

# Strikes and social movements

Silk workers from Lyons, textile and arms factories workers, sardine cannery workers from Douarnenez, miner's wives in Nord and Pas-de-Calais, store employees, cabin crew members, nurses, nursing assistants...: the women's strikes are often linked to claims for equal pay, proper working conditions and new labour laws. From the early days of the strikes at the end of the 19th century to the Yellow vests protests, women are walking at the head of the processions and cause a breach in the establishment that they contribute to shake.

## Bodies and sex

Bodies and sexuality are at the core of feminist fights because they affect the independence, the freedom and the equality of women. The objectification of the female body and the control of their sexual and reproductive choices as well as the awareness on gender-based violence reveal systemic inequalities. By laying claim to the right to have control over their own body and live their sexuality without being judged, feminists call into question patriarchal norms which restrain their power to act and their dignity. As the demonstrations go by, their joy expresses the happiness in campaigning for freedom.

# Warding off fear: Reclaiming the streets and the night

Since the 1970's, feminist night walks have enabled women to ward off fear of rape and violence of all kinds. They increase inside and outside Paris, with this simple and strong wish: "We want to go out at night without risk and without protectors." These are mostly women-only protests, which mark the determination to take to the streets and boulevards with their heads held high, usually singing; to regain their bodies, footing and place in a space where women are too often harassed, humiliated and assaulted.

## An international history of 8 March

The origins of the 8 March are in parts legendary and remain shrouded in mystery.

Within the labour movement, a story was told for a long time about 8 March 1857 - a labour strike of women in the US that never actually existed. This idea was spread by the German revolutionary Clara Zetkin before the First World War. On the 8 March, a march of women in Petrograd became the starting point of the revolution that overthrew the tsar. Over the years, 8 March became an international day to celebrate and defend women's rights and their dignity.