

CONTENTS

1

Critical and Speculative, 1

2

Historical Understanding, 4

Fact and explanation, 4. Explanation and law, 5. The uniqueness of historical events, 8. The rationality of actions, 10. Objections to Collingwood's theory, 12. Some revisions of the positivist theory, 15. Other kinds of explanation, 18.

3

Historical Objectivity, 21

Historical relativism, 21. The positivist rejoinder, 23. Human actions as value charged, 24. The problem of selection, 27. Explanatory and descriptive histories, 29. Instrumental and intrinsic importance, 32. Past and present values, 35. Objective histories, 39.

4

Causal Judgment in History, 41

Problems about causes, 41. Causes and reasons, 43. The relativity of causes, 44. A historical example, 47. The conspiracy theory, 48. The conflict theory, 50. The revisionist theory, 53. Abnormality and voluntariness, 55.

5

Philosophies of History, 59

The argument so far, 59. Speculation about history, 60. Kinds of systems, 61. Three questions, 63.

6

A Metaphysical Approach, 67

G. W. F. Hegel, 67. Spirit and freedom, 68. The course of World History, 70. Dialectic and necessity, 73. Empirical or a priori? 76. The principle of selection, 77. Metaphysical explanation, 79.

7

An Empirical Approach, 82

A. J. Toynbee, 82. The unit of historical study, 83. The rise and fall of civilizations, 85. The significance of universal churches, 88. The empirical method, 90. The conceptual apparatus, 93. A conflict of presuppositions, 95.

8

A Religious Approach, 98

Reinhold Niebuhr, 98. Three views of history, 99. God's sovereignty over history, 101. Meaning and obscurity, 103. Freedom and original sin, 105. Revelation and validation, 107. Provisions and ultimate meanings, 110.

For Further Reading, 113