National League for Democracy
No: (97/B), West Shwegonedine Road
Bahan Township, Rangoon

Statement 177 (12/99) (translation)

1. The Myanma-Asia Company with the cooperation of the military and the regional authorities have started a cooking sugar-cane plantation in the village tracts of Wa-sone and Kan-gyi-gone village groups in Hte-Kan-Taik region, Prome township, Pegu Division.

2. Lands that cannot be cultivated and lands that have been cultivated are ruthlessly cut down and cleared, then ploughed with machines leaving no grazing ground for the cattle. This has left the villagers with no land for cultivation and the lands where they had grown some crops were forcefully cleared and ploughed. Survival has become extremely difficult. Even animals are starving. A very pathetic state of affairs.

3. The remaining cultivators of the region have been forbidden to sell their sugar-cane crop to any other person apart from the individual authorised by them who is none other than the Superintendent of Police in charge of the Prome district. No individuals are allowed to process the cane sugar into Kyan-tha-ga. Members of the police force have been threatening to take action if any rising smoke is seen.

4. One ton of sugar-cane fetches kyats 2500. Cost of labour and transportation has to be born by the cultivator, which nets him Kyats 2000 only. One ton of kyan-ta-ga fetches kyats 10000. By forbidding the cultivator to process his own crop into kyan-ta-ga he is considerably disadvantaged.

5. This state of affairs leaves the cultivator a coolie at the mercy of the entrepreneur. Therefore we seriously condemn the authorities that are creating opportunities to bring about such unenviable conditions for the poor cultivators.

Central Executive Committee
National League for Democracy

Rangoon
23 December 1999