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Insight into America's present problems may lie in a study of her past. According to Alvin M. Josephy, author of The Nez Perce Indians and the Opening of the Northwest, released today by Yale University Press, "The American Indian of yesterday is the Vietnamese, the Congolese, and the Bolivian of today."

Over fifteen years ago, Alvin Josephy began an extensive study of the Nez Perce Indians, a tribe in the Great Northwest who waged a large-scale war against the United States, trounced several American armies, and affected settlers, traders, missionaries, and cattlemen in the history of the American West.

The result of Mr. Josephy's inquiry and research is a history of the conquest and dispossession of the tribe by white men from the time of Lewis and Clark until the great fighting retreat of the bands associated with Chief Joseph and other leaders in 1877. A narrative account of a largely forgotten fragment of American culture, it is the story of how the white invader overran and trampled a free people whose culture they did not understand or desire to understand.

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The confrontation of the Indian and the non-Indian is at the center of this history. According to Mr. Josephy, "It is not merely a history of an Indian tribe . . . it is a story of inter-racial relations. . . . From the Indian point of view, it is also the story of a basic weakness of the non-Indian American people, one that has hobbled them in their relations with peoples of different cultures and backgrounds everywhere in the world and is now imperiling them in Southeast Asia. For the non-Indian American did not learn from his history with the Indians. He could have, and he might have; but he did not."

Mr. Josephy added, however, that the book is not a "propaganda tract." "The pride and bravery of the Nez Perce people, who are now a part of ourselves, provide an epic part of our own heritage, giving us insight for the present and the future."

Alvin M. Josephy is also the author of The Patriot Chiefs, and Editor of the Book Division of American Heritage. The American Heritage Book of Indians, History of Flight, Book of Natural Wonders, History of World War I, and the 16-volume American Heritage New Pictorial Reference Guide to the United States were issued under his direction.

The Nez Perce Indians and the Opening of the Northwest, by Alvin M. Josephy, Jr., is one of a series of studies in Western Americana published by Yale University Press.

The Nez Perce Indians and the Opening of the Northwest, by Alvin M. Josephy, Jr., Published by Yale University Press, October 27, 1965. Illustrated, \$12.50.