

The Seattle protests of the WTO were one of the first instances of collective action of the people being used to target the power of the state, or more specifically the powerful multinational corporations that have undue influence over the state and the regulatory industries within nations. The main process of combating the WTO was to blockade the streets of Downtown Seattle and attempt to block the delegates from attending the convention.

The World Trade Organization is one of the bodies that regulate the global economy, and was seen as a target for protest because of its role in eliminating labour and environmental standards within nations. In the history of the WTO, it has ruled that every labour standard, environmental protection and tariff placed before the WTO has been ruled an illegal trade barrier, with those protections having to be dismantled in order to avoid fines or sanctions against the national industry for that economy. These reductions in barriers serve the multinational corporations by eliminating barriers to profit, but the resulting changes in policy severely weaken the ability of individual workers to share in the profits of the corporation they work for, and often present downward pressure on wages that further depress the power of the individual.

The video's main focus was on the creation of long term coalitions that could be formed to fight back in an electoral and mass media sense against the hegemony of mass corporations. In media coverage of the event, there were attempts made to divide the protestors into different groups, mainly Big Labour which was seen as the legitimate group that was law abiding and mainstream, and the anarchist activists that were vandalizing property and forcing police action against the protestors.

One of the main critiques of individual or mass power was that the corporations and powers that be are not concerned about the power of small groups or individuals, but once groups become too large they begin to have the power to influence decisions and they need to be destroyed, in the case of the WTO protests this included mass arrests without cause and the dismantling of civil rights, and also by attempting to divide the coalition into anarchists and mainstream labour.

In covering the event we can see how mass media was owned and operated almost solely by 8 major corporations and thus have an intrinsic motivation to defeat the protests before too much damage could be done to the credibility of corporate power. The coverage of the protests almost solely focused on gaining insight from members of the corporate elite who were being harmed and discussing the protest in terms of property and the protection of capital. Very rarely were the views of the protestors aired in the media, and usually it was done in the context of what kind of abuses they had suffered instead of the substantial debate on the issues that should have occurred.

Minimizing the impact of the protestors was another method used by the mass media to try and mitigate the impact of the protests, but it was found that independent media was able to create a less biased account and led to chants of "the whole world is watching" which was seen as a means of ensuring that people around the world would be able to take note of what happened in Seattle and would respond appropriately and based on their own beliefs. This idea that the whole world was watching was also based around the multinational profile of the protests, with over 30,000 protestors arriving in Seattle from all over the world.