

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

Statement 8 (1/00) (translation)

1. We hear that loans for cultivation of winter crops offered to cultivators in Mandaya township, Mandalay Division attract the following fees:-

- (a) Kyats 125/- per loan.
- (b) Additional fee of 1%.
- (c) Kyats 300/- agents fee for those who cannot attend personally to receive the loan.

By these devious deductions, cultivators do not receive the full amount of the loan and they are much aggrieved.

2. We hear that in the township of Nga-thain-kyaung, Irrawaddy Division, Kyats 350/- is collected from every household for the formation of a militia unit. Those who are unable to meet the demand receive constant visitations from the authorities accompanied by a member of the police force.

3. We hear that in Nga-thain-kyaung township cultivators of land formed by the process of silting are forced to sell their crops of mat-pe (green gram) and pe-de-sein (green beans) and always have to forego payment of 2 baskets. The cultivators feel aggrieved because they have to pay Kyats 4500 for a basket of these beans at time of cultivation and are forced to sell to the authorities at Kyats 2000/- per acre of produce.

4. The authorities are squeezing these people in Nga-thain-kyaung in devious ways despite their poverty and inability to provide for their daily needs as a consequence of which they are sick at heart.

5. We hear that in Pin-le-bu township, Sagaing Division, each cultivator has to sell 10 baskets of paddy per acre at the paddy buying centers where two condensed milk tin containers full of paddy is collected free from each of the sellers for the village administrative authorities in accordance with written instructions from U Aye Swe, chairman of the township authority. This adds up to about two and a half pyi per acre for which the cultivator is not paid. (Note: pyi is the unit of grain measure equivalent to one sixteenth part of a basket.) The cultivators of the entire township resent such illegal exploitation and are very dissatisfied.

6. Reports received about the experiences of the cultivators who went to the No 9 Paddy Purchasing Centre in Htan-taw-gyi administrative unit in Pin-le-bu township, Sagaing to sell their paddy in fulfillment of their obligations are:-

- (a) They had to sell 12 to 13 baskets per acre as instructed.
- (b) They were compelled to donate 4 pyis per acre for the Divisional PDC.
- (c) They had to pay at the rate of 3 kyats per acre allegedly for construction of a road to connect the purchasing centre to the town.
- (d) Dampness allowance should be 2 per 100 baskets, but without any prescribed measure, deductions for dampness was made consistently at 4 per 100 baskets.
- (e) The grain was judged inferior and further reductions were made for dust and stones. One and a half baskets per hundred Nga Sein paddy group and Eimahta group at three baskets per hundred.
- (f) Only after the required full amount was supplied and the above reductions and deductions made the stamp of approval would be affixed.

7. Due to heavy rains at the time of harvest this year, the cultivators were very stressed out in fulfilling the required products for sale. They did not receive full payment for the produce they were forced to sell and had to accept lying down all the exploitations by the authorities. They are extremely miserable.

8. Reports received about the paddy purchasing centers in Danubyu township, Irrawaddy Division is that fraudulent and illegal weighing of paddy is practiced and all sorts of excuses such as dampness, dust, sand, stones, inferior grain (not full or partially full) are being made by the purchasing authorities.

9. Our information is that some of the village authorities accompanied by armed police personnel are making the following illegal demands and practices:-

(a) For each basket of paddy that is discolored because of unfavorable weather conditions, the cultivator can either accept a deduction of Kyats 150 per basket or pay Kyats 400/-per discolored basket of paddy (the difference between the prescribed selling price of Kyats 350 and Kyats 750, the prescribed cash payment for failure to supply).

(b) For the purchase of a common winnowing machine in some villages, cultivators are asked to pay an amount of money at the rate of the price of a basket of paddy while in other villages the price is fixed at the rate of kyats 200 per acre.

(c) One pyi of paddy per acre is the fixed amount that has to be given free for the township PDC.

(d) Compulsory purchase of one videotape, cassette tape and calendar by every cultivator who arrives at the Paddy Purchasing Centre to sell his prescribed paddy.

(e) Compulsory purchase of insecticides for which deductions are made from the amounts due to the cultivators.

10. Our information is that for the cultivation of mat-pe (green gram) an advance of kyats 2000/- is forced on the cultivator and a sale at the rate of 2 baskets per acre of produce to the Trade and Agriculture Department has to be made. Also we hear that when advance payment at the rate of kyats 1200/- per acre is forced on them, they are expected to supply the Tatmadaw (Military) at the rate of 4 pyis per acre. We also know that the market price of this commodity is kyats 4000 per basket.

11. Further information received is that even those who are not cultivators of mat-pe are expected to supply this grain at the rate of 2 baskets per acre.

12. We have been told that in some villages, even daily wage earners and widows not excepted are being made to pay kyats 650 per household allegedly for the fire department.

13. The above practices of exploitation and victimization of the cultivators without any sympathy or compassion by the authorities at every level are strenuously denounced.

Central Executive Committee
National League for Democracy

Rangoon
19 January 2000.