

Harlan county, usa as a reflection of a conflict theory

Sociology



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It has just so happened that we live in a world of contradictory human relations according to the social division into classes. The appearance of the rich and the poor has always been perceived as an issue of inequality and injustice. As a matter of fact, the basis of such a situation is hidden in the conflict between different groups of people with the contagion of dissatisfaction of the working class by the policy of its treatment as a draught power by the selfish employers. The peculiarities of the development of a conflict with its further solution are the subject for studies by a conflict theory, which is one of the main directions in macrosociology that puts at the analysis center the social processes conflict as a phenomenon inherent in the nature of human society. The conflict theory develops in the 50 - 60s of the 20th century as an opposed teaching to the structural functionalism which emphasize stability and equilibrium of the social system. Theory followers accentuate the objective value of the conflict that does not allow ossification of the social system and stimulates its development. In particular, " Harlan County, USA" (1976) is a documentary film and a vivid example of the conflict theory in action, for it depicts the Brookside strike of coal miners against their servitude by the owners of the company.

So the Brookside strike becomes an official claim of oppressed miners for right observance. It is not the first attempt to gain fairness. But only with opened stated wish the miners can be heard and their lives leveled to inhuman conditions can be improved. The main purpose of the striking people is the signing of the contract between their coal company and the

UMWA or the Union of Miners Workers of America as the latter is intended to support and protect miners from negative conditions of their work. Here is where the bare conflict arises between haves, that is, the employers, and have-nots, that is, the miners. And the cause of conflict is the reluctance of the company's rulers to provide their workers with full conditions for the effective safe coal mining. There are many negative aspects of this occupation including such life threats as the disease of black lungs as an aftereffect of working without any protection from coal dust, and the risk of being caved in the pit because of its damage through unsafe application. Knowing all these facts the directors of the company just promise the melioration of miners' working and living conditions without any message executions. So the strike of mining workers who have no normal salary, no free medicine, and no guaranties for happy future is not unnatural. Their aim is achievement of the right defense by UMWA that becomes the only light for sick and tired humans having now power now for the chains on their hands. "If you start your organization and you strike together then you can defeat them" (Kopple) - this is how of the miners passes the common idea of the whole striking community of 180 miners' families. The all thing in their abilities is a scramble to their rights.

In conclusion, " Harlan County, USA" shows the great story of people's fight for the better life that is the basis issue of the conflict theory, namely: the development of social system for the benefits of its human elements.

Works Cited

Kopple, Barbara. (1976). Harlan County, USA. United States: First Run Features.

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