Chapter – V

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Anand’s The Sword and the Sickle and Pillai’s Two Measures of Rice share several striking resemblances in presenting the poor peasants’ life and their revolution. They handle most of the dominant socio-political concerns common to both the authors. With peasant life as their subject matter, both the novels provide a convincing picture of the millions of poor peasants in India. They depict the struggles of the peasants in the contemporary society and their real strength, and of their heroic march towards freedom throwing off all the social forces that restrict them. Both the writers have been at their best in the treatment of the subject matter. Their chief concern have been with the problem of the superfluous people in rural India, people without land or with little land loaded with debt or disease or exploited by a handful of the privileged.

The Sword and the Sickle and Pillai’s Two Measures of Rice can be ranked with the best works which portray the
social life of the Indian people. Anand has chosen the theme of The Sword and the Sickle from his home town. The words of Saros Cowasjee is apt in this regard, “In the Punjab most of peasants owned their own land, while in the United Provinces many of them were landless labourers” (114). Similarly Pillai’s Two Measures of Rice, according to Subba Rao, “is a detailed study of the problems of the landless peasant labour in the marshy lands in and around Alleppey” (169).

Both the writers know their native places very well. This becomes evident from the expression of Subba Rao: “Anand knows his Punjab as well as Thakazhi knows the soil, people and culture of Kerala” (168). They exemplify most of the essential features of socialist attitude as found in their Marxist interpretation of society, the exposure of the capitalist and bourgeois life, the depiction of the rise and development of class struggle, the evolution of the central character into an exemplary heroic figure, the use of historical details etc, rooted in the social and political realities of their times, both the novels are built around the historical process of the social transformation beginning with
the breakdown of the old social order under the impact of the modern industrialization. Anand and Pillai present here a theme which is quite familiar as well as dear to him, Indian rural populace, their orthodoxy and intolerance.

Anand and Pillai present the orthodoxy and backwardness of Indian villages at social, economic, political, and religious levels. In all these spheres they condemn the practices. Both the novels provide similar account of the breakdown of the social order as part of their central concern; the portrayal of the evolutionary process taking place in the society leading to great revolutionary change. But it is in these two novels that Anand and Pillai vividly depict the picture of this change in great details. Both the novels contain a number of references to the historical process of change taking place in the patterns of the agrarian society. The peasants themselves have become awakened rebels at some places whereas at others they are still unable to resist the illogical dictates of the feudal lords.

In The Sword and the Sickle, Lal Singh, shortly called Lalu, comes back to India after completing his term of five years as a prisoner of war in Germany. On his return he finds
a lot of change taking place in India. Lalu’s contemplation on how the British rule has brought about a change in the rural scene, disrupting the peasant life in the Indian villages is an indication of the breakdown of the old social order and the revolutionary spirits of them are well brought out:

The English broke up the villages and handed the land over to robbers like my ancestors, who have reduced the peasants to tenants, with fragmentary holdings, or to labourers without a chunk of soil to wipe their bottoms with!...Now, the only thing to end this madness is to throw the corpses of the landlords into the Ganga and give the peasants their land to till. (155)

Anand’s description of the Count in *The Sword and the Sickle* is a proud, assertive declamatory leader, concerned about the welfare of the tenants. Saros Cawasjee’s remarks are illuminating:

It is one of the stronger features of the book that we do not see any one character through the eyes of another, and the count, in his impassioned
denunciation of the British Government, the absentee landlords, and their stooges, speaks not only for the author but for all people with a social conscience. (119)

At the beginning of the novel Lalu notices the change in the social pattern brought about by the growth of industry and the emergence of the capitalist system of values. "Lalu was depressed at the thought of how Manabad, a glorified village of a provincial town five years ago, has become an ant heap" (28). To him, "Everything seems to have changed in his village for better or for worse" (54).

Pillai also deals with this change of social pattern more or less in similar way. He considers it as one of his major concerns in the novel. In Two Measures of Rice, Pillai mentions, "The social order which had existed for generations seemed to be crumbling. Many of the things so far regarded as sacrosanct were being assailed" (92). Pillai shows how the industrialization of agriculture leads to a breakdown in the age-old social order. Through typical scenes and situations, he dramatizes the change taking place in the relationship between the landlords and the serfs. The spirit of co-
operation and the feeling of a large family that governed their relationship for generations are lost in the incoming commercial values.

Kunjappi, a pulaya, in Pillai's *Two Measures of Rice* brings out the cordial relationship that existed between the farmers and the workers who took pride in being a joint family by saying:

My lad, the old Thambarans are all gone... To them a serf meant a member of their family. You know when a baby was born, all the expenses connected with the birth, naming ceremony, wedding, funeral and all the rest were met by the Thambaran... But today all that has gone. (30)

Similarly, Koren's father, Velutha recalls similar days of his youth: "Then the worker had a share in the fruits of his labour. The worker and his home formed a part of the farmer's family. Even in those days the worker had his grievances. Yet, what a difference!" (82).

The economic situation that arises out of this change is similar in both the novels. The change is shown to have
disastrous effects on the social and economic life of the farm labourers as well as the poor peasants of the middle class. Thus the picture of the wretched existence of such people in Anand’s Narisabad and Pillai’s Kuttanad is strikingly similar; their life seems to be one of ruin and misery caused by poverty, exploitation, debt, forced labour and eviction. Despite the geographical distance between them, the sufferings and their revolutions are the same.

In Two Measures of Rice, the brief description of the Koren’s father is typical of the common plight of the farm workers in the rich rice fields of Kuttanad:

How many millions of bushels of grain had he produced in the sixty two years of life as a farm worker! How many harvests he had gathered, what mountains of grain he had threshed! How many millions of people were fed from the fruits of this old man’s labour! What a magnificent contribution to human life he had made. (78)

All the peasants suffer from utter poverty and the landlords have become more greedy and selfish. Most of the farmers
have been reduced to landless labourers. The landlords are quite unconcerned about the starvation of their serfs, the big landlords pay the wages in money against the traditional practice of paying it in the grain. They sell the hoarded grain in the black market making great profit. Koren, who has produced a bumper harvest for his Thambran by toiling day and night, in filth and mud, and who feels proud of being a loyal and efficient farm worker, is without grain. When his serfs in utter starvation plead with Auseph Mapillah to pay their wages in grain, Auseph Mapillah throws a rupee each at them and declares with all his usual ruthlessness: “Take it if you want. There is neither rice nor paddy here for you. If you don’t want to work, pay up the advances and clear out!”(80).

The pathetic condition of the poor and middle class peasants is well portrayed in Two Measures of Rice. The fate of the poor farmers of middle class is not better; they too are the victims of feudalism and capitalism. The inhuman situation is summed up in the following words of Matthew to his neighbour Mathu:

One takes two acres of paddy field on lease at a very high rent; farming is started on borrowed
capital. The landlords and the creditors come and take away the grain. Even then the rent is in arrears. All the toil is for nothing. When the debt accumulates, they acquire the two cents of land on which one may have a roof to live under. That is the way we are all ruined. (49)

Two Measures of Rice is a powerful acknowledgment to such ruin and misery suffered by the poor farmers. Samayal, the old head Pulaya recounts “the history of many such families over the past fifty years. They all once had houses of their own, but were all ruined by farming land on lease” (44). The struggle to lead a better life of the poor farmers of middle class in The Sword and the Sickle, is parallel to that of their counterparts in Two Measures of Rice. This is clear from Anand’s portrayal of the peasant life, of “the hard realities of the straw huts and the beggars on the outskirts of Manabad, the realities of Nandpur and the brutalities of the estates in Oudh” (365). On his return to his native village, Lalu receives “the impact of that misery and poverty which the money famine had started in India during his absence in the war” (362). He hears everywhere the harrowing tales of poverty and
ruthless exploitation. He comes to realise the evil forces which are bent upon squeezing the poor peasants through the words of his uncle, Harnam Singh:

This country is like a lean bullock that has been reduced to the bone by the Angrezi lion, son. Each day the lion awoke and gnawed a chunk of flesh off the bullock's body and left it weaker but still standing. And then the other beasts of the jungle came, and set to—the local jackals and the foxes took their toll!...There have been bad times before in this country, but surely no time so bad as the present. (64)

Similarly Fazlu, the peasant turned weaver, blames his own folk for this deterioration, "Ohe brother, the Sarkar is not to blame, but our own folk are bent on murdering each other!... And children are rising against their parents, brothers are out to strangle brothers, and soon every one will drown everyone else!" (63).

Lalu warns his father and brothers against the dangers of borrowing money from the money-lender. He loses all
patience when the money-lender Chaman Lal tries to deceive his father and brother with his treacherous talk. A number of poor farmers of the middle class like Lalu, his father and uncle have lost their land under the pressure of the prevailing economic system. By means of effective incidents and situations, Anand presents the miserable existence of poor peasants reduced to begging, “A spell of dry weather, and the peasants who had hoped to wait for prices to go up, sold their grain dirt cheap and mortgaged their lands! Who could store cotton and the fire of his hunger together?” (61).

The reason behind the portrayal of the tragic social situation is intended to expose the economic conditions and the hostile forces responsible for the existence of such a situation. Such specific settings and situations are also meant to provoke anger and moral indignation, leading to the rise of revolutionary spirit in people. Apart from its disastrous effects on the lives of poor peasants, the changed situation is shown to generate a sense of justice in them and to sow the seed of revolt against their oppressors. Anand observes, “The oppression of the weak by the strong is only injustice, while the insulting of the strong by the weak is not only injustice
but dishonour!"(57). Lalu notices signs of some great revolutionary change taking place in the society:

What ever the changes, and however disastrous they were to his own interests, a vague new life seemed to him to be creeping among the doomed. Something was rising, some new force was rushing towards the light and, whether willingly or inadvertently, he was part of it. (71)

Pillai also depicts a similar rise of revolutionary spirit in the farm workers of Kuttanad, "The days ahead were fraught with the gravest danger; it was a battle. Not only will the farmers of Kuttanad, but even the powers that be will declare war on the Union and its workers" (91).

Pillai's description of the imminent social revolution in the society is similar to that of Anand: "The entire State witnessed a spirit of peasants' meetings and processions. Slogans were echoing everywhere. Slogans which would shake the innermost recess of the rich man's soul. The volcano was about to erupt" (92-3). In their revolutionary
novels, Anand and Pillai present their central theme of social revolution mainly through the portrayal of their hero becoming a revolutionary. The revolutionary change that occurs in the hero's response to the prevailing socio-economic conditions reflects in miniature one which occurs in society at large. In this connection it is appropriate to mention the words of N. Krishna Pillai, on Pillai:

The stirring of class consciousness in a Pulaya youth under the force of circumstances, who lived traditionally believing in the need to preserve and honour the existing social order and feeling proud of his Thambran and of his own ability in securing wealth for his Thambaran. (392)

Anand's novel is a similar presentation of the stirring of class consciousness in a poor Sikh peasant under the impact of circumstances. Saros Cawasjee refers to those circumstances that effect such a change in his hero, "Rebellious by nature and having had some education in a mission school, Lau reacts sharply to the injustices to which the village folk are exposed" (100). Lalu who has been fiery and rebellious since
childhood feels fascinated by the spark of agitation among the poor people like his uncle Harnam Singh.

Both Lalu and Koren possess the mind and spirit of a revolutionary. They defend themselves and others against the tyrannies of the landlords. Despite the differences in social standing and education, the two heroes, Anand’s Lalu and Pillai’s, Koren are smart, intelligent and strong-willed. From the very beginning, both of them appear to be rebellious by nature and temperament. Both Anand and Pillai show how this common trait of defiance in their hero’s character developed into great revolutionary ardour by their interaction with the society—by their confrontation with the harsh social situation. Both the heroes are shown to undergo a parallel change as a result of the growth of socio-political awareness in them.

Both Anand and Pillai present an exemplary revolutionary hero in keeping with the socialist tradition. The process of transformation in each case begins with the realization of the society and the subsequent resolve to commit themselves to the workers’ cause. Lalu begins to realize that the social breakdown has brought a change on
everything, "We have been talking of Religion, Revolution, Wine, Women, Money, and Marriage and all the burning issues of the hour!" (108).

Lalu’s revolutionary nature is further revealed in the way in which he is concerned about the pathetic plight of the people. Lalu feels that he must try to help them and forget the personal wrong suffered by him:

No, the suffering was too, widespread, and it was no use nursing one’s own grief among the men who licked their sores and lay all skin and bone, mixing with the dust of the road, the storm cloud of a fate over their head which was unknown to them except in their wails... He must do something for others. (71)

As in Lalu, Koren’s change begins when he comes to realize the evil effects of the breakdown of the old social order, and of the new capitalist economy. Koren vows that “He had devoted his life to the service of the working class to which he belonged” (95).
Like Lalu of Anand, he understands that many of the evils that plague the society like poverty, exploitation forced labour, black marketing, greed for money etc are the direct result of this new economy. Like Anand, Pillai reveals the rise of class consciousness to hear about the brutal thrashing suffered by Chennan, his wife and children at the hands of his Thambran. He learns that under the changed circumstances when the Thambrans have no concern for the welfare of their serfs, the farm workers like him cannot expect from their masters anything more than the wages fixed for their labour. Koren feels:

All the fruits of his toil had been misappropriated by that devil who was crouching over his accounts! His life-blood was being sucked out! He, too, had to live. He, too, had rights. He had been toiling. That grain and money belonged to him also... He didn’t want any charity from anyone. (65)

Both Lalu and Koren realises that it is money rather than caste that divides the society into classes. Lalu thinks:
There were no black or white people, no yellow or brown people, not even Francisis and Germans, and English and Hindustanis, and Chinis and Japanis, but there were only two races and two religions in the world, the rich and the poor. (83)

Similarly Koren says:

There are only two castes; those who have grain and money, and those who haven't. Just think of it. Was it not a Mappillah Thambran whom our Thambran had evicted from his house the other day with the help of the police on the ground that he owned his money? So, when it comes to grain and money, caste doesn't exist. (44)

The first day of harvest is a day of starvation. When Koren produces a bumper harvest after toiling day and might, the reward he gets from the Thambran is utter humiliation. At the time of harvest, when he picks up a sheaf of paddy, the Thambran shouts, "Were you not clearly told at the time of signing the contract that this would not be allowed? Leave the sheaf there" (54). After the order of the Thambran,
“everyone left the farmyard. No one could take home a grain of paddy—not even a grain sticking to the loin-cloth. Even the handful of gleanings hidden in the waist pocket of Ityathi’s Parayi were taken away by the Thambran” (55). Though the loyal and hardworking farm worker, Koren, is disillusioned and demoralized by the incident, this direct confrontation with the greed in his Thambran further sharpens his class consciousness. With this incident, there comes a significant change in the process of his transformation.

New thoughts, new passions shook his very soul.

Thoughts which had never before occurred to him. Such situations—yes, he had met with many such situations in the past. But never before had such feelings been aroused in him. (65)

He now thinks of the plight of the other people like him and feels the need of fighting against the inequalities that exist between the rich and the poor. He begins to be assertive in his dealing with his Thambaran and to feel the need of organising the follow workers to fight for their rights.
The farm workers, who produce all the grains, are denied even the right to know the quantity of grain produced by them. Similarly, they are denied the right to have their wage in grain. Koren becomes bold enough to ask his Thambaran to tell him the quantity of rice produced by him. When he finds that his account maintained by Thambaran is false, he openly tells his Thambran about it. More bluntly refuses to accept his wage in money. This incident arouses awareness in Koren’s mind. “That voice had the force of a consciousness of his rights, and the might of a yet unexpressed courage of conviction. He seemed to have arrived at some sort of a resolution” (67).

Similarly Lalu thinks:

a new strength which the sight of hundreds of peasants, the sound of their voices seemed to put into him-an emotional and a nervous power which seemed to give him an inner largeness, a confidence in his own capacity to control his destiny and to help others to do the same. (144)
It looks as though a joint decision had been secretly taken by all the farmers to this effect. Later Koren succeeds to encourage his fellow workers not to accept their wage in money and make them realize the need of unity among them. On one Sunday some sixty Parays and Pulayas assembled at the hut of Koren to take a decision,

They decided that they all should stand united. When so many Pulayas and Parayas gathered together, collectively they felt that they had courage; that they had power; that they could resist. Even Koren’s old father stood up, supporting himself on stick. (81)

Koren becomes indignant when he is not allowed to bury his father’s body in an uninhabited stretch of land belonging to Auseph Muthalali. He wrapped the body in a mat and tied it with stone. He is thus forced to dispose his father’s body into the river. “Patrose and Koren jointly lifted that heavy load and consigned it into the river” (84).

Similarly Lalu and his comrades Ram Din, Nandu, Gupta and one-eyed Sukhua along with twenty evicted
peasants including the father of the deceased, Bupendra, begin their procession carrying the dead body of the boy, Chandra, who was mercilessly flogged and killed. In order to open the eyes of the national leaders on the cruelty of landlordism they march towards Allahabad. The Manager of the estate, Sheikh Hadayat Ullah, tries to stop the procession by shooting. One of the bullets hits Nandu on the head and he dies. The peasants and comrades realise that they cannot carry the body upto Allahabad and so they offer them into the Ganga. They have "thrown the dead bodies into the Ganges without much ceremony" (182).

Lalu feels lack of faith in him that makes him abandon the idea of living his own life and throw himself into the peasant work. It is a kind of escape from the family troubles. Though he has undertaken the job of helping to organize the peasants and to bring about revolution, he is unsure of himself and of his real motive for taking up the work. He does not know what method he has to adopt for making the revolution. He is confused in the midst of a welter of conflicting views and methods advocated by the other revolutionaries. Much of the concern of Anand is to show how
his hero overcomes his difficulties, adopt himself to his work and emerges finally as a true revolutionary. Much of the focus in *The Sword and the Sickle* is on the struggle of Lalu for self-perfection. This is evident from what Anand writes of Lalu:

He was torn by the confusion in his own mind. He had felt guilty about mouthing slogans and tackling the watch man Bhoori Singh, about Gandhiji and a hundred different things. And yet he had wanted to help the peasants. True, he felt a certain sense of glory in leading the men. (242)

In Lalu Anand has struck a fine blend of strength and weakness, a true picture of an Indian peasant, both sturdy and infirm. Lalu feels that in order to achieve this aim he has to first perfect himself and find out the right method of making revolution. Anand presents Lalu in keeping with what he says in his *Apology for Heroism* about the men who can create a new society—the men "who are sincere, disinterested and free, men who are willing to save the world... men who are human, who represent humanity everywhere and seek a
Lalu knows very well in the process of becoming a revolutionary, he finds difficulty in adapting himself to the work he has to do. He feels, "he needed the strength of a more enlightened will to approximate himself to the work for the noble ideal of Revolution" (102). Lalu, like Koren, comes to realize that his wife is a great hindrance to his work: "She seemed a hindrance in the way of his work, a responsibility of the desires of those days when he had still wished for his own happiness" (107). Lalu and Koren are presented with a conflict in their minds between their love for theirs wives and their devotion for the revolutionary movement. But both of them never allow their love to hinder them from carrying out their mission in life.

Lalu's wife, Maya, has no faith in the struggle in which her husband is engaged. She has "adopted an attitude of stubborn contrariety against everything he stood for and decided to shift any responsibility that remained on her shoulders to desire a child" (227). Unlike Chirutha, Koren's wife, Maya, born and brought up in a different atmosphere, is
unable to understand the great significance of her husband's work. Anand analyses the strange relationship between Lalu and Maya, highlighting the reason for the failure of their domestic life. "They had become separate and apart in their bodies, except that the aura of the sullen pressure of Maya's silent will still held them together in the poisonous embrace of the cat playing with the mouse"(227-8).

Towards the end of the novel, while serving jail sentence, he realizes that he has become so involved in things outside himself that he cannot easily relate himself to his feelings about Maya, but only to the revolution. He understands that having discovered a cause in which he could believe, having lived and worked for himself as well as for others, for the peasants, his brethren, striving to root out evil, fighting all those who hindered their lives, he had been impatient with her because he had seen in her many of his own impulses to flourish of hi adolescence, his own weaknesses, his own confusions, vanities and vapidities. (383)
When he engages himself in public life and in the worker's struggle like Lalu, Koren too becomes increasingly conscious of the need to free himself from his personal or family life and devote his life to the service of the working class. Like Lalu, Koren feels guilty of neglecting his wife: "I shouldn't have married you, because you are a problem for me. I always feel that I am neglecting the girl I have married. I am not destined to enjoy the bliss of family life" (96). He expresses the mean sense of guilt when he tells her:

It will be hard on me. Having married a girl, would it be right on my part to make her suffer? On that wedding day when there was a quarrel, I ought to have given it up and gone away. In that case someone else would have married you and you would have been happy. (89)

He comes to know that as an active member of the union, he may have to face a lot of hazards; he may have to die or go to jail. So he feels that he must entrust his wife to the care of some one. Then he may feel free to engage himself in the struggle. Despite his intense love for his wife, his decision to leave her to Chathan, who was once his rival for her hand, is
a supreme act of sacrifice for the sake of revolution. Pillai thus shows his hero's total, selfless dedication to the workers cause through Koren's decision of breaking away from his wife who has been everything to him.

In the same manner Anand expresses that Lalu is a true revolutionary to the core. Anand writes: "How could he go back on all his experiences, how could he forget, how could he renounce his responsibilities and yield to the fantasy of a weak woman's universe" (340). It starts with the shifting of Lalu's stay from the palace to the Kisan Sabha. The dispersal of the leadership forces him to lead the peasant's movement by himself. The absence of the leaders, his own inferiority, his difficulties with Maya, his general bafflement at not knowing what to do, all leave him rudderless, but his encounter with Comrade Sarsher makes his political education complete. It enables him to shed his pessimism and know himself as well as the peasants better. The clarity of Sarshar's words makes him aware of the vagueness of his own thoughts. Sarshar exposes the Count, Razwi and others as false revolutionaries by pointing out the mistakes made by them and the wrong motives behind their
actions. The confusion in his mind clears when Sarshar explains to him the true nature of revolution in relation to their unsuccessful attempts to bring out revolution. He understands that his own views on the methods of revolution are identical with those of Sarshar.

At the end Lalu is seen to arrive at a proper perspective of the true meaning of social revolution and of the nature of a life devoted to it. In the jail, he declares his new perceptions: "We followed the shadow and forgot the substance...Come, worthy little people, come, we will now make a real real Revolution! Come, we shall work day and night and learn how to make a Revolution" (384-5). Once again he gives his idea of revolution, "For Revolution is a need of togetherness, Comrade, the need to curb malice among men, the need for men to stand together as brothers" (385).

The hope of new life is revealed through Anand's dextrous use of natural imagery,

Lal Singh lifted his head and saw the new dawn filtering through the doorways with that uncanny milk-white radiance which heralds the coming of
strong sun, the moist smell of the dew blew into the corners of the dormitory, freshening his limbs after the stench, the fatigue and the irritations of the dark night.(386)

Saros Cowasjee presents the portrayal of the hero’s political education and evolution into an exemplary revolutionary figure, “The leaders in Anand’s novels are from the privileged classes, and their attitude towards the oppressed has a remote similarity to that of Byron who made it clear that he was for the people, but not of them”(121).

Lalu, unlike Koren, arrives at his convictions mostly through some intellectual process like Anand. In the words of Meenakshi Mukherjee, “He (Anand) himself has arrived at his convictions after considerable exposure to a number of viewpoints, a great deal of soul-searching, the process of which is recorded in his Apology for Heroism”(232). He is exposed to a number of conflicting ideologies and viewpoints relating to Revolution before he reaches his convictions. Anand presents the mental state of his protagonist, Lalu:
He had gone on living a dual life, occupied by an earnest struggle, as well as building up a deliberate string of pretty lies, with a great many variation of the 'childling' kind of endearments which corresponded so well with the affectionate whimsicality. (340)

Koren is transformed into a socialist revolutionary though he comes from a low social status. He grows from an unsophisticated, loyal and efficient farm worker to a dedicated activist of the workers' union under the influences of his own experiences and of the outer circumstances. Pillai here suggests that the rise of class-consciousness and political awareness in Koren and other workers is not out of any doctrinaire education. On the other hand, it is the natural outcome of the lessons learnt from their own experiences. Pillai brings out the transformation:

Who taught him all this? It was an amazing phenomenon. It came spontaneously, naturally. The elephant realized its own strength — the Paraya discovered his own position. He became articulate; he had a cause and his cause had a
sound basis Is there not such a thing as the experience of centuries? Is not philosophy itself the spontaneous blossoming of human experience? (92).

Both the novels resemble in the portrayal of the growth of social and political sensibilities of poor peasants and workers as a whole. Despite the difference in the level of awareness, these people are seen to move from ignorance to awareness, from passivity and acquiescence to resistance and revolt. They gradually become aware of their position and of the need to stand united to fight for their rights.

In Two Measures of Rice with a growing sense of solidarity, they form their own union, and put forth their demands addressed to the landlords, farmers and the Government:

The demands were addressed not only to the landlords and farmers, but to the Government consisting of those who had proclaimed during the general election that they stood for the redress of their grievances. It was a
demonstration of their strength and a warning to
the rich and the Government. (91)

The Pulayas have grown in stature and their voice gained in
strength. They insisted that their wage of grain should be
measured in their presence and correctly. Even their ways of
life underwent changes. "What a transformation had come
over the Paraya who until yesterday had weekly submitted to
the farmer's dictates and unquestioningly accepted the
crumbs he threw at him!"(91-2).

In The Sword and the Sickle, Anand traces the
development of such revolutionary changes in the people. In
the beginning the people are:

stupid, insensate and cruel, concerned about
their own little plots of land, ignorant of the forces
which oppressed them and superstitiously
invoking the gods, bounded on every side by fear,
tottering and careworn and half-deed, they toiled
and preserved and followed where their leaders
led them"(242).
They are completely transformed. They are shown to change gradually shedding their fear and abjectness, and hardening their attitude towards their oppressors. In the course of their struggle, “They had become different from the broken, demoralized, backboneless creatures...The new movement seemed to have given them a new faith. It was extraordinary how any organized action gave them a new sense of power” (274).

This is suggestive of the beginning of a fresh class struggle for the purpose of making revolution in the light of Lalu’s full understanding of the meaning and methods of revolution. It is this understanding at last in the jail that makes him declare:

Now it is time to learn the ways of struggle, my love, now is the time to live in and through the struggle...Now is the time to change the world, to fight for Life and happiness; now is the time to sing, Comrade, brave songs of the struggle .(385)

The peasants are awakened about their rights and requirements. They are preparing themselves for a rebellion
against exploitation by the cruel money-lenders and landlords. The revolutionaries here are group of people with varying ideologies and approaches towards the goal of the liberation of landless farmers from the clutches of heartless landlords.

Day by day the peasants have involved themselves to fight against the system. Lalu notices the further growth of revolutionary ardour in the peasants, the members of the Kisan Sabha, when they express their views freely without any sign of submission. Mithu's remark about the division of people into the rich and the poor and his reference reveal the growth of class consciousness in them: "there are two races and two religions in the world, the rich and the poor. That is so all over the world, for all the folk who have gone to Vilayat tell the same tale; there are gora coolies and sweepers and there are rich sahibs" (347).

The portrayal of the development of class consciousness in the society is juxtaposed with a depiction of class struggle by both the novelists. Though each novel presents this class conflict in its own way, its portrayal forms a significant part of its central concern. The struggle of the peasants to lead a
better life in *Two Measures of Rice* reveals the importance given to the class conflict in the novel. "A class war emerged in a clear cut form. It began to develop—it was being developed—in the direction of the creation of a classless society" (113). There are similar critical views about *The Sword and the Sickle*. Saros Cowasjee observes, "the book had clearly marked the British Government as the chief enemy of the peasants and the cause of many India's troubles" (122). As in *Two Measures of Rice*, the portrayal of class struggle is an important concern, in *The Sword and the Sickle* it is evident from its title itself. "The sickle represents India's vast labour force, especially the downtrodden peasantry... The sword is, of course, the all too familiar brute force...which keeps the poor in perpetual serfdom" (113).

The struggle that is depicted in the *Two Measures of Rice* between the farm workers and the poor peasant on one side and the landlords, the big farmers and their agents on the other seems to assume the dimension of a class war. The workers come to realize their strength in unity, "We all must stand together if we want to survive" (81). They become one
class and a force to reckon with. Their union has now some important role to play in determining the destiny of the general election, "The Peasant Worker’s Union had become an important force to be reckoned with in determining the destiny of the general election" (85). Their worth is now increased considerably candidate offers an enormous amount of money to their union seeking their support. But they turn down the offer. While portraying the class struggle, Pillai highlights the effects of workers’ unity on themselves as well as on their oppressors. "The rich farmers of Kuttanad did, indeed, feel alarmed. The Parayas and the Pulaya stood united. The strength of unity was revealed to them in the election. In that unity they had matured; and they had awakened" (86).

The more the peasants are suppressed, the more they rise against their opponents. Once they have developed class consciousness and a sense of solidarity they cease to have any loyalty to their masters. When the public meetings and processions are banned, the Union decides to defy the ban; the workers’ struggle is seen to reach a significant stage. Pillai opines:
The entire working class stood up to this crisis. The whole State was awakened; it would not be a trivial local event. In all probability it would become a memorable event in the history of the land. The victims of repression were mobilizing their forces. (104)

The capitalist class out of fear seeks the help of the government to suppress the workers' upsurge. But even then, “The Union drew up a programme of demonstrations...Not a Paraya was afraid” (105). They engaged themselves in a life-and-death struggle and thousands of workers lay down their lives for the noble cause of social revolution, when the police fire at their huge demonstration in Padachal.

Both the heroes, Koren and Lalu, have been arrested by the police. One midnight Chacko tries to rape Koren’s wife with the help of an accomplice. But Koren kills him in his own hut. “Koren managed to evade immediate arrest, but he was apprehended within few days” (99). Lalu has also been arrested for his revolutionary activities, “Lal Singh and the peasants, who had been arrested after shooting, were crowded into the barracks cells” (376).
Pillai describes the massacre of Padachal and simultaneously portraying Chirutha giving birth to Koren’s son in their hut. Juxtaposing both the events, and presenting them as taking place simultaneously, Pillai makes the child’s birth symbolic of the birth of Revolution. The whole description is full of symbolic overtones. “Thence, from Padachal, came the deafening noise of continuous firing and the people shouting slogans. Thence too, the pangs of birth or of destruction” (107). It is the ‘birth’ of Revolution and the ‘destruction’ of a capitalist structure. This is clear from the author’s comments towards the end of the novel about the growth of the struggle. The novel ends on a happy note with Koren returning from the jail and getting united to his wife and son, Veluttha, who shouts “Land to the Tillers” in response to the slogans heard from in the distance: “Long live revolution!”, “Long live the Union!” (117).

Anand’s novel also closes on a happy note. In the jail, Lalu receives the happy news that his wife has borne him a son. The ending of the novel provides a number of symbolic suggestions. On the morning of a new day, “Lal Singh lifted
his head and saw the new dawn filtering through the doorway with that uncanny milk-white radiance which heralds the coming of a strong sun" (386). Lalu feels easier now that the night was over. The novel ends with the answer that he anticipates to receive good news from Maya and inquiries about their new-born son. Maya says, “Sardar Lal Singh, Your child is alive and kicking!” (386).

Despite this similarly in the happy ending, the novels show considerable difference in the presentation of the struggle for making revolution. While Pillai’s novel portrays the success of the struggle, Anand’s novel portrays the failure of revolution. In contrast with the successful class war shown in Two Measures of Rice, the struggle one finds in The Sword and the Sickle is nothing more than a series of blunders committed by its leaders. By way of explaining the reasons for the failure of revolution through Sarshar, Anand seeks to project his ideas concerning social revolution and its methods. Sarshar points out to Lalu:

Why, any fool could have seen that a situation had been reached in these estates when there was clear evidence on all sides of an awakening,
and when there were tremendous opportunities for organizing the peasants on a conscious basis of struggle. Instead, the peasants are all out for vengeance and destruction rather than struggle.

(351)

Neither the leaders nor the peasants are shown to be motivated and guided by any principles of some proper political philosophy. This is clear from what Sarshar tells Lalu: "you went on vaguely... you went on in the dark, the one-eyed leading the blind, excited by the thrill of action! ...Wah, not to speak of your Leaders!" (352). Anand suggests that the success of class struggle depends upon a proper political education in terms of the nature and methods of social revolution.

Pillai demonstrates the positive results produced by the organized struggle of the workers and peasants against the landlords, "the country's life in general underwent a sea change. The common people and their interests became factors to be reckoned with. The common people refused to be at the beck and call of the capitalists and landlords" (113). Anand implies it in the failure of some abortive and
misdirected attempts made by the revolutionaries with the help of a few evicted peasants. The reason for such failure is, C.J. George opines, "a lack of efficient and widespread organization make the peasant revolt vulnerable to the Imperial force of police and the Count and his comrades end up in jail" (111).

Similarities found in these novels expressing the concurrent society in terms of the aesthetic aspect are also mostly due to their allegiance to the socialist tradition. Following the soviet socialist, both the novels make extensive use of the various means of artistic expression — montage, inner monologue, both direct and indirect, time shifts in the narrative, flashbacks breaking into the action and symbolic characterization. Employing such literary devices and means which fit perfectly well into the aesthetics characteristics, Anand and Pillai make a similar attempt to achieve artistic realization of their social and political intentions in these novels.

The message conveyed through the portrayal of revolutionary peasants in both the novels is the same: that the success of struggle and social revolution depends upon
the workers' unity. Both the writers insist that it is only through the solidarity among workers and with a vigorous struggle that the existing social order can be destroyed and a new socialist society can be set up.