

Socialist Equality Party UK public meeting

What the Gleision mining tragedy reveals about Britain's trade unions

23 November 2011

The Gleision mining tragedy has shone a harsh light on the conditions of super-exploitation now rife in what remains of the UK's mining industry.

Four miners—Phillip Hill (45), Garry Jenkins (39), David Powell (50), and Charles Breslin (62)—were killed at the open cast pit in Swansea Valley, Wales, when a wall collapsed, flooding the tunnel where they were working on September 15.

Just 12 days later Gerry Gibson (49) was killed at Kellingley Colliery, North Yorkshire in a roof collapse. Another miner was injured. At least four other miners have had to be rescued in potentially life-threatening accidents at two other pits in the last weeks.

These terrible incidents are an indictment of the trade unions, in particular the National Union of Mineworkers. At a recent meeting in Sheffield, billed as a “tribute to the Mining Industry”, NUM honorary president Arthur Scargill and former Yorkshire NUM vice president Ken Capstick made no mention of these tragedies.

Their silence epitomises the gulf between the trade unions and the working class.

Across the country, in every industry and workplace, the trade union bureaucracy is collaborating with the coalition government in imposing massive austerity measures, pay freezes and pay cuts, and undermining working conditions and social rights.

The Socialist Equality Party calls for the building of independent rank and file committees, as part of the struggle for a workers government based on socialist policies.

Monday, November, 28, 7 p.m.
Yorkshire Coalfield Resource Centre (Thorneycroft Centre)
Halfpenny Lane, Pontefract WF8 4AY



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wsws.org/contact