

all, he did not wish to be remembered as a wishy-washy liberal. And so he dwells lovingly on his early years, almost half a century ago, when as a Socialist agitator he was the leading figure in organizing Jewish American labor. He makes a good deal of his defence of ultra-radical cases, of Johann Most the anarchist, of the Communistically inclined editors of the old *Masses*, of the victims of the red baiters during and after the war. He is proud of the fact that it was he who forced the Socialist party into a clear anti-war stand. And one cannot help but admire his real courage in the memorable New York mayoralty campaign of 1917, when in the midst of all the war hysteria he stuck by all his guns. It was Hillquit who was mainly instrumental in taking the American Socialist party out of the Second International; and he even wistfully regrets that the Third International made it impossible for the party to join it. He clearly comes out against the revolutionary cowardice of the German Socialists and states his belief that Soviet Russia is on the way to Socialist construction.

And yet he does not succeed in establishing his revolutionary character. He can't. He has to contradict himself. In one place he indicts and elsewhere he whitewashes the Eberts and MacDonalds. His pen sketches of the American progressives and labor leaders are invariably flat. He tries to praise them. But he obviously does not care for them. In the most literal sense these memoirs are an *apologia pro vita mea*. Still, it may well be that the historians of the future will agree with Hillquit's unconscious justification of himself, legible between all the lines, that the last half century of American life was probably the worst possible environment for the development of a revolutionary radical.

BENJAMIN STOLBERG

*Homes are as Barren as Box-Cars*

BOY AND GIRL TRAMPS OF AMERICA, by Thomas Minehan. \$2.50. 5½ x 8½; 246 pp. New York: Farrar & Rinehart.

THIS judicious and absorbing account of vagrant children is written by a sociologist of the University of Minnesota, who, having previously made a study of older male transients, has now pushed his researches still further by taking to the road with a younger army of hoboes, and was evidently young enough himself to observe them at close range without detection. He dressed in old clothes, caught rides and camped out with them in all weathers, slept where they did in cars and on the floors of missions and jails, and with his camera and note-book made the same kind of record of his travels as if he had penetrated the tropical instead of the hobo jungle. Although the book has an appendix of numerical tables for those who prefer their information in this form, Mr. Minehan has deliberately chosen the method of the reporter, and set himself to answer the kind of questions that any reader would naturally ask about an unknown tribe of children. His chapter headings read; Why did they leave home? How they travel; How they get food; How they get clothing; How they sleep; Their education, sex life, philosophy, and conversation.

He found, for instance, that 387 out of 466 gave hard times as their reason for leaving home; 28 the fact that they liked to travel; and 23 their dislike of school. Whether or not these were the actual reasons, apparently the children thought they were, which is all that the author pretends to record. Of the 577 tramps he interviewed, 295 were less than 17, and 454 less than 19. Of this number, about 1 in 20 were girls, and the girls ran

younger than the boys. Despite the fact that these children have had somewhat more schooling than the older hoboes, and talked upon a wider range of subjects, including Communism, their sex life was as naïvely unrestrained as that of older dederlichs, with the one exception that they do not take so readily to homosexuality. "I don't like that sin. I mean I don't like it," expressed a reaction which was fairly general among easy-going travelers who did not draw the line at much else.

Perhaps more significant than the philosophy of life so labelled by the author, is that which is latent in all their behavior and conversation. Each young vagrant obviously believes that when he is hungry, whomever he asks for it should give him a good meal, and when he is tired a comfortable place to sleep should be provided and no questions asked. The stale bread and watery soup of the breadline is as deeply resented by the tramp who emerges from a box-car to demand it, as if he sat at a hotel table and were charged a good price for his meal. Food is an everlasting subject of conversation, and these children want it as fresh and well-flavored as the rest of us do. Sometimes, by judicious stealing, they get it, but more often not. They have discovered that young brides are more generous with shirts, and German butchers with sausage; that new tomatoes are good eating; and an onion improves any stew. They deeply resent the fact that they get the cement floor and sour beans of small town jails, while local miscreants sleep on mattresses and eat fried eggs. And almost more than jailers they detest social workers, who ask impertinent questions, and offer advice and, perhaps, work—none of which is wanted. In short, beside the railroad tracks adjacent to our dooryards, camps a nomadic tribe that feels entitled to the shirts on

our clothesline, and whose conception of the rights to the roast in our ice-box differs radically from our own.

The author's conclusion is that this emergency can only be met by a Child Conservation Corps which will take charge of boys and girls under 18, as the Civilian Conservation Corps takes boys over 18, and will train them, not merely for camp life but for life in our social order. As things are, he says "I who have lived with child tramps find little that is wholesome, and nothing that is permanently good." This suggestion is excellent—but why restrict the Conservation Corps to tramps? What Mr. Minehan says of the relatively small tribe of child tramps, could be said with equal truth of the larger army of neglected and untrained children asleep in their own dingy beds. All the juvenile delinquents that I know live under a code similar to his tramps. All of them are undisciplined, unwholesome in mind and body, and resentful of interference. And they all live by snatching their food, their clothing and their pleasure where they can get it. If all of Mr. Minehan's child tramps were given a return ticket, the chances are that their homes would be as barren of good influences as a box-car.

So when his Child Conservation Corps is established, I can only hope that he will not restrict its membership to the children who took to the rails, but will give the same welcome to their equally wretched brothers and sisters who stayed at home.

ELEANOR ROWLAND WEMBRIDGE

### *Life in the Bush*

REBEL DESTINY, by Melville and Frances Herskovits. \$3.00. 5½ x 8½; 366 pp. New York: *Whittlesey House*.

THE thin narrative thread which binds together these observations of the Bush Negroes of Dutch Guiana is that of a journey