The NUM only gave financial support to strikers which put pressure on others to join in with the strike. Miners who didn’t strike were known as “scabs” and ostracised by many mining communities, there was even violence against “scabs.” Posters, badges and leaflets were distributed to give information and raise much needed funds.

The Battle of Orgreave
The National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) organised a mass picket on 18th June 1984 outside the Orgreave coking plant with the intention of blockading the plant forcing its temporary closure.

- 5000-6000 strikers vs 4000-8000 police
- 51 injured, 93 arrested vs 72 injured
- TV coverage showed strikers hurling rocks, bricks and bottles at the police who after much provocation retaliated with a mass charge
- This coverage badly affected public support for the miners
- The media, union leaders and the labour party criticised the strikers’ behaviour. So further mass pickets were called off

Additional Info
- The government was forced to agree to strikers’ demands in the miners’ strikes of 1972 and 1974, which resulted in its defeat in the February 1974 elections over its handling of the unions
- The conservatives were bitter about the way the miners’ strike had contributed to their defeat in the February 1974 election
- So when they were re-elected in 1979 they passed new laws reducing the power of the unions determined not to let them win again
- Many miners were unhappy with this undemocratic process

Poll Tax Protests

What was the “poll tax”
There was a plan to replace existing rate systems with a community charge aka poll tax to fund local governments. The Conservative government first introduced it on 1st April 1989 in Scotland and a year later in England and Wales. It meant that:

- Everyone over the age of 18 would be liable to pay (except the homeless, severely mentally impaired and members of religious communities
- Everyone had to pay the same amount which caused outrage since over 70% of the population ended up having to pay more tax

Protest groups
The Labour party, trade unions and other people thought that the poll tax was unfair with the poor paying the same amount as the wealthy. Soon afterwards the Anti-Poll Tax Union (APTU) was set up in