Jean Monnet (1888–1979) was the “father of Europe.” No single individual influenced the shape of the European Union more than this French civil servant and diplomat. Monnet convinced Robert Schuman to propose the European Coal and Steel Community and became the first president of its High Authority. Monnet convinced Johan Willem Beyen and Paul-Henri Spaak to propose EURATOM and the EEC, and then established the influential Action Committee for a United States of Europe to pressure governments to accept the proposals. Monnet worked hard, and eventually successfully, to enlarge the Community by adding Britain, Ireland, and Denmark. And shortly before his death, Monnet persuaded EC governments to turn their regular summits into the European Council.¹

Monnet was a pragmatic government official who quite naturally developed a strategy for uniting Europe that looked much like the step-by-step functionalism of David Mitrany (see Chapter 13). Monnet argued that problems of insecurity and human need in the world—and in Europe in particular—required radical changes in the way people thought. Nations, he believed, should adopt common rules governing their behavior and create common institutions to apply these rules. Such a strategy, even if applied on a small scale, would create a “silent revolution in men’s minds” that would change the way people thought and acted. For Monnet, the European Communities of the early 1960s demonstrated that small collective steps set off “a chain reaction, a ferment where one change induces another.” This ferment, he asserted, would not lead to another nineteenth-century-style great power—although a united Europe would be able to shoulder an equal burden of