

The Children's Crusade

BY NANCY LOVE

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Bus Number One, which was supposed to be the first one to move out and to arrive at the destination, was having a problem. No one could find the bus driver. "We lost the goddamn bus driver," the students in charge were telling each other. Then someone would rush off to look in another place he could have gotten to. There was a quiet urgency, a restrained desperation about their search, their need to get the thing rolling, to get the 15 buses moving to Washington.

The crowd that waited in the pre-dawn chill under the trees around Stokes Hall stood in subdued silence. Some wore white cloths, some black, tied around their arms. Several hundred people waited quietly. This was the day that Haverford College, a Quaker college for men on Philadelphia's Main Line, was going to move to the nation's capital to see whether they could communicate their concern about the Cambodian crisis. They were following the advice of George

Fox, a central figure in founding the Quaker religion, "to speak truth to power."

The 700 men and women who had resolved to speak truth to power were beginning to take seats in the other buses. They were students at Haverford College (about 550 of the student body of 600), students at neighboring Bryn Mawr College, which shares some faculty with Haverford (there were 70 girls, although they had been asked to limit their contingent to 50), ten from the Haverford administration (including the president of the College), 50 faculty (out of 70), 13 staff (including secretaries and groundskeepers), three from the board of managers of the College (including the chairman).

The driver finally climbed up the steps into Bus Number One. He hadn't tried to hold up the departure maliciously. He was really in favor of what the College was doing, glad they were going to exchange views

with legislators, even though he was not so sure it would do any good. He had driven a group of high school students to Washington not long before, and they had been very discouraged because the politicians refused to talk to them.

"But we did a lot of advance planning," the Haverford students countered. But no one was really sure how successful they would be.

Bus Number One finally starts up. Frank Sinatra's velvety voice explodes from the speakers: "*Strangers in the night exchanging glances...*" A roar goes up in the bus, part laughter, part derision. It is an unexpected intrusion. "Where's the stewardess?" someone asks. They get the jarring music shut off quickly, and one of the student marshals takes a bullhorn to make announcements.

One of his requests is that everyone wear name tags for identification. There will be many students in Washington that day and Haverford doesn't



Haverford president Coleman (center) led 700 to Washington.



Hugh Scott was one of Congressional leaders who listened to troubled academic community.

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want to have any of them attaching themselves to their group. They have promised Congressmen a peaceful confrontation and they intend to keep it that way.

John Coleman, president of the College, is on Bus Number One. If he is uptight about the responsibility of moving his college to Washington for the day, he doesn't show it—or the strain of the sleep lost the past few days. A handsome, even-tempered man who moves physically and mentally between the generations with an ageless elasticity, he talks about bitterness without showing bitterness. "I have been talking to other college presidents," he is saying, "and they tell me they have never seen such bitterness on campuses before, such a disruption of the educational process.

"This idea came at just the right time for us. It gave us something to focus on, to keep the bitterness from pulling us apart." Coleman realizes, of course, that the size of Haverford has helped make such a unified venture possible. A few students and faculty chose not to participate, but the degree of unanimity is still something of a small miracle for a campus like Haverford where individualism is encouraged, a testament to how desperately these young people wanted to get their message to their government, a government that had up to this point thumbed its nose at them.

"Some students in the Washington office we set up to coordinate this thing wanted to get in touch with Nixon as well as Congress," says president Coleman. "I discouraged it. I was one of the 34 college presidents Nixon turned down. What do you gain by another turn-down?"* Jack Coleman knows too well how frustrating it is not to be listened to.

The idea for the Washington confrontation came from Stanley Murphy, a Haverford senior, a psychology major who is the outgoing president of the school's student association. After Nixon's Cambodia speech it seemed irrelevant to go on with academic work in the old way. And not many academic institutions in this country found they could. Students wanted to direct their energies to ending the war. The peace movement suddenly came to life again, but with a new disenchantment.

"In our frustration and despair we thought of this idea of going to Washington. We wanted to match up the

resources of the College with the problem of getting out of Cambodia. For the first time it seemed to us that the old alignments in Congress were breaking down, that minds were not made up and we could hope to influence Congress and public opinion."

Murphy is from Alabama and the drawling rhythm of his Southern speech tends to take the edge off the sharp urgency of what he says. Or maybe it is that it's all so rational. He has thought over what he hopes this day will accomplish, and when he talks about it on the bus now that the day is really underway, it's like something he has almost disassociated himself from already. The students want to present a picture of a unified university, to show it's not just a few fringe crazies who are dissenting. They want to create a new image for demonstrations, to build a bridge between academic institutions and the public.

"Also, we come to give Congress a new perspective and to learn how we can be of some influence. We all are bonded together by a sense of anguish. The Kent State incident just intensified our mission and our goal to influence the course of things."

Murphy appears to be the antithesis of the fiery radical. With his logical words, his full face and portly body, he looks now like the moderate college professor he could become in 20 years. But as he continues to talk about what has happened since Kent State, some of the mounting impatience of youth comes into his voice:

"The situation is getting damned near unbearable," he says. "Reason no longer reigns. We can only expect a great deal of violence unless the doors of government open and there are honest people who are willing to have dialogues. Haverford is trying to show men can still be reached by reason. I hope we are right."

His fellow students in the peace movement have been discouraged at every turn. Nothing came of their candidate Eugene McCarthy or their moratoria. How many times will they get beaten over the head before they give up the strategy of reason? "We don't go into this with elevated hopes. Realistically, we hope to change a few congressional minds about Cambodia and about college mentality and link with other striking students to explain our anguish and turmoil."

Tom Gowen, the new president of the Student Association and one of the organizers of the day in Washington, has learned a lot about living

with the intolerable facts of government by working in Philadelphia politics for the last few years. A clean-cut political science major with earnest blue eyes, Gowen is aware that some students at Haverford are probably not as tolerant as he—or as politically sophisticated.

He hopes the day will provide a means of getting over to Congress a sense of how the progress of the war is destroying academic institutions. "Also, I think one of the functions will be to reinforce senators who are on our side. But the real targets will be those who are wavering and don't know which way to turn."

It is obvious that the leaders of the day are realistic and clear-eyed about what they are doing. They know what kind of reaction to expect. As Tom Gowen put it, "People don't like war, but they like college students less."

TO THEIR CREDIT, the student body of Haverford has seen the wisdom of playing the game by the rules of those they seek to influence. When Stan Murphy placed calls to the offices of Southern congressmen he made sure to identify himself as "Stan Murphy from Tuscaloosa; I go to a small church school up North," knowing the only college student who would get a hearing would have to go to a "church" school. The students have decided to wear coats and ties. Some hair and beards were trimmed in the interest of making the right impression. To a man, they have showed up immaculately groomed. Anyone who is aware of the usual nonchalance of Haverford students toward dress and grooming realizes what a sacrifice this must have been. They have also agreed to be not only peaceful, but nonabrasive, again a difficult compromise for some.

Not many people sleep on the buses, although most have had only a few hours sleep the night before. When the buses pull up at 9:00 a.m. the sun is shining brightly on the pristine white Supreme Court Building. The sky is an unbelievable shade of fantasy blue. The buildings are too white, the sky too blue. It is too much like a stage set with three-dimensional figures starting to run about to play out their lines in two-dimensional space.

THE GROUP from the Delaware County congressional district of Lawrence Williams, who is running for reelection this year, moves quickly to his office to ask for an appointment. A secretary looks up officiously and says, "Will you people tell me

* Nixon subsequently met with eight college presidents the day of the Haverford visit to Washington.

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who you are?"

The spokesman of the group, Holland Hunter, the head of the Haverford College Economics Department, answers her quietly. He has an imperturbable, almost solemn air and even when the secretary finally asks incredulously, "You never *did* have an appointment?" he maintains an owlish, unblinking dignity.

She finally gives up and says, "Will you have a seat, please?"

Williams makes the entrance of a politician, exuding warmth and good fellowship from his fleshy face and the hand with which he shakes every other hand in the room, saying with each handshake, "Glad to meet you. Nice to see you." Or one of the other phrases that are said when you greet people you want to vote for you.

He graciously welcomes his visitors but chides them a little for not having given him advance notice. His time will be limited because he has a number of visitors coming including a group of Boy Scouts. He mentions the Boy Scouts with obvious pleasure.

Holland Hunter begins with a request for Williams' opinion on the Cambodian crisis. Williams replies by saying his opinions have appeared in the newspapers. He asks how many have read them and counts the hands. He repeats the statements he has made against the escalation of the war. Spokesman Hunter asks what, specifically, he is doing to reverse the Cambodian stand. "I'm one of the Republicans pressuring Nixon." Of course, he doesn't say what he's doing to apply pressure beyond "talking" and "writing." He tends to orate rather than talk, to pile up mountains of words rather than clarify.

Then the question comes up about campus unrest. Williams is indignant about the situation. He is disgusted at goings-on at Berkeley, at students attacking National Guard troops at Kent State, at the president of Yale saying a black man can't get a fair trial.

The students sigh and exchange looks that say, "What can you do?" They don't challenge him on this. They concentrate on trying to get through to him on some of their views on politics in Vietnam.

When someone returns to the student issue and the charge that the Administration doesn't listen to young people, Williams answers by defending his own position. His door is open to anyone, and he's in his home district three days of the week talking to constituents. He makes a point of his willingness to come to the campus to speak. In fact, he seems

injured that no one has ever asked him.

In the hour or so of the encounter there are some tense moments, but spokesman Holland Hunter is stubborn in his refusal to be led off the track by disagreements. The track, after all, is to get the help of Williams. You don't persuade a man by clobbering him. "We are united on some common ground," he sums up at the end. "Whatever you can do to help stop the war will be a step in stopping campus violence. . . . I sense in you a calmness and a willingness to talk to your constituents who want to rub out kids on college campuses."

The group has now grown to about 20. Some would like to press their points more strongly, but he has already given them an hour and Williams announces that the Boy Scouts are waiting for him.

They had no illusions about Williams. They agree it has come off pretty much as they had anticipated as they talk about it in the hall outside the office. Chris Scott, a tall lanky student with an easy smile, says, "Williams is a politician. He will set a middle-of-the-road position and give it to everyone. When pressed; he will fend off the pressure with wide sweeping statements and personal anecdotes to get people off the track.

"I believe he is concerned, though. As a person I have respect for him. He is around. But he has to be a politician first. It's a matter of expediency in his congressional district. He has to take this line: America First. That's what the people back there want."

HUGH SCOTT, minority leader of the Senate, Republican senator from Pennsylvania, is something else. His constituency and power make him a different sort of a target altogether. The senator's staff has given a perfunctory refusal to all requests for a meeting. Still, a Pennsylvania group is scheduled to meet with one of his aides and its members still hope to get through to Scott. They have to tell him what they think about his continued support of the President.

By the time they reach the room designated for the meeting in the Old Senate Office Building, it is crowded with students from many other colleges. They all have been clamoring for an appearance from Scott for quite some time. Aides who were stalling the angry crowd were sweating it out with obvious discomfort. When aide Jerry Laughlin gets word at last that Scott is really coming, he turns to a middle-aged American Friends Service

Committee lobbyist and asks him to make the announcement that Scott is on his way.

"Why should I make the announcement?"

Laughlin, a strapping young Madison Avenue type, looks flushed and he is perspiring all over his wide red/white/and blue tie. "They'll believe you."

"Is he *really* coming?"

"Yes."

"If he really is coming, you tell them and they'll believe you."

Scott does arrive. He begins by saying, "The big news is that I came." He indicates there was disagreement among his advisors about whether he should meet with this group. He says he is already in hot water with the White House over the statement he issued the day before expressing his concern over the Kent State killings and the part the White House was playing in contributing to the hate and mistrust in the country. He tells the students he has never seen a greater polarization between the generations. "I am trying very hard to understand what is going on," he says.

As far as Cambodia is concerned, though, he continues, "I support the President and his decision." He pauses and says unexpectedly, "My mail is running 99 to 1 against my position." The students applaud.

"What do you do," he asks, "when the Commander-in-Chief arrives at a military decision?" And he repeats the President's reasoning. When he calls for questions, the first student to respond stands up and makes six suggestions about what he can do when his Commander-in-Chief makes a decision like this. They start with, Stop believing Nixon, and end with, Listen to your constituents who ask you to stop supporting the President's policies. This brings down the house.

Scott takes questions and more suggestions. But a note has been passed to him by Laughlin. It says: "Martin (outside) suggests you leave as soon as you can." He responds to a few more questions and then makes one last statement: "All I ask is that you extend to me what I extend to you. I believe in you and I ask that you believe in my sincerity." He raises his voice, "You are closer than you think!"

As soon as he is gone a shout punctures the magic balloon of that phrase: "Remember, he's up for reelection!"

Tom Gowen, Haverford's Student Association president, was impressed by Scott's willingness to listen and his

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request that they listen to him. "He might be doing more behind the scenes than we know." Then he pauses and his blue eyes narrow thoughtfully. "But I wonder whether he's doing as much as he can." When all was said and over, they had no illusions about influencing Scott either.

AT THE SAME TIME that some students and faculty were having encounters with congressmen in their offices, others were meeting with them in seminars on policy, economics, the war. Senators Charles Mathias from Maryland, Eugene McCarthy from Wisconsin, George McGovern from South Dakota, and others discussed and debated, exhorted and admonished.

It was all pretty heavy inside with issues and the press and television cameras and V.I.P.s everywhere. But outside in that unreal sparkling sunshine boys and girls ate bag lunches on benches and once in a while just acted like kids. A boy and girl were sitting on the steps of the Reformation Lutheran Church when Haverford president Jack Coleman strolled up for the last meeting of the day—a mass convocation of the whole group. They were sitting there licking orange Popsicles.

The boy said to Coleman, "I just sold the College. They'll bring trucks and take it away." Someone else said, "Don't you have to take bids? You can't just give it away for two Popsicles."

Coleman sits between student leaders Tom Gowen and Stan Murphy on the dais of the church. He still looks fresh and immaculate. Gowen's eyes are bloodshot by this time, Murphy's hair is awry and he looks haggard. This is the last event of the day so it is important, but no one knows exactly who will show up to speak. The idea is to alternate outside speakers with speakers from the college community.

Congressional administrative aides start to arrive. They look over the crowd and then call their bosses and advise them to put in an appearance.

Senator Thomas Eagleton of Missouri makes the first speech, is the first to congratulate the College on what it is doing: "Public opinion is important. People *can* have a voice. You must keep legitimate pressure on. Force us to respond. Make it clear over and over what you want. You want out. Give us your help as you are here today."

Bill Davidon of the Haverford fac-

ulty follows with a different stance altogether. "Just being listened to doesn't produce change," he says. "We must take the initiative for non-violent resistance." What he means is resistance to war taxes, to conscription. He hands out draft cards that were turned in in March by protestors who disassociated themselves from conscription. He passes them out at random and asks the college community to think of how this relates to their own lives.

President Coleman gets the point at once and sums it up: "Bill Davidon has consistently made us face our consciences. He throws us an important challenge. These events today can't stand alone."

But then it's back to the rhetoric of congratulations for today's expression of dissent. Lawrence Coughlin, congressman from Montgomery County; then Pennsylvania Senator Richard Schweiker. And by then the aides are sending in the big men so quickly and in such numbers that no one else from the College gets a chance to speak. A witty, salty Eugene McCarthy rides herd on Nixon and Scott ("I hope you judge him by what he does, not by his excuses"); Allard Lowenstein, representative from New York, ruffled and sincere, talks about the importance of dissent; a tanned and sartorially splendid Sargent Shriver assures them that they will get through not only to the government but to their parents; Oregon Senator Mark Hatfield, lean and determined, offers his office and help in their crusade.

It is an inspirational outpouring of words. But not everyone has really bought them. On the way back to the buses the pace is subdued. It is much warmer now than it had been in the morning and the clarity and unreality of the spring day lingers. It is hard to believe men were killing each other somewhere on this day, somewhere in a place where maybe the sun was shining just as brightly and the sky was just as blue.

A faculty member and his wife are talking about the day with a weary kind of indifference. "There was lots of talk. We'll see." There really isn't much to say.

One kid had a good time because he saw senators and congressmen he would never have gone to see under other circumstances. Another is saying, "I liked the confrontations with congressmen, only mine all agreed with me. One guy from Butler, Pa., said his congressman threw them out after he saw a 'We Won't Go' button

on someone." That sounded like much more fun. Another was convinced now that he should go to work for anti-war candidates in the coming election campaign.

Economics professor Holland Hunter seems as calm and unperturbed at the end of the day as he was in the beginning in Larry Williams' office. He thinks it is encouraging that there were so many senators who wanted to be associated with them. But there are a few things troubling him. For one thing, some of the more radical students don't think the group spoke for them. "What's really bothering me, though, is that the secretaries in the offices here think that Nixon is right." In other words, if so many of the people in the country do support Nixon, what good will all of the protest do? There is no elation in this mood.

BUS NUMBER ONE is loading again. All of the buses are going back half-empty because many people are staying on for the Saturday peace protest. But there is a feeling that even those going back can never return to an Ivory Tower. When the bus starts up this time, "Sign of the Times" bursts out of the loudspeakers. No one objects. No one seems to care now. They eat some of the food left in the bag lunches and drop off to sleep.

Haverford president Coleman stayed on in Washington too with nine students. Secretary of Labor George Shultz invited them to dine with him because he wanted to talk to them. The next day when he looked back on it, Coleman had a good feeling about the trip. It was well organized and unifying. "I think it did have impact. The secretary of labor had a favorable reaction and said he would take the message to the President. It gave us a feeling that these guys really cared. I really think some congressmen got the message more clearly than before."

All of the press didn't get the message, though. Students began drifting into Coleman's office with complaints about newspaper and television coverage. They felt the impression was being given that the Washington trip was an end in itself. The kids wanted to make clear that it was only a beginning.

Coleman was also getting feedback from parents. One father called and said he wanted a day's tuition deducted from his son's bill. He didn't consider the Washington trip educational.

Everybody back on the bus. ■ ■