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Ask the Jobless If Marx Is Relevant

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The New York Times

Ask the Jobless If Marx Is Relevant

Published: July 4, 1998

To the Editor:

Your July 2 editorial on the demonstration against the Metropolitan Transportation Authority's awarding of a contract to a nonunion bidder focused on the small number of construction workers who turned violent. But the vast majority were orderly.

What I saw was a militant protest that was legitimate and effective. The unions argue that the "lowest responsible bidder" must be defined with greater clarity to insure that public money does not go to contractors who offer no health insurance, invest no money in training and flout laws regulating the industry.

The demonstration also revealed the depth of working-class anger and anxiety in New York. The protesters believe a revitalized labor movement can restore the promise of American life.

JEFF GRABELSKY

New York, July 2, 1998

The writer is director, construction industry program, Cornell School of Industrial and Labor Relations.