

John Barden
1990 Ford Dr.
Cleveland OH 44106
216-795-6598

For The American Philosophical Association

Accepted 9/10/79

CYRUS EATON, 1883-1979

By John Barden.

Cyrus S. Eaton, a member of the American Philosophical Association, died in his 96th year on ^{May} ~~April~~ 9, 1979 at Acadia Farms, Northfield Ohio.

Eaton, while training for the Baptist ministry at McMaster University in Toronto, joined the Association circa 1904 as an associate member. The Association granted him full membership in 1972. In this the Association was right, though Eaton had long since become a different kind of philosopher. He was the dominant figure in industrial enterprises worth at least \$2 billion and an effective intervenor in the international politics of the United States and the Soviet Union.

A reader, writer and thinker, Eaton's characteristic mode of expression was nevertheless action, not words. When

he chose to use words, he chose them well. He could and did hold his own with his friend, Bertrand Russell. What made people including Russell sit up and listen to Eaton was the nonconformity of a man plainly answerable only to God. Convincing moral indignation ran through his talk like the denunciations of the prophets.

But Eaton -- courtly, austere, assured, white-haired, tough-minded, intellectual -- never talked much. He didn't have to. He was a master of practical action. Eaton had superb command of the intellectual virtue Aristotle called practical wisdom.

In the years of the cold war he set his formidable abilities to bringing peace to the world and composure to the United States. The results -- abandonment of U.S. cold war policies in favor of detente with the Soviet Union -- had all the earmarks of an Eaton operation.

By the time Eaton took on the U.S. government, he had defeated the policies of the entire eastern banking fraternity by establishing competitive bidding for the underwriting of corporate securities. He had mounted Eaton operations against the presidential aspirations of Newton D. Baker, Wendell L. Wilkie and Robert A. Taft. Baker and Taft were never nominated, and Wilkie lost.

A classic Eaton operation had put together millions in U.S. ^{and} public funds, Canadian public funds ^{with} and private funds (not Eaton's) to extract iron ore from the bottom of Steep

Rock Lake in Canada. Eaton emerged in full control of the fabulous Steep Rock Iron Mines, Ltd.

An Eaton operation was one in which Eaton, over time, had his way. There was a plan which set out in the privacy and clarity of the Eaton mind the objectives and practical actions calculated to reach them.

The opposition seemed always to be overwhelming, a situation that brought assiduity to Eaton's work and joy to eventual victory.

The initiative was always Eaton's, and he knew the value of surprise. Wonderful coincidences occurred so favoring the Eaton operation at hand that in retrospect it was plain Eaton had coincided them.

Every Eaton operation was collaborative. Powerful allies, well-motivated by their own interests, suddenly appeared in unexpected quarters. Opponents were likely to waste time on frolics and detours especially arranged for them by Eaton.

He assessed the possibilities of defeat as carefully as the potentialities of victory. Last ditches to fight from were constructed in advance; all retreats were tactical; all losses, salvageable. The worse his situation, the more formidable Eaton became.

New situations were estimated from a constant flow of information from reliable sources and skillfully exploited.

Just so, Eaton made his fortunes in utilities, steel, iron ore, ship transport, coal and railroads. He went down (though not out) just once. But the 1929 crash only added strength to impressive talent.

The last great Eaton operation turned around the American and Soviet people. He did not quite bring peace to the world or composure to the United States. He needed a few more decades in full vigor, but all men are mortal.

Every Eaton operation had objectives of profit and altruism. He pursued them with prudence, courage, meticulous attention to detail, persistence and success. Here was the essence, the philosophic achievement, of Cyrus S. Eaton.