

(itself left, perhaps inevitably, somewhat hazy) to define the specific nature of 'Europeanism' and the special problems, past and present, for nations and individuals, set for being or trying to be European. The 'basic problem' is set by the antithesis: freedom and authority. As to freedom, one notes with interest Halecki's agreement with Christopher Dawson in stressing the profound positive effect of Christianity. As to authority, one notes with relief the author's strong certainty of the historical short-windedness, so to say, of despotism; for today an exiled Pole might be excused for any despondency. Further, it is good to note that the Holy See is not left out of account. Let us hope that Catholics will buy this book; it deserves to be read and re-read; and kept handy for discussion.

K.F.

HISTORY, ITS PURPOSE AND MEANING. By G. J. Renier. (Allen and Unwin; 16s.)

People who like history naturally are bored with talk about history, for their interests are necessarily concrete and particular, whereas talk about history, its theory and so-called philosophy, is bound to be abstract and general. It is this which makes Professor Renier's volume tedious to the present reviewer as a student of history, though what the author has to say is usually sensible and occasionally valuable.

The most useful section of the book is that concerned with the frame of mind in which one should approach the task of writing history. Professor Renier quite rightly points out that no one can set out to write on a historical subject altogether free from prejudices and he proclaims the value of writing history with some general pattern, or philosophy, in mind. The mere recital of facts would be tedious and is, in fact, impossible. What he says by way of caution is pure common sense, that is, that the writer should always be ready to abandon his theory when facts turn up that will not fit into it. It is a pity that Professor Renier's knowledge of the Catholic Church is so incomplete that he has not yet found reason to discard some of his more fantastic comments upon it.

Books about history and its so-called philosophy are numerous nowadays for the good reason that the events of our time are so disastrous that we are all curious to know the causes from which they spring. The pattern which produced Hitler and Stalin is obviously of enormous importance and Professor Renier's book is useful in indicating how complex that pattern is likely to be when disengaged, and how very much pragmatism and anti-supernaturalism have contributed towards it.

P.F.