is most impressive, and they will, I am sure, develop a standard of living of which they will be very proud, and which will be one of the highest in the world. The Soviet people seem not merely to believe in their system, but they are dedicated to it. They are fond of work; and they are really a lot of hustlers when it comes to getting things done in the physical world.

Clark: And you don't think that when Russia comes to an equality that American jealousy will prove as strong, even as it has sometimes proved in Britain? At the end of the nineteenth century there was a good deal of Anglo-American tension because we felt that you were surpassing us. You think

that you will be able to accept Russia as an equal without any great difficulty?

EATON: I think so. It won't hurt us a bit to have a higher standard of living in Russia. As the people of that country increase their standard of living they will be buying many of the good things of this world, and that will give us an opportunity to sell them many of the things that they can use. And certainly if we in the United States who are in business, are going to get infuriated because some other country prospers, why we are in a bad way.

Clark: But, really, the most difficult question of all, Mr. Eaton, in some ways is this: the political rather than the economic one. Do you think, in fact, that Americans can accept that Russia shall have control with its system over Eastern Europe? I think Americans are quite prepared to see Russia have any system of its own that it wants, but what about its imposition on the countries of Eastern Europe?

EATON: We will have to do that. That will be somewhat of a struggle because of the large representations in America of people from Hungary and Poland and Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia; but that is one of the things which we will have to accept, and I'm sure that common sense will persuade us to do it.

Clark: Common sense, yes. Do you think that in this there is, in fact, a moral question involved? I mean, what about the position of both Poles or Hungarians who have shown a certain distaste for the system? Do you think that there is a moral question involved here, about whether they ought to be given any help in liberalising their regimes?

EATON: There is a moral question, which has been explained to me by a number of outstanding Hungarians, and that is that the United States has encouraged those countries to protest and revolt against Russian influence, but when the chips were down, as in the case of Hungary, we stood on the sidelines and did nothing for them. A very prominent Hungarian has said to me that his great hope is that the United States would leave them alone, and let time and reason work out their problems, rather than to stir them up emotionally to these rebellions and other things that only get them into trouble. As a matter of common sense we've got to realise that the peoples of Eastern Europe have got to work out their own destiny with the Soviets; and time, I think, will accomplish that. It never can be accomplished by force.

Clark: And then there is the very difficult question, for America, about the

recognition or, if you like, the acceptance of China. Do you think America is going to be prepared to accept Communist China?

EATON: It will change very swiftly. The chief influence for opposition to Red China comes from those with a business interest in restoring Chiang Kai-shek; and that is, of course, hopeless. And with Mr. Dulles off the scene and with Mr. Bohlen regaining influence in foreign affairs, I think politically we are going to change; and I'm sure that speaking for the business people of the United States, who after all have some influence in our affairs, we're going to, rather swiftly I think, get to the place of recognising Red China as there to stay. We're impressed with their economic and industrial progress, and I'm sure we are going to accept them before long.

Clark: Speaking for the businessmen, you say. May I just take you up on that point? Do you think that trade with the Communist Bloc is important to American businessmen?

EATON: I think so, for many reasons. Perhaps both sides are going to be exporters of certain materials. We can agree among ourselves on prices and other conditions that will be constructive to both countries.

Clark: Mr. Eaton, now that some of your dreams, if I may say so, have been fulfilled, and that there has been arranged this exchange of visits between Khrushchev and Eisenhower, and one half fulfilled at least, what good do you think has come out of this exchange between Heads of State?

EATON: It will have very important results. For example, Mr. Khrushchev has had a chance to see the tremendous strength and enthusiasm of America. His first-hand observations will weigh heavily with him in really standing for co-existence. He carried away, I'm sure, a great impression of this country, as did his wife, who's a very able and intelligent person.

Clark: I think perhaps she got a greater chance to see the United States than her husband did.

EATON: She did. Her last luncheon was with my wife, and they had a very friendly family gathering, where they exchanged ideas without reporters present. Mrs. Khrushchev said to my wife that she loved America. When my wife gave her a little heart of gold and diamonds, Mrs. Khrushchev said "I am taking away the heart of America."

Clark: That's very nice. What do you think, though, that President Eisenhower may get out of a corresponding visit to Russia?

EATON: That is even more important than the visit of the Russian Chairman to America. He is going to discover first the politeness and unfailing courtesy of the Russian people. He is going to be impressed by the fact that they don't have to have policemen and security people everywhere. He's going to be impressed with their eagerness to learn and to study. He's going to be convinced that the Russian people, no matter whether their system is good or bad, are dedicated to their system and are going to support it at least in this generation; and that will convince him that there's no possible chance of Communism terminating itself by internal disagreements and fights.

Clark: Well, Mr. Eaton, thank you very much indeed. I think, if you've done nothing else—and I think you've done a great deal else—if you've done nothing else I think you've managed to convince one Englishman, and perhaps an English audience, that America is not composed of people all of whom agree with each other, that there are individualists at all levels of American society with views of their own on the affairs of the day, which may be completely at variance with our sort of rather ordinary view of what an American Capitalist stands for. Thank you very much indeed. Good night.