

Blogs » StudentNation » From St. Louis to South LA, American Youth Move the Moment



StudentNation

Follow @thenation 400K followers

RSS Feed

Campus-oriented news, first-person reports from student activists and journalists about their campus.

From St. Louis to South LA, American Youth Move the Moment

StudentNation on October 14, 2014 - 4:28 PM ET

Share

Tweet

g+1



TEXT SIZE - +

SUBSCRIBE



Ferguson October (Photo: Howard Kopolowitz, IBT)

Last spring, The Nation launched its biweekly student movement dispatch. As part of the StudentNation blog, each dispatch hosts first-person updates on youth organizing. For recent dispatches, check out [September 15](#) and [September 29](#). For an archive of earlier editions, see the [New Year's dispatch](#). Contact studentmovement@thenation.com with tips. Edited by James Cersonsky (@cersonsky).

1. Moving a Moment

From October 10 through 13, thousands of people from across the United States gathered in Ferguson and St. Louis, Missouri, for a [Weekend of Resistance](#) that arose from protests against the murder of unarmed teenager Michael Brown, the violent police crackdown in the days following his death and the larger issue of police violence against the black community. [Marches](#), [convenings](#) and [nonviolent direct actions](#) united a wide spectrum of causes—from labor to climate justice—as part of building a national movement against racism and police violence. [At the forefront of the weekend were youth](#), who have led the Ferguson protests since Brown's death in August—despite being assaulted with tear gas and arrest. Students and young people, including activists from [Millennial Activists United](#) and [Lost Voices](#), led mass protests in both Ferguson and St. Louis in honor of Brown, [Vonderrit Meyers](#) and [Kajiem Powell](#)—two local youth killed by police—and other victims of police violence.

Moving forward, we are working to build local coalitions—from student networks like [St. Louis Students in Solidarity](#) to the strengthening of relationships among [young activists in St. Louis](#), Ferguson and other areas of St. Louis County—to build upon the momentum gained over the weekend.

—*Nay’Chelle Harris*

2. Demilitarizing America

On October 3, as thousands prepared to head to Ferguson, students of the [Community Rights Campaign](#) in Los Angeles held a vigil, “[From Ferguson to LA: Demilitarize Our Communities](#),” to honor the lives of the many young people who have died at the hands of law enforcement. The program that supplies military weaponry to St. Louis, the [Department of Defense’s 1033](#), recently delivered a [Mine Resistant Ambush Vehicle](#), sixty-six rifles and three [grenade launchers](#) to the Los Angeles School Police Department. Los Angeles schools are not a war zone. [We demand an immediate return of all the weapons and a complete inventory of the weapons the LASPD has in its possession](#). Over the past eight years, we have fought successfully to curb [truancy ticketing](#), ban the use of [willful defiance](#) and secure a [new police protocol](#) to decriminalize student discipline. Now, we are ready to demilitarize LAUSD and all police and [build a movement for power and respect](#) for black and brown communities.

—*Laura Aguilar*

3. Cutting the Pipeline

On October 5, as part of the Dignity in Schools Campaign’s [Week of Action Against School Pushout](#), the Missouri GSA Network [led a march](#) from Normandy High School, Mike Brown’s alma mater, to the Ferguson police department, chanting, “I deserve an education, don’t set me up for incarceration!” On Wednesday, we held a [speakout on experiences with school pushout](#) and the school to prison pipeline. On Saturday, in coordination with Ferguson October, we started a [chalk walk](#) about a world without pushout and followed with a march and rally with [hundreds of screenprinted shirts](#) with messages about justice and the school to prison pipeline. Later that day, we held a [trans teach-in](#) to discuss the intersection of criminalization, race and trans identities and [ended with](#) a celebration of our ongoing organizing at the St. Louis City Museum.

—*Sterling Waldman*

4. In Philadelphia, Students Walk Out—Again

On October 6, Philadelphia’s School Reform Commission voted to unilaterally cancel the Philadelphia Federation of Teacher’s contract, [forcing teachers to contribute to their health insurance plans](#)—after they had already taken a two year pay freeze and have been contributing their own money to classroom supplies. Two days later, more than 300 students from Philadelphia’s Science Leadership Academy, alongside students from the High School for the Creative and Performing Arts, [went on strike in solidarity with our teachers](#). We met at 8 AM and spent [the next four hours chanting and flyering to passersby](#) to call for the reinstatement of the contract. Superintendent Hite, Governor Corbett and the SRC have been [pushing a rhetoric of “shared sacrifice,”](#) but the sacrifice is nothing close to being shared. School district staff have given \$70 million in concessions this year [while Harrisburg has given \\$12 million](#). This is an [attack on workers, the poor, children of color and the city of Philadelphia](#). We stand in solidarity with our teachers and demand the SRC reinstate PFT’s old contract and continue negotiations toward a new one.

—*RubyJane Anderson*

5. In Hartford, Jane Doe Rises

After months of solitary confinement without charges at York Correctional, a women’s prison, Connecticut ward “Jane Doe,” a Latina transgender 16-year-old, has now had to [endure months of further solitary confinement](#) at CT Juvenile Training School, a facility for delinquent boys. Jane is a survivor of horrific [abuses](#) at the hands of Department of Children and Families staff and people with whom she was placed by DCF. On September 27, supporters—including the [Yale Undergraduate Prison Project](#), the [New Haven LGBTQ+ Youth Kickback](#), the [Party for Socialism and Liberation](#) and [Black and Pink](#)—marched to the state capitol, the most recent of several actions in Hartford. Some youth who have been through DCF [have told their own stories](#) in addition to advocating for Jane. The [Justice For Jane movement](#) is [demanding](#) the immediate removal of Jane from CJTS and her placement with a loving family, more than ten of whom have reached out with offers to adopt her. Additionally, the coalition is demanding that DCF Commissioner Joette Katz be fired, that [CT statute 17a-12, which allows DCF to imprison children without charges, be overturned](#) and that there be an independent investigation launched into DCF’s abuses. On October 14, there will be an [all-day call-in to Governor Dannel Malloy’s office](#) with demands to free Jane.

—IV Staklo

6. Umbrellas for Hong Kong

On October 2, seventy students supporting Hong Kong’s Occupy Central Movement [gathered at a pro-democracy rally](#) at the University of California–Davis. We wanted to show solidarity with the protesters in Hong Kong and stage a public forum on the movement with an emphasis on the [true motives of the “Umbrella Movement.”](#) Although the movement has received significant media attention worldwide, most news reports focus on police brutality rather than on the demand of the protestors—genuine universal suffrage, a fulfillment of the Chinese government’s promises and respect for people’s basic human right of unbiased elections. While [supporters in other countries](#) cannot actively participate in the protests, we can mobilize in support of the movement.

—Kenneth Chen and Kimberly Mitchell

7. Questions for Iguala

Six days after the [forty-third anniversary of the Tlatelolco massacre](#), students [across the world](#) protested an all-too-familiar attempt by the Mexican government to silence their voices. Police were involved in the [disappearance of forty-three student teachers](#) in Iguala, allegedly handing them to the Guerreros Unidos cartel. In solidarity with the [Trinational Coalition to Defend Public Education](#) and demonstrations against the Mexican government’s history of violent reactions to student dissidence, members of the [Michigan Student Power Network](#) and [MSU Students United](#) traveled to the Mexican consulate in Detroit to [deliver a letter](#) demanding that the government return the students alive and punish those responsible for their disappearance. After reiterating the letter’s demands to the deputy consul, he attempted to shift culpability to organized crime—the [seemingly preferred pretext](#). This answer is no longer satisfying. The Mexican people demand a government that is corruption-free, transparent, accountable and accepting of criticism; we will work to build pressure until such democracy is reached.

—Lizbeth Bermúdez-López

8. The Free Speech Movement, Continued

On October 1, the 50th Anniversary of the University of California–Berkeley’s arrest of a student during the Free Speech Movement, the [Cal Progressive Coalition](#) held a [sit-on at the](#)

home of Capital Projects, steps away from Sproul Hall where Mario Savio and many others answered the call to [put their bodies on the gears](#). Our coalition formed around the anniversary to tell the story of the ongoing struggles that have made gains in spite of UC's policy of repressing dissenting voices. The sit-in protested the privatized commercial development of UC-owned historic farmland, now slated to become a big-box, union-busting grocer. After six hours of negotiation, we won two key demands for one of our coalition members, [Students for Engaged and Active Learning](#)—a meeting with the chancellor and release of key documents—which will help them [build a food initiative on all twenty acres of this historic farmland](#). We will continue resisting [impending tuition and fee hikes](#), the exploitation of workers, the oligarchy of UC Regents, institutional relationships with petrochemical conglomerates, the speculative investment of tuition dollars, the arming of campus police with tactical weaponry and the installment of Janet Napolitano as UC president—struggles against privatization and violence that connect the FSM with an ongoing history of movements after 1964 tackling injustice at UC.

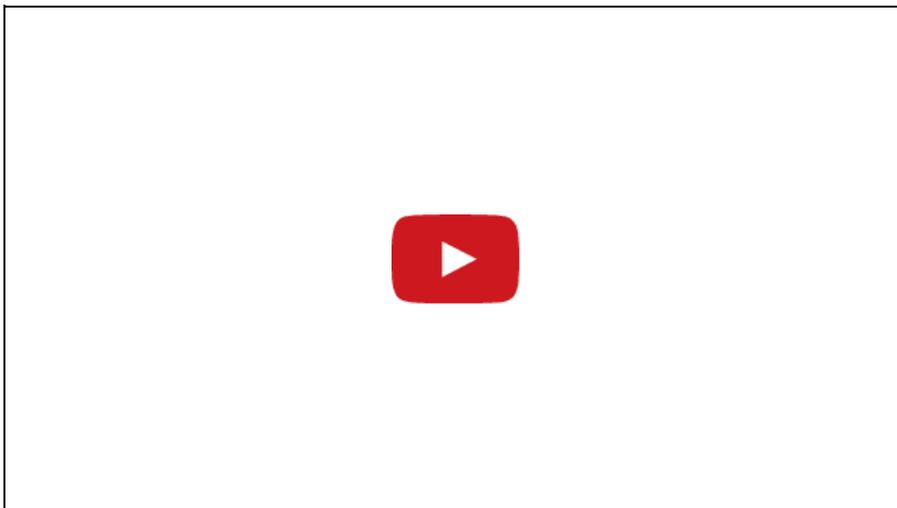
—*Cal Progressive Coalition*

9. The New Hillel

From October 11 to 13, student organizers with the [Open Hillel movement](#) hosted an [unprecedented conference](#) to discuss the Jewish community's relationship to Israel and the Israel-Palestine conflict. Open Hillel is a student-run campaign to challenge the red lines that limit debate on the conflict in the Jewish community. Among other things, Hillel's Jewish campus centers are [required to exclude groups and individuals](#) who support nonviolent resistance through boycott, divestment and sanctions from Israel. More than 350 people gathered at Harvard to hear from a diverse set of students, experts, activists and scholars, including [Judith Butler](#), Peter Beinart, [Rashid Khalidi](#) and three Jewish veterans of the 1964 Freedom Summer. The conference kicked off campaigns to organize transgressive events in campus Hillels, including a speaking tour with the Jewish civil rights veterans whose views on Palestine violate Hillel's current "[Standards of Partnership](#)."

—*Naomi Dann and Sandra Korn*

10. When Will Justice for John Crawford Be Served?



Editor's note: Following the police killing of John Crawford at a Beavercreek, Ohio, Walmart and subsequent non-indictment of the shooter, the Ohio Student Association took over Beavercreek police headquarters. In solidarity, organizers in Ferguson have since shut down three Walmarts. (Video: [TYT Nation](#))

—*Ohio Student Association*

Related Topics: [Education](#) | [Activism](#) | [Politics](#)

[Share](#)
[Tweet](#)


[TEXT SIZE](#)


[SUBSCRIBE](#)

Before commenting, please read our Community Guidelines.

Comments for this thread are now closed. ×

7 Comments The Nation  mmz ▾

Sort by Best ▾ Share  Favorite 

Community Rights Campaign · 4 months ago

The LA Unified School District is the second largest in the nation. Our students need #TeachersNotTanks #CounselorsNotCops! Do you agree? Take action by signing our petition here: <https://www.change.org/p/los-a...>

1 ^ | ▾ · Share ›

jsens3 · 4 months ago

I'm glad to see youth activism. That's the way young people should be.

1 ^ | ▾ · Share ›

Pelu Maad → **jsens3** · 4 months ago

YES! In the 60s we had to pass around hard to find copies of Herbert Marcuse, Steve Biko and others. With the internet and social media today's youth should be able to organize, inform and recruit at a much higher level...and as in the 60s, it looks like they have absolutely nothing to lose by injecting themselves into decisions on America's future. There is serious need right now for a national youth movement against whatever the hell it is we're supposedly doing in the Middle East.

1 ^ | ▾ · Share ›

Walter Pewen → **Pelu Maad** · 4 months ago

Good job. That's correct, "they" didn't want you to read Marcuse. Too bad because now lots of folks have gotten a hold of the books!

^ | ▾ · Share ›

plankman · 4 months ago

Look how cute and utterly unemployable they are!

^ | ▾ · Share ›

Walter Pewen → **plankman** · 4 months ago

Shut up.

^ | ▾ · Share ›

Pelu Maad → **plankman** · 4 months ago

Relax...."illegals" are taking all the jobs anyway....

^ | ▾ · Share ›

ALSO ON THE NATION

WHAT'S THIS?

The Conspiracy Theory Surrounding The Seahawks Last Play

525 comments · 10 days ago

 **wisconsinreader70** — Conspiracy theories - an American pastime. . . But, in all seriousness, If Lynch had ...

Why Gentrification is the Real Scandal Surrounding Jackie ...

41 comments · a day ago

 **BlackCanseco** — Zirin isn't saying the parents are innocent. He's saying that the economic and political systems ...

Did Bill O'Reilly Cover-Up A War Crime

Why Harvard Students Are Sitting-In

in El Salvador?

61 comments • 4 days ago

 **Jack Parry** — “When the CBS News bureau chief asked for volunteers to check out an alleged massacre in the ...

Outside Drew Faust's Office

5 comments • 4 hours ago

 **Joshua Lo** — As someone who is a minority and was non-priveleged growing up, I am proud that these ...

 [Subscribe](#)  [Add Disqus to your site](#)  [Privacy](#)

   [RSS](#)

- [Home](#)
- [Blogs](#)
- [Columns](#)
- [Current Issue](#)
- [Magazine Archive](#)
- [Multimedia](#)
- [E-Books](#)
- [Puzzle](#)
- [Community](#)
- [Educators](#)
- [Students](#)

- [Politics](#)
- [World](#)
- [Books & Arts](#)
- [Economy](#)
- [Environment](#)
- [Activism](#)
- [Society](#)

- [Advertise](#)
- [NationFilm](#)
- [Subscription Services](#)
- [The Nation Builders](#)
- [Newsletter](#)
- [Nation in the News](#)
- [Store](#)
- [Spanish Translations](#)

- [Help](#)
- [About & Contact](#)
- [Digital, Mobile and E-Reader](#)
- [Community Guidelines](#)
- [Work for Us](#)
- [Privacy Policy](#)
- [Terms of Use](#)

Copyright © 2012 The Nation