Sherwood Anderson had faith in American democracy. His faith was not literal but essential; it has nothing to do with the rhetoric of candidates running for office. Rather like Walt Whitman, he went to the heart of the matter, to the values mandatory for human beings. Anderson firmly believed that without the purity of human personality, the machinery of democratic government is a ridiculous merry-go-round. At the same time his belief in the value of the person could not lead to an aggressive and unchecked individualism. His belief results in the community of persons, which is strong because it is bound together by bonds of concrete and multiform feelings.

Anderson, due to his favour of the downtrodden and 'underprivileged' was associated with the so-called proletarian school, and because of his prestige he was fastened upon by various leftist political groups. But it is safe to say that he never went further in this sort of activity than to allow his name to be printed on committee letterheads. He had extreme faith in the value of human communion
that is why he seldom confused it with any doctrinaire scheme or organisation.

His sureness of intuition disentangled him from every "ism". Political people he believed, whether they admit it to themselves or not, really want to push somebody else around, to inflict their ideas on others. Whereas, it is a major, premise of Anderson's philosophy that human personality is sacred and should be inviolate. This was the main reason at the bottom of his dislike of political activities and his frequent disclaimer of interest in politics. (Appel, 60)

He recognised moreover, the powerful weight of the labour vote. In "They Elected Him" and "Olsonville" Anderson discusses two dynamic politicians, Senator Rush Holt of West Virginia and Governor Floyed Olson of Minnesota, who had recently been elected, largely by the workingmen. Anderson believed that both men were honest and worked hard to represent the needs and wishes of their constituencies; they were living manifestations of the principle that in
a democracy government can be changed in accord with the requirements of the people.

All his life he had avoided making political commitments. In 1916, impressed by what he thought was the "real knowledge of poverty and real tenderness for the poor" evidenced by *Windy McPherson's Son*, Upton Sinclair wrote Anderson, tried to convert him to socialism, but Anderson wrote back saying he didn’t know who was right, who wrong, that he didn’t want writers distancing themselves from their materials as "socialists, or conservatives or what not". He wanted them to be "something of a brother to the poor brute who runs the sweatshop as well as to the equally unfortunate brutes who work for him". The following year hearing young writers in Chicago talking about "the politics of poetry", he wrote them off as "part of the shrillness of the times" "With war and government", he said, "the artist has simply nothing to do". And for years he acted accordingly.

When the International Committee for Political Prisoners asked him to write something on Italian dictatorship in 1926, he denied,
saying he had “no political turn of mind”. The same year, in a ‘Vanity Fair’ article, “A Great Factory”, he declared: “Nothing in the world could ever make me socialist”, and while acknowledging that factories had changed the quality of American life, he justifiably struck the pose of one who for 20 years had not had one political thought, “no scheme for changing any thing in the social structure”.

Anderson wasn’t a politician or even a political thinker in the real sense of the word. He himself said in one of letters to Paul Rosenfeld: “It may be that I got reckless. After all Paul you have to trust someone. I am not a politically – minded man”. (Irving, 222)

Yes it is true that he was not a serious and responsible politically minded man. His populism was his chief concern. Whatever idea, ‘ism’, activity he felt would benefit common and ordinary man, he adopted that unhesitatingly. He started his political cum social concern during the early thirties when addressing to mill workers who were on strike, he felt that he could do something for them.
The Depression drew him into current things more and more. He said to Bockler after his first trip to Danville, "but I don’t care much", and for a new year that last clause meant only that he no longer had many reservations about getting politically involved.

In December 1931, he addressed a meeting in New York of the National Committee for the Defense of Political Prisoners on behalf of the efforts of Dreiser and other writers who had gone to Kentucky to investigate the miners’ working conditions and to call attentions to the terrorizing method the Coal Operators Association had used to prevent them from organizing.

In the spring of 1932 when Edmund Wilson asked him to sign a manifesto “Culture and the Crisis” to support for President, William Z. Foster, a communist candidate. He said to Wilson, “I wouldn’t mind saying Wilson to you that if at any time anything comes up like this manifesto and my name has any value you are at liberty to use it. Where you are willing to go I’ll go” (Irving, 219).

Anderson’s favour to Wilson was impressive. But his carefree and prompt consent to use his name wherever he like with out going
through the documents shows his lack of responsibility which seems mandatory while making such a political comment.

One more thing that brought him closer to politics was the Bonus Army. The veterans marched to Washington and built crude shelters and erected tents at Anacostia. President Hoover finally recommended to Congress a $100,000 appropriation to feed the men and send them home. Less than 10 percent of the veterans accepted the offer. Just before Congress adjourned with acting on the demands for a bonus, the date of the loans for transportation was extended to July 25 still most of the ex-soldiers refused to accept the money and remain in Washington. When a riot took place over the Treasury's attempt to reoccupy government property on which members of the Bonus Army had been living, several veterans were killed. The three District of Columbia Commissioners immediately asked President Hoover to call out the federal troops. Hoover consented and General Mac Arthur, immaculate in full uniform, directed the operation. What happened was a grim display of force. The troops marched directly into the unorganized ranks of the Bonus Army. With fixed bayonets
prodding those unwilling to retreat and tear gas ripping through the
crowds, the veterans driven out of Washington. The worst was still to
come. The troops advanced to Anacostia bridge, beyond which, on the
mudflats lay the shambles of Bonus City. The camp commander was
given an hour’s grace to evacuate the women and children. Then the
infantry massed into wretched city, gassing and firing each shack. By
midnight, the sight where 10,000 unemployed men and women had
lived was a lurid glow of flames. The next day the rationalisations
began. President Hoover said justifying the action that many of the
Bonus marchers were communists and persons with criminal records
and that the government can’t be coerced by mob rule. General Mac
Arthur called the Bonus Army “a bad looking mob animated by the
essence of revolution.” Meanwhile, the Communist, gleeful over
drawing the arrows of both Hoover and Mac Arthur, began to claim
the credit for the action in Washington even though they were only a
small minority of the veterans.

After few months Anderson took active part in the protest
against the use of federal troops during the bonus march. The
“Army”, or “Bonus Expeditionary Force”, as it was called, had come that spring from all over the country to ask that the “adjusted compensation certificate” given them as veterans of World War I should be redeemed before the promised year 1945. He joined the group of Waldo Frank, James Rorty, Elliot Cohen and reached at the White House. “The President, as the New York Times chastely reported ‘was too busy to see them’ (Irving, 220).

They were shunted off to a secretary, Theodore Joslin. Joslin proceeded to lecture them severely, saying that the writers must do their duty i.e. to spread the truth. He elaborated according to an Associate press dispatch:

I want to give you my personal view as a fellow craftsman. It is your duty to spread the truth. ... The first duty of the President of the United States is to maintain order.... This republic is founded on order, not upon attack on the police. If you do your duty, you will tell these indisputable facts to the American people (Schevill, 151)
Though the writers were not convinced with, whatever he said about the President’s duty regarding maintaining order they listened sceptically, left their protest, and departed. City police had been instructed to keep an eye on them. According to an Associate Press dispatch the police “later reported to the White House that the delegation upon leaving there went to a communist head quarters.” This was a complete fabrication, which Anderson indignantly denied.

However, this march helped in projecting the wrath of common people raised due to the barbarous treatment against the veterans. Anderson himself was agonised as he felt that the demonstrators were only trying “to live decently in America”. After a gap of few weeks in an “open letter” to President Hoover, which was printed in ‘The Nation’ he wrote:

I came to you with other writers because I was ashamed not to come when men are trying to assert their rights to live decently in America... When these men are brutally put down by the police or soldiers – bear in mind I have
seen these things with my own eyes – when that happens something within me hurts and bleeds. (Irving, 220)

The significant approbation which this “open letter” gathered emboldened Anderson to move away from radicalism. In September, the leftwing “World’s Congress Against War” was scheduled to meet in Amsterdam. The tense situation in Germany was rising to a climax, and the international peace meeting, even if controlled by Communists, promised to be an important one. Furthermore, a wealthy New York woman in sympathy with the aims of the Congress offered to pay Anderson’s passage if he would become a member of the American delegation. Anxious to see whether such an assembly would have any effect on the world situation, he accepted. Its organisers did not intend that the congress oppose all wars. Indeed, war was inevitable, they argued, so long as capitalism and imperialism existed. But the spirit in which Anderson participated all along was in keeping with that of the American committee that later formed, the spirit of World Congress Against War. By Anderson’s account it was an attempt on the part of intellectuals, to get together
with the workers of thirty-five nations for direct action against war and was very exciting.

Twenty-seven countries with 2,195 delegates participated in the congress. While the Communists were a majority, the Social Democrats and the trade unions were also strongly represented. The theory of the "Popular Front" was at its highest pitch of enthusiasm and most leftwing groups still believed it possible to co-operate with the Communists. The conference ended and the result was a document called Manifest – War Congress Against, The Imperialist War. As the "manifest" is typical of the many resolutions adopted by "Popular Front" groups in the early thirties it is pertinent to list its main points:

...The Congress without consideration of the ideological and political nuances, which might separate the various elements of which it is composed, is considering the facts and only the facts....The congress denounces the attitude of the big newspapers... because of servility to profit......It denounces capitalist politics....It calls attention to the tireless and systematic peace policy
followed by the Soviet Union and repudiates the legend of Red Imperialism......Each one of us makes here a sort of pledge...We swear that we will never again allow the unity, which has been established here among the multitudes of exploited and victimized persons to be broken. We swear to struggle... against capitalism which is the purveyor of slaughter. We swear to dedicate ourselves...against armaments...against chauvinism and nationalist propaganda, against fascism...against to the propaganda campaigns and the lies against the Soviet Union... against the partition of China...(White,153)

It was in the same emotional fervor of the Congress in the belief that it was possible to work with the communists against fascism, in the belief that the workers could bring about peace, that Anderson felt the meeting to be an immense success. His judgement, like that of many other liberals of the period, was based on the feverish enthusiasm of the moment rather than any rational view. The future was forming quietly behind the scenes.
During the same year he started writing for the “New Masses” in which he threw light on his belief that his hope for future found a strong base in the fighting young communists. He also participated in its (New Masses’) symposium on “How I Came to Communism”. The Communist Party was a working-class party they were members of “the artist class”. Anderson was sympathetic toward the Party and active rhetorically, but he didn’t travel very far with it. A year later, when he saw himself actually “becoming more and more a communist”, when he said “it must be coming nearer – an inevitable thing”, he was not signing up, but welcoming the long – awaited arrival of an age in which people were not so cut off from each other and from “life” by money.

In his New York speech he said that not being a political economist he couldn’t tell the “technical difference” between socialist and communists, he felt it nevertheless: “I guess the communists mean it”, he said in his speech in New York. He did too, and for about a year he tried to believe in “it” as well. “Communism” was a resource Anderson called on in his final project of escaping the
confines of himself. His vision of the party line on socialists was that when the crisis comes, they always caved in. There was too much sweetness in that crowd”. He worked on, but never completed, his own J’Accuse, “an indictment of all our crowd”, he called it, for not providing revolutionary leadership, and in the spring of 1932 he joined John Don Passer, Waldo Frank, Lewis Mumford, and Edmund Wilson to issue a manifesto that cavalierly called for “a temporary dictatorship of the class-conscious workers”. In the summer, along with more than fifty other artists and writers, he signed another manifesto, drafted by Matthew Josephson and James Rorty, the one an expatriate literary man turned political writer, the other an editor of the New Masses. The manifesto declared that “as responsible intellectual workers, we have aligned ourselves with the frankly revolutionary Communist party”, and he thereby became a member of the League of Professional Groups for Foster and Ford, the Communist ticket in the presidential election of 1932. The manifesto, expanded into a pamphlet titled ‘Culture and Crisis’, urged fellow writers, artists, scientists and teachers – “all honest professional
"workers" — to "support the Communist Party or the political campaign now under way".

In his mind any differences between Communists and social democrats and trade unionists blurred. That was the gist of his report to the readers of the New Masses, dated August 28, 1932. When he explained to them "How I Came to Communism" in the September issue, again he showed how little communism or any party affiliation, how much more "the other thing", finally mattered to him.

The next year, 1933, the trip to Washington was itself just a good story — published in The New Yorker — called "Delegation". In it Anderson in all coyness, feeling "silly", nor sure what was going on, not sure what the communists were up to, not sure he and the men he had come with "represented anything much". The high point of it all comes as Anderson and (it seems) Frank emerging, speakeasy, share their delight in what they both noticed was Joslin's fear of them. The piece is nearly anecdotal, almost cute. It is a measure of how far and how fast Anderson returned from his three-year engagement with the politics of the left.
After a meditation on what he takes to be the language of the communists and its power to create “queer new alignments” and on the discrepancy between the songs the communists teach the strikers and the strikes’ ability to comprehend, Anderson concludes that there was something more than exact meaning in words. He also knew that in 1932 people were eager for answers, “a definite statement — communism, socialism, the finding of one another, some thing they can take hold of.”

By the time the First American Writers’ Congress convened at the Mecca Temple in New York in April 1935, the Left had long since given up on Anderson. As Daniel Aaron has said in ‘Writers On the Left’, no one at the congress “confused political correctness with literary talent”, no one wanted propaganda, but Anderson’s name came up only as the author of a so-called communist novel of three years ago, Beyond Desire, which sentimentalized workers’ lives, “made them smell of sex” and as the founder of the “I-am-Dumb School” of short-story writing.
Social criticism, a relatively political novel, stories in the old and in altered veils, reportage, and satires - Anderson had written them all since his departure from Saint Petersburg in January 1930. By the time of his letter to Rosenfeld, one kind of attempt, one phase seemed to be over. With *Perhaps Women* and *Beyond Desire* behind him, he no longer seemed so interested in conducting political inquiries and writing social criticism. Instead of an action or plot *Beyond Desire* flows in an out of the sensibilities of various characters and develops their feeling about life the incidents which have shaped or scarred them, and the ways in which they are dominated by the forces of American social inequality.

The book (*Beyond Desire*) plays with the idea of communism but without conviction and certainly without much persuasiveness. It reveals Anderson's fundamental sympathy with the working masses, his belief that there is in them more essential human goodness than in their exploiters.

In the early 1930's, parallel with the growth of the depression, the sympathy of many liberals for communism was increasing. As
employment mounted, the moral failure of a society devoted mainly to business ends seemed more and more apparent. Karl Marx was cast in the role of the wise prophet of capitalism's downfall. Few critics questioned what would happen under the promised dictatorship of the proletariat. They considered the end worthy of the means. The one immediate issue was the obvious, terrible living conditions of the working class. Communism promised action to relieve this suffering. No other political doctrine seemed so dynamic. All considerations of Marxist political theory were bypassed and the sole issue seemed to be the necessity of a new system of government and a new way of life.

It was in this mood that Anderson found himself swept along with the surge of left wing sympathy. Then the Danville strike gave him his first real consciousness of the political implications of the labour movement. He grew curious about the various groups fighting for control of the workers. Most of March 1931, he spent in the mills and factories of Georgia, speaking eagerly to labourers and employers, or standing quietly in the background watching the huge
machines at work. In April he had to give several lectures on counting journalism at Northwestern University and the University of Chicago. As the news of his Danville talk spread through labour circles, he was solicited for more speeches. Request to endorse various social action groups poured in. He found himself torn between his natural sympathy for labour and his obligations to his own hiding. In May the latter impulse triumphed temporarily. The compulsion to write had returned and he said to his brother, Karl, on May 16 that he had have been avoiding people in New York because he didn’t want to get involved in a lot of social obligations, as right now he wanted to put all the energy he had, into the work.

He was struggling to make up his mind about his position in regard to the labour movement and to the communism. On June 23 he explained to Eleanor the reason for not going to Charleston that his real reason for not wanting to go lies deeper he did feel himself in a transition stage. He may conceivably go to communism. There was something about the whole labour thing about which he was too uncertain.
The conflict in his mind was clear. Reading the newspapers closely, the strikes, the rising unemployment, the menacing figure in Germany with vaudeville mustache awaiting the downfall of the Weimar Republic, he sympathised intuitively with the necessity for social action. Throughout Europe the forces of reaction were gaining power. In the United States the depression was growing worse. Millions of men had lost their jobs and were becoming bitterer about the promise of democracy each day. In the midst of the world crisis the Utopian pledges of communism seemed the only optimistic voices. Anderson had appreciated the quality of the some of the communists he had met. They seemed to be fighting hard for greater racial and economic equality. The one thing that had disturbed him was that these men and women had often been too dogmatic in their statements. For the moments, however, he could attribute this belligerence to their underdog position. He had read little communist doctrine and his sympathy was based almost completely on talks with friends and direct observation of working conditions. Still, he put aside the many political entreaties and stuck to his novel.
The need for social action continued to disturb him and he wrote in the Letter A Day of February 13 that in American democracy had already gone. There was no American democracy. America was already controlled by a small group of man. Controlled without altruism, with no hope, by entirely cynical men.

With such thoughts in his Letter A Day series he was growing closer to an acceptance of communism. It was a negative approach at best. In the factories he had seen the terrible working conditions and in New York he had surveyed the tragic poverty of the unemployed. When he wrote that "democracy was dead", he meant that the nation had reached a crisis where a drastic change was necessary just what kind of a change whether communism or something else, he was not yet prepared to say.

Whenever he returned to the industrial centers and witnessed the conditions there, after a rest in tranquil Marion, his sympathies were aroused and he felt closer to the idea of communism. This instinctive sympathy would then fade into doubts about the sincerity of mixing his writing with politics. That writing should reflect social problems, he believed with all his heart.
When he returned to Marion at the end of May, his sympathy towards communism had deepened. His leftward swing came from the disillusioned spirit that he had felt in people throughout the country.

This attitude led him to a definite commitment towards communism. Late in the spring he received a copy of a manifesto drawn up by Edmund Wilson, Waldo Frank, and Lewis Mumford. The manifesto declared the world predicament "a crisis of human culture" and called for "a new human order". To achieve this goal the following aims were prescribed:

a) The ruling caste hopelessly corrupted by the very conditions of their emergence must be expelled from their present position.

b) A temporary dictatorship of the class - conscious workers must be set up as the necessary instruments for abolishing all classes' bases on material wealth.
c) A new order must be established, as swiftly as can be, in which economic rivalry and private profit are barred; and in which competition will be lifted from the animal plane of acquisition to the human plane of cultural creation ... we believe that in imaginative works in philosophic thought, in concrete activities and groups, the nucleus and the framework of the new society must be created now.

Wherefore in our function as writers:

a) We declare ourselves supporters of the social-economic revolution- such revolution being an immediate step toward the creation in the United States of a new human culture based on common material possession, which shall release the energies of men to spiritual and intellectual endeavor.

b) We recognized the fundamental identity of our interests with those of the workers and of the nation.
c) We call on our fellow writers, artists, teachers, scholars, engineers and intellectuals of every kind, to identify their cause with that of the workers, in whose ultimate capacity to rise and to rule rests the destiny of America and mankind. (White, 147-148)

Despite the illusions, the basic idealism of the manifesto cannot be doubted. The men who drew it up sincerely believed that America had come to a dead end. In a similar spirit of defiance against existing conditions, Anderson signed the document. As for the political jargon, the "temporary dictatorship of the class consciousness workers", he had an instinctive doubt about such doctrine and it was this feeling of uneasiness that kept him away from joining the party. More than most of the other serious writers in the country, he knew the working people and was doubtful both of their "class consciousness" and their ability to control a "dictatorship".

Publication of the manifesto containing the endorsement of such writers as Lincoln Steffens, John Dos Passos, Theodore Dreiser, Newton Arvin, Matthew Josephson, Malcolm Cowley, Sidney Hook
and others, caused a furor. Whispers of the impending "revolution" floated about the centers of gossip.

In an article in Scribners, Paul Rosenfeld attacked the signers of the document. For a moment, Anderson and Rosenfeld grew a little apart, each feeling that the other was taking an extreme position. Listening to the young communists speaking on the corners he was impressed with their passion and energy and wrote, "I am convinced that the future will be in the hands of the proletariat". (White, 149)

The same sympathy for the plight of the workers led Anderson into another affiliation with a communist group. In the June 9 Letter A Day he wrote; "Agreed with Robert Dunn to give my name to the communist organisation for relief of political prisoners... to be shirt front for the real workers". The purpose of the Prisoner's Relief Fund, as stated on its letterhead was to "raise money for all workers now in prison because of their activities in the labour movement." In the face of the treatment of the strikers he had observed, Anderson was convinced that the only humanitarian gesture he could make was to join such a group. For a time he even served as "dummy" chairman of
the Fund, but soon resigned this role when he discovered that his name was being used on documents that he knew nothing about.

Frustrated by this he felt that only writing could give him inner solace. So during June he was again deep in his writing to the exclusion of all political activity. He had begun to experiment with diction and found it worked successfully.

Though Anderson was bending towards Stalinism yet he maintained to ponder over the problem of the relation of the sympathetic write to the radical movement. He viewed in the "New Masses":

...revolutionists will get the most help out of such men as myself not by trying to utilize [us] as writers of propaganda but in leaving us as free as possible to strike, by our stories out of American life, into deeper facts.(Irving, 220)

Anderson’s radicalism had never been secured in a theory of society or a clear vision of the goal to which he had publicly
committed himself. While traveling through the country he saw the miserable condition of his countrymen. His chief motto was to lessen these miseries. Initially he saw radicalism as a cure for these miseries and clung to it. But later on he felt that the communists really cared for the downtrodden. Once in the “New Masses” a hope for social betterment which was quicker and less vexatious than that offered by radicals, was manifested. He not only admired but also accepted it. But one thing that was agitating his mind was the relationship of the ‘New Deal’ to capitalist society. This link troubled him more than that of Stalinist totalitarianism to the radical views.

Anderson’s novel Marching Men got several interpretations such as:

Francis Hackett reviewed it in the ‘New Republic’ as a graphic proletarian novel. The radical critic V.F. Calverton described it as “radiantly and romantically symbolic of the rise of proletariat”. (Irving, 85)

Anderson’s works carried some tint of populism. Due to McGregor’s power worship, irrationality and asexual fanaticism
which resembles to modern totalitarian leaders, he (Anderson) should not be titled as fascist as all his political and moral dispositions were towards other directions. He always wished that common people should be benefited, be there any political party or activity. His "Marching Men is full of spastic aggression and sadism which reflect undifferentiated anger at the burdens imposed by modern life".

Anderson was of the opinion that the leaders should take care of the amelioration of the society especially of downtrodden, giving up all their selfish ends.

Actually the search for a leader who through the exertion of his will can lead the helpless and confused out of wilderness is distinctly though not exclusively plebian, very often related to a lower – middle – class desire, which is shared by declassed elements for a violently dynamic alternative to radicalism. And in 'Marching Men' Anderson contemptuously refers to socialists as people who merely wag their jaws which is preciously the way a modern totalitarian speaks of those of his
opponents who profess to base their views on reason. (Irving, 87).

It was not only Anderson's but also a common belief that the Populist movement was an equitable democratic insurrection of the common people against the trusts and railroads. It had in its womb "a xenophobic scorn of city slickness and intellectual 'long hairs' who 'jawed' about ideas when immediate action was needed (Irving, 87).

He was of the opinion that the problems of society and the type of politics by which these problems are to be solved, political leaders and their activities should be voiced by the contemporary writers unhesitatingly. He not only believed but also acted accordingly. He voiced those problems which he considered should be revealed at national level.

The programme of 'marching men' is so ambiguous that it cannot inspire any labour movement, and the solution of huge McVey's problem is too nebulous for a gospel; but in a day when most writers are so wise messianic about what should be done, and confuse literature with 'the coming revolution', it is not without
pleasure that one reads Sherwood Anderson’s brooding pages. They vividly realize confusion as an end itself and indicate no easy formulas for ordering disturbance. But he does catch in simple words the effect of the confusion on minds equally confused.

Both Anderson and his heroes achieve the clarity in the fog of confusion. He believes that this loss of clarity among Americans is the root cause of restlessness, insecurity and loneliness. Americans are not aware of the aim of their lives. Leaders are living selfish lives while the governed i.e. the common people, are leading a life of prostrating infatuation with the eloquent leaders.

In Marching Men he published a proletarian novel which reflected his experience of inequities. He had begun to believe that America was becoming darkly lost in dehumanizing gentility, in conformity, and in super patriotism. To Anderson, these forces became the enemy that annihilated the possibility of all the ebullient Whitmanesque promise that formed his image of the republic (Malcolm, 59)
The European noblewoman featured in “The Return of the Princess”, the final selection, confirms Anderson’s conviction that the American people retain a large measure of strength. Driven from her home-land during World War I, she came to America, stayed a few years, and returned to Europe just before the stock market crashed in 1929. She has returned just after Roosevelt’s election in 1932. She tells Anderson that despite the great depressions she still sees in America something “that, compared to Europe is gay and alive”. “You do not yet have the fear”, she says, the fear that pervaded totalitarian countries. America was still free to seek its own solutions.

To Anderson, the solution was already being manifested. He was convinced that democracy was the political system that was best for the country, and that Roosevelt was the leader who could make its benefits available to the people as a whole. “We are still at heart a democracy”, he proclaims. “The hunger to do the thing together is still alive in us”. In “At the Mouth of the Mine” he summarises the hope he shares with his countrymen by paraphrasing a statement made by one of the miners: If some one man can go through it – a
Roosevelt or some other - if he can lead us into something new - the workers having a real chance - if he can do this without the terror or revolutions - its worth a shot, isn’t it? The democracy must be given another whirl.

Anderson wants a kind of democratic country where leaders are not allowed to suppress common people and common people are allowed to live decently using their own rights. Yes it is true that he wasn’t a politically minded man. As in making his political comments he showed irresponsibility, not for one or two times but so many times for example when he, without going through documents gave his name in favour of William Z. Foster and later on complained to be used by the party’s agents; when he, without knowing the exact characteristics of Stalinism began writing for it and at once stopped without pondering over the consequences; and when he, without thinking the influence of Stalin’s constitution on Russian life, praised it openly.

But only one thing that can lessen the severity of criticism passed against Anderson was his never diminishing feeling for the
lower classes of society. It is true that he fought for them without caring for his reputation. His sense of plebeian fraternity seems a treasure in the crowd of writers who only projected barren ideas and were never with their words. Anderson on the other hand proved his words through his actions. He believes that the leader should be with the common public not with the specific public. They should feel the pulse of these common people. He felt that the intellectuals, leaders and upper social classes were manipulating and suppressing the workers and lower classes of society.

He himself felt guilty during one of the textile strikes and wrote to Edmund Wilson that he had:

a guilty feeling just now about taking any part in pulling public out on strike. We go and stir them up. Out they come and presently get licked. Then we go comfortably off. It seems to me that if we... are to go in at all with workers perhaps we should be ready to go all the way. I mean that we should be willing to go live with them in their way and take it in the neck with them. (Irving, 218)