

Chapter 7

1959–1963

“In Open Air Again”

In the summer of 1960 Harvey Mansfield, Sr., professor of political science at Ohio State University and editor of the *American Political Science Review* found himself in a pickle. From Spain he had received an article from Willmoore Kendall. The article criticized the right to free speech, a right which ordinary Americans and political scientists held almost sacrosanct. Mansfield recognized the quality of Kendall's “incisive” analysis but knew that he had a problem. Finding a “neutral” reader for evaluating the article, given Kendall's status as a conservative “symbol and stereotype” proved impossible. Giving up on this task, Mansfield evaluated the article himself. He made several suggestions for revision. He wanted Willmoore to tone down his “rhetoric” and edit out “anything that will appeal only to Catholics and the natural law people.” The author was annoyed by these comments but accepted several of Mansfield's suggestions as legitimate. Others he rejected, refusing to back off, for example, in his harsh attacks on John Stuart Mill. Kendall was therefore pleasantly surprised when Mansfield—despite the article's “unabashedly egghead McCarthyism”—published it in the *APSR*.¹

Had he not used a similar title in his Socrates article, Kendall might have called this article: “The Case of the People vs. John Stuart Mill.” In it he took on the role of prosecuting attorney, cross-examining Mill relentlessly, and seeking a harsh sentence. Karl Popper, who popularized the term “open society,” merited less attention in his analysis. Refining his Buck Hill Falls lectures, Kendall set out to show the import of Mill's ideas through close reading and analysis of *On Liberty*. He demonstrated that Mill (with few exceptions) favored “absolute freedom of thought and speech,” even when—perhaps especially when—such expression involved subversive subjects. Mill, said Kendall, insisted that freedom was society's first duty, demanded that all questions be treated as open questions, and denied “existence . . . of any truth

whatever." Mill posited no "right" to free speech because that would demand recognizing an objective order of rights and duties. "In full rebellion against both religion and philosophy," Mill rejected previous treatments of his subject and regarded himself as "standing not upon the shoulders of giants but of pygmies." In summation, prosecutor Kendall called his nineteenth-century defendant "a teacher of evil."²

In the rest of the article, Kendall showed why an open society cannot work. Mill treated society as if it were a "debating club devoted above all to the pursuit of truth," whereas real societies cherish many goods. Most want to preserve ideas and practices which their members regard as true and by which their members try to live. Mill assumed free speech could do no social hurt. Most people disagreed with him on this point and feared social hurts resulting from what others said, or wrote, or thought. Therefore, Kendall argued, the only way to establish an open society was to coerce people into accepting a kind of society which they did not want. Society must silence those who oppose freedom of speech. Moreover, without belief in truth, "extremes of opinion will . . . grow further and further apart so that . . . their bearers can less and less tolerate even the thought of one another, still less one another's presence in society." Amid universal skepticism, noisy clashes of opinion would substitute "phosphorous" for "philosophy." Society would abandon the search for truth and tolerate injustice, ignorance, and oppression. Rather than modeling society on a debating club, Kendall suggested comparing it to an academic discipline. Among scholars discussion is valued, preparation for serious discourse required, and disciplinary "orthodoxy" assumed. Anyone who wanted to promote change had to work within the system's parameters and "persuade the community to accept his point of view." For the adamant change agent, if the academic discipline (or society) rejected his initiative, the alternatives were "isolation" or "banishment."³

Coming out in December 1960, the "Open Society and Its Fallacies" was one of the most insightful and provocative pieces of Kendall's oeuvre. Yet, only a month before, Kendall had published another article which was also among his most important. In it he articulated a carefully calibrated vision of Congressional supremacy. Entitled "The Two Majorities" and appearing in the *Midwest Journal of Politics*, this piece developed Kendall's conception of U.S. representative democracy. Presidential campaigns of both parties, he argued, tend to promote change and to seek "popular mandates" based on "lofty and enlightened principle." They proclaimed broad, vaguely defined plans to attract voters in a country with many different interest groups. Presidential elections thus tended toward a "plebiscitary political system." Congress, on the other hand, was linked to actual interests in "structured communities" in specific locales. Its representatives sought real gains for

constituents through pork barrel projects and grounded the body politic in a healthy way.⁴

Clarifying the Madisonian vision he had first seen at Stanford, Kendall argued the Framers had designed Congress to make most important national decisions. Sometimes those decisions meant rejecting principled presidential initiatives. Leaders of the political science profession, especially Robert Dahl, had done a disservice to American politics. They had creating a false dichotomy that "either the majority rules through the presidential elections . . . , or it does not rule at all." Such political scientists thus denied "legitimacy . . . to Congress as a formulator of policy." Dahl and company portrayed Congress—with its staggered elections, seniority system, filibuster, and so forth—as a barrier to democracy, created because of the "anti-democratic, anti-majority-rule bias of the Framers." To question this consensus, admitted Kendall, "may seem an act of perversity." But academic perversity was Willmoore's stock-in-trade. He then argued persuasively that the Framers—contra Charles Beard, J. Allen Smith, et al.—possessed a deep "commitment to the majority principle." In creating the nation's framework, they had sought to facilitate popular control over the government, not to prevent it. They feared inflamed majorities "bent on injustice," but majority rule per se did not frighten them. As father of the Constitution, for example, Madison had no problem with "popular majorities having their way. He simply wanted . . . the majority to be articulated and counted in a certain way." Congress, then, was not a barrier to democracy but one of "two popular majorities."⁵

The Congressional majority involved selection by the people of uninstructed legislators with time and temperament to consider the national interest and the interests of their own communities. Localities vote not mainly on issues but for individuals. They select their "virtuous men," the natural aristocrats of their particular places. Such individuals, with deep roots at home and well connected with local business leaders and professionals, represent the "interests and values" of hierarchically structured local communities in ways no distant president ever could. Political discourse at the Congressional level dealt with concrete situations. Thus, candidates could "talk about something." In presidential elections, using "pleasant-sounding maxims," candidates mostly talked "about nothing." In this scholarly tour de force, one sees Kendall's long-standing interest in Rousseau and in local government bear fruit. By representing the will of many distinct communities, instead of upholding theories popular among liberal academics, Congress helped preserve democracy. It embodied the consensual will of the people which Rousseau believed must be lost in any large state. Frank Meyer, Willmoore's *National Review* colleague, recognized the article as "a brilliant piece of analysis." But Vernon Van Dyke, editor of the *Midwest Journal*, had to think long and hard before publishing it, given Kendall's notoriety.⁶

Though under contract with Yale until 1961, Kendall never returned there after 1958. In fact, his most productive years as a scholar came after leaving New Haven. After Stanford Kendall developed an increasingly nuanced and intricate political philosophy. From 1959 until his death in 1967, Kendall's publications increased in quantity and in quality. His many articles, and one book, from this period comprise his best scholarly work. They witness the maturation, extension, and articulation of ideas he had been pondering for the previous three decades. Later in 1960, for example, Kendall published yet another important article, "How to Read Milton's *Areopagitica*." This one appeared in the *Journal of Politics*. Arguing that the English Puritan was not a strong defender of free speech, he again faced considerable skepticism from the editor before having the article accepted for publication. The next year, together with Frederick Wilhelmsen, Kendall's piece on Cicero and the necessity for maintenance of a "public orthodoxy" appeared in French in *Table Ronde*.⁷

By 1960—having served his country in World War II and Korea, lived through scarring controversies at Yale, helped start *National Review*, and absorbed the ideas of Leo Strauss and Eric Voegelin—Kendall was at the height of his intellectual powers. His thought was reaching full maturity. For a time, he focused on publishing in prestigious journals hoping such articles would win him promotion at Yale. Under the sponsorship of the Reim Foundation, Kendall lived and worked in Europe from 1959 to 1961, mostly in Spain. Having more time to write facilitated this burst of scholarly productivity. Together with seventy other scholars, he lived for a time at the *Residencia* of the Spanish National Research Council, a government-sponsored think tank in Madrid. Here he found pleasant lodgings and was provided meals, domestic servants, and ample office space. Nellie Cooper came with him as his research assistant. Charles Hyneman believed this time in Spain helped Willmoore rediscover his muse. After "a long time in the woods," Hyneman took heart to see his old friend "out in clear ground and in open air again."⁸

Looking for like-minded company, Kendall began to associate with right-wing critics of the Franco regime. Among these were the Catholic traditionalists of *Opus Dei* associated with the University of Navarre in Pamplona. He befriended the Spanish historian and political activist Rafael Calvo Serer. He also admired philosopher Rafael Gambra Ciudad, whom he called "the only interesting person I found in Madrid." Many of these persons, including Calvo and Gambra, were monarchists disenchanted with the Franco regime. Some were Carlist legitimists. They supported the claims of the descendants of Don Carlos, Count of Medina to the Spanish throne and were often at odds with the Franco regime. The Carlists, Kendall admitted, were "a little crazy," but he admired their verve and self-assurance. He came to believe that even

his "friends" in Spain remained constrained in their thinking and creativity. He did not blame the "dictatorship" for creating such intellectual stagnation. Rather he viewed the regime as "the result not the cause of the intellectual degradation of Spain." Frederick Wilhelmsen (deeply influenced by the Carlists) and his family were part of this circle. When Willmoore came to see the Wilhelmsens, he boomed out to their children that: "God has arrived." Alexandra Wilhelmsen, then a little girl, remembers that Kendall's Spanish was perfect but spoken slowly, similar to the southern-inflected drawl of his English. Although she called him Uncle Willmoore, he also frightened her a little.⁹

Kendall had difficulty completing a proposed book on Rousseau. In April 1960 he wrote Richard Ware of Relm to ask for renewal of his grant despite failure to complete the book. Part of this delay came because Kendall was reformulating his work in light of reading Leo Strauss and Eric Voegelin. He asked Ware to consider the quality of his work rather than its quantity. He noted that he could turn out "Polemical work" quickly but that "scholarly work" took time. Kendall told Ware that he had been more productive than ever in writing scholarly articles, but he had to write carefully, completing 700-800 words a day, all the while reading lots of scholarly material. Indeed, he was coming to understand that his forte lay in writing short expository pieces rather than lengthy monographs. When Willmoore pleaded greater productivity as a scholar, he spoke truly. He was formulating or completing much of his best scholarly work during this time. Recognizing the value of his efforts, Ware granted a second year of funding.¹⁰

Kendall did write a book in Spain, but it was unpublishable. Tentatively titled *The Long Farewell to Majority Rule*, it involved a close reading, textual analysis, and refutation of Robert Dahl's *Preface to Democratic Theory* (1956). By reading and rereading the book and reducing Dahl's arguments to logical form, a new vision of democracy "opened up" for Kendall, the implications of which, he said, Dahl did not see. By engaging with Dahl, Kendall realized his own previous ideas about "majority-rule democracy" had been wrong. Few Americans ever actually questioned "the majority-principle." Yet he was skeptical of Dahl's number crunching to measure democracy. He thought the author's anti-Madisonian views incompatible with the main arguments in *Preface*. Kendall then reached the "shocking" conclusion that "the whole anti-majoritarian interpretation of Madison and Hamilton is an historicist fallacy." As a book, this effort did not work. Rigorously argued point by subpoint, full of explanatory ellipses and references to Dahl's *Preface*, it made tough reading, even by Kendall's demanding standards. Public dissection of famous works by Locke or Socrates or Mill might pull in readers, but Dahl's name lacked similar cachet. Kendall did get interest from publishers, but eventually they shied away.¹¹

Kendall wrote only sporadically for *National Review* while in Europe, with his contributions intertwined with his academic work. In May 1961 a crisis in Kendall's relationship with the magazine arose over his review of Arthur Whitaker's *Spain and the Defense of the West*. When Willmoore submitted a twelve-page typescript, Buckley pruned it. Believing his original version would help "our friends in Spain," Kendall found the edits to be unacceptable. He threatened resignation and expected that his stance would "probably result in the disappearance of my name from the masthead of *National Review*." A month later, he told Francis Wilson that the coming "liquidation" of his connection with the magazine would be "a relief." In reality, Buckley's refusal to rescind his cuts and his willingness to accept Willmoore's resignation shook Kendall so badly that he ended a long period of sobriety. Brent Bozell was able to reconcile the two men which allowed Kendall to continue for a time with *National Review*. In July Kendall apologized to Buckley and agreed to accept Buckley's editorial discretion as the final word about what got printed.¹²

Thus, not everything went swimmingly for Willmoore on his European sojourn. Despite a year of successful writing, Kendall was drinking to excess and determined to enter a hospital for treatment of this "long-standing malady." In October he checked in for a long hospital stay in Pamplona. He expressed hope that that this break from routine would help him start afresh in his scholarly pursuits. Responsible for his treatment was Dr. Juan José López-Ibor, the most famous psychiatrist in Spain. Hospital costs were cheap by American standards, and López-Ibor agreed to offer "his own services for free—as a friend." After months of treatment, the psychiatrist, using an early form of cognitive therapy, told Willmoore that what he most needed was "to apply to my own problems the kind of intelligence I apply to the problems I write about." López-Ibor also prescribed the drug disulfiram (Antabuse), "the famous little pills," said Willmoore, "which make you allergic to alcohol." By November, Kendall had given up all intoxicating beverages. He found the change to be quite "a shock," but López-Ibor stressed the need to "abstain totally." For a time Willmoore kept the nature of his malady quiet, and he always remained defensive about it. He told Hyneman he had been hospitalized for "fatigue" and "pneumonia." Only in early 1961 did he admit the alcohol dimension of his hospitalization to Bill Buckley. Even then he claimed López-Ibor was providing him "advice, not therapy" and that his hospital stay was "purely medicinal" in nature.¹³

For a time, Kendall thrived under this treatment. In December 1960 he welcomed Brent Bozell, Patricia (aka Trish or Tish) Buckley Bozell, and their eight children. They were coming to Spain so Brent could write. Willmoore devoted lots of time to finding a suitable dwelling, hiring a cook, two maids, a nanny, and buying a week's worth of groceries. Said Trish:

Ken remains a jewel. When we arrived here he had the guards hand me the keys to the place and all the maids lined up in spanking uniforms (gotten by Ken) to greet me. Then a delicious four course meal with flowers around (another Kenism) and a sign in front of each bedroom designating which person went where. Yes, we were met at the airport by Ken, Reid, and two nurses. This allowed me to clutch Kiki, and after a plush reception at our home, I followed Kiki under the bed.

All in all, she thought, her family had come to live in "one of the more beautiful spots on earth," located near the magnificent royal monastic complex of El Escorial and surrounded "on all sides by snow-topped mountains."¹⁴

Mrs. Bozell, however, was also suffering from alcoholism. Drinking no alcohol on the plane trip over was the start of her attempt to dry out. At this point Kendall, months into his own treatment, spoke confidently about his "complete break with alcohol." It was a development he found a "quite 'liberating.'" He offered assistance to Trish, of whom he was quite fond. At social gatherings, their circle sometimes refrained from serving alcohol. When the alcohol did flow, Trish and Ken happily "drank mineral water." A few days after the Bozells arrived in Spain, Ken and Trish sat up to 5:00 a.m. talking "candidly for the first time about the problem." Willmoore was optimistic after this private conversation. He saw Trish "falling in love all over again with life," fondly recalling "how she loved it when I first knew her!" He expressed hope to Bill that he had "been of some use to her," then noted "how young and beautiful she is," despite her recent struggles with alcohol.¹⁵

By March things were going less well. Mrs. Bozell appeared to abstain only because of the insistence of her husband. Her abstinence had lasted six weeks. On March 5, 1961, the Bozells planned a birthday dinner for Ken, for which Trish prepared roast beef and cake. In the meantime, Brent discovered a "fifth of gin" his wife had snuck into the house and threw it away. A furious Patricia began slamming doors, then refused to talk to her husband. "Poor Ken," said Brent, "even he, I am sure, has had happier birthdays." Kendall then put the Bozells in touch with Dr. López-Ibor and was hopeful his treatment would help Trish. The initial results were unhappy. Brent soon found himself a "prison guard" to his wife, as his efforts to empty the house of liquor failed. "On Willmoore," Brent told Bill, "Good God." Kendall soon lapsed back into his own alcoholism. Upon receiving a letter from Buckley in the Spring of 1961 accepting his resignation from *National Review* (in the Whitaker dispute), Willmoore had gone "to the can and vomited," then telephoned Brent. Two hours later—when Willmoore showed up to lecture at the Madrid Ateneo—he "was stinko." As Bozell patched things up, he suggested that clarification of Buckley's editorial authority must come from him alone, that "no one else will do."¹⁶

Another untoward incident occurred in France in early 1961 when Kendall mailed some jewelry from Paris back to the United States. He sent it to Bill Buckley with instructions to forward it to Evan (Van) Galbraith. Galbraith was chairman of the board of *National Review* and Buckley's closest friend. Nancy Galbraith, Van's wife, had left two valuable gems in the poor box of a Paris church. Having convinced the priest to give them to him for safekeeping, Kendall chose not to return the jewels to Mrs. Galbraith herself. There "was some question as to Nancy's present competence." Over the next couple of years this situation got more complicated. Van Galbraith accused Kendall of having committed adultery with his wife, apparently during this visit to France. The Buckley circle mostly sided with Ken in the matter, regarding Nancy as "a mad woman" who was either lying or who herself had seduced Kendall. After Kendall's return to the United States, this matter got entangled in the Galbraith divorce. Named as correspondent in adultery, Willmoore had to testify in the case, amid accusations of homosexuality against Van and insanity regarding Nancy.¹⁷

Kendall, Buckley, and Bozell had developed a deep emotional bond in their shared battles at Yale. Despite bitter disputes in coming years, that bond never really disappeared. By 1960 the Buckley-Kendall relationship had experienced a role reversal. Buckley was acting as father figure to his former teacher. Some of Bill's letters to Willmoore in Spain sound eerily like those from Reverend Kendall to his son decades earlier, with Bill urging Ken to finish his book. Buckley also assisted Kendall with financial matters, including his taxes. Meanwhile, Bill and Brent were coming to know Nellie Cooper, and Brent was not impressed. Nellie, he said, "was nice, but terribly stupid . . . and mostly vegetable." He knew "how bad off Willmoore" was when he "presented her to us as his fiance." Bozell noted that Kendall had "taken refuge in her in the way one heads for the shade of a favorite old oak when the world seems too much to bear." By that summer, Bozell was also feuding with Kendall, but he hoped that Nellie would force Ken "to face reality and go after a cure." Willmoore seems to have planned to marry Nellie before this announcement. In 1960 he asked Yvona not to think it "silly" that he still hoped for "a son or daughter of my own." He went on to say that he had hired "the Roman equivalent of a Philadelphia lawyer" to help "his canonical case." He thought "the Church is going to free me to get married" and told his sister that the lower cost of living in Spain would make it easier to raise a family.¹⁸

As Kendall's time in Spain wound down, he had to face returning to Yale, a prospect neither he nor the university relished. When considering his position at Yale, however, Kendall took into account the "standpoint of the national Right." Conservatives prized having one of their own at the renowned university. Conservative activists regarded his employment at

Yale as a strategic beachhead. Buckley, said Kendall, had convinced him to return to Yale from a better-paying job at ORO to serve the purposes of the conservative movement. Relm had provided the research grant for Kendall to go to Spain in part to bolster his cause for receiving promotion at Yale. In 1959, when Stanford students wanted to raise money to establish an endowed chair for Kendall, Buckley discouraged their efforts. His old mentor, he said, could "do more for the cause of Conservatism teaching in the cosmopolitan fortress of the Liberal ideology than he can in the relatively robust colleges of the midwest and far west."¹⁹

Yet, Kendall often talked about quitting Yale. He came to believe that being at some other university where he could turn out PhD students, a privilege denied him at Yale, might help American conservatism more than remaining at the Ivy League school. In 1959, before he left for Spain, he thought he had arranged a buyout of his contract. Then, he said, President A. Whitney Griswold had "got cold feet at the last minute." Eventually Kendall decided that he could no longer be a martyr to the conservative cause by staying at Yale. He still wanted to boost the cause of conservatism and was willing to sacrifice for it. As regards Yale, however, he told Buckley that he had now to distinguish between loyalty and "quixotism."²⁰

By early 1961 Kendall thought that Yale might accept another buyout proposal. His "self-respect" required him to leave, he said, given the impossibility of promotion and the pervasive hostility he faced in New Haven. In February 1961 he made a proposal to leave if the university would pay him ten years salary. The request did not result from a spur-of-the-moment drunken phone call to President Griswold, as sometimes portrayed. Kendall had long considered this move, then perhaps he made such a call. Dahl, on behalf of Yale, accepted Kendall's offer. Willmoore believed Buckley would "put great pressure" on him not to go through with his resignation. Kendall received Dahl's letter "with mixed emotions" but felt "pretty good about it." After negotiations, Kendall signed his letter of resignation on May 10, 1961, with Provost Norman Sydney Buck signing for Yale. The final terms of the settlement were two payments of \$4,250 each year for the next five years. University officials denied they had forced out Kendall for political reasons. One political scientist did wryly suggest that their former colleague would find Spain's political climate more "congenial" than New Haven's.²¹

When Willmoore came back to Connecticut in late June 1961, he vowed never to set foot on the Yale campus. Without a job he began to look around for an outlet for his energies and for ways to boost his income. Always a poor money manager, and with heavy expenses related to legal matters and frequent travel, Willmoore struggled financially. His financial prospects began to improve at the end of 1961. The Yale settlement money helped, but he also began to sell gravel from his creek at Northford. This attempt to draw profit

from his land attracted the attention of neighbors, the closest of whom were Cleanth and Tinkum Brooks. When Tinkum complained to Willmoore about trucks entering the property to remove the gravel, Kendall, who had been drinking, exchanged words with her. This confrontation ended a decades-long friendship with the Brookses.²²

Kendall claimed at times that his drinking problem remained in abeyance upon returning to his home country. In November, for instance, he wrote to Hyneman that: “I took the vow in Spain and am sticking to it pretty good I *must* say.” Doing “pretty good” was either intentionally untruthful or delusional. Those closer to Kendall knew better. In August Buckley and Bozell warned Willmoore that he was “dangerously ill” and should return to Spain for treatment. Kendall did not respond well to these admonitions. He temporarily cut off contact with Bozell for wielding “the weapon of alleged illness” like a “baby” brandishing “a razor.” In September 1961 he went on “a bender” which caused grave concern to his mother, sister, and Buckley. In October Bill got Ken to agree to make continued employment at *National Review* contingent on remaining sober. He even agreed to pay him a \$2,000 retainer if he refrained from drink. Buckley informed Pearl Kendall that her son “was looking for an incentive to take that little pill every morning.”²³

Meanwhile Kendall was searching out professional opportunities. Building on established contacts, for example, he explored working for the Dominican Republic. He had previously served that country as a public relations consultant. As part of this work Kendall had worked as ghostwriter and translator for Rafael Trujillo, the country’s controversial dictator. In January 1957 the Dominican government had rejected his proposal to write a book about the “inner workings of the regime.” Kendall viewed the country’s public relations efforts as “inept,” but he remained fascinated with the Trujillo experiment. He saw the regime as translating “into palpating reality” the “‘public-spirited’ political philosophy” of Thomas Hobbes, with Rafael Trujillo as a Hobbesian Leviathan trying to bring order to his society. The Dominican boss, Kendall thought, was seeking to promote the good as Hobbes said strong rulers should do. Labeling the country’s government a “dictatorship based on something called force,” Kendall argued at the time, failed to catch its complexity.²⁴

By the summer of 1961 the regime was in serious trouble. In May, shortly before Kendall returned to the United States from Spain, Rafael Trujillo—who in the previous two years had repelled a Cuban invasion and attempted to blow up the president of Venezuela—was assassinated in a CIA plot. Desperately holding onto power, the Trujillo family reached out to Kendall. Besides intellectual interest in the regime and experience working with it, Willmoore had a personal connection to the dead dictator’s family. Flor de Oro Trujillo, Rafael’s oft-married daughter, was an “old flame.” Therefore, in July 1961, he took a trip to the Republic to explore working for the tottering

government. It was, he said, a "sorely needed job." Kendall viewed his mission as showing the regime how "to make itself acceptable" to American conservatives, that is, what "self-surgery" would be necessary to make it agreeable to a Barry Goldwater. Afterward he flew to California to give a speech to Hollywood conservatives in which he praised the anticommunism of the rump government. If American liberals forced regime change on the country, they would, he argued, facilitate the spread of Castroism. Kendall doubted he would get the job because "the course I'd advise them to follow . . . would take more imagination than I suppose them to have." After about a month, he gave up the project as a waste of time. Shortly thereafter the remaining Trujillos fled to Europe. Kendall believed an opportunity to establish a firmly conservative Dominican government, "a la Chiang," had been missed.²⁵

Longer-term prospects beckoned on the American speaking circuit. When he returned from Spain in 1961, Willmoore discovered that "an unprecedented demand for 'conservative' oratory" had developed in the United States. He believed he could earn a tidy income from such "performances." To maintain his market value, he told his sister, he would have to keep "my name on the masthead of *NR* at a time I would like to break with it." Kendall consulted with Buckley about possible engagements. He signed on with a speaker's bureau which advertised six different topics which he could deliver. These included: "Academic Freedom and Its Fallacies, 'Freedom of Speech' and Its Fallacies,' Conservatism and the Right-Wing Dictators, Conservatism and the Welfare State, The Fallacy of 'Christian' Pacifism, [and] Conservatism and the 'Individualist' Fallacy." Another flyer from following years included an illustrated portrait of a dapper Willmoore smoking a cigarette. It included testimonials from Brent Bozell and Stanley Parry.²⁶

Over his lifetime Willmoore Kendall often showed himself to be a mesmerizing speaker and debater. When facing a challenging opponent such as Mulford Sibley, Paul Weiss, or James MacGregor Burns, he more than held his own. In the autumn months of 1961, however, he experienced a series of public embarrassments in this role, mostly related to his worsening alcoholism. Even when not obviously liquor related, one suspects covert drinking caused Kendall to misjudge his audiences. On August 19, 1961, for example, he delivered a speech at Hollywood High School in Los Angeles and praised Keynesian economics. In response Buckley received a cascade of letters criticizing his editorial "left hand man." A Phoenix-area physician complained that Willmoore sounded like "a Fabian socialist, perhaps a new frontiersman." Another listener said Kendall was rude and that he championed the "commie-line" of farm subsidies, the Marshall Plan, and the minimum wage. When Kendall proclaimed it "was the Russian communists we had to worry about" not "creeping socialism" at home, the crowd started

"booing & protesting." Defending his mentor, Buckley admitted Kendall was fond of Keynes. Remembering the Yale years, however, Buckley told one correspondent that Willmoore had been "the only man on campus defending: 1) free enterprise 2) Senator Joseph McCarthy" and that "I saw him bleed rather profusely in defense of his beliefs." Therefore, Willmoore deserved "a certain amount of patience."²⁷

Then things got worse. In Seattle on November 15, 1961, Kendall set out to debate liberal activist Carl Braden, recently freed from a year in jail for refusal to testify to the House Un-American Activities Committee. That night Kendall denounced the Bill of Rights, called Americans a "persecuting people," claimed Braden should be persecuted, and labeled himself a "Jacobin." According to a friendly witness, he "was obviously drunk and had been drinking all day." All in all, said one attendee, "it was a Field Day for Liberals." The next day—November 16, 1961—Kendall spoke at a California university and again appeared inebriated. Buckley wrote sternly to Kendall. Willmoore had denied being drunk, marshaled favorable testimonials, and defended his arguments in the speech. Buckley knew better and urged his former teacher to get "back to the antabuse." Bill then smoothed over the matter. He settled on (and asked others to share) the story that the controversial performances had resulted from "barbiturates taken in an accidentally heavy dose, and fatigue." He then sent an encouraging telegram to a thankful Ken. "EVIDENCE IS CLEAR. YOU WERE AMBUSHED BY BARBITURATES AND LET'S GET ON WITH PUTTING BRADEN BEHIND BARS."²⁸

Continuing to drink heavily and not taking his Antabuse, Kendall was not yet ready to "get on with" anything. On December 1, he again embarrassed himself in front of a crowd, this time on a visit to Georgetown University, where he was set to teach the next semester. After a lackluster talk, he annoyed his audience by answering questions in a "boorish" manner. Then, at a dinner party at the home of Karl Cerny, former Yale student and (together with George W. Carey) a member of the Georgetown political science department, Kendall passed out. Carey attributed such behavior to Kendall's "heavy drinking," which was "well in excess of a fifth a day." Willmoore was often drunk before going out in public. In such state, said Carey, Kendall was a danger to himself, "falling asleep with lighted cigarette, falling out of chairs, etc." Ken reported this incident to Bill, apologizing for "getting very drunk." Buckley showed the letter to James Burnham, with the comment: "Read it & weep." Kendall remembered nothing about the night in question but promised to be "less grand" in promises about future sobriety. For a time, Kendall again dried out. He reported in mid-January to Buckley and Hyneman (who had heard of his troubles with "John Barleycorn") that he had not taken a drink in six weeks.²⁹ Buckley ignored his own pledge to fire Kendall from *National Review* if he did not stay sober.

In fact, when Kendall traveled to Dallas later in December to pursue yet another professional opportunity, he served as an emissary for Buckley, then sounding out a potential alliance with General Edwin A. Walker. Willmoore hoped to become a speechwriter for Walker, a right-wing critic of Eisenhower and Kennedy, who had just resigned his army commission to enter politics. In terms of political influence, the potential job would be "the most important operation I was ever involved in," Kendall told his sister. He added that he needed to stop Walker "from using his mouth to put his foot in." He told Francis Wilson that he would take the job only if Walker dropped "the whole topic of domestic communism, on which his thinking varies from silly to just plain mad." Kendall met Medford Evans, Walker's chief advisor, but the men could not agree about the nature of the Communist menace. Kendall toed the *National Review* line, arguing that American communists were no real danger and that the focus should be on the external Soviet threat. Evans maintained that American political leaders were deeply under the influence of communists and had to be denounced as such. Kendall replied that if the General did not change his mind he would "lose his respectable support." Asked to explain "respectable support," Kendall told Evans, "I mean *National Review*." Willmoore did not get the job. He informed Buckley that "real communication on the issues at stake" with Evans and Walker was "out of the question" because of "how they hate the 'respectable' Conservatives!" Kendall soon wrote a note to Evans which ended with the admonition, "*C'est la guerre*."³⁰

Such outreach to Walker was connected to the magazine's increasingly testy relationship with the John Birch Society, to which both Walker and Evans were closely connected. After discovering in 1958 that Robert Welch, Society founder, thought President Eisenhower, and numerous other American government leaders, were communist agents, Buckley determined to break with the society. As Willmoore explained to Yvona, any such ideological divorce was a perilous step for the magazine "as many of our most powerful and wealthy supporters are also supporters of the Birch Society." Kendall was never a Bircher and said he could not understand why anyone would support the group. He believed Buckley had handled the question of *National Review* distancing itself from the Society "just brilliantly."³¹ A key question in this dispute, then, was how to distinguish between the dangers of liberalism and communism. Those associated with Walker, Evans, and the Birch Society wanted to merge these threats. On the other hand, Buckley, Kendall, and the other editors of *National Review* had long sought to portray liberalism and communism as distinct dangers. The former was domestic and the latter external.

By backing Buckley, Kendall lost the friendship of Revilo Oliver. Oliver was a founder and board member of the Birch Society, and he wrote

regularly for its magazine *American Opinion*. His final break with *National Review* came in 1960 when anti-Semitic statements delivered in his speeches appeared in *Common Sense* and *American Mercury*. Magazine editors already knew Oliver was a Nietzschean who viewed liberalism as exemplifying *Skavenmoral*, but they found his increasingly open and outright anti-Semitism unacceptable. Buckley asked Oliver to repudiate his published remarks as "unauthorized." When Oliver refused, his name disappeared from *National Review*. Kendall applauded Buckley's approach to the matter. Heading east from Dallas in December 1961, Kendall stopped by Urbana to mend fences with his old friend. Oliver, he said, had "become very bitter about the world in general" and "seems to be asking for trouble as eloquently as anyone can." Willmoore had urged Reילו to avoid politics after being forced out at *National Review* but to no avail. He told Oliver that his anti-Semitism and conflation of liberals and communists was unacceptable to him personally and to the magazine. Reילו, however, had "gone John Birch Society crazy." To Wilson, Kendall added: "All of this is very sad to me, as Reילו has been my closest friend for 30 years now." On his visit Kendall tried to convince his friend that he was making unsubstantiated claims in his political writings that he would never tolerate in his scholarship. This outreach failed, and the men had little contact afterward. Oliver understood that in commencing "to write on political subjects," he had made a "grave mistake" career-wise, but said Kendall, Reילו's "hatred for NR dominated all else in his emotions." Eventually, Oliver's anti-Semitism became too much for the Birch Society, which pushed him out in 1966.³²

As it began to separate from the Birch Society and associated groups, however, the Buckley circle was distancing itself from an approach much like it had once championed. The magazine had always distinguished between liberal and communist threats. But it had also warned that liberal "fellow-travelers" facilitated communist subversion. As Buckley was getting *National Review* off the ground, critics had called such attacks disreputable. Now it was Buckley who was calling out his opponents on the right as scrambled in the brains. In part this change came because Buckley, Kendall, Burnham, and associates believed their battles in the 1950s—waged in their words and through the actions of McCarthy and the House Un-American Activities Committee—had worked. That is, under conservative pressure, the United States had tightened up its internal security procedures enough to minimize communist infiltration of American institutions. This fissure also occurred because Bircher claims were more extravagant, and less evidence based than the charges of their predecessors. As always, *National Review* continued to lambaste liberals. Insofar as this fight derived from the anti-Semitism of those to the magazine's right, there was little change. Buckley, Kendall and company had long denounced this tendency among conservatives.³³

Willmoore had a relatively uneventful and productive semester at Georgetown in the Spring of 1962. For the first time in his life, he held the rank of full professor, albeit on a visiting basis. He continued to integrate the various strands of his career as a public intellectual together, working up speeches and lectures and then revising them for publication. An April 1962 speech he delivered in Madison, Wisconsin, for example, provided the basis for an article in *National Review* and for a key essay on McCarthy in his upcoming book. He suggested in this speech, that each side could claim victory in the McCarthy struggle. "McCarthyites . . . got the persecution of the Communists which their understanding of American consensus demanded." But "the anti-McCarthyites" saw that such efforts "went forward" using "the clear and present danger doctrine." Despite his inauspicious debut, Kendall performed creditably at Georgetown. He roomed with George W. Carey, developing an intellectual partnership that blossomed in the upcoming years. As usual, he won "devoted fans" among conservative students. When offered a teaching post in California, Kendall delayed accepting the position. The Jesuit university wanted to see if it could match the offer.³⁴

After returning to the United States in 1961, Kendall continued to write occasionally for *National Review*. But he never wielded the influence or experienced the camaraderie he had enjoyed there until 1958. Privately, he expressed reservations about the magazine. He told Wilson that *National Review* "was a menace to US conservatism in its present form" and complained about being shunted aside as a "dreamy college professor." Kendall expressed dismay "at seeing myself passed up in the race for fame and fortune by persons who once in one way or another had been very close to me and distinctly below me in pecking order." Among these persons were John Fischer, Carl Albert, Robert Dahl, and Henry Kissinger. Much of this dissatisfaction centered on Buckley himself. As Ken told Bill in 1962, "You're *already* famous, and don't have to work on it so hard from now on. Some of the rest of us want to be famous, too." He fumed that the magazine had become "*Burnham's Fortnightly*." Predictably, Kendall came to resent Buckley's advice about his drinking, and in April 1962 he told his former student he had stopped taking Antabuse.³⁵

That summer the Bozells paid for Ken and Nellie to return to Spain. Brent hoped Willmoore could help him finish his book. He also needed Kendall's translation services to help with Trish's treatment whose various nuances were beyond Bozell's Spanish. Trish continued to receive residential treatment for alcoholism from López-Ibor, and Bozell feared she would need institutional care upon return to the United States. Willmoore certainly did not lead by example. After a summer of sobriety, said Trish, Kendall partied "all night" with his friends for a "lost weekend" in Spain, leaving him "*muy soplado*." Then, "when he was on his 22nd hour of drinking, slobbering and

fuming all over me, he garbled: 'Tish, you don't know how well you look. You see, some of us can take drink, some like you can't.' Isn't that cute?" Willmoore, she went on, "looks awful & is sick and not just from booze. . . . Poor everybody." Trish reassured a worried Bill about Ken's health but mentioned his "shortness of breath." In fact, Kendall had his first signs of angina pectoris during the Spring Semester of 1962 at Georgetown. That fall he was diagnosed with serious heart trouble in Los Angeles.³⁶

Kendall arrived back in the United States in late August 1962 and prepared to move west to take a new post at Los Angeles State College. He knew he was taking a step down from Yale or Georgetown but needed the money. Offered a tenured post, Willmoore took a visiting professorship instead. The job market for political scientists was quite good, and he did not want to tie himself down. He was interested in raising funds to push the annulment process forward so he could marry Nellie. "This business in Rome," he told Yvona, "is gonta be expensive." Kendall was also ready to relocate. The East, he said, was for him too tied up with his "mistakes" of going to work for the ORO, committing too much time to *National Review*, going into debt at Northford, and marrying Anne. He was happy to move to California whose "fluidity" offered a chance to start over. Kendall enjoyed teaching his classes at his new post but discovered students less prepared than those he was used to. He considered coming back for a second year, but his contract was not renewed. He experienced "pangs of guilt" about not contributing more to *National Review* but preferred focusing on his academic work.³⁷

Kendall's biggest achievement that year was to complete his long-awaited book. He finished the manuscript in February 1963 for submission to Regnery. The book's original title was *What Is Conservatism?*, patterned after Leo Strauss's *What Is Political Philosophy?* At the suggestion of the publisher, Kendall agreed to call the book *The Conservative Affirmation*. Kendall had high hopes for the book. He cultivated reviews in mass circulation magazines, including *National Review* and told Francis Wilson that Regnery was thinking "he's got another *God and Man at Yale*." William Rusher, publisher of *National Review*, wrote to Kendall saying he was eager to read *The Conservative Affirmation*. Rusher found Kendall's writing style "overwhelmingly attractive, and I am forever running around larding my sentences with 'over against' and 'off at the end.'" Into the early summer of 1963 Kendall continued to hope that sales of *The Conservative Affirmation* would take off. By July, however, it had become apparent to Kendall that his book, in terms of sales, "was going to be another Right-wing flop."³⁸

One can understand why the book disappointed some of Kendall's fellow conservatives. It was a collection of seven essays, several already in print, together with thirty-one previously published book reviews. For one who already knew his work, Willmoore appeared not to be breaking much

new ground and had not produced the "book book" which they expected. Moreover, *The Conservative Affirmation* seemed to lack focus. Bertrand de Jouvenel criticized it for not affirming conservatism but attacking liberals and Lockeans. In fact, the book was more carefully structured than it appeared. Kendall, for example, placed the essay "The Social Contract: The Ultimate Issue between Liberalism and Conservatism" at "what Strauss would call the center of the book, where the reader is led to the deepest philosophical level attempted in the book, and where at last the purpose is to instruct him philosophically, not to propagandize him." Kendall wanted that piece "to stand out like a sore thumb, i.e. as quite different in character from the rest of the book." Henry Regnery knew the book was not just slapped together. But he believed its centerpiece was "McCarthyism: The Pons Asinorum of Contemporary Conservatism," which argued for the necessity of social orthodoxy and showed that liberalism, in trying to undermine that orthodoxy, was a revolutionary enterprise.³⁹

Despite these disparate interpretations, *The Conservative Affirmation*—every part of it—was, and still is, worth reading. Republishing book reviews might seem like cheating, but Willmoore Kendall was a master of that form. Indeed, he was a connoisseur of reading. Like a wine critic, he savored the essence of each book he was appraising, then rendered his carefully considered judgment upon it. He could be vicious. The new edition of Clinton Rossiter's *Conservatism in America: The Thankless Persuasion* was "even more ignorant or perverse" than its original version. He said Rossiter ignored actual conservatives and judged political movements by liberal principles. "One is tempted," concluded Kendall, "to explain the book in terms of perversity, not ignorance. But that might be ungenerous since the book is shot through and through with methodological confusions." His evaluations could also be generous. In analyzing *Our Public Life*, by Paul Weiss—his old Yale debate antagonist—Kendall admitted that conservatives would deplore its "liberal programmatic aspect." Then he praised Weiss's defense of natural law, "piety" toward the "American political tradition," and openness toward religion. Weiss, he concluded, "is that Liberal we've all been looking for who truly values the discussion process." Or, Kendall might combine deep analysis, severe criticism, and praise in his reviews. He criticized Richard Weaver's *Ideas Have Consequences* for having an "ill-tempered, name-calling emphasis." He suggested Weaver did not have enough familiarity with England or Scandinavia to analyze them. Then he compared Weaver favorably to Ortega y Gasset. Weaver just needed to realize that his real enemies were liberals, not Americans as a whole. If he did so, he would get Kendall's "vote for the captaincy of the anti-Liberal team."⁴⁰ In these reviews, one sees that Kendall had intellectually absorbed these books and would never forget them. His erudition, admitted even by enemies, was not faked, it was earned.

The book's essays also demonstrated Willmoore's characteristic style in all its intricacy. To readers unfamiliar with his work, his analyses of the open society, Christian pacifism, and the two majorities in American politics would appear as novel and meticulously reasoned. Two new essays also showed Kendall at the top of his game. "What is Conservatism?" began by limiting itself to the American situation. It dismissed "vulgar" conceptions of who the real conservatives are, that is, religious believers, anticommunists, and so forth. Kendall then posited an elaborate "battle-line" metaphor. He suggested that conservatives were those people who resisted—right down the line and on a whole host of issues—the "Liberal Revolution." The liberals were the enemy across this line of battle who, in an increasingly self-conscious way, sought "to overthrow an established and traditional social and political order." The enemy called its goal equality. Kendall labeled it egalitarianism. Liberals, that is, did not champion "an equal right to compete with others." Rather they wanted government to level all significant differences within the populace. Moreover, this liberal "revolution must go on and on forever, since if you are in the business of making people equal, there is and can be no stopping place." Kendall called on the resisters to coalesce in a self-conscious movement. Thereby, they could, on the line of political battle, work together to defend their tradition—a tradition grounded in the "high principles" of the "great documents" of the American founding. Thus might they thwart leveling liberal designs.⁴¹

In the book's keystone essay, "The Ultimate Issue," Kendall admitted he would work readers "somewhat harder" than "in earlier chapters." Then Kendall explained how American conservatives could not be Lockean. This essay briefly summarized Western political philosophy. Starting with the Greeks, Kendall showed that the Sophists had argued for society originating in agreements between individuals designed to promote their own self-interest. He then demonstrated how Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle had defeated these propositions. They had argued that society was natural not conventional. The principles undergirding it were to be discovered, not invented. Moreover, the good society allowed the best aspects of human nature to flourish. Individuals thus had a duty to promote human good by preserving society. For two thousand years, this "Great Tradition" reigned in the West until challenged by Hobbes, Locke, and Rousseau. More modern philosophers had further reduced the insights of the three contractarians to a ruined remnant. Only two principles remained: (1) society must be based *exclusively* on the consent of the governed as to what is right and what is wrong and (2) the purpose of society "is to minister to the self-interest" of its members. Conservatives were those who affirmed the Great Tradition. Their ideas stretched back to Aristotle. They believed in a higher law discernable through reason which individuals were duty-bound to obey. Liberals were those who

embraced the "relativism" of human convention and held individuals bound only by self-interest. "The Lockeans in America," said Kendall, "are the Liberals," and "Conservatives . . . must learn to understand themselves as the anti-Lockeans."⁴²

Late that spring, a university which appreciated Kendall's ideas approached him with a job offer. The University of Dallas—seeking to build its brand as a superior, conservative, and Catholic institution of higher education—wanted Kendall to head its department of politics. Winding down his year in Los Angeles, this offer was a godsend for Willmoore, but it did not come out of the blue. He had received hints of the university's interest as early as 1960. As he pursued other opportunities, he remained in contact with Dallas about possible employment. When the offer came, he was excited. A light work schedule would leave him time "for writing, lecture engagements, etc." The money was almost as good as he was used to, and he could "call the difference . . . a gift to the Church." Kendall would lead a department of politics, not of political science. It would focus on "political philosophy and comparative government," as Aristotle did, with no behaviorist "nonsense." At Dallas, Kendall could combine his love of belles lettres and politics, a puzzling blend to many political scientists, but one to which Kendall had clung since Oxford. Happily, he told Wilson, "I shan't even see a Liberal in the course of a week's work." In his new post, he rhapsodized: "I can be Moses back from the 40 years of his preparation, among his people—I found myself sinking into the local accent, which was mine forty years ago, as a weary man sinks into a warm bath." In brief, he went on, "God has been very good to me."⁴³

In April 1963 Kendall, seemingly chastened by his recent experiences and heartened that his book had come out, wrote to William F. Buckley. He thanked him for having borne patiently with him over the previous few years. He suggested a quieter future ahead, that most of his personal challenges from previous years were now in the past. He would also have the "enforced calm of being a heart patient."⁴⁴ As so often in the life of Willmoore Kendall, this period of contentment, especially in regard to his personal relationships, would be the calm which preceded a storm.

NOTES

1. WK to FGW, March 4, 1960, August 4 1960, and October 11, 1960, B2, WP; WK to LS, August 10, 1960, August 29, 1960, and October 12, 1960 in WKM, 222-23, 226-27, 230; Austin Ranney to WK, April 10, 1960, B20F10, KP.

2. WK, "The Open Society and Its Fallacies," *American Political Science Review* 54, no. 4 (December 1960): 972-76.

Preface

1959: Willmoore Il Magnifico

On the Saturday evening of May 2, 1959, the weather in Palo Alto was clear, but the wind was blowing with a bit of a chill. As the sun started to set over the Pacific, an expectant crowd gathered at Stanford University's Memorial Hall. This building provided the largest indoor venue on campus and could seat more than seventeen hundred persons. Tonight the Hall was too small. All seats were filled by 7:00 p.m. though the performance was scheduled to start at 7:30. Organizers set up loudspeakers on the lawn and within adjoining buildings to broadcast the event to the overflow crowd. According to one observer, attendees were "hanging from the rafters." And, no, Wilbert Harrison had not shown up to play his current hit "Kansas City." Rather two popular professors, a pacifist and a "warmonger," were debating the morality of war. Student interest in questions of war and peace remained high as the Cold War still cast an ominous shadow.¹

In one corner stood Mulford Sibley, a University of Minnesota political scientist. He had served the previous year as a visiting professor at Stanford and had won a devoted following among students. Sibley, a Quaker and socialist, was the foremost advocate of pacifism in American academia. He had braved the wrath of the US government during World War II as a conscientious objector. At the height of the Cold War, Sibley continued to argue against war and military preparedness. In the other corner stood Willmoore Kendall, the "well-known Fascist beast" from Yale. Kendall was a veteran of World War II and Korea. He had held a high position in the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), helped professionalize American principles of psychological warfare, and was a senior editor at *National Review*. Kendall, a Catholic, was finishing up his own visiting professorship at Stanford. He had replaced Sibley and had also won the hearts and minds of many students.²

Though the two men's political principles could hardly have been further apart, they were old friends, having grown up together in 1920s Oklahoma. As a boy Sibley had attended the Methodist Church in the small Oklahoma town of Miami, pastored by Reverend Willmoore Kendall, Sr., father of his opponent in tonight's debate. Both men had also received degrees from the University of Oklahoma. Later they crossed professional paths at the University of Illinois where Mulford Sibley got a job teaching political science as Willmoore Kendall was finishing up his doctorate. As evidenced this spring evening, both men were learned, both skilled at disputation, and both possessed strong convictions. Each spoke for 40 minutes, then got 5 minutes to respond to the other. Afterward both speakers took questions from the audience.³

Kendall—fifty years old, with a “brindled” military-style crew cut—went first. He noted his social connections to Sibley, suggesting that his dad's example may have inspired his opponent's political views. Kendall pronounced that—together with Sibley and the audience—his object was to seek truth and not to make an oratorical display. Yet, as Kendall proceeded with his speech, he pulled no rhetorical punches. Sibley, he said, could never *win* a debate on this subject because Western civilization, the civilization to which he, Sibley, and the audience belonged, had rejected pacifism for millennia. From Moses onward, said Kendall, the West had often considered but always rejected pacifist arguments. However this event might turn out, no totting up of debater's points would alter this aversion to pacifism. The West *obviously* would not adopt the pacifist proposal, “the mere thought of which strikes terror into the heart.”⁴

Kendall then declared that pacifists were barbarians, heretics, and parasites. They were barbarians because they refused to defend their civilization from “enemies from beyond the gates of our Civilization.” By refusing to fight, the pacifists were prepared to allow their own civilization to fall and barbarism to triumph. Pacifists were also heretics, that is, “enemies within the gates.” Most accepted the Christian roots of Western civilization but put a radical twist on Christian principles which undermined their society's well-being. Pacifism, Kendall argued, “insinuates itself into the body politic as a higher expression of Christian selflessness, [but] is marked throughout by irresponsibility and callous indifference towards the wants and needs and rights of the pacifists' fellow-men.” The pacifist was a parasite. He lives “*off* our Civilization” and benefits from “the [martial] commitments it imposes upon others.” The pacifist thus “consumes the produce of fields that he does not help to till.”⁵

This aversion to pacifism—while instinctual and traditional—was also rational. Here Kendall delved deep. Drawing upon Aquinas, he argued that pacifism meant ontological rejection of society itself, for it denied the “recourse to arms, even by legally constituted states attempting to defend

their just interests." Citing Lincoln he maintained that "no state voluntarily wills its own dissolution." Thus, as society was formed to promote human flourishing through establishing a legal order, those who refused to defend society were enemies to human welfare, for they advocated national suicide. Claiming to promote human dignity, then, pacifists were in fact antisocial anarchists who willed "the nothingness of civil society."⁶

Kendall then detailed Augustine's just war theory, which, he claimed, demonstrated how Christians might wage war to defend the social goods of civilization while restraining the violent passions of war to uphold ideals of peacefulness and justice. Indeed, this tradition often required the use of force—including military action—as a positive Christian duty, "the *law of Christian love itself*," to protect the weak from their oppressors. To help the oppressed and to preserve the goods of one's own civilization, nations sometimes had to go to war. Historically, for example, that meant that war had been required to defend the West against Islamic invasion. In the twentieth century, upholders of this tradition possessed a moral duty to battle "the disciplined hordes of World Communism" and to defeat "the abomination known as Nazism."⁷ In fact, by refusing to submit to evil, by confronting and vanquishing the evildoer, heroic resistance might help bring that evildoer to embrace the goods of civility and peace.

The advent of nuclear weapons, said Kendall, did not change this moral calculus. God, said Kendall, had "made it *our* business . . . to protect justice, and law, and liberty, and this out of love for our neighbor." Indeed, Kendall argued, the United States, to promote justice, ought to have used its atomic monopoly in 1946 to demand that the communist regime of the USSR stop oppressing its people. It is always "our" job, that is, we the people of the West, to fulfill this moral obligation and "to use the means at our disposal in order to preserve justice in the situations in which 'we' are involved." If God has willed "the destruction of the planet in an atomic *Götterdämmerung*," this moral obligation still remains. Even in a thermonuclear world, therefore, the people of the West must perform "our duty to strike down the Soviet aggressor . . . to prevent him from doing the wrong he is doing"—as previously the West had done against the Nazis.⁸

Sibley, aged forty-seven and with thinning curly brown hair, then stood up. A lifelong socialist, he wore his trademark red tie as a symbol of solidarity with the working class. Saluting the audience as "orthodox, heretics, and friends," he proceeded to deliver his speech. He was unyielding in his defense of pacifism; that is, he claimed to oppose *all* wars. Still, Sibley focused on the contemporary "age of violence." Indeed, said he, the "central faith of American foreign policy today seems to be in the threat of mass violence." Yet Sibley also acknowledged the warlike activities of the Soviet Union, China, and India. None passed pacifist muster. He argued that human values

were not absolute but dependent on historical context and that a hierarchy among such values was inevitable. Sibley drew a distinction between force—which was sometimes legitimate and necessary—and war which was never permissible.⁹

Human agreement on “social and political ideals” was, he claimed, more widespread than commonly acknowledged. All sides in the Cold War, for example, claimed to support freedom, equality, brotherhood, progress, and peace. Sibley suggested the existence of a force “continuum” from “nonviolent” civil disobedience to “increasingly violent” forms of force culminating in “the institutional practices which we sum up under the word war.” The evils that war lets loose, said Sibley, including deaths of noncombatants, “contradict the kinds of ends (freedom and destruction of tyranny) for which war is usually proclaimed.” The “character of a future war,” with likely use of atomic weapons, would bring death and destruction to a catastrophic new level. Meanwhile preparations for war undermined peaceful economic development which might make war less likely.¹⁰

War was “immoral,” Sibley argued, “because it involves organized and deliberate . . . killing of human beings.” And “the prohibition of killing, would seem to be as close as we can come to a moral absolute in this sub-angelic world.” In this light, distinctions between “aggressive” and “defensive” wars had little meaning, for both sides waged war in the same murderous fashion. Also, there were no actual criteria to distinguish an aggressive war from a defensive war. Even when war achieved positive results, as with eliminating Nazi power, these come “at such a cost and with such enormously evil by-products that its positive attainments are far more than counter balanced by its evil.”¹¹

For nations who accepted that there was no such thing as a good war, Sibley counseled unilateral disarmament (if multilateral disarmament proved impossible). Funds saved from war preparations could be used for education, for “nonviolent resistance,” and for helping the “underdeveloped” world. And if “worst came to worst,” said Sibley, the people of such a nation “would agree with Socrates that . . . it is better to suffer injustice than to commit it.” Thus, nonviolent people might find themselves enslaved, but such results could also occur when a country fought and lost a war. In any case, occupation of a nonviolent nation by a hostile force “would still be preferable . . . to a war.” Tyranny might triumph but “with *relatively* little loss of human life.” Individuals ought therefore to engage in an “open conspiracy” against “war making governments everywhere.”¹²

As regards Christianity and pacifism, Sibley noted that he did not “regard [himself] as a Christian.” He maintained that the connection between pacifism and Christianity was not clear but then argued that the earliest Christians had opposed war, as such, on religious grounds. He admitted that after

the early Christian period, pacifists were few because "historical so-called Christianity . . . held war to be legitimate under certain circumstances." The "nonkilling" ethos of the New Testament was nevertheless incompatible with war "despite the efforts of men like Athanasius, St. Augustine, and Luther to prove the contrary." Whatever Christianity might say about it, concluded Sibley, "pacifism is the only practical politics in our day."¹³

Sibley next proceeded with a rejoinder to Kendall's talk. He claimed Kendall contradicted himself by claiming that Western civilization would never accept pacifism while fretting about pacifist popularity. Sibley then argued that the present ought not be bound by "the short-sightedness and obtuseness of our ancestors." He argued that pacifists were not irresponsible because they were championing the values they held most dear and were not parasites because war itself contradicted Western values. Contra Kendall, he argued that the just war theory was false because modern "war . . . will always give rise to greater disorder than order." Any ends achieved would be "at a price more than counterbalancing the gains." Western civilization would "have likely reached a higher level more rapidly" if Charles Martel had not resisted the more advanced civilization of Muslim invaders. Sibley closed by suggesting repudiation "of war as a method of resisting tyranny" and urging development of "efficacious and moral means of defense."¹⁴

Kendall then rose to offer his own rebuttal. Sibley, he said, had told "us that enslavement—*our* enslavement—was preferable . . . to a war fought for the purpose of repelling and crushing the invader." Slavery would not be so bad, Sibley claimed, because most people would survive. Tyrannies do not last forever and could be resisted nonviolently. Kendall then argued, contradicting Sibley, that future wars would not necessarily go nuclear. Meanwhile, our "quasi-pacifist *inhibitions*" had left "millions of Russians . . . in Communist prison camps." Similar inhibitions had prevented the United States from helping "German and Eastern European Jews whom the Nazis slaughtered by the millions." Sibley, he added, would "cheerfully bid us to 'achieve' political freedom by delivering ourselves into slavery." Finally, Kendall asked how "that old complex of errors that learned men call 'historic Christianity'" had misrepresented its teachings for so long until corrected by Mulford Sibley.¹⁵

As the two men exchanged one highbrow haymaker after another, the crowd got caught up in the excitement. "The hall," said one observer, "sounded like the last quarter of a football game between Stanford and California." Fifty years later graduate student Tom Schrock still recalled the "spectacular" Kendall-Sibley debate. In the question and answer period which followed their speeches, neither professor retreated. Asked how he would save democracy should the Soviets nuke Palo Alto, Kendall responded that he would retaliate in kind. Queried about what he would do if the Soviets demanded capitulation or war, Sibley replied that he would surrender then

begin a nonviolent resistance campaign when Russian troops arrived. As spirited defenders of their respective positions, then, Sibley (as proto-hippy peacenik) was sublime and Kendall (as homegrown Dr. Strangelove) magnificent. "Mulford," said Willmoore as they left the stage, "this was a great show. We'll have to take it on the road."¹⁶

Who won the debate? On one level that depended on whether one thought it better to be red or better to be dead. On another level, the real winners of the debate were the audience members who witnessed its powerful back and forth. Student organizers of the event were surprised by its popularity and praised both participants. It was all too rare, they said, for students to see "the drama" of well-prepared scholars expressing their ideas—powerfully, boldly, and without apology—on a subject of such great consequence. Even after paying Sibley's airfare and offering a similar fee for Kendall to donate to anticommunist Tibetans, the Breakers Club, which had sponsored the event, generated a tidy profit from the overflow crowd. Requests almost immediately arose for transcripts of the respective speeches. Using Kendall's contacts, organizers contracted with the Swallow Press in Denver. When published later that year, the debate proceedings sold rather briskly, especially on the Stanford campus, and talk arose of a second edition. Sibley and Kendall got a bit peeved with one another that evening, but both soon got over it, and in the coming years they would meet on other stages to debate different controversies.¹⁷

Both scholars were, in distinctive and diametrically opposed ways, too hot for Stanford to handle. In 1958, when the university political science department had declined to offer Sibley a permanent position, students had protested. When the department made a similar decision with Kendall for this following year, a different set of student demonstrators carried signs to object.¹⁸ Sibley soon returned to Minnesota where, though something of a gadfly, he served out a long and distinguished career, never wavering in his pacifism and retiring in 1981. Meanwhile, Kendall, who had hoped to get a full-time job at Stanford, headed off for a two-year research sabbatical at the University of Madrid.

Though disappointed at Stanford's decision, Kendall had had a fruitful year in Palo Alto. Faced with large classes, he had shelved his own uniquely effective Socratic teaching style. Thereby, he had honed his effectiveness and increased his self-confidence as a speaker. His carefully prepared lectures were so popular that his classes became standing room only, as nonenrolled students crowded in to hear. Kendall had also participated in a series of public debates prior to the confrontation with Sibley. Taking the conservative side on a variety of controversial issues, many of these appearances had been well attended and successful. In December 1958, at one of these events, he met local librarian and ex-Marine Nellie Cooper, who first agreed to serve as

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his research assistant—following him to Spain—and who later became his wife. As the Spring Semester wound down, Kendall received a telegram of congratulations from former student William F. Buckley, Jr., for a “a year of splendid achievements.”¹⁰

During the debate itself, Kendall uttered a telling aside, a throwaway line, referencing his own family background. “My father,” said the conservative political theorist, “like Professor Sibley, was a persuasive man, and strongly held Professor Sibley’s present ideas.” In the context of the debate, this statement affirmed that it was “always good to greet a fellow-townsmen whom one has not laid eyes on for a long time.”²⁰ After these opening niceties, of course, Kendall had launched a blistering, root and branch attack on pacifists of Sibley’s ilk. Indeed, if one connects the dots of his speech, the Yale professor had called his own father a barbarian, heretic, and parasite. Therein lies a tale.

NOTES

1. Thomas Schrock, Email to Author, October 17, 2017; Kent M. Lloyd, Introduction to *War & the Use of Force—Moral or Immoral, Christian or Unchristian—A Debate at Stanford University* by Willmoore Kendall (hereafter WK) and Mulford Q. Sibley (Denver: Swallow Press, 1959), 2; Oscar Pemantle, *Contrasting Arguments: The Culture War and the Clash in Education* (New York: Peter Lang, 2019), 201.

2. “Plan for Peace,” *Hammond Times*, May 15, 1944, p. 6; Paul K. Damai, “Radio Short Circuits,” *Hammond Times*, August 13, 1944, p. 8; “Goble to Speak,” *Evening Courier*, February 18, 1945, p. 7; Duane L. Cady, “What’s On My Mind: Remembering Mulford Q. Sibley,” May 20, 2019, duanelcady.com; Letter to the Editor, *YDN*, October 17, 1957, p. 2

3. Lloyd, “Introduction,” 2–3; WK and Sibley, *War & the Use of Force*, 5.

4. Letter, *YDN*, October 17, 1957, p. 2; “Kendall-Sibley Debate,” *Stanford Daily*, March 1, 1959, p. 1; WK/Sibley, *War*, 5–6.

5. WK/Sibley, *War*, 6–9.

6. *Ibid.*, 7–10.

7. *Ibid.*, 12–13.

8. *Ibid.*, 14.

9. Cady, “Sibley”; “Kendall-Sibley Debate,” 1; “Capacity Crowd Attends,” *Stanford Daily*, May 4, 1959, p. 1; WK/Sibley, *War*, 15–16.

10. *Ibid.*, 18–21.

11. *Ibid.*, 21–22.

12. *Ibid.*, 22–23.

13. *Ibid.*, 24–25.

14. *Ibid.*, 26–29.

15. *Ibid.*, 30–32.