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**THE EUROPEAN
AGRICULTURAL COMMUNITY,
1948 - 1954**

by

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THE EUROPEAN AGRICULTURAL COMMUNITY, 1948-54

The proposals to form a European Agricultural Community have been ignored by historians since they failed. There exists only one work on the subject, an unpublished thesis and two published articles which essentially are taken from that thesis (1). The author of this work, M. Gilbert Noël, did not have access to the Dutch, German and Italian materials which have been used here, nor does he seem to have been able to use the same range of French materials. In addition his work is written from a somewhat different perspective than this paper. This neglect is hard to understand when there has been so much speculative writing about the agreements which have now formed the basis of the European Economic Communities, especially when it is considered how inordinately large a share of the EC's time and money is taken up with the Common Agricultural Policy. There are times when agriculture seems the raison d'être of the Community, yet the first attempt to regulate western European agriculture in a common policy framework has been ignored, even though it contained many of the subsequent elements of the Common Agricultural Policy.

The origins of the proposals are to be found in two distinct post-war developments. The first is the decision in the French Ministry of Agriculture and in the Planning Commissariat to generate export surpluses of primary products from the French economy. The second lies in the failure of the OEEC trade liberalization programmes to bring any advantages to European agricultural exporters. The attempts of the Netherlands to rectify this situation when coupled to the political effort by French

governments to find markets for the surpluses which they envisaged led to the attempts at a European-wide solution in the "Community" framework established by the Schuman proposals, attempts which came to complete failure. The reasons for this failure are considered at the end. To understand them it is first necessary to consider in greater detail the origins of the idea and then to consider the attempts to put it into practice.

THE ORIGINS OF THE GREEN POOL.

Until the bread shortages of late autumn and winter 1947 the Monnet Plan had concerned itself with the "modernisation" of French agriculture. Its activities in that direction had been largely irrelevant, insignificant in fact. Modernisation seemed something for the future when the reality was penury. Agriculture was not high on the Plan's list of priorities. It was not one of the "basic sectors" to which investment would be directed. Farmers followed prices, which were controlled only for grains and then mainly to keep the price down rather than to increase output. In the uncontrolled animal farming sector output went up more steeply under the influence of high demand. It was the political response to the catastrophic grain harvest of 1947, the worst of the century, which changed everything. The political crisis was so serious that for once agriculture moved to the forefront of government policy-making. Pierre Pflimlin who became Minister of Agriculture and Food Supply on 24 November 1947 had one obvious and immediate task, to increase domestic food supply by all means possible and for once the government was prepared to provide cash

for such a cause. In January 1948 Pflimlin was able to obtain a threefold increase in government credits to the agricultural sector. Planning the expenditure of these funds at first started in the ill-equipped Ministry of Agriculture. When the Americans insisted in July 1948 that the European countries prepare a medium-term plan for economic recovery, however, planning for the agricultural sector moved into the Planning Commissariat which was not only better-equipped but had in any case to prepare for the OEEC the figures for the medium-term plan on which the Americans were insisting.

The event that marked this change was the listing of agriculture as one of the six "basic sectors" of the economy into which the Plan's Investment Committee would channel funds, now including Marshall Aid funds. According to Pflimlin Monnet accepted this change once the great regional infrastructural inequalities in French agriculture were demonstrated to him, particularly the relative backwardness of his own Charentes, and he was then able to envisage a higher level of expenditure directly on farms themselves as an aspect of France's "modernisation" (2). This is a wholly plausible story, but there were other influences, probably even more compelling, which led not only to this decision but also to the radical changes in the way the Plan envisaged the post-war economy, of which this decision was but a part.

The most important was probably the acute dollar shortage. Until summer 1947 France, like all other west European countries had been able to assume that it was moving rapidly along the right path to a balance of payments equilibrium and that the dollar deficits were merely the obvious consequence of the rapid economic

expansion of 1946. These illusions had been shattered by the enormous increase in dollar imports in 1947 and by spring 1948 Marshall Aid had established a state of affairs where these dollar deficits would not need to be eliminated or paid off through a balance of payments equilibrium until 1952. One element in the deficits was dollar food imports; North America was the only food surplus area in the world. France was in the clear position that any food grown in France or in the overseas territories, no matter what its real cost compared to American food, was a saving in dollars. The planners thus had an obvious motive, as did all other west European governments, for increasing the output of domestically-produced food. The revision of the Plan in 1948 was concerned with using the agricultural sector to overcome France's balance-of-payments difficulties. The target now set was to feed France and the Saarland at a level of food consumption 15 per cent higher than before the war and yet at the same time to eliminate as far as possible dollar imports. It was envisaged that in future food imports would be largely confined to fats and tropical produce. For the first time since the 1860s France would cease to be on balance a food importing country. Not only that, but the agricultural sector would now have to generate a sufficient volume of net agricultural exports to cover France's balance-of-payments deficits on commodity trade by the end of the Marshall Plan. This was a variable target of course, but by the end of December 1948 it was taken to mean that agricultural exports in 1952 should reach a level of \$560 million! (3) When the first official version of the Monnet Plan was published in 1946 it had been accepted that improved productivity might mean higher output, but if that

resulted in occasional commodity surpluses the problem of disposal was simple, "they would serve to combat malnutrition in North Africa" (4).

If we ask why, instead of being content with a target which sought to eliminate dollar food imports the Monnet Plan reversed all its original assumptions and planned for a future in which France would be a net food exporter, we cannot, however, accept that the change was concerned solely with France's balance of payments position. It is also apparent that Monnet was accepting a set of political realities which he had chosen to ignore in 1945.

Earlier versions of the Plan seem to have relied on the idea that a rapid improvement in the agricultural sector would be induced simply by pouring out a stream of tractors (French tractors) and by a rapid redistribution of the pattern of landholding. By 1948 this looked politically naive. The first post-war Minister of Agriculture, Tanguy-Prigent, himself a "moderniser", had created the Confédération Générale d'Agriculture (CGA) to replace the former Vichy Corporation Paysanne as an instrument of government policy to help in this modernisation process (5). The CGA was supposed to serve as the highest, federal, policy-making structure of a series of democratically-elected, agricultural syndicats for producers, cooperatives, technicians and so on. Of these the producers' syndicat, the Fédération Nationale des Syndicats d'Exploitants Agricoles (FNSEA), would obviously be the most important, and here the troubles for government policy began, for the peasant vote and peasant support which had once gone to the Vichy regime did not support Tanguy-Prigent or the CGA. The minister was suspected of being in league with the planners to

impose some sort of Soviet-style reform from above on French agriculture. When the voting for the syndicats took place the representatives returned to the FNSEA were men whose spiritual allegiance remained firmly with the Corporation Paysanne and "La France éternelle" and who displayed a deep suspicion of any process of improving productivity by reducing the agricultural labour force, realigning farms, or subjecting the sector to any governmental intervention in its workings outside the area of prices and stocks.

Pflimlin was able to bridge the political gap, most obviously because of the great increase in public money poured into agriculture; 4.5 per cent of total public investment in 1947, 7 per cent in 1949 (6). It was also under Pflimlin that French agriculture moved progressively towards the system, widespread elsewhere in Europe, of public, guaranteed prices for a range of "key" crops which guaranteed farmers' incomes against the risks of over-production, at least in the arable sector. Pflimlin had to react to the political power of the agricultural vote and secure it for the centre through a complicated compromise between agricultural modernisation and public subsidies for farmers, while increasing output. Because livestock and dairy product prices had been left free, high demand, in a situation of very restricted supply, brought higher profits to farmers in that sector than any other. When animal farming prices collapsed in 1951 as a result of the improvement in supply, the general election of June 1951 returned about 60 deputies with official backing from the new syndicats. Of these 27 were actually officials of the FNSEA. The MRP, to which party Pflimlin belonged, counted only eight of these

deputies in its ranks (7). Pflimlin's tenure at the Ministry of Agriculture came to an end and from July 1951 onwards the minister always came from the loose parliamentary alliance of the FNSEA deputies and the other peasant-bloc members of the Assembly, the Amicale Parlementaire Agricole. After Pflimlin's successor, Paul Antier, had resigned in protest over the increases in public expenditure occasioned by the rearmament programme, the next minister was Camille Laurens, described by the General Secretary of the CGA to the Dutch agricultural attaché in Paris as "a cattle-merchant, but not stupid" (8). Laurens had actually been an elected official of the Corporation Paysanne.

That it was these inescapable political realities that Monnet was accepting when the Plan was revised appears most clearly from the revised Plan's ambiguity on the subject of the size of the agricultural labour force. The Commissariat now argued that although in the long run improved productivity for French agriculture was the real goal, as it was for every other sector of the economy, and that eventually labour must be released, in the short run the present labour force must be retained to achieve the higher output figures. It would be preserved in its present size until the end of 1952. Even when the second national plan was drafted in 1952 it was based on the publicly-stated assumption that employment in the agricultural sector would decline only slowly. In reality, however, the loss of labour to other sectors was high from 1945 onwards, not surprisingly in a period of absolute full employment. About 110,000 workers left the agricultural sector annually over the period 1945/9 and about 130,000 annually over the period 1950/4 (9). Both first and second Plans aimed at retaining

more labour on the land than was actually retained. The reason must be that exports had in fact become more important than productivity. This was not only because of their importance to the balance of payments position but because export increases, given the political balance of power, were easier to obtain than productivity increases, while being at the same time a target which could be presented as an immediate economic advantage. In the second national plan it was proclaimed that a further increase in exports was the only way of sustaining a further increase in productivity. This idea had already been present by 1949 and was formulated by Libert Bou, mainly responsible for drafting the agricultural sections of the Plan. He held that exports were essential, "because it is a fact attested by history that there can only be true progress in agriculture in countries orientated towards the export market." (10). "No other western European country", he wrote, "has the same possibilities as France to effect the technical revolution which would allow it to satisfy Europe's food needs. She has effectively only so far realized in the elite farming sector the fundamental transformation which in the last fifty or a hundred years has allowed certain countries to take the lead in agricultural development." (11) The argument that exporting would force French agriculture to higher levels of productivity through the influence of international competition was completely bogus given the uncompetitive nature of western Europe's intra-trade in agricultural products and reveals once more the cosmetic covering up of the fact that centrist governments could not live without support from the agricultural sector and that the only sensible thing to do politically was to accept this and then try to

improve productivity in this less promising framework. Agricultural exports thus came to have an inherent role in the French political process independent of their economic value in covering balance of payments deficits.

But what should be exported? Any attempt to answer this question from the historical evidence shows that exports were not selected because of their export potential but because certain commodities were being produced at home in excess of present and future consumption. The lists of commodities envisaged as future exports and the quantities which it was thought could be absorbed by foreign markets vary from one estimate to another to suit the changing circumstances of the French economy. Only wheat appears as a consistent factor and even there the quantity estimates of future exports had little in common with the production increases actually achieved. Table 1 shows the changes in the public planning targets for agricultural output as they evolved over the period from the hesitant beginnings of the first national plan to the revision of the second national plan in 1954, the date when it was finally accepted. Apart from wine plans were for a constantly rising output trend. In three areas of output in particular, wheat, sugar and dairy products, the revision of agricultural targets went well beyond self-sufficiency. The import needs of other west European countries for these products, as presented in the OFEC medium-term plan, were large enough, it was considered, to "guarantee French farmers against the risk of bad prices" and to "liberate them from all fear of over-production" (12).

But what the public planning calculations did not so clearly reveal is the emerging meat surplus, generated by leaving meat

prices free. Pierre Maestracci, Pflimlin's chef de cabinet, insisted that the planners also incorporate into the OEEC figures a plan for exporting meat (13). In 1948 when the problem was first approached statistically the plan was to export 1.5 m tonnes of wheat by 1952, not, it was suggested, a difficult target if account were taken "of the needs of the countries of central Europe, needs actually unsatisfied because of the growth of the population of these countries, the increase in their standard of living and, equally, of the difficulties which these populations have of acquiring in the dollar zone the foodstuffs which they need." (14). Applying the same criterion, the forecast import need of other western European countries, to meat exports, led to the assumption that exports of 200,000 tonnes of meat in one form or another were possible (15). The third possibility was dairy products. This was more difficult, especially if butter was chosen, because it led to direct competition on the British market with Danish and extra-European exporters, who had a firm and well-established grip on the market. What was left from their share of the British market was fought for by the Netherlands, Ireland and Switzerland. The German market was dominated by Dutch and Swiss imports, with Denmark taking the rest. To avoid this competition, it was argued, France should aim for cheese and powdered milk exports. In soft cheeses the competition was less strong, and although the United States dominated the European powdered milk market this might, as in the case of wheat, be France's opportunity to replace dollar imports in other western European countries. "It suffices to say that markets exist and that the rest will be a function of the aptitude of the French in presenting good quality products at normal prices on the

market and what will not be realizable in 1952 certainly will become so later" (16). Wheat exports would therefore go mainly to Germany, meat exports to Germany and the United Kingdom, cheese could go to several different markets and powdered milk to Germany. The long-run importances of the German market to these plans was inescapable. By contrast, Italy, with which country negotiations were still in progress to form a customs union, appeared as being of no use whatsoever.

Monnet's first idea was that these exports would be achieved through long-term bilateral export contracts. The French government would sign contracts guaranteeing delivery. The representative interest groups for agriculture in France and in the importing country would sign corresponding contracts stipulating prices, arranging for the administration of stockpiling programmes to prevent too great a range of price fluctuations, and guaranteeing, through their influence on their own members, that there would be no further protectionist barriers erected to this trade. Within France the syndicats would thus bind themselves to the government to produce and export the necessary quantities (17). In this way Monnet could have achieved several objectives. Firstly he could have turned the new post-war representative structure for French agriculture into an instrument of the Plan, its executive in fact. Secondly, he could have used these groups to link with their European counterparts, thus capitalising on their post-war political strength while extending the mechanisms of indicative planning onto the European level (18). Thirdly, he could then hope to create at that level a European-wide interest-group structure. This would resemble the representative committee structure for the

coal and steel industries and would underpin a future European Agricultural Community once the Schuman Plan negotiations had actually set up the High Authority, which he began to envisage also as directing an Agricultural Community (19).

To support these ideas the Planning Commissariat drew up a detailed plan of exactly what these contracts might cover to the end of 1952 (20). Once the commodities had been specified and the inter-governmental trade contracts passed down to the representative interest groups for executive action, it would then be the task of the Planning Commissariat to provide the investment necessary to enable France to compete in standard-quality exports of cheese, meat-products, powdered milk and, if necessary, even butter. Wheat, of course, was less of a problem in this respect. The markets that counted in these plans were the United Kingdom and Germany, not surprisingly since they were responsible for about two-thirds of Europe's food imports between them, with some help from a market vaguely classified by Monnet as "Benelux". Monnet's first idea for a wheat market, and Pflimlin's too, was not in fact Germany but the United Kingdom, almost certainly because of the importance of the United Kingdom alliance to French plans for European reconstruction and also, no doubt, because the United Kingdom had a government. He envisaged sales contracts which would commit the United Kingdom to the purchase of 800,000 tonnes of French wheat by 1952, 1.4 million hectolitres of condensed milk, 30,000 tonnes of frozen beef, 25,000 tonnes of charcuterie, 13,000 tonnes of butter, 9,000 tonnes of cheese and 5,000 tonnes of beef or veal carcasses. All this represented more than a half of the total surpluses envisaged. It represented, also, the somewhat

tenuous hold on foreign realities of Monnet; the British had no intention of committing themselves to long-term purchasing contracts for expensive French food exports when their economic policy was geared to the consumption of low-cost food imports either from the Sterling Area or, if needs be, the dollar zone. They were prepared to contract only for the very first step in all this, the 100,000 tonnes of wheat which were envisaged as starting France's career as a wheat exporter in 1949. They did not, in any case, believe that France would actually produce a wheat surplus (21).

That left Germany and "Benelux". By 1952 the Federal Republic, once it had been created, was envisaged as importing from France 300,000 tonnes of wheat, 15,000 tonnes of live pigs, 10,000 tonnes of live cattle, 5,000 tonnes of beef carcasses, 4,000 tonnes of butter, 3,000 tonnes of cheese and half a million hectolitres of condensed milk. Exports of dairy products to "Benelux" would be similar in size and to those would be added 50,000 tonnes of wheat and 25,000 tonnes of meat in various forms.

When the International Wheat Agreement was signed in March 1949 France demanded to be included as one of the five exporters for whom 37 importers would provide quotas. The preamble to the early drafts of the second national plan in 1952 proclaimed the export of three "staples", wheat, dairy products and sugar as the basis of future policy. The plan forecast annual export surpluses by 1958 of two million tonnes of wheat, 20 million hectolitres of milk and milk products in milk equivalent, 250,000 tonnes of sugar and 200,000 tonnes of meat (22). The CCA put these plans in perspective, particularly in the light of the threatened customs

union with Italy, telling the minister that there was now "only one solution: the opening up to France of another regulated market which imported foodstuffs, namely Germany" (23).

There were only three net agricultural exporters in western Europe; the Irish Republic, whose exports went almost entirely to the United Kingdom and which showed at that time no interest at all in these issues, Denmark, and the Netherlands. Denmark and the Netherlands suffered badly from the trade liberalization programme in OEEC in 1949/50, removing quotas on industrial imports while the other OEEC members retained their quotas against Danish and Dutch agricultural exports. Danish and Dutch interests were not, however, identical. The mix of Dutch agricultural exports was much wider than that of Danish. Eggs and fruit each amounted to about a tenth of total agricultural exports and potatoes to even more. Butter and dairy products made up a greater proportion. Denmark, however, whose agricultural exports amounted to almost three-quarters the total value of exports, depended on three staple exports, butter, meat and eggs. Furthermore, Denmark's food processing industries depended ultimately on fodder imports on a large scale, amounting to about one-third of total imports. Danish agricultural activity was thus on a much higher level of specialisation. The Netherlands had far more possible bargaining positions open. Where Dutch and Danish agricultural exports were directly competitive, as in the case of butter and eggs, in the completely free market to which the OEEC trade liberalization programmes were hypothetically directed Denmark would have had decisive competitive advantages. Both countries had been prisoners in the 1930s of the monopsonistic purchasing practices of the United Kingdom and Germany and both

wished to escape from that situation in the post-war world. For both, as for France, the German market appeared to be of decisive future importance. But whereas Denmark's national interest might best be served by getting as near as possible to a totally free market the Netherlands could hope to maximise its own national interest by constructing a more restrictive set of trading agreements, reducing protection against the products which the Netherlands specifically wished to export, while protecting Dutch agriculture in other sectors against its competitors, including Denmark.

For the Netherlands the problem of agricultural exports had primarily, however, to be seen in the wider context of all exports. More than forty per cent of Dutch national income came from foreign trade in goods and services and this had been a historical reality for so long that the reduction of barriers to the free flow of goods and services in western Europe was inescapably a cardinal point in Dutch foreign policy. Dutch tariffs were low, so the removal of quotas through the trade liberalization programmes had an immediate impact on reducing the level of protection in the post-war Netherlands. Similar processes in high-tariff countries did not help Dutch exports because tariffs were exempt from the OEEC trade liberalization programmes. Agricultural trade remained virtually unaffected by these programmes because of the high level of agricultural protectionism everywhere. It was this dangerous situation which produced in the 1950s a series of Dutch foreign policy initiatives aimed at reducing barriers to the movement of goods and services in intra-west-European trade. The Stikker "Plan of Action" in the OEEC for "sectoral integration", Beyen's various

plans for joint tariff reductions, mutual preference extension, and the "Beyen Plan" as it came to be called for a West European common market as part of the proposed European Political Community, were all attempts to solve the same problem. As the trade liberalization programmes had already shown, however, agricultural trade was an altogether different affair from trade in manufactures because of the deep and intimate involvement of governments in managing the agricultural sector. Effectively, each national agricultural sector was managed like a huge state corporation and would never be subject to the economic rules and practices which governed private trade, no matter how far western Europe returned in other sectors to private trade in a multilateral framework. Any attempt by the Netherlands to pursue its policy of reducing barriers on the European frontiers immediately confronted this particular problem of the agricultural sector, not least because agriculture was so important to the Netherlands itself and because it was managed there in the same way as elsewhere.

The Stikker Plan, the "Plan of Action" as it was called in the OEEC where it was presented in June 1950, was not in its origins concerned with agriculture. It proposed that a process of "sectoral integration" be attempted in the west European economies by means of separate negotiations at the OEEC level on each commodity for which it was proposed to "integrate" the market in the trade liberalization programmes. Stikker was a liberal and the whole intention of his proposals, which were excessively vague, was to reduce tariffs and quotas at the same time, thereby going well beyond the limited objectives of the OEEC trade liberalization programme. All that his "Plan of Action" had to say about

agriculture was that it required "a special treatment" (24). This was enough, however, to generate a burst of activity inside the Ministry of Agriculture which resulted in a comprehensive plan for the control of western European agriculture drawn up by the minister, Sicco Mansholt, and his top officials. In its essentials this plan resembled in many ways the eventual Common Agricultural Policy of the European Community, of which Mansholt became of course himself eventually a founding father. His chief aide in the ministry in drawing up these proposals, S.L. Louwes, was actually the brother of the head of the central interest-group organisation for Dutch agriculture, the Stichting voor de Landbouw.

Mansholt's plan was presented to the Dutch cabinet in August 1950. Its basic idea was that western Europe should develop a common agricultural import and export policy and that in the western European agricultural markets there should be common producer prices to which all countries should move over a specified transitional period. A common Integration Fund would subsidise sectors unable to obtain these prices. These complicated price regulations together with the control of a common external tariff and foreign trade policy for west European agriculture would be administered by a "European Board for Agriculture and Food". It would take control of grain, meat, and dairy products as a minimum and might then add to its empire wine, eggs, fats and oils, and even tobacco. In a later version before the plan went to cabinet it was envisaged that there would be a central control of western European fodder imports. All this, of course, was close to Mornet's original conceptions of the High Authority of the ECSC and

fundamentally different to what Stikker, and indeed the more left-wing members of the Dutch government, wanted to see. Even Spierenburg, who had committed himself to the ECSC, advised ministers against the Mansholt proposals. His argument, which has subsequently been proved correct, was that Dutch domestic prices would be forced upwards while the central authority would find itself trying to dispose of unwanted surpluses at prices lower than those on domestic markets, while also becoming increasingly interventionist and imposing production quotas (25).

On these grounds the government rejected the proposals in August for further consideration in September. When they were presented once more, however, Mansholt had not been deflected. The proposals now envisaged the possibility of countries maintaining domestic prices below the official producer prices, but not of using these lower prices in foreign trade. This concession was intended only to be temporary. Like the French planners Mansholt resorted to the argument that "planning" of this kind would speed up the rate of productivity improvement so that prices were bound to fall in the long run. The government was not convinced and Stikker, whose "Plan of Action" had already lost all impetus, demanded that its preamble now contain the phrase that "real integration in agriculture was not possible"! (26) Faced with this opposition Mansholt decided that the transitional arrangements to common European prices would last so long as to be almost permanent, but that there was still the possibility for the introduction almost at once of a common market in wheat and sugar. This was acceptable, and the Mansholt proposals in this much weakened form therefore took the diplomatic stage (27).

Mansholt placed a great deal of faith in the supranational element in his proposals since he saw this as the only way of overcoming the rules of unanimity and veto which he considered had blocked all progress towards a solution in the OEEC. He never appears to have envisaged that the United Kingdom would be included. Here, too, he was leaning towards Monnet's side, for after the rejection by the United Kingdom of Monnet's idea of long-term Franco-British trade contracts Monnet was always prepared, at times eager, for an Agricultural Community which omitted the United Kingdom. Stikker was strongly opposed to any such action, with the consequence that the Mansholt proposals were only accepted as guidelines for the conduct of negotiations within the OEEC in the context of Stikker's "Plan". Nevertheless, in their various phases and disguises they were to haunt all European agricultural discussions until the eventual development of the Common Agricultural Policy.

THE SEARCH FOR AN INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENT

The French centre parties, including the MPP of which Pflimlin was a member, contained a certain number of advocates of a Franco-German association in some kind of European framework as a solution to France's national security problem. Once Germany was identified as the best, perhaps the only possible, outlet for the planned agricultural surpluses the party began to toy with including agriculture in their proposals for a "European solution". At the first session of the Consultative Assembly in Strasbourg in August

1949 the MRP group requested a study of ways of facilitating intra-west-European agricultural trade. In September Pflimlin personally protested strongly against the way in which the French government, following the example of others, had omitted most German industrial goods from the lists drawn up for negotiations in OEEC on trade liberalization. Without some change of policy, he argued, there was no hope of persuading Germany to remove quotas on French agricultural exports.

The first Franco-German bilateral trade agreement did make provision for French wheat exports to Germany, but this was only for one year and wheat was only part of the problem. So far was French output from reaching the targets set, even for output for domestic consumption, that it might have been thought there was little pressure to look for any more complex framework than the renewal and widening of this bilateral agreement. But by the end of May 1950 the situation had changed in a fundamental way; the agreement on a European Payments union had rung the death-knell of bilateral trade between western European countries and Schuman had made his proposals for the Coal, Iron and Steel Community. In any case it is clear that Pflimlin and Monnet were always interested in a more far-reaching political solution to the problem of Franco-German relations. Pflimlin wrote to Monnet at the end of May 1950 congratulating him on the early success of the Schuman proposals and adding, "Perhaps you remember certain conversations where we discovered the coincidence of our views, on this problem as on so many others". (28) This was the prelude to an attempt to persuade Monnet to link the concept of an Agricultural Community to the Coal and Steel Community. On 6 June, Gabriel Valay, who served as

Pflimlin's deputy, specifically asked Monnet to do so and to raise the issue at an opportune moment in the Schuman Plan negotiations. French agricultural exports to Germany "can only find an effective solution in the progressive realisation of an economic union which releases the reciprocal commerce of the two countries from the vicissitudes of industrial or agricultural protectionism - from bilateralism and from financial disequilibrium" (29).

Monnet, and here the documentary record confirms his memoirs, did everything he could to forestall any such official discussions until the Coal and Steel Community negotiations were safely concluded and also to make sure that the Agricultural Community which Pflimlin had in mind would be restricted to "the Six", would be governed by a High Authority which could be assimilated to that for the Coal and Steel Community and which would have the same interventionist powers, and would share with the Coal and Steel Community the Court of Justice and the Assembly (30). He succeeded in postponing Pflimlin's intention to submit proposals for an Agricultural Community to the French Council of Ministers until September (31). At that meeting ministers went no further than setting up four working groups to study the four commodities which would be most in question. These were the three "staples", together, now, with wine.

French interest in wine exports was of a fundamentally different nature from that in the "staples". This was the one commodity whose output was planned to fall. Side by side with this reduction the Ministry of Agriculture wanted to negotiate some guarantee for high-value exports, because the intention was to reduce domestic consumption of low-value table wine while

encouraging exports of the traditional high-value luxury products. A European Agricultural Community, however, would link France to a wine producer on the same large scale, Italy, whose quality controls were primitive compared to those which governed French high-value wines, whose prices were lower, and whose main output was cheap table wines. How could French low-value producers be protected against Italian imports while their total output was also being shrunk by government policy, and how could French high-value exporters be protected against competition from Italian exporters not subjected to the same quality controls? Here, a solution might be found in a European context, perhaps by forcing Italy to align with common Franco-German quality controls.

Interestingly, meat had now disappeared again from official consideration in spite of the attention given to it in the Plan in 1948. It had been replaced by sugar. It could be argued that one reason for this was that sugar was an export requiring less investment than meat. But it is much more probable that the commitment to sugar as a staple export came from other circumstances. French sugar producers in the 1930s had received, in form of direct government support which had not subsequently been withdrawn. Sugar surplus to requirements was up to a certain quantity purchased by the government and converted into alcohol, which was then sold to industrial firms at a loss to the central government. To this the Planning Commissariat was always strongly opposed. No target was set for sugar output in the 1946 versions of the Monnet Plan while the planners embarked on a long argument with central government over the fiscal implications of their policy. The issue was eventually to become a serious political quarrel in

the National Assembly. Only after Pflimlin had become Minister of Agriculture was a sugar output target set. It represented an increase of two-thirds on the pre-war level of output and it seems probable that the reward to beet producers for removing their direct facility for offloading their surpluses onto the government was the official commitment to find a European export market for their even bigger surpluses.

The "working groups" had concluded by January 1951 and on 12 February, well before the first High Authority was safely negotiated, Pflimlin sought permission once more to translate his plans into diplomatic action by an official invitation to the other powers to a European conference. By this time, however, the idea of a European Agricultural Community, which Monnet had excluded from the Schuman Plan negotiations and which had never emerged from the Council of Ministers as an official diplomatic initiative, had already entered the level of international diplomatic negotiation. Pflimlin seems at first to have been unaware of the Dutch discussions. Monnet had wanted the idea to be sprung on the world without prior negotiation, other than the discussions within the Consultative Assembly, as a second step in the making of "Europe". He envisaged an initial proposal from the French government based on a "document de travail", akin to that presented in the Schuman Plan negotiations, which could serve as the basis of a treaty. In accepting the "document de travail" all the other powers would bind themselves to the eventual acceptance of the surrender of some further degree of their national sovereignty, this time over their agricultural policies, to a High Authority (32). But by postponing this until the first European Community had been safely negotiated

Monnet achieved only the opposite result. By February 1951 when Pflimlin was still seeking permission from the French government to launch an initiative similar to this, semi-official discussions with both the Germans and the Dutch had already taken place and what had been discovered in these negotiations had already gone a long way to make Monnet's conceptions appear hopelessly simplified.

Given the political impulse in the Netherlands it would have been absurd for Pflimlin to have done nothing and in any case the planners were still insisting that 1952 was the year by which France needed markets. The crux of the matter was the German market. Because no official approach could be made to the German market, an approach was made at the interest group level through the CGA directly to its German counterpart organisation, the Deutsche Bauernverband. At the International Conference of Agricultural Producers, which had been created in 1948 as a central forum for the various quasi-official interest-group organisations which had themselves been recreated after the war on a national basis, the CGA and the Bauernverband agreed to form a "permanent committee which would meet a month later, on 3/4 July in Paris, to sign a charter of permanent cooperation". Beneath this stirring phrase, however, the reality was very different. The Bauernverband's internal coherence depended on its support for high levels of protection for German agriculture. It was perfectly ready to reach agreement on longer-term purchasing contracts for French wheat surpluses. That after all was a way of keeping up grain prices in Germany when the Ministry of the Economy wanted to buy wheat in the cheapest markets and bring the price down. But the only other thing that could be agreed was that the two organisations would

officially request their governments to call a "European wine conference" to standardise legislation on quality controls (33). Philippe Lamour, the Secretary General of the CGA, described the leader of the Bauernverband, Andreas Hermes, as being "cool" to the French ideas and more interested in signing agreements with Italy, whose agricultural exports were not so competitive with those of German farmers (34).

This did nothing to reconcile Italy to the affair. The discussions between the CGA and its Italian namesake, the Confederazione Generale dell'Agricoltura, had taken up no small part of the time of the technical committees which had been discussing the implementation of the Franco-Italian customs union. French agriculture had been strongly opposed to that union and was now busy discussing privileged entry for its own products into Italy's main market. Monnet's original revisions of the Plan in 1948 envisaged Italy as a market able to take at the most 150,000 tonnes of French wheat in 1952. By the close of the harvest year 1952/3 Italy, however, was committed under the International Wheat Agreement to take imports up to 1.1 million tonnes from Agreement countries. The Italian government certainly envisaged the possibility of a larger quantity of wheat imports from France. As Italy maintained a 55% ad valorem tariff on wheat imports, in any customs union with France the degree of preference which French exporters would have on the Italian market would therefore be greater. Italy had been rejected primarily for two reasons. It offered little scope for exports other than wheat. But, more decisively, French farmers were not prepared to tolerate in their turn the imports from Italy, of wine, fresh fruit and vegetables,

which a customs union would have entailed. The Quai d'Orsay insisted that the Italians be present at the Franco-German negotiations in Paris in July as a return for Italian support in the Schuman Plan negotiations, but the French CGA simply refused to pass on the invitation (35).

It had already become obvious by July that the organized representatives of agriculture did not necessarily share identical views on the nature of an Agricultural Community with their governments and the situation was the more complicated in France where the CGA was closer to government policy than the FNSEA where the real political power of voters was concentrated. We may imagine what the outcome of the Schuman Plan negotiations would have been had the French government used the French steel manufacturers' association in this way to conduct the preliminary stage of its negotiations, and also, no doubt, what the German response would have been at the same level. The Bauernverband had offered no hope of a long-term market in Germany for French sugar, dairy products or wine and any last vestiges of goodwill on the Italian side had been destroyed (36). Meanwhile at government level the Germans could insist that the whole affair was private and had no official status of any kind. Although this argument could also be used inside the German government to stifle the cries of protest from Minister Erhard, the discovery of these negotiations by the Ministry for the Economy only stiffened its resolution to oppose any such Franco-German agreement as being a prop to protectionist interests inside the Federal Republic (37).

The success of any common European policy to support the ambitions of the Planning Commissariat and the Ministry of

Agriculture now seemed to depend on coming to terms with the position taken by Dutch agriculture. Mansholt had already threatened the Dutch cabinet in August with the news that the French were coming forward with a plan, too (38). From September onwards the Dutch agricultural attaché in Paris was kept reasonably well informed of the internal struggles in the French government while Pflimlin and his ministerial colleagues tried to bring the Dutch in on their side. Success in this direction might still force the Germans to a more cooperative attitude. On 6 November 1950 officials of the French and Dutch ministries of agriculture met in Paris and discussed the feasibility of a central supranational regime for imports and the possibility of establishing a central investment fund, financed from the income which the "European Board" would receive from the common external tariff, to help investment in more backward agricultural regions. Here, the differences became obvious between the ambitious schemes of Mansholt and Pflimlin's altogether more pragmatic approach. Mansholt wanted the transitional measures to be brought straightaway under the control and approval of the supranational authority; the French were more inclined to leave the matter to national governments and only to diminish national authority over agriculture once "competitive conditions" had been established. The concept of the central investment fund had not yet even been discussed in the French Council of Ministers (39). Pflimlin, in whose own constituency a large number of dairy farmers were represented, was apprehensive about the control of milk prices by a "European Board". The Planning Commissariat felt that the milk market should remain free, unless Denmark were included in which

case there would have to be a "High Authority" to regulate the competing Danish and Dutch surpluses. If sugar were included a "High Authority" was inevitable to control imports and regulate the export surpluses, because many western European countries were not only sugar producers on a large scale but had commitments also to take extra-European imports. Butter surpluses, likewise, were unmanageable without a "High Authority", because both France and the Netherlands were going to be butter exporters to Germany (40).

These Franco-Dutch discussions were followed closely in Italy, often through the good offices of the Deutscher Bauernverband which feared perhaps a European attack. Before Pflimlin had drawn up his draft invitation to the European conference the Italian Ministry of Agriculture had already firmly decided against any attempt at European common market. Italian prices on average were lower than elsewhere in western Europe, so all fixed "European" prices would discriminate against Italian exports. Even if Italy, for political and diplomatic reasons, were forced into negotiations on an Agricultural Community these would have to cover a whole range of products which the Dutch and the French were not even talking about. Officials enjoyed themselves listing these; fruit, rice, perfume essences, tobacco, fresh vegetables, the list grew ever larger. Stepping out of the customs union was not going to help the French avoid the issue of Italian exports. From other ministries came the demand, as usual, that a common market would have to provide for free labour migration as well (although it was quite clear that the other members were trying to get rid of surplus agricultural labour!). It was certainly out of the question that such a common market could be confined to "the Six" alone. Grazzi

summed up the position by saying that Italy, because it might be harmed by staying out, would have to participate in any discussions with "a prudent scepticism" and that the French and Dutch plans would be "only realisable with difficulty" (41).

The difficulty which Grazzi foresaw was already becoming plain in France itself. Guy Mollet, the Minister for Affairs of the Council of Europe, wanted Monnet left out of the proposed conference on the grounds that too much talk of a "High Authority" would frighten away the participants (42). The FNSEA, while supporting the idea of European prices, high ones, isolated from world prices by a tariff guaranteeing protection against extra-European imports, did not support such a scheme if it were restricted to "the Six" (although the United Kingdom did not necessarily have to be a member). Even the support they did give was wrapped in much language about retaining the family farm as the pillar of French society, which contrasted rather oddly with the productivist language of Pflimlin's own policy statements (43). Pflimlin himself saw the problem both in an immediate economic and a long-term political perspective. If it were possible eventually to progress by means of agreement on agricultural trade to a further stage of European integration, he would clearly have been glad to keep that prospect open, but not at the expense of the immediate economic solution he was looking for. Everything depended on which countries would join the agreement and what the powers of the "High Authority" might be. In these circumstances he accepted the political reality that the invitation to the conference should be issued in the first place to all OEEC members and not confined to "the Six". Further decisions could then wait on their replies

and on what happened at the conference when it was called. However, the invitation itself was in some ways a rejection both of Monnet's and Mansholt's ideas. The ministers of agriculture should meet, Pflimlin proposed in the invitation, which was eventually issued in March, to organize a "European Agricultural Committee". This in turn would prepare the way for a common market in agriculture for the products in which it was necessary. These would be, at a minimum, wheat, sugar, dairy products and wine. The common market would have similar institutions to the ECSC. The Court of Justice would be shared. The market would not, however, necessarily be restricted to the members of the ECSC (44). Yet this still left open the possibility that a large number of rejections would be received or that the conference would meet and that the number of countries then proceeding to form a common market would be equivalent to the Six, plus perhaps Denmark. At least this would have been a reasonable interpretation in Paris and in that sense the terms in which Pflimlin's invitation were eventually couched were a satisfactory political compromise.

From the date on which Pflimlin's invitations were issued to the eventual official demise of the idea of a separate European "committee", "board", or "High Authority" with special powers over west European agriculture there were almost four years of detailed diplomatic negotiations. The eventual official demise of the concept of a separate organisation for agriculture was marked by

the agreement reached in January 1955 to confine discussions on intra-west-European agricultural trade once more within the OEEC. These negotiations are in many ways as crucial to an understanding of the problems of intra-west-European agricultural trade as the sudden rise to prominence of the idea of an Agricultural Community. But to recount them and to elaborate their significance would take up several other papers. A summary of the events, however, is needed to cast further light on the collapse of the concept of an Agricultural Community.

It was already clear from the attitude of the Deutscher Bauernverband and of the Italian government that the chances of the successful formation of an Agricultural Community were small even should the French and the Dutch agree on a common programme of action. It is some measure of the seriousness of the problems involved in establishing a framework of foreign trade for western Europe's highly-protected agriculture that it took so long to officially bury an idea which seemed to have so little life in it when it was born. No country except the United Kingdom, no matter how hostile it was to the idea of a Community, was prepared to hand matters back again to the OEEC which had proved so ineffective. Most hoped that something less than a Community could be created, a series of interlinked agreements covering certain commodities which would permit guaranteed markets to producers whose output was growing under the stimulus of government policy everywhere. From the moment when Pflimlin's invitations were issued there was in effect a separate organisation from the OEEC in existence. To this the name "Green Pool" was usually given, perhaps because it covered all possibilities between a Community and a standing trade

conference. We cannot be concerned here with the detailed and laborious studies of intra-west-European agricultural trade which the "Green Pool" undertook, nor with the separate attempts at trade agreements carried on under its aegis, but only with the broad political outlines of the Agricultural Community's evolution and collapse.

The expected hostile responses to the invitation came at once from such countries as Switzerland and Sweden while the United Kingdom insisted that there was no need for any organization other than the OEEC. Italy had been given some more detailed knowledge of the French proposals provided to the confederazione dell'Agricoltura by the CGA in February 1951. Pflimlin, it was explained, would be content to emerge from the conference with a common market for wheat and for dairy products, excluding cheese, and with an international statute governing wine production and trade, together with some further measures of "market rationalization". The Italian view of these aims was that they were "detailed international dirigisme" based on "equivalent domestic dirigisme". They would exclude Britain and thus would be damaging to Italy's interest. A "High Authority" would be "inopportune" (45). The Luxembourg government handed the proposals at once to the Centrale Paysanne, which embraced most Luxembourg producers, and got a very discouraging reply (46). In any case Luxembourg was not even prepared to attend unless the conference gave prior recognition to the completely protected status of Luxembourg's agriculture within Benelux. The Germans were non-committal. The Danes, to the annoyance of London, made it clear that anything was better than the existing situation in the OEEC. Lastly, the Dutch,

after some initial debate accepted that one outcome might be the separation of a group of countries prepared to accept the principle of a High Authority from the rest, providing the rest, of which the United Kingdom would be the crucial component, would still be in a position to negotiate some form of associative agreement with the new organization should it come into permanent existence (47). This was a political compromise not unlike that which had enabled the French to proceed.

There then followed a long and complicated series of struggles in the French government over the familiar territory disputed before the invitation was sent. The question of the exclusion of the United Kingdom inevitably was seen in the context of France's commitment, so bitterly opposed by many in political life, to a European Defence Community without British participation. In January 1952 Monnet took advantage of a cabinet crisis to demand the withdrawal of the invitations and a return to the idea of a conference involving "the Six" alone. The others should be informed of the state of the negotiations only when they had reached the stage of agreement. They could then consider "association" without being allowed in any way to change the terms of the existing agreement (48). The unenthusiastic nature of the replies to Pflimlin's invitations, the fact that Pflimlin himself had left the Ministry of Agriculture, the wait for ratification of the Coal and Steel Community Treaty, and the furious internal debate over the Defence Community treaty, all contributed to this sense of uncertainty. The space of time also allowed the French employers' association, the Conseil national du patronat français, to organize two conferences of the representatives of the food processing

industries and food distributive trades, the first confined to "the Six" and the second widened to admit delegates from Denmark, Spain and Sweden, which denounced the idea that prices should be set by any High Authority, especially if the Authority "were confided to the arbitrary powers of a bureaucratic organisation". No High Authority should "modify by authoritarian methods the structure of the processing and distribution circuits". (49)

This wavering was bound to have its effect in the Hague where the governmental divisions were no less. Spierenburg, the head of the Dutch negotiating team in the Schuman Plan negotiations, tried to persuade the French to partially set aside the terms of Pflimlin's invitation and call an informal meeting of the foreign ministers, economic ministers and ministers of agriculture of "the Six" at The Hague to try to link the proposals to all the other "Community" proposals then under discussion. The French accepted but only on condition that a serious effort would be made to get British and Danish participation as "associates" in the actual conference. This led to a further breakdown on what the precise difference would be in such an "informal" conference between "the Six" on the one side and Britain and Denmark on the other. Pflimlin then decided to gamble everything on a meeting of "the Six" alone as Mansholt wished him to do, but this proposal was turned down by the French Council of Ministers mainly on the strong opposition of René Mayer (50). Even after Monnet's attempt in January 1952 to persuade the ministers to repeat the negotiating tactics of the Schuman Plan treaty had failed Mansholt was still able to visit Paris in February hoping to persuade the French to call a preliminary conference of "the Six" alone. In fact inside the Dutch

government this had now become the clear way forward, at least it was decided that an effort must be made in this direction, that "the Six" must be made to take trade liberalization seriously and that the proposed European Communities might be the way to make them do so. Even Stikker had become convinced that a solution "à la Schuman Plan" was now necessary for agriculture (51). All this was in the full awareness that the chances of producing such a solution were very small. The tactics, it was unanimously decided, with only Liefstinck showing marked dissent, should be to make Pflimlin stage his conference, place the question of a supranational High Authority with wide powers high on the agenda, and when the conference collapsed call a second conference of "the Six" which could later come to some accommodation with the United Kingdom (52).

This was the policy position which Mansholt took with him to Paris in February 1952 and Pflimlin was forewarned that Mansholt would insist on maintaining the principle of a High Authority and would, for that reason still ask for a preliminary meeting confined to "the Six" (53). Laurens flatly refused to call any such preliminary meeting and maintained that nothing could be done without the United Kingdom. So strong was Mansholt's insistence, however, that Pflimlin agreed to ask Schuman to speak to the foreign ministers of "the Six" at the NATO meeting in Lisbon and ascertain their opinion about a preliminary meeting on the eve of a larger conference (54).

As far as the other countries were concerned, though, it is clear that nothing had changed. The official position of the Deutscher Bauernverband was that in principle they were in favour

of a common market, but that in practice this was only likely to be realizable in wheat and sugar and even there only with great prudence. There could be no question of allowing French dairy exports to reduce dairy output in Germany. If there were a High Authority confined to wheat and sugar its powers would have to be closely circumscribed and exercised only in close coordination with the agricultural interest-groups themselves. (55) The Ministry of Agriculture in the Federal Republic appointed a committee of six academic experts to study the question and their report came down in favour of beginning, as many in France wished to do, by single product agreements, wheat being the obvious starting-point, and only when there was a sufficient number of such agreements considering a supranational authority (56). All these compromises would have been wholly unacceptable to the Ministry of the Economy which regarded them as protectionist deviations from the first priorities, currency convertibility and a wider geographical framework for freer trade than "the Six" would provide (57). In Germany was unencouraging, although not opposed, there was no hope of progress with Italy or Belgium. Italy would only participate in the conference if it included the largest possible number of OEEC member states and would not participate at all unless the United Kingdom were present. The conference would have to discuss the largest possible number of commodities including those previously suggested by Italy and it would have to discuss the free migration of labour in western Europe. Unless the French government supported these positions Italian participation "would proceed more from courtesy than from the firm intention of pursuing the study of this project" (58). As for Belgium the Minister for Agriculture, Héger,

had already given his opinion to Yves Malecot, Laurens's directeur du cabinet, when the Frenchman had visited the Belgian agricultural exhibition in February. "It appears", he had said, "that Belgian farmers are hostile on principle to any freedom for foreign competition." Even before the conference "they were decided to oppose the institution of any supranational authority." (59) So were the FNSEA. In a note to the minister in February they left no room for ambiguity. "A 'European Agricultural Community' has been talked about. It is obvious that the variety of output and the diversity of positions does not allow so general an objective to be envisaged from the start; that would in any case raise problems going beyond agriculture. We are envisaging in reality only the organisation of 'common markets for products'. It will be the task of the conference to determine the choice of the products which can be considered." (60) Worse, when Héger spoke officially at the Brussels show in front of Malecot, he "ardently" wished "that the French government would share the opinion of the French professional agricultural associations"! (61)

There was nothing to do but proceed with the conference according to the original invitations to all OEEC member states. It met on 25 March 1952. Pflimlin came back from his new ministry to chair it. Schuman opened the proceedings, saying that the conference was intended to move towards another stage in the creation of a united Europe. Pflimlin took the same line. Laurens, however, was noticeably less enthusiastic than Pflimlin and Schuman about a common market and a supranational authority (62). What Pflimlin actually proposed was not in fact another High Authority but "a European coordinating organisation" which would begin the

task of harmonizing policies on production, marketing and consumption. Mansholt made up for this with the fervour with which he pleaded the case for European integration under a supranational authority. The aim was one unified market governed by a High Authority and the Dutch government considered it impossible, he said, "to restrict, even at the start, agricultural integration to a limited number of products" (63).

The obvious opponents, Austria, Switzerland, Norway and Sweden all declared their opposition. Ireland could see no point in the proposals. Turkey was distinctly encouraging; like France it was developing wheat surpluses. This, naturally, did nothing to help Mansholt even though it presented another possible ally for the minimalist position in the French Ministry of Agriculture! Mansholt had argued so strongly in front of the conference precisely because the Dutch wanted the conference to collapse as quickly and comprehensively as possible, so that they could proceed to the conference of "the Six", in which smaller framework there might be some real hope of removing restrictions on agricultural exports. It was the position taken by the United Kingdom which destroyed, unwittingly, these Dutch tactics.

The United Kingdom had come, in fact, to the conclusion that if the further discussions could not be sent back again into the OEEC, and it did not look as though this would be possible at once, Britain would have to take part in them. The British archives reveal that this decision was not taken to help Guy Mollet and Monnet's other opponents in Paris. On the contrary, it was taken because most civil servants were genuinely afraid that so close a harmony of purpose now prevailed between France and the Netherlands

that some form of agricultural common market was inevitable! The British delegation, therefore, against the advice of the Minister of State in charge of the negotiations, Anthony Nutting, was instructed to take a position in favour of talks on "association" even if the conference should agree to try to proceed with a common market or a "Community" (64). In so doing they made it certain that France would take what agreement it could get from the conference as a basis for further action and the Netherlands would be left stranded in the worst of all possible positions. There would be no conference of "the Six" and there would be no reference back to the OEEC; instead France, Germany and Italy would be able to continue within the framework of the "Green Pool" to explore a series of possible agricultural trade bargains, all of which would take for granted the continuation of very high levels of protection and none of which would take much account of Dutch interests.

So it proved. Italy spoke in favour of continuing a set of detailed studies. Germany accepted the principles of a common market as a good "European" cause but made it clear that the only thing that actually interested the German government was a step-by-step, commodity-by-commodity negotiation. Denmark sat helplessly on the fence waiting to see what would happen and making the forlorn argument that liberalisation was better than all these solutions. Pflimlin retreated to the ENSFA ground that the conference should study first only the question of which commodities should be coordinated and postpone all question of a High Authority to the future. A study of certain commodities, firstly those in which the French modernisation plans were primarily interested, was therefore handed on to an Interim Working Party, which would also study the

institutional arrangements necessary for common policies (on the Dutch demand). What the Interim Working Party effectively did was to set up commodity study groups in which the possibility of trade deals as a way of venting surpluses on to foreign markets could be achieved and the committee which was to study institutional arrangements remained of no significance.

Until, however, Mansholt abandoned his position or the Dutch government changed its policy the European Agricultural Community clung to a kind of existence. In a sense it could not do otherwise when Dutch policy continued to be to force the foreign ministers of "the Six" to agree to a common market for all goods as part of the European Political Community envisaged in the European Defence Community treaty. So long as the European Political Community was not officially dead the European Agricultural Community could not die because it was the only policy the Dutch government had to make the common market for all products possible. Monnet, certainly, did not give up hope. He convinced himself that the FNSFA was actually more interested in an "integrative" solution than the CGA and set up a working party including Louis Rabot, the head of foreign relations in the Ministry of Agriculture, to draw up a new plan for a supranational authority (65). On his return from the conference Mansholt called together in "strict secrecy" a meeting of civil servants and government advisers including Spierenburg, Linthorst

Homan, Tinberger, Sankalden and Kohnstamm to inform them that he had agreed with Monnet that they should work together to produce a common experts' report (66). Not much happened, though. Monnet and his collaborators were busy churning out drafts of a second national plan in which agricultural surpluses would be even larger, although as Table 2 shows the actual surpluses in 1952 were far short of what the first Monnet Plan had envisaged. The second plan, which was not to be adopted by the government until 1954, was couched in even more productivist language than its precursor and had even less political appeal to the farmers than that had done. The drafts were noticeably vague on the whole question of exports, except for the insistence that sugar would now become a major export both to the French empire and to the "European Community". Dairy products had now disappeared again as a likely export staple, meat had reappeared, and fruit now made its first appearance as a possibility! (67) It is hardly surprising that the problems of the future organisation of trade were being treated in no more realistic a way.

Mansholt and Monnet did not meet again until January 1953. This time Monnet was sailing on a different tack. He now thought agriculture should form only the last building block in the edifice of European integration! First should come a European parliament and European elections. Immediate moves to surrender any area of economic sovereignty, including that over agricultural trade, would impede the creation of the European Political Authority.

This left Mansholt on his own to face Laurens and to persuade him to persist in attempts to find an "integrative" solution. By October 1952 the reports of the sub-groups set up by the "Green

Pool" were coming in. It had been agreed to call the ministers together again to consider these reports and to pronounce on what could be done. Laurens was, in familiar style, wavering as to whether they should be first considered by the ministers of "the Six" or by the sixteen who had attended the first conference. In November Mansholt met him and they agreed on a "top secret" protocol. They agreed that the Luxembourg Resolutions on a common market demanded a meeting of the foreign ministers and the agricultural ministers of "the Six" before February 1953. This should produce a supranational authority, but it would have to be "noticeably different" from the High Authority of the ECSC. Membership of the new supranational organisation would entail acceptance of the terms of the Luxembourg Resolutions. Finally there would be an effort to build as close economic links as possible with the countries which could not accept these terms perhaps by long-term trade contracts. Monnet's staff were associated with this meeting and Rabot, who was there, argued on the Dutch side that it was impossible to have a narrowly circumscribed list of products. He argued, too, for a High Authority with real and extensive powers (68). Of course, it is not known how highly Camille Laurens actually rated the chances of the European Defence Community treaty, and thus the Luxembourg Resolutions, of passing the National Assembly.

There followed a determined effort by Mansholt to make the other members of "the Six" subscribe to the terms of this agreement. Amintore Fanfani, the Italian minister of agriculture, had already agreed, only with much reluctance, that there should on this second occasion be a preliminary conference of the ministers

of "the Six" before the full conference met. In January 1953 he showed that even this concession was not definitely made. To the Dutch Ambassador in Rome, H.N. Boon, he praised Mansholt's "dirigiste" approach, but insisted that it was entirely inappropriate for Italy's nine million farms. As for a preliminary meeting of "the Six" to discuss the relationship of the Agricultural Community to the Luxembourg Resolutions, it had now become unacceptable and impossible because of the forthcoming elections. It was all very well, Fanfani was reported as saying, for de Gasperi to talk about political and economic integration; it was not he who had to deal with Italian farmers. The only kind of agricultural "integration" acceptable to Italy was in the form of multilateral trading agreements (69). It could be assumed from this in the Hague, rightly as it proved, that if the foreign ministers of "the Six" were to decide that the agricultural ministers should meet to discuss the Luxembourg Resolutions, Fanfani would at least have to attend. Nothing else positive could be hoped for from him whatever de Gasperi might say.

Héger was less antagonistic and was prepared to support a preliminary meeting of the agricultural ministers of "the Six" to discuss ways of setting up a European Agricultural Community, although he himself did not think such a step to be necessary. He himself was only in favour of a limited number of commodity agreements covering the widest possible number of countries and a certain number of common regulations or perhaps only recommendations to achieve a sufficient degree of harmony in national agricultural policies to make the agreements viable (70). This, the Belgian government thought, should be done through the

OEEC. They wanted the whole idea of even a "Green Pool" "dropped completely". (71)

Immediately on the close of the first conference of the sixteen ministers the Deutscher Bauernverband had demanded that its wishes be given the fullest consideration in settling all further questions arising in the "Green Pool". (72) There seemed little danger that this would not be so, because the leader of the German delegation to the conferences and the most powerful influence on decisions made there by the German delegations was not the Minister of Agriculture himself but Hermes, the head of the Bauernverband who had been minister of agriculture thirty years before at the start of the Weimar Republic. It was his presence there that stimulated a few hopes in Paris and the Hague (although it stimulated much stronger antagonisms in Rome, London and Brussels) because he was known to be a close colleague of Adenauer from time past. Given the dependence of the CDU on rural votes and the attitude of the voters, however, this connection was more likely to be used to sway Adenauer away from the concept of an Agricultural Community. In June 1952 the Bauernverband and the French CGA again met and had no difficulty in agreeing to support a grain agreement in which a joint Franco-German committee of the interest groups should determine annual requirements and prices, a somewhat ironic note to Monnet's original organisational ambitions. The German side agreed to examine the timing of seasonal quotas on fruit and vegetable imports and made a further concession to their French counterparts when they agreed to recommend to the German ministers that they agree to create an international body to control Europe's wine trade which would be modelled on the French Institut des Vins

de consommation courante (73). In the event local organisations of fruit and vegetable traders and growers displayed considerable alarm over this commitment on their behalf made by the Bauernverband in which they were federated. The Bauernverband had obviously been driven as far as it would go. It met with the official representatives of the Belgian Boerenbond and the Luxembourg Central Paysanne and together with the Belgians passed a resolution, to which the Luxembourgers would not commit themselves, to say that there should be no High Authority to control a future Community and whatever arrangements were agreed on at the conference, even if they were purely trade and commodity agreements, should not be confined to the ECSC countries (74). This was what the State-Secretary in the Ministry of Agriculture, Theodor Sonnemann, himself an appointee of the Bauernverband, told the Danes in December 1952 to be official German policy at the forthcoming conference (75). They had already been told by Mansholt that they were not wanted unless they were prepared to accept the full implications of the Luxembourg Resolutions (76). For them, there appeared no hope of relief on any side.

The Federal Ministry of the Economy was opposed even to commodity agreements, because it saw the whole affair as an attempt by the Ministry of Agriculture to cement agricultural protection even more firmly in place by international agreement. The removal of tariffs was not the first problem needing to be tackled, Erhard argued, but currency convertibility, and if tariff removal was such a necessity that an Agricultural Community had first to be created to make it possible it would emerge that any arrangement between "the Six" would stabilise the framework of the Federal Republic's

foreign trade in a much more protectionist mould than a wider agreement. In short, nothing economically was to be gained from "the Six" at all. (77) In January 1953 Mansholt travelled to Bonn to talk first to Wilhelm Niklas, the Minister of Agriculture, and then to Adenauer, in the hope of overcoming this opposition in the German cabinet. Adenauer supported Mansholt's position that there should be a preliminary meeting of the agricultural ministers of "the Six", but he then went much further. The sacrifices which Germany would have to make, he said, in the cause of agricultural integration would amply be compensated by gains made from economic integration in other areas.

This muddle of opinion in the German government was partly the result of the complete lack of systematic working practice which the German archives for this period and for this question reveal. Hermes was responsible as head of the delegation only to Hallstein, the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and through him to the Chancellor. Erhard's only influence was likewise through the Chancellor. But despite Adenauer's great influence and in spite of his personal commitment to the solution which was eventually to emerge after the Treaty of Rome, he could not command through all these direct lines so large and complex a country. Below him the decision-making process was still formulating itself in bureaucratic ways familiar from Germany's past and from present practice in other countries. The glee in the Hague at thus bypassing German opposition and convincing the Chancellor, if he had needed convincing, that the Agricultural Community was the next step to take was short-lived. The position of Secretary of State Sonnemann remained "absolutely opposed" while the permanent German

delegate to the Interim Working Party of the "Green Pool" had "Angstvisionen" over the discussion in which he would have to inform Hermes of Adenauer's opinions (78). Niklas would not accept a "Green Pool" of any kind without Danish membership and preferably other countries outside "the Six" too (79). The opposition to the possibility of commodity agreements on fruit and vegetables had grown. Rhineland growers objected to liberalising Dutch vegetable imports through any forthcoming agreements and their Bavarian colleagues had the same views about Italian imports. The agreement on wine had meanwhile collapsed and France had withdrawn it from the agenda for the future conference.

In any realistic view of the situation in Paris to go into a second conference of the agricultural ministers with the sole policy of supporting the Laurens-Mansholt agreement would be a disaster. Much of French agriculture was opposed, a large part of political opinion was opposed, and even those in the government who supported it were uneasy. It seemed to involve a commitment to present the European Defence Community treaty to the National Assembly with the full backing of the government not for that treaty alone but also for the Luxembourg Resolutions and the common market. The economic objectives of the Ministry of Agriculture alone hardly warranted so drastic a chain of political actions. France was somewhat in the position of a convinced but irresolute polygamist being forced through his own irresolution to marry a series of brides whom he did not wish to marry at all for a limited objective which could be obtained without marriage. When it row turned out that with one exception they did not want to marry him either the structure of future action was bound to collapse. And

superimposed on it was the great weight of the even more unreal European Defence Community. The time for the purging of these illusions had arrived.

When J.J. van der Lee, who as head of external relations in the Dutch Ministry of Agriculture served as Mansholt's right-hand man throughout the negotiations, went to Paris at the end of February the French were already in full retreat in face of the incontrovertible evidence from elsewhere and the awareness of their own unwillingness to accept the full political implications of the decisions they now felt they had been forced into making. The suggestion that, regardless of any agreements between "the Six" at the preliminary conference, the sixteen should also try to reach a series of commodity agreements. This would obviously break the terms of the secret protocol between Laurens and Mansholt, so it was also suggested on the French side that the assembled ministers should receive two separate memoranda from the French and Dutch governments, one based on the secret protocol and one on the possibility of commodity agreements between the sixteen (80). In fact a week earlier, on 21 February 1953, the French Council of Ministers had rejected the protocol as a basis for the conference and had destroyed the last chances of the European Agricultural Community by deciding that its policy in the conference would have to be "the organisation of markets product by product". In spite of the Rome agreements and the Luxembourg Resolutions they had taken the view that the French government was free to propose an agricultural agreement between the sixteen and one which was in no sense a common market. Their decision was to start trying to reach agreement in this wider framework on a limited number of products,

those which had initially been identified by the first Monnet Plan. The "Green Pool" working groups had revealed how diverse conditions of production and product markets were in European agriculture and the other countries had made this clear in their responses over a year and a half. The French government would therefore propose that the "Green Pool" set up a further series of working groups to study particular products and from these studies the first steps towards an eventual common market might appear (81). Of supranationality and a High Authority there was to be no more question, unless in a distant future as the result of much more pragmatic proceedings than had so far been witnessed.

As Laurens expressed it to his delegation after this crucial decision, "It is a question of looking for the lowest common denominator in the aspirations of the different countries interested in the issue of a European agricultural community". (82) A study of the global trade balances of each of the sixteen in agricultural trade would now be the best procedure, for it was possible that commodity agreements could eventually be struck so that the sixteen could absorb the surpluses. But in the first stage this could cover only products strictly confined to intra-west-European trade in order to avoid all problems with countries which depended on extra-European food and feedstuff imports. This inevitably, he indicated, meant a direct clash with the Dutch. The only way of avoiding this was by preparing two policy positions for submission to the conference, one with the Dutch and one without them. This, of course, was the suggestion made to van der Lee a week later and which he rejected.

The agricultural ministers of "the Six" met on 14 March, two days before the conference of the sixteen ministers. Even before the meeting officially began Laurens told Mansholt that the memorandum which he presented based on their protocol needed "petites retouches". What those amounted to was that the only purpose of the preliminary conference now was to discuss the full conference. When the meeting officially started nobody would agree that the Dutch memorandum should be the main item on the agenda, but only that it might be discussed at the end, if there was time. The six ministers then began to work out a limited list of products to be discussed by the sixteen. Eventually Mansholt's patience broke. He declared that if the meeting was going to turn into a conspiracy he had no intention of staying. To placate him it was agreed to discuss the Dutch memorandum there and then. Fanfan declared that the decisions of the six foreign ministers fell outside his responsibility and that he would certainly not commit himself to anything until after the conference. Héger declared himself "perplexed" that the Dutch Minister of Agriculture should want to settle large political questions, to which Mansholt replied that he, too, was "perplexed" that the Belgian Minister of Agriculture was willing to leave his government in the lurch on such an important matter. It was only Hermes, whose intention was doubtless now to get the body of the dead European Agricultural Community off the stage as quickly as possible, who was able to persuade the conference to proceed towards its due end and into its meeting with the sixteen (83). Even by that meeting two days later the Dutch delegation had buried the corpse and vigorously supported there a policy of burying the "Green Pool" too and placing the

whole question back into the confines of the OEEC. Nothing else, of course, for them now made sense, for the "Green Pool" would certainly be a protectionist club whereas in the OEEC there was some faint chance that this might be less so.

CONCLUSIONS

Two conclusions are inescapable. The first is that the national origins of the European Agricultural Community as it briefly became, were too divergent for the idea ever to be translated into an effective international agreement. This is so when we consider the divergence in aims between nations and also when we consider the divergence within nations.

Between nations, the objectives of France and the Netherlands were different in important ways. On the face of things the origins of the European Agricultural Community as a concept in France are to be found in the Ministry of Agriculture and in the Planning Commissariat, neither of which it might be supposed had much influence on the vital questions of national security with which France had to deal in those years. But that is a superficial view. The first National Plan for Modernisation and Reequipment (the Monnet Plan) had important repercussions on French foreign policy. Its longer-term implications, the assumption that it would be only the first of a series of planned interventions by the state to change the economic and political place of France in Europe, had

even more consequences for the reactions of the other European countries. In the short-term it focussed French policy on the question of German reconstruction, intensively, narrowly, often obsessively, and for a long time on the question of the supply of coke and Ruhr coking-coal. Without a guaranteed supply of both commodities at a satisfactory level the Monnet Plan was simply unachievable, and this made it seem as though France's domestic economic reconstruction was unachievable without internationally-guaranteed constraints on German reconstruction (84). In this way the Monnet Plan provided a practical goal at which French diplomacy could aim. Something of this kind, something which appeared feasible, although limited, and which could be expressed in terms of immediate pragmatic action was badly needed. Until that time French foreign policy towards Germany had been based on a set of impossible objectives, fragmentation, annexation, prevention of any central German government and so on, combined with a generalised assumption that French recovery must precede that of Germany. This assumption was too diffuse to be translated into a practical programme of action on any particular question when faced with the realities of American power in Germany. The Monnet Plan explained what French reconstruction was and what the German economy had to contribute to it if it was to be achieved. It is not surprising therefore that its implications should have been seized on by Alphand and by others in the French Foreign Ministry, particularly in the European Section, because they provided one constant thread through the tortuous maze of international discussions with the British and the Americans over Germany between 1945 and 1952. Thus the priority for France's own economic recovery would be assured by

translating the Potsdam agreements into a longer-term guarantee by the Americans of German imports for French steel-making, through French officials on the Coal and Steel Contrôl Boards in Germany, through control over German coal and coke exports by the International Ruhr Authority, through "de-cartelisation" of the Ruhr coal and steel industries, and then through the European Coal and Steel Community, which emerged to remedy the deficiencies of these other policies.

The "European" solution, the concept of a "Community" and a High Authority proved, of course, to be more effective than earlier policies, not only from France's point of view but from that of the other western countries too. In the five years between 1945 and 1950 Monnet and the French Foreign Ministry had moved a long way, from grasping the inherent connection between short-term imports from America for French recovery and short-term imports from Germany, to the idea that France's needs could be better expressed to its allies if drawn up in the concept of the medium-term Monnet Plan, to using the Monnet Plan as the basis for political action in the OEEC, to using it as the basic guide for action in the International Ruhr Authority, and finally to translating the Monnet Plan to the international level in the European Coal and Steel Community. When the decision was made to increase French domestic agricultural output over the long-term and to develop agricultural surpluses as a way of effecting a long-term change in the French balance-of-payments position, it coincided in time with the French decision to use the Monnet Plan as the basis for the national contribution to the OEEC's abortive efforts at producing a medium-term plan. Because the Monnet Plan had to be radically redrafted to

accommodate the concept of agricultural surpluses, this new policy, too, became a further basis for immediate political action in the OEEC. From there it was almost automatic that it should follow the same path as that followed by policy on the coke and coking-coal problem; a solution in France's favour which proved impossible in OEEC might alternatively be achieved by a "Community" and a "High Authority". In this case it was not the Foreign Ministry which acted together with the Planning Commissariat to try to create a European framework within which the Monnet Plan could be successful, but the Ministry of Agriculture, for the obvious reason that its practical interest in the matter was as immediate as that of the Foreign Ministry was in the question of Germany.

What was at stake for France here, too, was the national commitment to change the country's relative place and status in western Europe; the planned agricultural surpluses had become as much a part of this programme as the planned increases in steel output and the increased inputs of coke and coal from Germany which they necessitated. A Europe which would take French food exports became in 1948 as necessary as a Europe which would permit the French steel industry to operate at higher levels of output had become in 1946. That this was not a last-minute pragmatic adjustment to the acute food shortages of winter 1947/8 is clear from the correspondence between Pflimlin and Monnet, with its hints of earlier general agreement between the two men on the relationship of France to western Europe, as well as from the wholly specious economic arguments presented both in the revised version of the First Modernisation Plan and in the Second Plan for the new agricultural policies. Indeed, in spite of much special

pleading that western Europe's food surpluses have been induced by the automatic processes of technological change in highly-developed agricultural systems, the evidence in this paper strongly persuades to the argument, supported of course by much other evidence, that they were policy-induced. Governments sought agricultural surpluses and the French plans only aimed at the same general target as unplanned economies elsewhere. On the other hand these agricultural policies clearly were a pragmatic adjustment to the unforeseen consequences of high investment levels on the balance of payments position, in France as elsewhere, in a world where the dollar shortage lasted longer and was more acute than had been foreseen. Coke imports and wheat exports stood alike as symbols of a commitment, widely held at many different levels to alter France's relationships to western Europe, a process which began by altering the path of development of the French economy through a long-term process of domestic economic and political change. The idea of a "Community" and of a "High Authority" existed for Monnet because these institutions could provide some effective international guarantee of that alteration.

For the Netherlands, the issue turned on precisely what the alteration in the relationship with France within the new "Community" would be and to what extent it would further the Netherlands' own objectives. The origins of the Dutch proposals, at least as they emerged after much alteration from cabinet, is equally clear. They were part of a sustained campaign, which took many forms in the 1950s, for lower tariffs and more liberal foreign trade policies in western Europe. This was a vital matter of national security and future welfare for the Netherlands, as indeed

it always has been. The failure of the trade liberalization programme in the OEEC to make any significant difference to the levels of agricultural protection in western Europe and the failure of the GATT to reduce agricultural tariffs affected almost 40% of total Dutch exports. By contrast, the Netherlands maintained very low tariffs against industrial imports. Dutch governments showed themselves ready to support a remarkably wide variety of policy positions in the hope of reducing obstacles to trade in both industrial and agricultural products, "sectoral integration" (the Stikker Plan of Action), a common market as part of the proposed European Political Community (the Beyen Plan), and the extension of European preference zones (on several occasions). None of these had very much in common at the level of actual functioning with Mansholt's proposals. But of course none of them offered a solution to the problem of intra-west-European agricultural trade either because no country except Denmark was prepared ever to contemplate a genuine measure of liberalization in agricultural trade including the Netherlands itself. From the moment that Stikker's proposals recognized the need for "special" action in the agricultural sector the Netherlands had to be prepared to negotiate such "special" action at an international level. No-one in the OEEC had paid much attention to the needs of western Europe's net agricultural exporters; they were too small. The change of domestic policy in France was a possible opportunity and some effort had to be made to take it. This was the strength of Mansholt's position. No matter how much other ministers from other parties disliked such interventionist schemes they had to admit that as far as primary exports were concerned they had no alternative ideas which offered

the slightest chance of success. If they looked at Denmark's foreign balances in 1950 and 1951, if they considered the difference which the Dutch-German trade treaty of 1949 made to Dutch exports, they had to allow some modified form of the Marsholt proposals to serve as a basis for negotiations to create a common front with France.

In 1950, even in 1951, it was possible that the Netherlands and France might in fact agree on a programme of gradual removal of barriers to intra-west-European trade and that Marsholt's (or Pflimlin's) "special" arrangement for agricultural trade would be the permissive agreement which allowed more genuine liberalisation in trade in other sectors, that Marsholt and Pflimlin through the European Agricultural Community might remove the very barriers to trade liberalization which had stopped the OEEC trade liberalization programmes. But after 1951 the conviction grew in France, shared by all parties, that the French economy was becoming less competitive than that of its neighbours, specifically less competitive than that of the Federal Republic, and that for this reason tariff reductions and quota removals were dangerous. An Agricultural Community which was not instrumental in lowering barriers to trade in other sectors was simply not worth the sacrifice involved for the Netherlands. At some time, on some distant horizon, when the medium-term plans had made the French economy more competitive, it was the intention of the Planning Commissariat to lower the barriers around the frontiers and, following their beliefs, allow international influences to increase the level of productivity in France. Foreigners can be forgiven for wondering in the 1950s exactly when that horizon would be reached,

for it appeared to be receding after 1951 when the protectionist impulse of politicians was often supported by the planners. In short, for most of the period over which the attempt at a European Agricultural Community was made France was interested in maintaining protection and the Netherlands was interested in reducing it.

It is in this light that one charge subsequently made against the European Agricultural Community, that it had to fail because it was negotiated separately from a network of economic agreements covering other sectors, should be judged. The accusation appears ridiculous. Agriculture was a separate problem from the other economic issues which were negotiated at the OEEC, because the agricultural sector had a unique economic status and political position in each country. In any case, it can only have been to the advantage of the Agricultural Community that for much of the time it did not become immediately involved in the baroque and increasingly unpropitious negotiations over the European Political Community, which were themselves dependent on the hopelessly unrealistic Defence Community treaty. And to argue that the Common Agricultural Policy was later achieved because the commitment to a common market was already signed is to forget that it was only the fact that a similar agreement had already been signed which kept the Agricultural Community alive from summer 1952 to summer 1953, to forget also the impact of de Gaulle's return to power on the new-born common market, and also to forget that although we now have much historical evidence about the negotiation of the Treaty of Rome, about the negotiation of the various agricultural agreements which eventually implemented its glib clauses on

agriculture we know very little. The Treaty of Rome did not really get much further than Stikker. It acknowledged that to reduce intra-west-European trade barriers a "special" arrangement was necessary for agriculture, and then, like Stikker, washed its hands of the affair. We are left wondering how the problem could have been resolved, because it is evident in the case of the European Agricultural Community that the degree of common interest, even when the discussions were confined strictly to the agricultural sector and kept as free as possible from all issues of defence, industry and constitutional sovereignty, was inadequate to arrive at any international agreement.

The Netherlands was a net importer on annual average of roughly 800,000 tonnes of bread grains. But as all discussions in the cabinet showed the price of bread grain was an extremely neuralgic political issue. Low wages in relation to its west European neighbours meant the Netherlands' bread price had to be low. Although on balance the Netherlands was a sugar importer, within the OEEC countries it was a sugar exporter, raw sugar being imported from the dollar zone and overseas territories and refined sugar being exported to European markets. The only interest the Dutch had in the wine trade was in preserving the liberty to buy where they wanted. And as for dairy products and meat it was difficult to see to where in western Europe France would direct its planned export surpluses if not to markets where they would compete with Dutch goods! The common front would have had to consist essentially of an export cartel directed against the United Kingdom and Germany. French partnership in such a cartel was simply not worth the sacrifice the Dutch would have made. The British and

German markets would have been no less monopsonistic. For Holland they might have eventually become smaller by the share conceded to France. And the possibility that in return the French butter and cheese markets would be opened to the Netherlands never looked as though it would materialize, indeed when it was being discussed French dairy farmers in the central regions were rioting to achieve higher guaranteed prices and the same measures of protection as arable farmers had already gained.

Above these considerations of prices and markets stood, it might be argued, the greater idea of "Europe", the idea that the ECSC would not stand alone, but that an economic sector determining the livelihoods of far more people would be immediately associated with it. But the debates in the French Assembly on the European Agricultural Community proposals revealed no glimmer of anything except a "Europe" designed solely to help French planners and the French economy. The FNSEA displayed exactly the same attitude and it was their narrow realism which Laurens represented. He was interested in specific export markets for specific products and it has to be said in retrospect that this was also the heart of the matter for Pflimlin and for Monnet, in as much as they rightly sensed that "Europe" had to have a functional purpose. Robert Schuman blessed the idea of a second stage of the "Community" based on agriculture, but whereas the Foreign Ministry had been prepared to fight for the Schuman Plan, because for France the relationship with Germany was, literally, a matter of life or death, agricultural export surpluses which had still not materialized were not.

A glance at Table 2 will show that the Monnet Plan fell ludicrously short of achieving the ambitious programmes which had initiated the very idea of an Agricultural Community in France. The sugar surplus had developed, but was much smaller than forecast; the wheat surplus, exported as flour, was not much more than one-tenth of that forecast; the meat and butter surpluses were in not much larger proportion; and dried milk still hardly existed as an export. When the second conference of the "Green Pool" met in 1953 France was on balance still a net food importer from "the Six". The reality was that the United Kingdom remained France's best market. Fruit and vegetable exporters still had a privileged position there (which would have been weakened by almost any conceivable outcome of the conference!). French imports of fruit, vegetables and tobacco would have to be increased even as the price of a set of commodity agreements in the "Green Pool". The refusal of Sweden and Switzerland to associate themselves even with a limited "Green Pool", which seemed all too probable, would exclude two countries with which France did actually have a surplus in agricultural trade. 1953 was a year of recession in western Europe and French prices were higher than those of their competitors, so that exporting was becoming ever more difficult and this could hardly be avoided even in an Agricultural Community. It had to be asked wherein the precise economic advantage for France lay in an Agricultural Community or in a set of "Green Pool" commodity arrangements. The only convincing answer in 1953 was that it might serve to get rid of the wheat and sugar surplus. The political price to pay for this, to say nothing of the eventual price to be paid in admitting German industrial imports once the agricultural

arrangements had permitted "the Six" to proceed to a full common market, was wildly disproportionate to the gain, the sale of what still only amounted to 165,000 tonnes of sugar and 195,000 tonnes of wheat flour.

And was there any point in such a fight when much of Germany was essentially opposed to a second stage of "Europe" based on an Agricultural Community? Adenauer's goodwill in the matter was insufficient. German farmers, CDU voters, were against it. So were their powerfully-established interest-groups. What would the Federal Republic gain from an Agricultural Community? Recognition as a more or less equal European partner outside the realm of coal and steel now meant equality, or something near to it, in the Defence Community. There were no purely diplomatic gains to be won by accession to the Agricultural Community which had not already been won through acceptance of the Schuman proposals. What of the other countries? In the Schuman Plan negotiations overriding issues of European reconstruction and security had led the Netherlands and Italy to accept that the future Franco-German relationship was more important than the particularist interests of their coal and steel industries. In any case the concessions made to them in the negotiations were very generous. Belgium had been left with no choice but to go along, grudgingly. Without a Franco-German axis there was no reason at all for the other countries to accede to an Agricultural Community unless they had substantial gains to make by doing so. The reality was that they would face, on the contrary, substantial political opposition. Their farmers looked on the idea of subjection to a High Authority with cold hostility. They preferred the more accessible national governments, with which they

had become very professionally equipped to deal since 1931 and out of which they had wrung since 1945 considerable financial advantages. In Belgium, especially, nobody wanted to hear of a High Authority again.

The differences of opinion between farmers and government are just as evident in France and the Netherlands themselves and so are the differences within the governments. Lack of genuine national agreement between the two proponents of the Agricultural Community was in fact the result of a lack of domestic agreement within each country on the same question.

French planners saw agricultural surpluses as a means of lowering prices by increasing productivity, at least they and Monnet in particular constantly claimed that this would happen, although they may have been merely assimilating some rather unpleasant facts of political life into their rather glibly comprehensive theories on modernisation. They certainly did not see the changes in agricultural policy in 1948 as a barrier to modernisation and were determined to make land redistribution and more rational methods of production and marketing a reality. From this came Monnet's idea that the trade in French and European surpluses would be regulated by national producers' associations with powers of intervention legitimated by, and legitimating in their turn, a High Authority. The producers themselves, though, only wanted intervention to keep up prices and incomes and the idea of a supranational authority which would have similar powers of intervention in the domestic economy to those of the High Authority of the ECSC was repugnant to them because it was thought in France that it would use those powers to "modernise" the agricultural

sector along the lines to which the first post-war governments had aspired. The producers, through those bodies which more directly represented their interest, were only interested in the Agricultural Community if it provided a market in Germany for their output. The advantages which Monnet and Pflimlin saw in it as a possible extra-national policy instrument for domestic change were to them only a threat to be resisted. An extra-national policy instrument which guaranteed French exporters access to the German market might have been worth making certain concessions to the government for; but the attitude of the Deutscher Bauernverband had already made it clear in 1950 that this was unlikely to happen except for French wheat farmers, whose influence over French farmers' policies was strong only when it was not necessary to count votes. For the far more numerous farmers whose cash crops were dairy produce or wine the German market still looked impenetrable no matter how long the Agricultural Community was discussed.

In the Netherlands there was, by contrast, a harmony between producers and the Ministry of Agriculture. But almost everyone else in the government was deeply suspicious and supported the Agricultural Community only as a way of lowering the barriers to trade in industrial goods as well. For them the Community meant high food prices and there was never any political consensus for Mansholt's plans except as a purely instrumental device to achieve something further. Had Mansholt obtained French agreement to his own "special" arrangement for agriculture it is by no means obvious that the Dutch government and parliament would have sanctioned the arrangement even as part of the proposed common market of the

proposed European Political Community without substantial modifications. After the rejection of the European Defence Community treaty and all its political implications there would have been no point, for the other economic sectors in the Netherlands and Dutch consumers would have been paying the price for another stage of a "Community", while obtaining none of the other goals of their foreign economic policy in which these agricultural arrangements had been merely one instrumental part and the part for which there was the least consensus.

For Dutch farmers British markets remained of central importance. French wheat exporters had not much to hope for from the United Kingdom, as Monnet's early efforts in the CEFC medium-term plan showed. Butter exporters were not likely to make inroads into that proportion of the market reserved for extra-European supply as long as Dominion preferences remained. They would have to compete against the Dutch and the Danes and the experience of the early 1950s showed they could not yet do so. The Plan had not equipped them with the centralised refrigeration, harbour and packaging installations necessary; like many of Monnet's ambitious programmes this had not been backed up by adequate financial action. Meat exporters faced similar problems; unless the British could be persuaded to eat more charcuterie, which they scarcely ate in the 1950s, France would have to export bacon in direct competition with Denmark and this, too, required domestic investment programmes on a scale beyond anything the Monnet Plan had managed to achieve. The two groups of French farmers with continuous, high-value markets in Britain were spring vegetable and fruit farmers and they were never covered in the negotiations,

except through the efforts to obtain advance warning of seasonal import quotas. An Agricultural Community which excluded the United Kingdom meant on balance at the time of the negotiations a loss to French farmers, scarcely compensated by future visions, mainly false, of a soaring demand for French staple foodstuffs in the ECSC countries.

For Dutch farmers the loss would have been much greater; they ran the risk of losing their main market. An Agricultural Community of "the Six" would have left Dutch exports ever more at the mercy of British protectionism. After such an action claims for special consideration would not have been worth making. Britain's "association" with the Coal and Steel Community was based on inescapable economic needs. It was hard to see what inescapable economic need Britain had of Dutch agriculture, particularly if Denmark did not join the Community. A second stage of the "Community" might appear an irrevocable and hostile declaration of political commitment towards "the Six" and away from the United Kingdom with drastic consequences for Dutch trade and perhaps for Dutch defence and security too, a commitment to the still uncertain Franco-German alliance supported by a still uncertain United States which was likely to bring only grave economic disadvantages. A second stage of "Europe", wholly in the French interest and pattern, was not worth it because it did not really promise a solution to the particular problems which the Netherlands now faced.

Germany's intentions were to become self-sufficient in butter and dairy produce and this point was in fact obtained while the Agricultural Community was being negotiated. Meat imports into

Germany, other than live beasts, were also a diminishing prospect for similar reasons. Major sections of the Dutch export trade were becoming more dependent on the British market as negotiations continued which envisaged a "Community" which would obviously exclude Britain. Whether the United Kingdom should be excluded if it proved necessary, was a question, however, which did not primarily concern agricultural trade. It was the further political implications of such a decision which divided both Dutch and French governments very seriously. Mansholt's commitment to a further stage of "Europe" only widened the gap between himself and his fellow ministers, because an Agricultural Community of "the Six" automatically excluded the United Kingdom much more definitively than the Coal and Steel Community had done. So too did Monnet's commitment to the same cause divide him from French governments. They rejected his method of conducting the negotiations, which he had struggled to impose on Pflimlin, they rejected his interventionist ambitions, and they rejected him. This does not, however, seem to have made them any more able to agree amongst themselves. The question of France's future relationship to the United Kingdom was obviously much wider than the issues raised by agriculture and for much of the time French politicians were mostly concerned with the future location of divisions of the British army and not with the future status of French vegetable exports to the United Kingdom.

It is obvious that the presence of the United Kingdom, with a protectionist agricultural system which could not even be readily assimilated into those of the other countries, because it was based on direct subsidies to keep food prices low, was a massive barrier

to agreement between "the Six", which was not reduced by any decision to exclude the United Kingdom from the proposed Community.

During the course of the negotiations, however, an almost equally massive barrier appeared for France in the shape of its overseas territories. The astonishing thing is for how long its existence was ignored or played down. It never appeared as an issue at all in the negotiations until February 1951 as the response to a hint from the Danes that they might be more interested in the whole affair if the French Empire was included. They could then have saved dollars by importing some of their fodder and fat imports in francs from French overseas territories. This immediately provoked the crushing reply from François Mitterand, who was then Secretary of State to the Presidency of the Council, that if the overseas territories had to admit other European food exports to help the Danes they would obviously ask for reverse preferences throughout western Europe for their own exports (85). It could not help but be admitted that this was a fact of life, but even then an investigation of the trading relationships of the overseas territories to the European Agricultural Community was remarkably desultory. It almost seemed as though those in Paris were more immediately concerned with the preference arrangements between Britain and its overseas territories. It was the opinion of Edward Lloyd, who was chiefly concerned with these negotiations in the United Kingdom Ministry of Agriculture, that in March 1952 Pflimlin had "only just realized" that the integration of France's overseas territories with an integrated European market might be difficult (86). Yet it is clear that in the decision by the Council of Ministers a year later to kill the project this question took up

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much of the discussion and weighed heavily in their considerations. The overseas territories, they decided, posed an insuperable problem to any Agricultural Community which resembled the ECSC, a problem which could be avoided by choosing the "product by product" approach (87). As Laurens made clear afterwards, this decision was also taken with British "overseas territories" in mind; only the "product by product" approach would allow France to construct commodity deals which included British Commonwealth and Empire countries as well (88).

The catalogue of reasons why the European Agricultural Community failed to emerge seems almost endless. Yet, eventually the Common Agricultural Policy appeared in its stead and is clearly sketched out in its main principles in Mansholt's earlier drafts for the Agricultural Community. This must lead to a third conclusion; there was obviously some possible change in circumstance which could have made all these obstacles less serious, because in the 1960s circumstances had changed. The most likely explanation is the much greater interest in that later period on the part of all governments, including that of the United States, in reducing barriers against imports. The Agricultural Community was, after all, a way of persuading countries to embark on a programme of trade liberalization worth the name rather than the very limited steps taken before 1951 in the CEEC. Once they were committed to such a programme which even included tariffs an agricultural agreement in some form or other would become necessary, not instrumental. Nor would the problems go away, because they were inextricably linked to the new role of the national agricultural sectors in reconstructed Europe. No matter

what the deficiencies of the Monnet Plan in action eventually the French agricultural surpluses did emerge and Germany still remained the one possible market for them. All long-term economic and political trends pointed to the fact that a solution would have to be found. In an industrial world more positively committed to freer trade the solution became possible, although it is obvious from this paper that it must have been exceedingly difficult.

NOTES

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Table 1

Public Planning Targets for Agricultural Output in France, 1946-1954
(million tonnes)

	Average output (1934- 1938)	1950 Tar- get(in 1946)	1950 Tar- get(re- vised 1948)	1951 Tar- get(1948 revision)	1952 Tar- get(1948 revision)	1957 Tar- get(in 1954)
<u>Wheat</u> (million tonnes)	8.15	8.2	8.1	8.8	9.5	9.5
<u>Feed grains</u> (million tonnes)	4.71	6.68				
<u>Sugar</u> (million tonnes)	0.77	n a	1.0	1.2	1.3	1.5
<u>Milk & milk Products</u> (million hl. milk equi- valent (of which <u>Butter</u> (hundred tonnes)	138	150	150	160	170	200
<u>Cheese</u> (hundred tonnes)	250	300				
<u>Wine</u> (million (hl.))	62.8	50.0				

Sources: France, Commissariat Général au Plan, Rapport général sur le premier plan de modernisation (1946), pp. 163/4; ibid., Quatre ans d'exécution du plan de modernisation (1951), p. 194; ibid., Cinq ans d'exécution du plan de modernisation (1952), p. 133; ibid., Rapport sur la réalisation du plan de modernisation et d'équipement de l'Union Française, Année 1952 (1953), p. 29; ibid., Deuxième plan de modernisation et d'équipement. Projet de loi portant approbation (1954), p. 33. Ministère de l'agriculture, Notes et études documentaires, no. 1314, Le plan quadriennal (1948-1952).

Table 2

Actual French Net Agricultural Exports, 1948-1956
(000 tonnes)

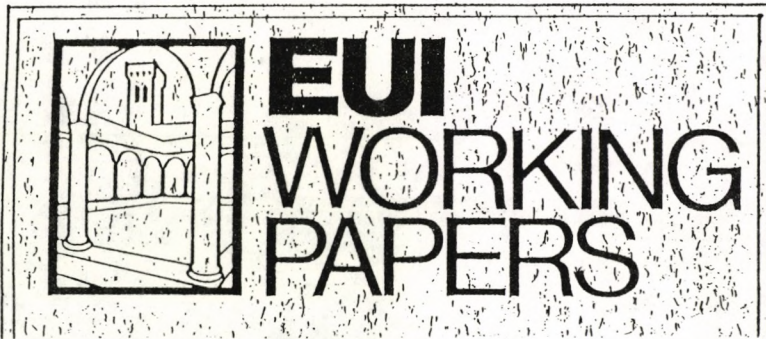
	1948	1949	1950	1951	1952	1953	1954	1955	1956
<u>wheat</u>	0	0	457.5	231.7	0	0	973.9	2044.9	0
<u>wheat flour</u>	0	0	152.5	231.3	195.2	188.1	343.2	490.2	306.2
<u>sugar (crude)</u>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	212.1	52.7
<u>sugar (re-fined)</u>	31.8	55.9	142.3	217.3	165.3	138.4	175.5	249.0	295.2
<u>live cattle</u> (000 head)	0	24.6	45.5	0	0	8.3	51.5	123.0	0
<u>live pigs</u> (000 head)	0	0	49.0	0	0	2.3	0	0	24.9
<u>beef (fresh, chilled, frozen)</u>	0	0	11.6	1.1	0	3.4	43.9	51.2	0
<u>pork (fresh, chilled, frozen)</u>	0	2.2	9.4	0	0	0	0	0	0.2
<u>meat products</u> (prepared)	0.5	1.8	2.4	3.3	3.0	2.9	3.4	2.8	3.6
<u>butter</u>	0	0	0	0	n.a.	2.2	2.8	11.9	5.5
<u>cheese</u>	7.0	7.2	0	8.3	1.1	8.2	8.1	10.7	7.9
<u>condensed milk</u>	0	6.0	10.3	() (12.5) ()	13.7	12.4	13.7	13.6	12.3
<u>powdered milk</u>	0	0	0	()	0.2	0	0.1	0	0

Source: FAO, Yearbook of Food and Agricultural Statistics, Commerce, 1952 vol. VI, 1955 vol. IX, 1957 vol. XI. Annuaire Statistique de la France.

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