

**MASTER OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION**

**SUCCEED GLOBALLY. STUDY LOCALLY.**

Learn more >>

THE FEMALE FACTOR

# Training Feminism's Next Wave

By AMELIA GENTLEMAN  
Published: August 28, 2012

LONDON — What is the best position to adopt if you are staging a sit-down protest outside Downing Street and do not want to be dragged away by the police? How can you make your body so cumbersome that security guards will find it hard to remove you? What are your legal rights if you form a human chain stopping the traffic?

Connect With Us on Twitter

Follow @nytimesworld for international breaking news and headlines.

Twitter List: Reporters and Editors



The Suffragette Summer School, a two-day feminist training camp taking place in [Britain](#) in mid-September, will provide strategic advice as it instructs participants in the art of nonviolent protest. The camp's promotional material promises to help "budding Pussy Rioters" hone headline-grabbing techniques.

FACEBOOK

TWITTER

GOOGLE+

E-MAIL

SHARE

PRINT

REPRINTS

Weary of more conventional methods of campaigning, its young organizers hope to inspire a new generation of feminists with the same dynamism that saw the original suffragettes chain themselves to railings to secure the vote.

"There are creative ways in which ordinary people can put feminist issues into the mainstream agenda," Kat Banyard, the founder of UK Feminista, the group organizing the summer school, explains. "Direct action doesn't have to be illegal. It is really important that people are confident about their legal right to protest."

There appears to be a real appetite for the course, and about 500 individuals and representatives from small feminist groups around the country are expected when the summer school opens, on the campus of Bristol University, on Sept. 15. Ms. Banyard hopes that this enthusiasm reflects the beginnings of a feminist revival in Britain.

"Until recently, the only time that feminism was mentioned in the press was to remind us all that it was still dead," she says. "But there has been this huge upsurge. No one can deny that it is back."

She set up UK Feminista three years ago, aiming to encourage the creation of new, energetic grass-roots feminist groups, ready to take action across the country to fight for greater equality between the sexes.

Ms. Banyard, 30, who is also the author of "The Equality Illusion," a well-received book outlining how far women are from achieving equality in Britain, estimates that the number of small affiliated groups has tripled to more than 100 in the past two years. Much of the anger that has driven this growth has, she believes, been prompted by the realization that

Log in to see what your friends are sharing on nytimes.com. Privacy Policy | What's This?

Log In With Facebook

### What's Popular Now

Ryan's Speech Contained a Litany of Falsehoods



At Cat Video Film Festival, Stars Purr for Close-Ups



MUSIC, MOVIES, BOOKS, APPS AND MORE.

On Android and the web.

Google play PLAY NOW

All titles available at play.google.com  
Super 8 © 2012 Paramount Pictures. All rights reserved.

### TicketWatch: Theater Offers by E-Mail



Sign up for ticket offers from Broadway shows and other advertisers.

Sign Up

See Sample | Privacy Policy

MOST E-MAILED

MOST VIEWED

1. At Cat Video Film Festival, Stars Purr for Close-Ups

2. GAIL COLLINS Only the Good Get Rich

3. CHARLES M. BLOW The G.O.P. Fact Vacuum

4. Before Eastwood's Talk With a Chair, Clearance From the Top

5. Harvard Students in Cheating Scandal Say Collaboration Was Accepted

6. PAUL KRUGMAN The Medicare Killers



women have been much harder hit by the ailing economy and the government's austerity policies than men.

The vast majority of public-sector workers, whose jobs are threatened by government cuts, are women, she points out. "They also use the services that are being cut more," she says. "They also do the bulk of caring, so when services are being cut back, it is women who have to cushion the blow. Austerity has a specific impact on women. It is, quite frankly, disastrous for women's rights."

In addition, there are the continuing problems of dismal representation of women in Parliament (where men outnumber women four to one), the enduring gender pay gap (where women working full time earn 16 percent less than men) and the continued scarcity of women in the most senior positions in business and politics. Ms. Banyard is particularly concerned by the "relentless objectification of women which is the cultural backdrop in the U.K. — the pornified norm, on mainstream television."

"Because of the ease with which people can share pornography on their mobile phones, it has never been easier to access really violent or degrading images of women," she says. "We are being confronted with it more and more — things like upskirting on mobile phones."

"This all adds up to an urgency. It should be a political priority, but these issues are sidelined and not seen as the disaster that they are. Most people believe in the idea of equality between the sexes; notionally, people support it, but we are a long way from realizing that aspiration."

The growing interest in a new wave of feminism in Britain is echoed in a recent spate of feminist publications, with books like "Reclaiming the F Word," on contemporary feminism; Caitlin Moran's "How to be a Woman"; Cordelia Fine's "Delusions of Gender"; and Natasha Walter's "Living Dolls: The Return of Sexism" all doing well.

"From my perspective, the debate has shifted from the perennial 'Where is feminism?' debate to 'What can this resurgent feminism achieve?'" Ms. Banyard says.

The summer camp will help women — and men — channel their impatience at the slow pace of change into noisy protest. Campaigners are already planning when to put their new skills into action. Politicians should expect some form of yet-to-be-revealed mass feminist action outside the House of Commons in late October. More imminently, Ms. Banyard says, delegates at a European trade gathering for the pornography industry, due to meet for an annual conference at a London hotel, should also be bracing themselves for protest.

As well as providing lessons on how to occupy a public space during a protest, the summer camp aims to be an upbeat meeting place for a group of campaigners who still feel resented.

"Feminism can be quite isolating because it is so stigmatized," Ms. Banyard says. "It can be quite hard to tell people you don't know that you're a feminist, because of these persistent stereotypes — people think feminists are anti-men, are humorless, have to dress in a certain way — so the very act of coming together can be quite powerful."

"It's a reminder that there is a global movement out there, they are not on their own. They are part of an amazing struggle that is hellbent on bringing about a better world."

*Amelia Gentleman is a journalist with The Guardian. Katrin Bennhold is on sabbatical leave.*

A version of this article appeared in print on August 29, 2012, in The International Herald Tribune.

FACEBOOK    TWITTER    GOOGLE+    E-MAIL    SHARE

7. EDITORIAL  
[Mr. Romney Reinvents History](#)



8. DAVID BROOKS  
[The Real Romney](#)



9. NEXT STOP  
[A Challenger to the Amalfi Coast?](#)



10. YOUR MONEY  
[Giving to a Newborn's College Savings Plan](#)

[Go to Complete List »](#)

[Show My Recommendations](#)

**ELECTION 2012  
FOR iPhone®  
AND ANDROID™**

DOWNLOAD NOW ▶

The New York Times

The advertisement features a red background with white text. It shows two smartphones displaying the app's interface, which includes sections for 'Election Guide', 'Polls', 'FiveThirtyEight', 'Delegate Tracker', and 'Candidates'. A blue button with white text says 'DOWNLOAD NOW ▶'. The New York Times logo is at the bottom left.

TimesTalks

Jessica Chastain:  
"The Heiress"  
September 10,  
6:30 – 8 PM E.T.  
BUY TICKETS ▶

The advertisement features a black background with a white speech bubble icon on the left containing the text 'TimesTalks'. On the right, there is a portrait of Jessica Chastain and the event details: 'Jessica Chastain: "The Heiress" September 10, 6:30 – 8 PM E.T. BUY TICKETS ▶'.

Get Free E-mail Alerts on These Topics

Great Britain

Women and Girls

Women's Rights

Demonstrations, Protests, and Riots

Ads by Google

what's this?

**Trader Joe's Coupon**

Coupons for Trader Joe's.

Print Free Trader Joe's Coupon!

[www.ShopAtHome.com/TraderJoes](http://www.ShopAtHome.com/TraderJoes)

INSIDE NYTIMES.COM



MUSIC »



He Took Hip-Hop From Gritty to Global

OPINION »

**Is Teach for America Helping Kids?**

Critics say students need professional teachers. Room for Debate asks: What's wrong with ambitious grads rotating through?

N.Y. / REGION »



Guiding Golfers to Rock Their Shots

SPORTS »



View of Open's Practice Courts an Intimate Perk

OPINION »



Op-Ed: Republicans, in Search of a Foreign Policy

U.S. »



Harvard Students Deny Ever Having Cheated

[Home](#) | [World](#) | [U.S.](#) | [N.Y. / Region](#) | [Business](#) | [Technology](#) | [Science](#) | [Health](#) | [Sports](#) | [Opinion](#) | [Arts](#) | [Style](#) | [Travel](#) | [Jobs](#) | [Real Estate](#) | [Autos](#) | [Site Map](#)

© 2012 The New York Times Company | [Privacy](#) | [Your Ad Choices](#) | [Terms of Service](#) | [Terms of Sale](#) | [Corrections](#) | [RSS](#) | [Help](#) | [Contact Us](#) | [Work With Us](#) | [Advertise](#)

MORE IN EUROPE (26 OF 47 ARTICLES)

**AstraZeneca Names Its Next Chief**

[Read More »](#)