Northumbria IWW #KillTheBill

Newcastle has always been a hub for protest action in the North East of England, in recent times, the Northumbria Branch of the IWW, alongside fellow socialist and anarchist organisations, have always attempted to have a presence there, raising the flag of our union high and proud. Most of these protests end with a positive tone, but a Kill the Bill protest held on May 1st ended with several protestors being arrested, those of whom who were arrested are due to appear in court soon.

Iain, the Northumbria IWW Secretary, was at the protest in question and had the following to comment on the events that transpired:

*‘’The person on monument [Grey’s Monument] was asking people to come up and chalk what Kill The Bill/Protest means to them which the police saw as due process to man handle teenagers. They took them to the waiting vans… where there was a standoff between the protesters and police. Turning a 'peaceful protest' into one of indignation because someone wrote a message on the base of a statue (which the police can and will arrest you for, another indication of their overreaching powers we want to stop). This started an impromptu march through the city and eventually being contained on the road outside the civic centre at which point I dipped.*

*Rejoined at the Life Centre where there was another standoff with police who had riot gear under the railway bridge to stop anyone getting near the police station.*

*From accounts I've heard afterwards (some first accounts of those arrested, including one from a teenager) the people arrested were held in police custody for several hours and released early in the morning.’’*

ResitNCL also reported similar treatment of the minors who were arrested, commenting on twitter that the minors who were arrested were: ‘held in a cell for over 10 hours’ with many protestors being ‘rugby tackled and pinned to the ground’ for peacefully protesting against the authoritarian increase in police powers. Videos of these arrests and the full statement made by ResistNCL can be found [here.](https://twitter.com/resistncl/status/1389297244315299842)

This level of violence and aggressive tactics by Northumbria Police are becoming more and more common in recent months due to an increase in protests due to the Kill the Bill movement, alongisde the anniversary of the beginning of the Black Lives Matter protests following the murder of George Floyd by the police. I personally witnessed a baffling moment in which the police informed a person with a sign saying ‘fuck the tories, deport the EDL’ that if the EDL showed up, the police would force them to get rid of their sign. This is alongside their use of the ‘blue bibs’ cops who have attempted to get information from protestors.

The above further shows how Northumbria Police, alongside the police worldwide, are in the pockets of the rich, those in power, and those on the far-right. However, we as a union have always stood against them, and we continue to do so in the North East. We will not allow their aggressive actions to impede us when we are fighting against the capitalist state that oppresses us. With protests planned in the future regarding Kill the Bill, attempting to stop the [Hassockfield Detention Centre](https://www.refugeewomen.co.uk/stop-the-new-detention-centre/?fbclid=IwAR11xP_uqa0gFRon0if2RYuO8v6XyHSrRaQpnYxJ9zuyupLY1tIyFYjzb70) that is planned to be built, alongside other general protests, we hope to continue the fight and support each other in solidarity in protest and in work. Our union has a rich tradition of attending such actions, especially in the North East, and we hope to continue it with even greater force as protests become more common now that lockdowns have eased. Northumbria IWW Branch stands united in solidarity with those affected by the brutal capitalist police and the state that they serve.

If you wish to support those who are due to appear in court, you can donate to the gofundme [here.](https://www.gofundme.com/f/legal-fund-kill-the-bill-protests-in-newcastle)

Solidarity forever comrades,

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