

IN THE NETHERLANDS, THE LAND QUESTION WILL NOT GO AWAY

By BASIL BUTTERWORTH (Hayling Island, Hants., England)

News of an interesting example of local democracy at work has reached me from the Netherlands. In the village of Alkemade, a progressive group made up of the local branches of the Labour and Radical parties, has been producing a publication of its own for the last four years. The June 1978 issue, prepared by Mr. Henk van Tol, with the help of Mr. J.J. Pot of Grondvest, deals with the land question.

It seems that the local council has been following a policy of selling land for building without seriously considering the alternative of letting the land on lease with provision for regular adjustment of the rent, as advocated by Grondvest. Mr. van Tol has presented an excellent summary of the case for retaining the land in public ownership, of the contrary arguments raised by vested interests and of the answers to these objections. This is completed by the reproduction of various relevant articles from the Dutch press and of Grondvest publications, including their draft conditions of lease and one of their calculations showing that the rising rents would enable a local authority to finance the purchase of land to be let for building without any serious burden on the taxpayer.

Mr. van Tol tells me that he and one other member of their progressive group have just been elected to the local council. I think we can rely on them to make life difficult for any of the other councillors who may wish to follow a policy beneficial to the local land speculators and developers.

* * *

JUSTICE is a land of peace, not a piece of land. - C.A. BURGER

- 4 -

GEORGET JOURNAL - AUTUMN 1978