

BIONOTE

Prabhakar Sanzgiri – CITU, Maharashtra

Born in September 1921. Primary education in Gujarat. He was active in student movement too. Worked in the GKU leadership. 1942-48, fought for strike in 1944 within the leadership. Dange had prepared a detailed chart of dearness index for Sassoon Mills in 1928. This pattern was adopted to prepare similar charts for other textile mills in the 40s. Participated in the struggle for living wages during the standardisation scheme of 40s – 50s. INTUC agreeable to lower limits, but the Party (CPI) line was also being stretched to the other extreme.

1948 was a sectarian line; did lot of damage to the workers' movement.

Sanzgiri worked in the Prabhadevi area beginning as area organiser for four mills with a combined strength of more 50 thousand workers.

He worked actively in the elections for workers' constituency, which elected Dange to the Legislative Assembly.

In 1950 he concentrated on reading and writing. He was active at top levels in 1956 during *Samyukta* Maharashtra movement.

After party split in 1964 joined CITU. He is at present president of Mumbai Shramik Sangh, serving in this capacity since 1971.

He has organised tyre workers, particularly of the CEAT, who get the highest wage in tyre industry in India. Their average salary is Rs. 10000/-. It is the only factory in Maharashtra to recruit workers; it has recruited 500 workers in the last one year. Since one of the units had no future for cycle tyres, the union suggested production of 2 wheeler tyres. The union even agreed to shift the workers to Nasik.

For modernisation, in his opinion, one has to moderate one's demands.

He had been vice-president of CITU at all India level.

There are Shiv Sena people also in his union.

At present he is concentrating on writing books.

Presently, President A-I CITU.

Prabhakar Sanzgiri – CITU, Maharashtra

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Transcriptive Summary

(The interview was conducted by Krishna Jha and Anil Rajimwale in the Maharashtra state CITU office in Mumbai on 27 June 2003 in the after noon)

My primary education was done in Gujarat. As a student, I was active in the movement. Later I joined the textile workers' movement and became an activist of the GKU. I was in the GKU from 1942 to 1948. We prepared a mill – to – mill survey of workers on their D.A. index. This was done on the pattern of the work done by S.A. Dange in 1928, when he prepared indexes for the workers of the Sassoon Mills.

My work in the beginning was in the Prabhadevi area as Area Organiser. Workers were my Guru'. There were four mills in the area with over 50 000 workers. There was, for example, the Century Mills with 13000 workers; now it has only 5000.

We prepared for a big movement in 1944 but the party tried to hold us back in the name of the 'line'. We gave notice. In 1948 also, sectarian line was advanced, which did immense damage to the workers' movement.

In the meantime came the Divetia Committee Report on the living wage. The INTUC was agreeable to lower wage than the one recommended by the committee. On the other hand the party also stretched its line too much and caused a break. This was the time of the standardisation scheme.

We fought the elections from the Textile Constituency in 1946 for the provincial Legislative Assembly. S.A. Dange was our candidate. Members of the textile unions used to be the voters. Dange got elected defeating the congress candidate. We took the voters to the Maidan at 4 AM; many slept there during the night. Thus we could queue up more than 2000 workers for voting.

In 1950 I concentrated on studies, teaching and reading/writing. In 1956 I was one of the secretaries of the Samyukta Maharashtra Movement along with Madhu Dandavate. I was in jail during the China war. After the split in the CPI in 1964 I joined the CPM and CITU.

I have been president of the Mumbai Shramik Sangathana from 1971 to the present.

I am dealing with the CEAT tyre workers. They get the highest wages in tyre industry in India, more than Rs. 10,000 and 20 per cent bones. It is the only factory in India that recruited 500 workers.

One unit had no future for cycle tyres. We suggested production of 2 wheeler tyres. The management wanted the unit shifted to Nasik. We agreed; we said "we will tell the workers to shift". 1200 workers shifted.

You have to moderate your demands in case to need of modernisation and increase of production. I was attacked with swords, scythes in JK Tyres unit in Udaipur.

I have been the vice-president of the all India CITU for 2 terms.

(My date of birth is September 1921).

At present I am the president of All India CITU.

There are even Shiv Sena members in our tyre unit. Regular classes we held.

Number of regular workers, on the whole, is going down but production is increasing.

I have written a number of books, and at present I am concentrating on writing.