

Online book launch: Political lessons of the Pike River disaster and cover-up

Socialist Equality Group (New Zealand)
23 May 2022

The Socialist Equality Group in New Zealand and the *World Socialist Web Site* will hold an online public meeting on Saturday, June 4, at 5:00 p.m. NZ time, to launch the new book *Pike River: The Crime and Cover-up*, published by Mehring Books.

Please register here to attend this critical webinar on Zoom.

On November 19, 2010, an explosion tore through the underground Pike River coal mine on the west coast of New Zealand's South Island. After a second explosion five days later, the 29 workers underground were declared dead.

This was not a random accident: it was a crime caused by capitalism. However, despite overwhelming evidence that Pike River Coal placed profit and production ahead of workers' lives, more than 11 years later no one has been held accountable for turning the mine into a death trap.

At this public meeting, Tom Peters, the main author of *Pike River: The Crime and Cover-up*, will speak about the causes of the disaster and the ongoing fight to uncover the full truth about what happened.

Peters, a leading member of the SEG, has written extensively for the WSWS about Pike River since the disaster occurred. He will explain how successive National and Labour Party-led governments have worked with the trade unions, state regulators and the judicial system, to prevent a full investigation into the disaster, and to protect the company management and owners.

Last year, Jacinda Ardern's government permanently sealed the mine, refusing to retrieve human remains and vital evidence in the mine workings. The decision was opposed by the majority of the victims' families and by international mining experts.

This meeting will also be addressed by members of

the Socialist Equality Parties in Britain and Australia. The speakers will examine the global parallels with Pike River, and how capitalist governments everywhere have rigged the justice system in favour of the rich and big business.

The lessons of Pike River have a burning international relevance: millions of workers have died in the COVID-19 pandemic, as governments everywhere have placed profits ahead of lives, allowing the virus to spread out of control. This webinar will discuss how workers must organise politically to fight back; it will make the case for workers to establish rank-and-file safety committees, independent of the pro-capitalist unions, and to build a new socialist party.

We urge workers, students and WSWS readers to attend and join the discussion about these vital issues, share this meeting notice on social media, and invite others to attend.

Times for this meeting:

New Zealand: June 4, 5:00 p.m.

London: June 4, 6:00 a.m.

Sydney: June 4, 3:00 p.m.

Colombo: June 4, 10:30 a.m.

New York: June 4, 1:00 a.m.



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