

Let's Fight against the Privatisation Policies of the Rulers Collectively with the Spirit of Visakha Steel Plant Workers Struggle!

Friends!

The anti-privatisation movement of Visakhapatnam steel plant workers' has reached 800 days. However, the central government has repeatedly affirmed that it is committed to privatization without taking into consideration the aspirations of the workers and the people. The UPA and NDA governments have made many attempts to privatize the steel plant which was achieved with the bloodshed and struggle of the people of the Telugu states. In 2010, the Visakha Steel Plant was declared a Navaratna company, and the plant got the right to take independent decisions regarding investments up to 1000 crores. But as part of the decision by the Govt to sell its stakes in the public sector, it announced that 10 percent will be sold, otherwise the Navratna status will be removed. The workers understood that if they agree to sell 10 per cent stake, it will not stop there, Govt will gradually sell the majority stake, and the same procedure is being followed in all other public sector industries. The working class fought unitedly against the sale of shares. In 2018-19, the NDA government became more aggressive. Visakha Steel Plant has been included in the decision to sell stakes in 24 public sector industries. Now it is just not the sale of shares. Govt has announced that plant will be sold completely. It could be a strategy by the government that if they say complete sale, the employees would atleast agree for the sale of some shares.

Invitation for Bids in the Name of EOI: As the first step in the privatization of steel plant, gov't invited bids under the name of 'Expression of Interest'. It is reported that private companies are also participating by the announcement that the steel produced by the steel plant will be handed over to the company that invests 5000 crores. The BRS party, which initially announced that Singareni would participate, backed off when the center announced that privatization would not stop; it can be understood how the steel plant will be saved by those who cannot open the industries that are shut down in Telangana. It is just for election propaganda. The Andhra State Government, which cannot protect the Gangavaram port from privatization, is saying that it is against the privatization of the steel plant. The workers should understand that the steel plant privatization is being used by various political parties for their own political gain, but these parties are not against privatization policies.

The government is giving the Country's coal mines to Adani; even after 50 years since the inception of the industry, though Visakha Steel has been demanding for allotment of captive mines, despite the change in governments at the center and in the state, captive mines have not been allocated. They decided to hand over all the country's strong public sector enterprises to foreign or domestic capitalist class.

Prime Minister Modi's own words at the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FICCI) meeting show their rigid determination. "Public sector units are born to die. Some die in childhood, while others die in youth. But their death is inevitable" by saying this he announced their unadulterated pro-capitalist policy. But he forgot that the very organization he wants to kill has saved many lives during Covid by supplying oxygen. There is a law that says that public sector units have to spend 2 percent of their profits as social responsibility. As a part of it, the facilities like welfare centers, Kalyana mandapams (marriage halls), roads and electricity have been improved in the employees colony. The plant provided drinking water to the Gajuwaka area and provided necessary support to the people during natural calamities. The private sector will take no responsibility towards the workers except the chase for profits. Because of the steel plant, Gajuwaka area has developed a lot. Apart from that, auxiliary industries have been established at Pedagantyada, Autonagar and other places to supply the spare parts required for the plant providing employment for thousands of workers.

50 percent of the displaced people who have lost their lands and houses have not yet given jobs. Will private companies care about them?

In order to get employment opportunities for the displaced; to expand the plant; to get captive mines and improve the job opportunities; for the protection of the Visakha Steel Plant and job security, along with the entire working class the people of Andhra State should recognize it as their responsibility to participate in the steel plant protection movement. It should be realized that there is no solution other than organized struggle.

With Revolutionary Greetings

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