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The Truth

Volume One

**An Analysis of
the Announcements Issued
by the National League for
Democracy**



**Office of Strategic Studies
Ministry of Defence**

*Translated by The New Light of
Myanmar & Daw Kyi Kyi Hla
(Myanmar Perspectives)*

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An Analysis of the Announcements Issued by the National League for Democracy

The National League for Democracy has issued many announcements alleging that the Government has been violating human rights in the country. It has been sending such announcements to foreign embassies and foreign broadcasting stations such as VOA, BBC, RFA, etc.

These announcements were not issued with the honest aim of submitting constructive suggestions to the Government. The announcements are based on false news and utilized as tools to attack the Government politically by exaggerating the weaknesses of some local authorities in the execution of their duties in the remote areas.

Most of the facts of the NLD announcements are found to be based, not on actual incidents after systematic inquiry, but on rumours and reports of some NLD members. The NLD is issuing such random announcements with no credibility. It sends these false reports to foreign governments through foreign embassies as well as to the world at large via powerful broadcasting stations. As a result, the Government's admirable and noteworthy endeavours for developing the country have been greatly misunderstood by governments and the people of some nations, and our country has been wrongly assumed to be a nation with poor human rights norms and practices.

A careful scrutiny of the NLD announcements issued from 1-1-99 to 10-9-99 will show that there were 54 announcements that accused the Government of detaining and arresting NLD members without any legal grounds; 10 announcements alleged that the Government was purchasing paddy at reduced prices by force; 37 announcements made unfounded accusations that the people were being forced to contribute labour; 2 announcements charged that factory workers were being oppressed and being deprived of their legal rights; 3 announcements charged that the Government was oppressing the public as a whole; 6 announcements accused the Government of confiscating land and relocating the inhabitants by force; 3 announcements stated that the Government was extorting money from the public; one announcement wrongfully reported that the Government was forcing farmers to cultivate crops in accordance with Government plans only and 5 announcements consisted of talks given by Daw Suu Kyi and U Tin Oo on certain anniversaries.

Beginning from 1999, the NLD has been issuing announcements in increasing numbers. To counter their false allegations and slander, we have hereby compiled the actual events under the heading "The Truth" (Volume 1) in which we have made an honest appraisal to present the truth behind these announcements and to expose the fact that their real intent is to solely impugn and discredit the Government.

Colonel Than Tun
Office of Strategic Studies

**Announcements alleging that the authorities concerned have
been unlawfully detaining and arresting NLD members**

Announcements

The National League for Democracy issued announcement No. 4(1/99) dated 6-1-99 and announcement No.11(1/99) dated 19-1-99 alleging that the authorities were unlawfully deterring the activities of the NLD; that as soon as the authorities were informed that the NLD was going to convene the Hluttaw (Parliament), NLD members were unlawfully arrested and detained; and that detained representatives were forced to resign as representatives-elect and from membership of the NLD.

Facts

The National League for Democracy on 16 September 1998 made a decision to make their own arrangements to convene Parliament and unlawfully formed the Committee Representing the People's Parliament, a move that would certainly have led to a confrontation. If action had been taken only after they had called their so-called Parliament, the authorities would have been obliged to mete out severe punishment in accordance with existing laws and this would have caused great hindrance to the multiparty democracy that is being nurtured by the State. Hence, the State took preemptive measures against the confrontation line of the NLD by keeping some NLD members at a Yeiktha (government guest house) to discuss with them the actual conditions of the country. Except for the few NLD die-hards and those who favour the personality cult, the majority of them were then released.

Allegations

Announcement No. 5(1/99) of the NLD dated 11-1-99 mentioned that NLD divisional organizing committee chairman U Kyaw Shinn of Monywa, Sagaing Division, was detained on 6-9-98; that the authorities permitted U Kyaw Shinn to meet his wife who was undergoing medical treatment on 15-12-98; that his wife passed away on 16-12-98. The announcement accused the authorities of being inhumane.

Facts

Actually the person detained was U Aung Shin and not U Kyaw Shinn, vice-chairman of the Monywa NLD in Sagaing Division. The authorities temporarily detained him at the guest house of the Irrigation Department and permitted Aung Shin overnight-leave for the first time on 9-12-98. On 15-12-98, he was permitted to return home for humanitarian reasons as his wife was suffering from malaria. Unfortunately his wife died on 16-12-98, and he was not recalled and remains free to this day. The regional battalion even provided necessary assistance for his wife's funeral. But U Aung Shin being an intransigent person, moved to Yangon later and he has been harshly criticizing the Government ever since.

Allegations

Announcement No. 6(1/99) of the NLD dated 11-1-99 mentioned that the authorities concerned sentenced some NLD members to severe prison terms although they were not guilty of any crime. Then they were incarcerated in a prison camp near Kalay Myo

in Sagaing Division , a place that was very far from their families. It also said that this place was a malaria-infested area; and that although 15 NLD members were stricken with malaria, they were not given necessary medical treatment.

Facts

All Governments have to take action against any person who violates the law whether he or she is an ordinary citizen, or a member of a political party. Anyone who has perpetrated a crime such as theft, robbery, gambling, murder or rape etc: is punishable by law. One who violates the laws of a country cannot be exempt from punishment just because he or she is a politician. But all those who are serving jail terms in the country are given their full rights as prisoners. These people were sentenced because they were found guilty of violating the laws of the penal code. The motto of the prisons Department goes "the debt of crime will be repaid with sweat", so the prisoners are obliged to pay their debt to society with their labour in quarries, road building, land reclamation, thus contributing towards nation building activities. In doing so, they can contribute towards regional development, earn wages, live better and can finally have their sentence terms reduced. Hence, many prisoners request to go to work in labour camps. The State is providing health care to every prisoner and those who are ill or sick are given medical treatment in hospitals of the jail and those who are suffering severely are sent to civil hospitals.

Allegations

Announcement No. 12 (1/99) of the NLD dated 22-1-99 mentioned that the authorities had unlawfully detained NLD members of Meiktila and that a complaint in this regard was lodged officially to the Township Commission; It further stated that 15 NLD organizers in Meiktila Township were thus being detained and of them U Tun Shwe, U Sein Ya and U Than Maung were forced to take unknown tablets by the authorities. The same night U Than Maung became deranged and after frenzied behaviour attempted to jump out of the window. The authorities then handcuffed him instead of sending to the hospital.

Facts

U Than Maung has always been mentally unstable in addition to being a political extremist. He was detained for slandering the Government with intent to disturb the peace. While he was at the Guest House, he was given preventive medicines against malaria weekly and was under medical care by doctors. He suffered from insomnia and did not sleep normally at night. Though doctors from the Armed Forces Hospital had given him medication, he did not take the medicines. Hence, his dementia got worse and he became aggressive and uncontrollable. He was thus sent to the hospital, and was temporarily restrained on the way because he was in a manic state. He was given medical treatment for two days at the military hospital in Mandalay and sent back home on recovery. He is now living at home in good health.

Allegations

Announcement No. 34(3/99) of the NLD dated 3-3-99 mentioned that one Daw Khathizar, wife of NLD organizing committee chairman U Tin Pe of Myothit Township, Magway Division, hired U Tet Pu to fell a tamarind tree in the house compound after obtaining permission from ward authorities; that the Township Peace and Development Council chairman arrested U Tin Pe and those involved in the felling of the tamarind tree and a case was filed at the township court. It also stated according to information received that U Tin Pe and party were likely to be sentenced with jail terms due to pressure given by the Township Peace and Development Council.

Facts

It was found that action had been taken against them as they had violated the prohibition not to fell large shady trees as part of the arid zone greening project.

Allegations

Announcement No. 38(3/99) of the NLD dated 5-3-99 consisted of a complaint that the authorities had not only arrested U Kyaw San, NLD organizing committee member of Pyay Township, on 22-1-99 for distributing NLD announcements but that after arresting U Kyaw San, his father's fortune-telling premise in the compound of a pagoda was closed down by authorities on 8-2-99 and that they are now having difficulties in earning their livelihood; that U Kyaw San was tortured during the period from 22-1-99 to 5-3-99.

Facts

Actually, action was taken against Pyay Township NLD member Kyaw San as he distributed NLD announcements and made instigative speeches on the Yangon-Pyay trains as well as on passenger buses in Pyay, Shwedaung and Paukkhaung towns. His actions would have disturbed peace and tranquillity, so action was taken against him in accordance with existing laws. The case of his father U Mya Swe and wife who operated a fortune-telling room was a separate case altogether. U Mya Swe and his wife lived at Shin Upagupta Hall on the platform of Kanle Shwe Hintha Pagoda, Pyay, using it as their home. Living as a family in pagoda precincts is prohibited by law, custom and tradition. So a decision was made by the meeting of the Pagoda Trustee Board on 7-2-99, to request all those living permanently and unofficially on the pagoda platform to move. Letters of intimation on this decision were sent to the of Pyay Township Peace and Development Council and Hsandaw Ward Peace and Development Council . However, they were to be allowed to come daily from 6 am to 6 pm to carry on with their work at the pagoda, including fortune-telling. Though they were prohibited from living in the pagoda compound, they were not prohibited from coming to the pagoda to earn a livelihood or to earn merit by doing chores for the pagoda.

Allegations

In announcement No. 41(3/99) dated 9-3-99, the NLD chairman stated that the National Unity Party had held a mass meeting with the banner "Dialogue of the NUP Yangon Division organizing committee with peasants" at Asugyi village-tract in Htandabin Township with the permission of authorities concerned; that if the NUP was given permission to hold a mass meeting, the NLD which is an officially recognized political party, should also be given equal opportunity to do so.

Facts

Actually, the NUP has very few activities and has been mainly carrying out organizational work within the party. The NUP did hold a Peasants Day commemorative meeting on 2 March; it was at a village on the outskirts of Yangon City with about 200 peasants in attendance. In comparison with the large rallies that the NLD holds at Daw Suu Kyi's house and NLD offices in downtown Yangon with over 1,000 people, the above-mentioned mass meeting was a trifling occasion. The announcement made by the NLD demonstrates its hostility towards the NUP.

Allegations

Announcement No. 57 (4/99) dated 8-4-99 mentioned that treatment of political prisoners at prisons and prison camps by prison authorities have become worse and they even prohibited the prisoners from meeting family members and denied them visiting rights. That medicines bought for patients by family members from pharmacies with permits signed by the warden himself were confiscated by the jail staff with the result that these political prisoners are without medication and their lives are at risk. Prison staff are also said to seize other items bought with the warden's consent for the prisoner concerned. Such acts the announcement added violate article (5) of the International Human Rights Declaration.

Facts

Actually, in accordance with the law, all prisoners whether political or criminal are entitled to and enjoy visiting rights. There are absolutely no prohibitions on sending food and personal items for prisoners. However, these items are inspected for security purposes. The prison doctors regularly examine the health of prisoners and if necessary the prisoners are sent to the jail hospital. Emergency patients in need of intensive care are sent to township level, state level hospitals and to specialist hospitals. Currently, there are many prisoners undergoing medical treatment in hospitals outside the prison. The International Red Cross Committee (ICRC) is also inspects them periodically. The prisoners are allowed to receive medicinal assistance from their families and

these medicines are temporarily kept by authorities to prevent untoward incidents. Then, these medicines are given to the prisoners in accordance with the prescription of doctors. No confiscation or prohibition has taken place.

Allegations

Announcement No. 102(8/99) of NLD dated 2-8-99 stated that NLD organizing committee chairman of Htandabin Township, Yangon Division, Maung Maung Lwin, under the instruction of NLD headquarters and also of his own accord saying he owed a responsibility to the public, reported on so-called incidents of oppression and torture of members of the public by the authorities.; that holding this against him the authorities, in retaliation, maliciously filed a case against him under Section 420 of Penal Code and he was sentenced to a prison term of 5 years. The NLD (Central) has claimed that the case in which Maung Maung Lwin is involved is merely a civil case.

Facts

The fact is Htandabin Township NLD member Maung Maung Lwin sold his house to Daw Nyunt Yi on 6-6-96 for 14,000 kyats. After receiving the money he refused to vacate the house ignoring letters of intimation that were sent to him many times. Hence, Daw Nyunt Yi filed a case at the court and action was taken against him for fraud. As he was guilty under Section 420 of Penal Code, he was sentenced to a prison term.

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Allegations

Announcement No. 2(1/99) of the NLD dated 5-1-99, Announcement No. 7(1/99) of the NLD dated 12-1-99 and Announcement No. 21(2/99) of the NLD dated 9-2-99 mentioned that Sangha Maha Nayaka Sayadaws in Hsinpaungwe, Yesagyoo and Taungtha Townships in Magway Division were urging and putting pressure on NLD members to resign from the party.

Facts

In fact, the Sayadaws in the region who disapprove of many of the activities of the NLD members because they are detrimental to the development and welfare of the country may have discussed these matters with their congregation and urged them to resign, but this in no way concerns the Government nor were the monks acting on the Government's behalf. It is an established and long-term tradition in Myanmar for Buddhist Sayadaws (that is "Noble Teachers) to give moral advice and guidance to the lay congregation in much the same way as Christian clerics sermonize and admonish churchgoers.

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Announcements that charge the Government of purchasing paddy at below-market prices

Allegations

Announcements Nos. 14(1/99), 29(2/99), 49(3/99), 61(4/99), 62 (4/99), 79 (6/99), 100 (7/99) and 125 (9/99), charged the Government of coercing the sale of paddy in the villages; that farmers were not even permitted to keep seed paddy; and that those who could not sell the full quota of paddy were arrested.

Facts

To boost paddy production, the Government has provided various inputs such as modern technological assistance, farm implements, oil, fertilizers, etc. Under the market-oriented economic system, the farmers have been allowed to freely mill and sell their paddy since the time of the State Law and Order Restoration Council. Accordingly, the socio-economic lives of farmers in the entire country have risen and they now earn sufficient incomes. Though the Government has permitted farmers to mill and sell their paddy freely, it has annually purchased a certain quota of paddy for supplying rice to service personnel, the Armed Forces, prisons and hospitals free of charge. Hence, the Government purchased paddy for such purposes directly from the farmers. In 1990, the price paid was 7,500 kyats per 100 baskets of paddy and the rate increased to 35,000 kyats in 1998. It is true that on the market, merchants and traders buy the paddy at higher prices. But some farmers had taken agricultural loans on the agreement that they would sell a certain quota of paddy to the Government. But these farmers in violation of

this agreement wanted to sell their entire paddy output to merchants at higher prices. Hence, responsible personnel systematically inspected their actual paddy output and arranged to buy not all the paddy produced as alleged but only a fair and proportionate amount of paddy from them. Action was thus taken in accordance with the law against those who, in breach of contract, refused to sell any paddy at all at the instigations of political parties even though they had taken cultivation loans and harvested a considerable paddy output.

Allegations

Announcement No. 46(3/99) of the NLD dated 15-3-99 mentioned that in Wakema Township of Ayeyawady Division, fertilizers sold by the Government at the official rate of 2,000 kyats per bag were sold to farmers by the local authorities at 2,200 kyats per bag, raising the official rate to make a profit of K200; that diesel oil was also charged an additional K2 per gallon; that responsible personnel thus profited about 60 million kyats from selling 350,000 bags of fertilizers and about 720,000 kyats from selling 360,000 gallons of diesel oil. More over, it also stated that the farmers had to pay 3,000 to 5,000 kyats per acre if they did not want to cultivate summer paddy, and 1,500 to 3,000 kyats per acre if they did not want to cultivate chilli, to the Township Peace and Development Council chairman, secretary and members; and that 74 acres of paddy fields were confiscated for the welfare fund of the Education Department in Thayagon village-tract in Wakema Township.

Facts

Actually, the Ministry concerned was implementing an education project for the farmers in mechanized farming with modern techniques. The Ministry also sold farm machinery, fertilizers and diesel oil to farmers at reduced prices. Farm machinery, fertilizers and diesel oil were sent to respective divisions and cities. Townships and villages were to take delivery of them on their own arrangements. Responsible personnel concerned on behalf of farmers, collectively took delivery and collected transport and labour charges proportionately from the farmers.

Allegations

NLD Announcement No.62(4/99) dated 20-4-99 mentioned that in Kyaukpadaung Township farmers using reservoir water for irrigation were obliged to sell 8 baskets of paddy per acre; those using creek water for irrigation, 6 baskets per acre and others using the rain water irrigation system, 2 baskets per acre at the prescribed rate of 400 kyats per basket. All this was done without their consent by forcing them to sign contracts. Moreover the actual payment received was 360 kyats per acre and those farmers who were supplied with reservoir water had to pay 9 baskets of paddy per acre. Those farmers who harvested less output than expected had to buy paddy from outside at the market price of 700 kyats per basket to sell their quota of paddy to the Government.

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Facts

When the Kyaukpadaung Township Peace and Development Council made contracts with farmers to set the quota for selling paddy, they had agreed to the rate of 8 baskets of paddy per acre as reservoir water irrigation fee, 6 baskets per acre as creek water irrigation fee and two baskets per acre as rain water irrigation fee. When cultivation loans were disbursed, the rates were designated as 360 kyats per basket for Emahta strain and 350 kyats per basket for Nga Sein strain. Cultivation loans of 150 kyats per acre were disbursed. Only some poor farmers took out cultivation loans. There is no evidence that the farmers bought paddy from outside at the price of 700 kyats per basket to be able to sell their quota. In buying paddy directly from farmers, negotiations had been held with the reservoir-water consuming farmers and they had agreed to sell 9 baskets per acre instead of 8 baskets as some paddy fields usually cultivated with rain water had not been successful.

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Announcements concerning charges of forced labour

Allegations

Announcements No. 3(1/99) of the NLD dated 5-1-99 mentioned that one Maung Myo Myint who took part in voluntary labour on alluvial land on the other side of Anyarsu village, Kadook village-tract, Htandabin Township Yangon Division, was bitten by a snake on 29-10-98; that though he was admitted to the Yangon General Hospital, he was asked to leave the hospital according to the NLD announcement and when he went to the hospital later, he was again denied treatment.

Facts

Actually, Maung Myo Myint, 33, of the other side of Anyarsu village, Kadook village-tract, Htandabin Township, Yangon Division, caught hold of a snake during work on the nearby alluvial plot of land to cook and eat the snake. When he tried to cut its head with knife, his thumb was bitten by the snake. Armed Forces members contributing labour together with him sent him to Insein Hospital. He was injected with anti-snake venom and then transferred to the Yangon General Hospital. At the Yangon General Hospital, he was kept in the special intensive care ward and provided with respiration equipment. On 6-11-98, the top joint of his right thumb was amputated. Armed forces personnel who brought him to the hospital assisted him with cash and meals. On 16-11-98, since his condition had improved he was permitted to go home

as requested and was asked him to come back to the hospital for further treatment. He came back on 23-11-98 and his thumb was given skin graft treatment. He was allowed to go home on 12-12-98 and asked to come back for attaching a prosthetic joint to his thumb. No, fee was charged at any time for the medical treatment he received. Though the hospital asked him to come back for the artificial thumb, he did not do so because the NLD had issued announcement on his case, and he was afraid to get involved.

Allegations

NLD Announcement No. 31(2/99) dated 23-2-99 mentioned that about 6,000 sundrums (a term for a 100 cubit foot of sand) of earth was required at the embankment of Khayan Creek at the Alair village of Khayan Township and at the lower part of Bagan Taung village, Thanlyin Township; that each household from ten villages (six village-tracts) had to contribute labour in conveying one and half sundrums of earth; that those who could not contribute labour had to pay 750 to 1,500 kyats; and that though the work was completed on 15-12-98 the villages still had to pay the money. It also stated that about 3,000 sundrums of earth were laid at the embankment of Kinpunchon Creek in Khayan Township and each household from seven villages had to contribute labour in putting two sundrums of earth; and that those who failed to do so had to pay 1,000 to 1,500 kyats. The announcement also mentioned that about 10,000 sundrums of earth were put at the embankment of Sairma Creek near Paukpin village of Khayan Township and each household from nine villages had to contribute labour in carrying

two sundrums of earth; that those who failed to contribute labour had to pay 1,200 to 1,500 kyats; and that though the work was completed on 31-12-98 the local authorities continued to collect money. It was also mentioned in the announcement that sea water used to enter the far eastern parts of Khayan Township and in the past authorities used heavy machines to strengthen the embankment; that a person from each household of eleven villages was obliged to contribute labour in building up the embankment or else they had to pay a fine of 300 kyats.

Facts

Actually, taking silt from creeks and strengthening the embankment is done annually in accordance with the wishes of the people to prevent sea water from coming into Khayan Creek of Khayan Township, Sairma Creek which is linked with Khayan and Kawa Townships, Kinpunchon village and Pinle-phyat Creek. It is true that the people from the villages, took part in the work of piling on silt to strengthen the dykes for the good of the community some took part in the work personally but those who could not paid others up to 500 kyats to work in their stead. For those who could not afford to pay, Ward/Village-tract Peace and Development Council members and those affluent paid on their behalf which they repaid later when they could. The collection of this money was not handled by the Township Peace and Development Council but by Ward/Village-tract Peace and Development Councils, labour contributors and hirers combined. In some villages, it was difficult to hire earth diggers so the wage rose to 700 kyats per sundrum. Damming of

Khayan Creek and Sairma Creek and strengthening of Kinpunchon embankment for preventing entry of sea water and silting have been carried out annually by the public for over ten years. Digging of the creek at Kinpunchon village was collectively supervised and carried out by the Township Peace and Development Council and Irrigation Department in response to the demand of the public. Those who failed to contribute labour did not have to pay 1,000 or 1,500 kyats.** This is service in the interest of the community and no one was forced to work. It has been part of Myanmar custom and traditions throughout the years and only now has it become a political issue.

Allegations

Announcement No. 70(6/99) of the NLD dated 3-6-99 alleged that the authorities forced the local people to collect bamboo for the Army in Pinlebu and Wuntho Townships in Sagaing Division; that private vehicles were commandeered free of charge; that cash donations were collected by force for building a pagoda; and that the people were forced to fell trees for timber.

Facts

In Wuntho Township, Sagaing Division, there are two battalions. To raise funds for their own welfare organizations, servicemen of the battalions decided to collect bamboo for sale. Not a single civilian was involved. When about 1,000 bamboo poles were required for Mu River Bridge construction, villagers were asked to collect bamboos at a payment of four kyats for each bamboo pole.

For carrying those bamboos, vehicles in the Township were asked to render help. However, necessary fuel and cash assistance were provided to them in return.

Allegations

Announcement No. 75(6/99) of the NLD dated 11-6-99 mentioned that the local people were forced by authorities to contribute labour from 17-5-99 to 31-5-99 along the Insein-Nyaungdon road in Htandabin Township, Yangon Division; that those who failed to contribute labour had to hire a worker on behalf of each household for a sum of 300 kyats; and that regional police made threats that those who failed to contribute labour would be beaten or arrested or sentenced to jail term.

Actually, the Township Peace and Development Council had made a decision to plant shade trees along the Hlaingthaya-Nyaungdon Road and Htandabin-Thida-aye Road. In accordance with this decision the people in the vicinity had been requested to render help for three days on 15-5-99, 16-5-99 and 30-5-99 (which fell on week-ends) and only in the mornings. They had arranged the timing so it would not clash with crop cultivation work of the villagers. It was a request and it is not true that those who could not contribute labour had to pay 300 kyats. Nor were any kind of threat made by the Police. This was pure fabrication.

Announcement that accused the Government of oppressing the public

Alleged oppression of factory workers

Allegations

Announcement No. 104(8/99) of the NLD dated 4-8-99 mentioned that at the MGS beverage factory in Thandaepin village, Hmawby Township, on 26-6-99, daily-wage worker Maung Min Min severely injured his forefinger while moving Carbon Dioxide gas cylinders; that he had to spend 1,400 kyats for x-ray and medical treatment, and that the factory did not take any responsibility. It said a worker has the right to compensation for injury from an employer and that leakage of ammonia gas at the factory was very harmful to health.

Facts

Actually, the MGS beverage factory is the one which was formerly producing Pepsi Cola under joint venture with its main company of USA. It was very successful and employed a large number of workers. It produced import-substitute beverages and opened sales centres at various places. After the NLD urged the international community to impose economic sanction on Myanmar, the Pepsi Cola Co withdrew its investments. The Myanmar counterpart endured the economic sanction and continued business as the MGS Beverage Co. The factory has been successfully producing beverages with the brand names of Crusher, Quench, etc.

Many workers were thus saved from unemployment. The NLD was not pleased with the success of MGS and spread rumours about it to make the public lose faith in the company. The said and Maung Min Min is still working at the factory he has never been injured nor undergone medical treatment in hospital. Moreover, there has been no dispute between employer and employees in the company.

Allegations

Announcement No. 112(8/99) of the NLD dated 18-8-99 mentioned that in an incident that took place at Opel garment factory in Hlinethaya Industrial Zone, Yangon Division, on 5-8-99 one Mr. Budana (Indonesian) slapped the cheek of woman worker Ma Aye Aye Myat and the workers protested against it and staged a strike; and that action should have been taken in the case.

Facts

The incident did take place at the factory and the Indonesian employee was expelled immediately on the same day and deported to his country. Moreover, discussions and coordinations were held between officials of The Labour Department, employer and representatives of workers and agreements reached as regards the rights of workers. On 18-8-99 when the NLD issued the announcement, the case had already been settled and workers were discharging their duties normally. It was found that the NLD issued this announcement in order to instigate other factories and mills to launch strikes.

**Announcements alleging that the public was being forced to
make donations of cash**

Allegations

Announcement No. 20(2/99) of the NLD dated 10-2-99 mentioned that polio control measures were taken throughout the country with the aid of WHO but that every mother whose child was injected or given medicine had to pay 10 kyats in Kyaukpadaung Township, Mandalay Division; that otherwise no injection nor medicine was given; that the NLD thereby condemned authorities for charging money on medicines provided free of charge by the WHO; and that independent organizations should be given authority to supervise whether international aid was being utilized properly.

Facts

Actually, polio preventive activities were launched jointly by the Government and WHO in accord with the social objective for promoting health, fitness and educational standards of the entire nation. Though the WHO provided medicines free of charge, they had to be stored in refrigeration in rural areas. There was also the cost of printing injection record cards that had to be issued. Hence, the Township Medical Department had to make a small charge of 5 kyats each for an educative card and injection record card. The charge of ten kyats was not unreasonable and there was no one who did not come for the injection because they could not afford 10 kyats.

Allegations

Announcement No. 22(2/99) of the NLD dated 15-2-99 made the accusation that at Danok Pagoda in Twantay Township, Yangon Division, the regional battalion forced villagers to perform guard duty and those who failed to do so had to pay a fine.

Facts

The State Leaders having visited and paid homage at the Danok Pagoda in Twantay Township, Yangon Division, instructed that measures be taken for all-round renovation of the pagoda in 1991. A troop of regional battalion was assigned security duties for guarding the pagoda from vandalism and theft. People in the area also decided to participate in security duty to earn merit. So people of the village-tracts in Rakhine Gyaung station voluntarily dispatched people in turns for security duty. This was a decision made by the people themselves and had nothing to do either with the battalion nor with the Ward Peace and Development Council. When some villagers were busy during the cultivation season they hired persons as substitute of their own accord. These villagers selected U Hnyut Gyi as security chief and he collected money for seven others on security duties.

Allegations

Announcement No. 67(5/99) of the NLD dated 28-5-99 mentioned that cultivation loans were disbursed to farmers on 7-5-99 in Hsinbaungwe Township, Magway Division; that there were 63 farmers in ward 3 of Hsinbaungwe town; and that

each farmer had to pay 50 Kyats to first submit an application forms before the loan was disbursed and it had been learnt that 225 kyats was deducted from a farmer who borrowed a bank loan of 10,000 kyats. The announcement therefore urged the authorities to disburse the loans in full without making deductions for one reason or the other.

Facts

In actual fact the Township Branch of the Agriculture and Rural Development Bank in disbursing cultivation loans to farmers of Ward 3, Hsinbaung We Township, Magwe Division charged 70 kyats for contract documents and also charged one kyat per hundred for providing food and refreshments to the farmers. The largest loan amounted to 12,000 kyats so the cost for food was 120 kyats at the most. The maximum payment including 70 kyats contractual fees was 190 kyats. So it is not true that 225 kyats was deducted from every farmer.

Announcements accusing the Government of confiscating lands and relocating people

Accusations

NLD Announcements No. 17(1/99) dated 29-1-99 and No.82 (6/99) dated 25-6-99 mentioned that local authorities together with employees of the Micro-organic Chemical Production Enterprise confiscated cultivation lands located behind Chaungpauk, Pauktaw, Myaytaing and Letpan villages in Sagaing Township, Sagaing Division; that as a result villagers were so upset that some went insane and some died; that cattle also died due to food shortage; that U Aung Maung, a clerk of the Ward Peace and Development Council who had written the letter of complaint had been removed from his job; and that U Nwa Maung who refused to work at the micro-organism production plant was sentenced to a prison term.

Facts

The actual development of events was as follows:

The Yaykha lake at Twintaung region, Sagaing Township, Sagaing Division, is the area where Spirulina (blue-green algae) is obtained to produce Provimin tablets. It was discovered in 1985 and production of the medicine on an experimental basis began in 1989. In 1993, a factory was built. To build the factory, 28 acres of land was confiscated for the first time in 1986 and a fair compensation was paid. The medicine was very popular with the consumers and due to increasing demand there are plans to extend the factory. In addition, more land was needed for growing Carambola, a raw

material crop, as well as for building pure water tanks. A report to that effect was submitted to higher official levels. Then, a directive was issued by the Ministry of Industry-1 and the Divisional Peace and Development Council to annexe more lands by paying compensation to local farmers. Compensation at the rate of 10,000 kyats per acre was paid by the Ministry concerned. Of 303.39 acres of confiscated lands, compensations for 103.39 acres have been paid. Arrangements are under way to pay the remaining amount. Since implementation of the project has not yet started on the confiscated lands, the farmers who were the former-owner were temporarily allowed to cultivate crops free of charge. Moreover, the required posts of factory workers were filled with inhabitants from near-by villages. The authorities confiscated land for constructing a factory by paying substantial compensation. The majority of farmers are very understanding. They realize that it is a project that will develop their region. However, some farmers who are NLD members opposed and criticized the Government and sent letters of complaint to their political party. The account of people going insane or dying due to the confiscation is pure fabrication. No one has become insane or died. No cattle either has died of starvation.

Allegations

NLD Announcements No. 23(2/99) dated 19-2-99, No. 56 (4/99) dated 7-4-99 and No. 72(6/99) dated 8-6-99 mentioned that certain squatters in Dagon Myothit (South) and Dagon Myothit (North) Townships were moved back to their native regions or to Rakhine Region Bawathit Project site or to sites of wetlands paddy cultivation; that authorities threatened action would be taken against those who refused to move. Action was taken against NLD members who had refused to move.

Facts

In Yangon City, former squatters had been systematically resettled in Dagon Myothit, Hlinethaya and Shwepyitha new satellite towns. As factories and mills as well as job opportunities increased in Yangon, large numbers of people from the rural areas moved to the city. Some settled on farmland near new satellite towns and earned their living by taking up itinerant jobs. They lived in squalor and some of these places became nests of crime. The authorities, concerned about these conditions collected data and made arrangements for them to return to native regions or to live in less populated areas in Rakhine State or Ayeyawady Division. They were allotted land and cattle free of charge. Assistance was also given to them in building their houses. Under the scheme for raising the quality of life about 310 households have returned to their native land. These households favoured and accepted the Government's scheme. But there were also those who were against the scheme. In those areas, NLD members incited the people not to accept

the Government's scheme. Hence, many difficulties are being encountered. However, legal action was not taken against any one and efforts are being made only through organizational and educative methods.

Allegations

Announcement No. 103(8/99) of the NLD dated 3-8-99 mentioned that some farmlands were annexed in Htanbingon village-tract, Madaya Township, Mandalay Division; that the farmers were said to have been paying land revenue, water revenue and other taxes to the State annually; that their lands were not concerned with virgin and fallow land reclamation projects and they had been undertaking agricultural work on their lands for many years; and that those, whose lands were confiscated were encountering difficulties in earning their living.

Facts

Actually, the topography of Madaya Township of Mandalay Division is a plain. Cultivation can be carried out round-the-year with supply of irrigation water from Sedawgyi Reservoir. However, irrigation water was not accessible to some plots and some others were infertile. Hence, it was a great hardship for farmers to earn livelihood. Such were the lands that were confiscated by the State. Under the Land Renovation Plan, 7147 acres in Madaya Township and 5678 acres in Patheingyi Township totalling 12825 acres were confiscated for Land reclamation and building drainage in 1993. Of the confiscated 7147 acres of land in Madaya Township, irrigation water was not accessible to 1850 acres and 5297 acres were

infertile. The 5678 acres of Patheingyi Township was not suitable for paddy cultivation and other crops could be cultivated on them only in those years with good rainfall. After renovating and reclaiming these lands, the Land Resettlement Committee was formed and it gave 9779 acres of land to farmers who were former owners. The Committee gave over 3000 acres with bamboo and cane groves to some army battalions and private entrepreneurs. Of the 3000 acres, some plots of land belonging to battalions and private entrepreneurs had not commenced cultivation. Hence, nearby farmers trespassed on the land and cultivated crops on them. The confiscation of land was done in 1993 and currently, no land has been confiscated.

Conclusion

After the NLD had declared that they would call for an assembly of Parliament on their own arrangements, the Government had to take necessary preventive measures. The NLD on its part after making such a declaration stepped up its programme of hurling false accusations and attacking the Government to lower its prestige. It made many unfounded accusations stating that many NLD Central Committee members were being persecuted; that some had been arrested without warrants and detained. That the Government was avoiding dialogue with the NLD on some pretext or another and had also refused to convene the Hluttaw. Moreover they said NLD members sentenced and imprisoned were not given the same nourishment as other prisoners and were not given proper medical attention either when ill. It can be seen that the NLD tactics to

slander the Government and incite the people has become more exaggerated and intense. With regard to the detention of members of the NLD Headquarters, it began to issue announcements of how many were under detention and where they were being detained. These announcements are issued frequently and have become greatly inflated.

Some NLD announcements also accuse the authorities of forcing and coercing State/ Division NLDs to remove signboards from their offices and in some cases accuse the authorities of forcefully pulling down signboards. The announcements also said that NLD members were threatened and forced to resign from the political party.

The truth is, those who resigned from NLD did so because they no longer had any faith in their party and no longer wished to be involved in party politics. They sent official letters of intimation of their resignations to the Township Election Commissions concerned and to the NLD political party. These people appeared for interviews on television and broadcast their views to the public. But the people know and can judge for themselves whether the announcements issued and accusations made are true or false. Moreover, some of the allegations are so patently false and petty that it would be hard to give credibility to them.
