National League for Democracy
No. (97/B), West Shwegondine Road
Bahan, Rangoon

Statement No: 46 (3/99)

1. Based on information received this statement is issued regarding the illegal abuse of power by the wielders of authority in Wakhema Township and villages.

2. We have information that Township SPDC Chairman and Secretaries give a format to the Village SPDC chairmen regarding the quantity of paddy, beans and pulses, and chillies that have to be supplied by the different villages which has to be fulfilled willy nilly.

3. Though the cost of a bag of fertiliser issued by the relevant authorities is two thousand kyats, the cultivators are made to pay an additional two hundred kyats for the District SPDC plus the additional sum of two kyats for one gallon of diesel. Overall, the power wielding authorities make more than 60 millions kyats on three and a half lakhs of fertiliser bags and 720,000 kyats on three lakhs, sixty thousand gallons of diesel.

4. Also, when cultivators do not want to sow a summer paddy crop, they have to pay from between kyats 3000/- to 5000/- to the Township SPDC Chairman, Secretary, council members and heads of administrative departments. If these officials can not agree among themselves on certain matters, the cultivator could them lose not only his money and his crops of beans, pulses, chilies etc. but the land on which his forefathers first settled, cleared and cultivated could be confiscated. (Example- the Education department confiscated seventy four acres in Thar-yar-gone village, Wakema township for their Welfare General Fund.)

5. For growing chillies instead of a summer paddy crop, one hundred acres of agricultural land was confiscated in the village tracts of Ka-sa-kae, Min-lan, Yay-lain and Oo-kyun villages as a result of which
   (1) An investment of about four lakhs on chillies plantation by U Maung Kan and daughter Ma Khin Sein was destroyed and confiscated.
   (2) Sixty acres of beans and pulses plantation ready for harvesting was destroyed at the orders of the township SPDC chairman and secretary even though payment at the rate of Kyats one thousand per acre had been paid by them to U Aung Tun Oo, the Information Officer in charge of lands.
   (3) One cultivator from Ta-dar-gyi village, Wakama township who failed to grow a summer paddy crop was bound with ropes and arrested.
   (4) A cultivator from Kyone-pa-tode village was so distraught, he died of mental depression because his crop of chillies on two acres of land was destroyed.
6. Confiscation of land seems to be a regular practice. The people's predicament is similar to that envisaged in the saying "A leper is infected with scabes (mange); the fallen man is attacked by thieves." They are suffering extreme hardship and poverty. We deplore and condemn the actions of those wielding power.

Central Executive Committee
National League for Democracy

Rangoon
16 March 1999