
NEW TITLES

*History***PERSONAL
IMPRESSIONS**

by Isaiah Berlin
Viking, 1981
210 pp. \$13.95

An Oxford professor, former diplomat, and respected interpreter of Marx and sundry Enlightenment and Russian writers, Russian-born British philosopher Berlin has observed and conversed with many of this century's Big Names. In 14 subdued essays, he deftly sketches the personalities of, among others, novelist Aldous Huxley, Supreme Court Justice Felix Frankfurter, Albert Einstein, Zionist Chaim Weizmann, poets Boris Pasternak and Anna Akhmatova, and a few of his eccentric fellow dons. Berlin recognizes that imperfections can be blessings in disguise. Winston Churchill used easily parodied archaic language, but, argues Berlin, his operatic style was just what was needed to convey the Battle of Britain's high drama and spur his countrymen to victory. Berlin, who worked in the British embassy in Washington during the war, never met Franklin D. Roosevelt. But he recalls the President's reputation for ruthlessness in dealing with the "adventurers, slick opportunists, and intriguers" who surrounded him, as well as his offhand, optimistic style. "He had all the character, energy and skill of the dictators," Berlin concludes, "and he was on our side . . . every inch a democrat."

**LAND OF SAVAGERY,
LAND OF PROMISE:
The European Image of the
American Frontier**

by Ray Allen Billington
Norton, 1981
364 pp. \$18.95

At the high point of Comanche courtship, a young brave plunges a knife into his horse's neck, rips out its heart, and touches it to the forehead of his intended squaw. Or so Indian "custom" is portrayed in one 19th-century French novel. James Fenimore Cooper's Leatherstocking tales (1823-41) introduced the hardy U.S. settler and his Indian foes to delighted audiences all over Europe. Soon, countless European authors were penning their own American adventure tales, with