

## Transcribed Excerpts from Federal Writers' Project Interview of Henry Gill, between 1938 and 1939

... “Near’s I can make out, it’s some new plan for the revision of the capitalist system. They’ve got it figured out that its lack of buying power that’s responsible for the depression, and they’re goin’ to give every family ‘ead and income of at least twenty eight dollars a week while ‘e’s out of work and a minimum of fifty dollars when ‘e goes back to work, not matter what ‘h does. They’re also goin’ to repeal taxes. Don’t ask me ‘ow they’re goin’ to get the money. When I read that far I got dizzy. “you can see ‘ere where they’re collectin’ money from gullible people. Subscriptions to the paper fun from a dollar to five. They got a bill before Congress they claim, and now what they’re tryin’ to do is elect their own representatives all over the county. They make it sounds very plausible.

“Look ‘ere” (reading from the paper) “The American Foundation for Abundance (that’s what they call the plan – the AFA) would no break up monopolies. It proposed that the public take them over and put them under scientific management for the common good. It does not believe that it is the part of wisdom to turn back from an industrial gains amount the people. The only intelligent solution of the monopoly problem is the public ownership and public operation of the monopoly. Let us go forward not backward.

“Sounds almost like Communism, don’t it. Only it goes a bit farther than Communism. They believe in the New Deal but they don’t think it goes far enough. Listen to this (reading) We are supporters of the New Deal as just a tiny step on the road toward a New Day. However, we recognize that if the majority of our people continue to be content with just tiny steps like the New Deal that it will be centuries before the people come into their own.

... “Wouldn’t it make you sick? What the ‘ell are things comin’ to I ask you? We’ve got to go back, that’s what we’ve got to do. Either go back or broaden opportunity in some way. Go back to the old standards of livin’, or open some new roads for industry. There ain’t no more frontiers. Used to be when I was a young chap if dull periods came a man would go west. There was always opportunity our in the unsettled country. There ain’t no more of that. The country’s settled from one end to the other, and conditions are no better out west than they are ‘ere.

“So what are people goin’ to do? Maybe there’ll be some new industry come along to stimulate things. Like the automobile industry did in its day. Some say television will ‘elp.

“And if there ain’t goin’ to be nothin’ like that we’ll ‘ave to lower livin’ standards to where they used to be, that’s all. People used to content with simple things. It don’t seem possible today, I know, but there were people in day who used to actually enjoy workin’. I do myself, to this day, I like to get out ‘ere in the knife shop and tinker around. That’s mostly what I keep it for, as I told you before.