

(Sanat Mehta)
Phase III

(3)

Sanat Mehta (CITU) (Phase-III)
Baroda

My full name is Sanat Magan Lal Mehta. My date of birth is April 19, 1925. I have always been associated with the HMS even though recently I have got my Gujarat Trade Union Council affiliated to the CITU.

I got my education in Bhavnagar and as a student while taking part in the 1942 movement, I came in contact with the big names in the national movement.

It was mainly due to the efforts of Ashok Mehta that I agreed to organise the workers in Bombay. I was already in contact with the railway and textile workers as a student.

Among the memorable moments are the Baroda Palace Hands' strike in the late 1940s. It was on the question of security of the Palace employees after the merger of the Baroda state into Indian Union.

I participated and organised several strikes and movements in Bhavnagar, Surendranagar and other places. I organised the sweepers' historic strike in Bhavnagar in 1948-49. I used to go around on motorcycle, contacting the workers. I had the habit of living simply among the poor and the down-trodden. I used to stay in the union office, organising the railway, post and telegraph and other workers.

I became active in the Textile Labour Association (TLA). I worked in their office but later developed a conflict with the Majdoor Mahajan.

I also worked among the workers of Sarabhai Chemicals, textiles, Baroda Labour Education Trust, ONGC and many others.

I was also active in Legislative front. In fact I was a municipal councillor for two decades. I was also elected an MLA. When I became the Union Labour Minister, Indira Gandhi tried to prevail upon me to dissociate myself from the HMS, but I refused. As a minister, I amended the BIR (Bombay Industrial Relations) Act in favour of the workers. I have taken up some studies and projects related with workers and farmers and also on economic and labour questions. I was the first to condemn the economic policies of Manmohan Singh. In my opinion the Indian trade union movement is not doing any serious thinking on WTO and similar issues, as the European TUs are doing.

(3) Sanat Mehta (HMS-CITU), Baroda

Sanat Maganlal Mehta was born on 19th April 1925. He had been earlier, associated with the HMS, but lately became independent, though continuing in HMS. Recently, he has got his Gujarat TU Council affiliated with the CITU.

Sanat Mehta got his college education in Bhavnagar. As a young student, he participated in the '42 movement. He came in contact with Ashok Mehta, Danga, Achhyuta Patwardhan, and others. As a student, he was already in contact with railway and textile workers. He was influenced by Mazzini, Garibaldi, Lenin, etc.

Into TU movement:

Ashok Mehta convinced him to go to Bombay to work among common workers. He came back to Baroda to work more actively among the labor. One of the memorable and unique struggles he organized and participated in was the strike of Baroda Palace Hands' Strike in the late -40s. There were about 1500 of them, who were retrenched after the accession of the state into the Indian Union.

Sanat Mehta used to roam about on the motorcycle meeting and organizing the workers. He used to sing songs to attract them. He used to stay in the Union office, organizing railway, post & telegraph and other workers.

He participated, during 1948-49, in several strikes and movements e.g. historic strike of sweepers in Surendernagar, etc. He was in the habit of living simply among the poor and the downtrodden.

Sanat Mehta was active in the Textile labor Association (TLA), but later developed a conflict with the Majoor Mahajan. He worked in the TLA office. He worked among the Sarabhai Chemicals workers Textile, in Baroda Labour Education Trust, ONGC, etc.

He was a municipal councilor for 20 years. Later he became MLA and ultimately the Union labour minister under Indira Gandhi. She tried to dissuade him from working in the HMS, but he refused to quit and continued to associate with the HMS.

As a minister he amended the BIR (Bombay Industrial Relations) Act to suit the textile workers.

Sanat Mehta has done a lot of academic work on economic and labour issues. He was among the first to oppose Manmohan Singh's Policies inside the Congress. He has been campaigning against liberalization and globalization. In his opinion, the Indian TU movement is not doing any serious thinking on WTO and other issues, as the European TUs are doing. WTO issues with help unite workers and farmers in India. Balco should have become an all-India issue. In his opinion, there has been no leader like Dange.

Sanat Mehta wants Fidel Castro to be brought to India to mobilize the people on WTO, other issues; he is ready to take the initiative if others agree.

He has conducted and guided a number of studies on the industrial and labour issues, including projects and long-term studies.

At present, Sanat Mehta is guiding Gujarat TU Council and has got it affiliated to the CITU though he himself continues to be in the HMS.