

**Source B: Celestine Bohlen, article about die-ins and current student activism, “Students See New Hope in Bias Protests,” *New York Times* December 16, 2014**

## **Students See New Hope in Bias Protests**

CAMBRIDGE, Mass. — As student activism goes, the sporadic demonstrations at [Harvard](#) protesting the deaths of two unarmed black men by white police officers — and the decisions by the American justice system not to prosecute either case — hardly measure up to the massive turnouts back in the late 1960s.

There have been a couple of marches, drawing as many as 600 students from Harvard and nearby universities; a series of “die-ins” where protesters lay motionless on the ground in tribute to the victims; a clash between some 30 demonstrators and a group of naked pranksters on a traditional midnight run through campus on the eve of exams; and a controversial letter from a group of Harvard law students, challenging their dean to grant them an extension on their exams as a way of supporting the protests.

As they headed into a final weekend of demonstrations before the winter break, student activists said they were determined to bring renewed momentum to the “Black Lives Matter” movement so that it avoids the slow fizzle that ended the Occupy Wall Street movement in 2011.

“People understand that if we all come together and have one voice, we will have more impact,” said Fadhil Moore, a Harvard senior from Atlanta who joined other black students at the university to draw up demands before a second march on Friday — from mandatory body cameras for the police and a national data base on police shootings to a sharing of best practices for neighborhood patrols.

Students say the countrywide protests over racial bias in United States law enforcement have hit a nerve that the Occupy movement never did.

“It feels stronger than Occupy,” said Matthew Disler, a junior from Richmond, Va. “These deaths were galvanizing events.”

Yet students and professors question whether this movement will mark the beginning of the kind of student activism that has been largely absent since the Civil Rights and Vietnam War era.

“There are a lot of planes on the runway, and there are many fewer that get off the ground,” said Richard Parker, a Harvard lecturer on public policy and a veteran 1960s activist. “Those in the air are even fewer.”

He said that although Harvard’s student body had changed considerably since the 1960s, students today were more cautious and career-oriented.

“There is diversity on the input side, and standardization on the output side,” Mr. Parker said. “If you give the students a clear structure, they function well. Give them a range of autonomy, they’re more tentative. They’re more risk-averse because they see acts as having social consequences.”

It’s not for lack of issues. Some, like Occupy, which protested the power of Wall Street, evaporated. Others — such as climate change, women’s issues, minority rights — are a permanent part of the university landscape.

But strategies are changing. After a brief blockade of a university building in May, students campaigning for Harvard to divest from fossil fuels switched course and filed a lawsuit last month, asking a Massachusetts court to compel disinvestment on behalf of the students and “future generations.”

So too are tactics. Leafleting is out; Twitter is in. But activism via social media can be illusory.

“Don’t let this protest be a Facebook profile picture,” Mr. Moore said at a die-in held on Dec. 5 by the statue of the university’s founder, John Harvard, according to an account in *The Harvard Crimson*, the campus newspaper.

In the meantime, an old but newly defined debate has emerged on Harvard’s social networks. Amanda Bradley, a senior from Atlanta, defined the issue as “ally-ism,” a neologism that covers the sensitive question of how white students fit into a movement driven by racial bias against blacks. “Allies” are encouraged to join the movement, she said, but it is also important that black students remain its main representatives.

“We are all grappling with the issue of ally-ism,” Ms. Bradley said. “There is more discussion about it now than at other times.”

*From the New York Times, December 16, 2014 © 2014, The New York Times. All Rights Reserved. Used by permission:*

<http://www.nytimes.com/2014/12/16/education/students-see-new-hope-in-bias-protests.html? r=0>.