1. From 1 January 1999, villagers living in the area between Pa-kko-ku Township and Myit-chay Township in Magwe Division have been ordered to clear all their crops (without compensation) and give voluntary labour in digging canals for the implementation of a new project.

2. The villages involved are those in western side of Pakkoku township such as Koke-ko-hla, Ywar-thit-kone, Sei, Sin-lan, Tha-phan-pin, Kyun-nyo, Kan-hla and others extending up to Myit-chay township. The "power-holders" gave notice that the new project would commence within a month when the digging of canals would commence and that the entire area was to be cleared of all crops without thought of any compensation.

3. In addition to not receiving compensation for the loss of crops and land, the cultivators were forced to provide labour for the digging of the canals. The loss suffered by each household for this unjust and compelling measures taken by the authorities is approximately as follows:-

(a) Cost of land ...........................................Kyats 150,000
(b) Cost of tobacco seedlings ......................... 4,000
(c) Cost of ploughing ....................................... 3,600
(d) Fertilizers (2 bags) ........................................ 5,000
(e) Cost of pumping water ................................. 4,800
(f) Cost of labour ............................................... 300

Total Kyats 167,700

The loss for some is greater. There are approximately 40 to 50 household in one village tract.

4. Another burden that has to be born by these cultivators in the Pakkokku district is the compulsory requirement to grow sunflowers for the seed. The seeds harvested has to be made over to the authorities for a nominal price which is then sold at a much higher price resulting in a loss of Kyats 170 a pyi for the cultivator. It is the authorities who enjoy the profits. Any views expressed is considered as obstructing the project for which one could be arrested. One such action was against U Tin Shwe, chairman of the administrative unit of Nyaungbin village, Myit-chay township.

5. We denounce the aforesaid actions of the "power-holders" in causing such great loss to the villagers and we strongly urge that they be suitably and equitably compensated for their sufferings.
Central Executive Committee
National League for Democracy

Rangoon
16 February 1999