

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

Statement 96 (6/00) (translation)

1. Under instructions from the township authorities of the military dictators in the Sagaing Division, the village authorities in the township of De-pe-yin are demanding registration fees of Kyats 200/- per acre from the farmers in the entire township. The fact is that these farmers are already registered as tenant-farmers having inherited the right from their ancestors who were "first-come" farmers and farming is a family business.
2. Under instructions from the township authorities, the village authorities summoned the farmers from all the villages and informed them that of the Kyats 200/- to be collected, Kyats 100/- was for the Divisional authorities, Kyats 50/- for the township authorities, and the balance Kyats 50/- would go to the Township Land Records Department. Our information is that some village authorities have been demanding Kyats 250/- to Kyats 500/- per acre from the farmers.
3. In the De-pe-yin township there are five buying centers for agricultural products. Each center has an average of 50 thousand acres within its jurisdiction. The money for the entire township will amount to about five hundred lakhs calculated at one hundred lakhs per buying center. Other townships in the division are making similar demands we are informed.
4. At the time when the farmers were preparing to cultivate their seasonal crops, U Myint Maung, Chairman of the Taung-pyin ward (De-Pe-yin township) and the members of the council demanded that the farmers dig the Mu river which runs along the east of Taung-pyin. Non-compliance resulted in a penalty of Kyats 300 to Kyats 500 per household. Some elderly farmers who failed to satisfy the chairmen were made to work continuously two or three times we are told. This is the beginning of the rainy season and to demand such labour from the farmers appears to be deliberate to cause suffering and hardship.
5. A road measuring 500 yards in length, 10 ft in width and 5 ft high was made on land that was currently used for cultivation in the region between Pyan-kya and Ma-gyi-zauk villages in De-pe-yin township causing loss of about 10 acres of agricultural land. One day before the road opening ceremony was to be held in the middle of May, 2000, about eighty farmers who were making preparations to go down to their fields to plough and prepare the soil, were accused of damaging the road and 7 were arrested and incarcerated. They were treated like thieves and bugs and the law applied to habitual criminals was used against them.
6. As slaves of the military dictators, the lower level authorities are thus treating our respected farmers to whom we owe a debt of gratitude as their slaves by abuse of excessive power without legal authority. Collaboration by the higher authority must be presumed because they can do so with impunity. We condemn them and all these tyrannical activities and collaboration of the authorities at all levels which must be stopped.

Central Executive Committee
National League for Democracy
Rangoon
28 June 2000

