

# **SOCIALISM: AN ANALYSIS**

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Socialism: an analysis by Rudolf Eucken

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**RUDOLF EUCKEN**

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AN ANALYSIS**



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**RUDOLF EUCKEN**

**HIS LIFE, WORK AND TRAVELS**

**By Himself. Translated by JOSEPH  
McCabe**

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## PREFACE

SOCIALISM comprises an ideal of life as well as an economic statement. This ideal the politician may relegate to a secondary place and rarely notice, but for the philosopher it is the chief matter to be considered. Beyond both politician and philosopher, moreover, is the plain man, in whose mind the various movements of our time meet and must be adjusted to each other.

The economic question is a child of our own time and is directly related to the present condition of the world, but philosophy is based upon the tranquil work of thousands of years. Yet even philosophy seems to have reached a critical stage where radical alterations of all human things are demanded. We see everything about us in a state of suspense, and in the strain which ensues we may hope to obtain some general improvement by combining the two points of view. It is a strange situation to see ancient wisdom join hands with the advancing present: to find permanent hopes of human nature shooting through the stormy agitation of the day.

As a thinking being man does not exhaust his powers in the situation of the moment, the passing hour. To give point to his efforts he needs to direct his gaze to a higher order of life and a larger happiness. It is hope that gilds for him the dreariness of life, and lends it some joy and splendour. That is true, in the first place, of the individual, but it holds also for the race; for the race itself cannot prosper unless it seeks its task in life as a whole, is conscious of possibilities that are full of promise, and tries its strength upon obstacles. The higher the wave of life rises in this sense, the more zealously will new paths be sought, and the more passionately shall we try to determine which resource is the best for attaining the desired end. The question may rend humanity into hostile camps and give rise to grave doubts about the meaning of the whole scheme of things, but the doubts themselves will invest it with an incomparable greatness. The race now receives its fate from no alien power, but earns it by its own resolution and will.

This conflict over the ideal of life is shared by Socialism. But the struggle has only in the course of time passed from being a secondary current into the great stream of life, and concentrated all attention upon itself. We shall see how many causes have contributed to this, but we know from the

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start how it has become a burning question, not only for the German people, but for the whole race. We cannot, however, sufficiently appreciate the situation to-day without recalling first, in general outline, the story of how the present strain developed.