

Text N°1: The Yellow Vests Movement

The yellow vests movement is a political movement that started in France in 2018. A woman from the Seine-et-Marne department started a petition on the change.org website in May 2018. This petition has reached 300,000 signatures by mid-October. Parallel to this petition, two men for the same department launched a Facebook event from 17 November to "block all roads".

- 5 The movement is motivated by rising fuel prices, high cost of living and claims that a disproportionate burden of government tax reforms were falling on the working and middle classes, especially in rural and peri-urban areas.

The protesters have called for lower fuel taxes, reintroduction of solidarity tax on wealth, a minimum wage increase, and Emmanuel Macron's resignation as President of France. The
10 movement has been described as populist (...). The protests have mainly involved marches and the blocking of roads and fuel depots. Some of the protests developed into major riots described as the most violent since those of May 1968.

Yellow vests were chosen as a symbol because, since 2008, a law had required all French motorists to have high-visibility vests in their vehicles while driving. As a result, reflective
15 vests had become widely available, inexpensive and recognisable. By early December 2018, protesters with similar grievances had begun using the yellow vest symbol in many places around the world.

The movement is organised in a leaderless, horizontal fashion. Informal leaders can emerge, but some have been rejected by other demonstrators and even threatened. According to John
20 Lichfield, some in the movement extend their hatred of politicians even to any "would-be-politicians" who emerge from their own ranks. The yellow jackets movements is not associated with a specific political party or trade union and has spread largely by social media.

The protesters claim that the fuel tax is intended to finance tax cuts for big business, with some critics (...) claiming that spending should be cut instead. Macron said the goal of the
25 administration's economic reform program is to increase France's competitiveness in the global economy and says that the fuel tax is intended to discourage fossil-fuel use. Many of the yellow jackets are primarily motivated by economic difficulties due to low salaries and energy prices. The majority of the yellow jackets wants to fight climate change, but are opposed to forcing the working class and the poor to pay for a problem caused by multinational corporation.

From https://www.en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/yellow_vest_movement, visited on 27th Dec. 2018.