

May Day protest in Seattle results in nine arrests

George Gallanis
3 May 2016

On Sunday, anarchist protesters marched in Seattle in a self-described “May Day anti-capitalist” protest. News reports indicate that the protesters, dressed in black, threw rocks and bricks, among other things. Nine arrests were reported.

The protesters began amassing in Westlake Park after 5:00 pm. The protest was planned in advance, giving the Seattle police ample time to organize their forces. As the *Chicago Tribune* reported, there was “a massive deployment of police officers in riot gear on foot, on bicycles, on horseback and in vehicles to control the crowd of dozens of masked protesters...”

As the protesters marched, Roman candles and other fireworks were lit. A Starbucks window was shattered and a Seattle Department of Transportation vehicle was sprayed with black spray paint. Upon moving to Fifth Avenue and Pine Street, protesters began throwing rocks and other objects where, the *Chicago Tribune* notes, “police liberally doused parts of the crowd with pepper-spray.” Moreover, police tossed “blast balls” at the protestors, which generate a loud noise and bright light while emitting pepper spray.

From Fifth and Pine, protesters moved to the Belltown neighborhood, where they were flanked by heavily armed officers. At roughly 7:00 pm a majority of the demonstrators headed back downtown, where a number of clashes with the police ensued. According to reports, more rocks and bricks were thrown at the police, while others shot flares. The Seattle police reported an officer was hurt in the clash, at which point police issued a dispersal order for the area, arresting anyone who resisted.

Flanked at all times by the police, the protesters moved to the Sodo industrial area, where they would make their final confrontation in a Costco parking lot. There, they reportedly began overturning pallets until

they were encircled by the police. By 8:45 pm only a small group remained in the parking lot. At that point, police began allowing protesters to slowly disperse, after a small number were arrested.

Such anarchist protests are the expression of disillusioned middle class layers who do not represent the interests of working class. They rely instead on political adventurism, i.e., the planning of one day protests accompanied by rock throwing and scuffles with the police. The backward character of such protests feed into the reactionary character of the state, which uses them to legitimize the use of force. Moreover, the anarchist organizations are often infiltrated with police officers.

Multiple mainstream media outlets have denounced the protest, making sure to use the words “anti-capitalist” and “violence” together in their articles. Moreover, major news outlets contradict one another, with some suggesting Molotov cocktails were thrown, while others say they were not lit.

NBC News described the outcome of the day’s events as follows: “One officer was struck by a rock, one was hit by a Molotov and a third was bitten, the Seattle Police Department said. The nature of the injuries to the other two officers was not immediately known.” This sentence was preceded by, “The anti-capitalist disorder followed a peaceful march earlier in the day by advocates for workers and immigrants—one of several nationwide events Sunday calling for better wages for workers and work permits for undocumented migrants.”

The big business press rushes to use such events to promote confusion among workers and youth, where a genuine anti-capitalist sentiment is brewing. To put it more precisely, the media, acting as the mouthpiece of the capitalist ruling class, fears that such sentiments

may find expression in a genuine political and socialist form.



To contact the WSWS and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact