

**T**o ride a bus in Los Angeles is to know a city so different from its enduring image of uncircumscribed freedom, the more blissfully ignorant motorists among us would be moved to forget about rebuilding L.A. (if we ever thought about it in the first place) and start rethinking L.A. The 210 line rumbling south down Crenshaw from Wilshire is a good primer for the uninitiated: During the hottest part of a hot day the bus is without air conditioning, so patrons sitting on its west side sweat and bear it. By the time the bus pulls up at the King Boulevard stop, in the heart of the Crenshaw district, it's standing room only for the largely tired and poor, among them women with kids piled on their laps, a man in a wheelchair, a mother bottle-feeding an infant, teenagers recently freed from school. Nearly everyone on board is black or Latino, and most are female. It gets so crowded that people cluster in the stairwells, which one rider declares a bad accident waiting to happen. "It's not supposed to be that way, but what can the bus drivers do?" says the man in the wheelchair, whose name is Muhammad. His clothes are rumpled and slightly dirty; he talks in spurts, and there's a militant edge to his anger about buses. "They need to put more of them in the ghetto. They put, what, six lines on Wilshire Boulevard, but [here] they only got this one. It's ridiculous."

At Crenshaw and Slauson, the most enterprising intersection in the city, a man hawks Mike Tyson T-shirts ("If You Can't Beat 'Em, Bite 'Em") from the trunk of his battered car. The 210 is still packed, and is having trouble unpacking because the back door is stuck. The T-shirt man stands expectantly outside, awaiting new customers. "Give it some Prozac!" somebody up front yells, and the passengers laugh, albeit wearily. "Look at that," remarks Rosemary Lockett, a bus rider for 36 years. "Buses are not maintained. Sometimes things work, sometimes not." Today's not so bad. "We take it," she says before getting off in Inglewood. "What can you do? You got to get from Point A to Point B."

In Los Angeles, getting there is indeed more than a notion, and it tends to take precedence over understanding the enormously complex issues underlying the city's transportation crisis—rail cost overruns, construction mishaps, infighting on the Metropolitan Transportation Authority board. But the Bus Riders Union wants you to know: It's tunneling right through the bureaucratic muck to bring first-class bus service to L.A. For four years union organizers have been spreading the word on lines like the 210, and as resigned as most riders still appear, many have at least a dim awareness of the union and its ongoing fight with the MTA. "Yeah, I heard of 'em," says Ron Davidson, a sometime truck driver with a straw cowboy hat slumped over his eyes. He's taking the 210 today to Crenshaw and Washington, to get to work. "They got a court order against the MTA. Well, that's good. The MTA should do right by the buses."

In fact, the upstart union has already moved from the fringe of local politics to a regular seat at the negotiating table with the MTA, an 8,500-employee, \$2.5 billion agency that had gone unchallenged locally until the union's emergence. The culmination of the BRU's work thus far came last October, when, as lead plaintiff in a federal civil rights lawsuit filed by the NAACP Legal Defense and Education Fund, it won a consent decree that mandates the MTA to expeditiously improve its bus service. But while four members now serve on the court-appointed Joint Working Group along with MTA staffers to hash out details of the decree, the BRU seems to have lost none of the squeaky-wheel aggression that got it noticed in the first place, when members were routinely escorted out of MTA boardrooms for disrupting meetings. Built on a vision of rebuilding America's political left from the ground up, the union remains loyal not simply to bus riders but to a belief in the ability of people to change the system with their bare hands, to arm themselves with information and moral certitude and bring the establishment to its knees.

Pie in the sky? Perhaps. Some say the union just got a lucky legal break, and that its political intractability will be its downfall.

But not only does its approach appear to be working, it is working in a city that is hardly known for multiethnic coalitions or sustained activism of any kind. James Moore, an associate professor of urban planning and civil engineering at the University of Southern California, says the union is doing nothing less than "God's work." Moore is among a group of transportation experts who share the union's belief that the MTA's focus on rail projects is aimed more at filling political egos and corporate pockets than the street-level needs of commuters. But nobody's ever really made an issue of it, let alone a federal case—until now. "The BRU counters all this civic stupor by being not just in your face, but action-oriented," he says. "We [academics] can write all the studies we want, but that doesn't affect public policy much. The union's voice is resounding, and getting more and more audible."

*Reporter to a BRU member: "You all don't sound like a protest group. You sound like you want to run the MTA."*

*BRU member: "You got that right."*

### **The Bus Riders Union is the latest, greatest campaign undertaken by the Labor/Community Strategy Center,**

the nonprofit organizing center started by longtime activist Eric Mann in 1989. It grew out of a Transportation Policy Group formed by the center to study L.A.'s transportation policies and their effect on low-income and minority populations, which in turn led to the Campaign for Mass Transportation and Environmental Justice and its call for expanding L.A.'s bus fleet with clean-fuel buses. The campaign baptized Mann and his crew in fire: They discovered that the MTA, formed in 1993 when the Southern California Rapid Transit District merged with the county transportation Commission, was bankrupting itself by building rail projects with funds allocated for buses, in the process neglecting the needs of L.A.'s most transit-dependent, who by no accident are chiefly poor, black, brown and female. Mann knew then that the center would be in the bus war for the long haul, and that it had to wage the fight not with speeches and reports, but with bus riders themselves.

Of the 1,200 union members now working on behalf of an estimated 350,000 bus riders—currently 94 percent of MTA's daily ridership—six are field organizers and 12 serve on the planning committee. The union is a publicist's dream: 80 percent black and Latino, 10 percent to 15 percent white, 10

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*"The BRU counters all this civic stupor by being not just in your face, but action-oriented...The union's voice is resounding, and getting more and more audible."*

James Moore  
Univ. Southern California

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percent Asian. Like Los Angeles itself, it notably lacks a center—but this is a lack by design, engineered by Mann to grow what he calls a “culture of leadership” in which everyone on staff is equally knowledgeable and equally capable of running things. BRU members also tend to be members of labor unions, veterans of labor or social movements, or in any case people acutely disillusioned with the current political process. Members must contribute at least a dollar in annual dues. “You’ve gotta have at least a dollar,” says Mann. “No freebies. You got to invest your own money to get out of poverty.”

Rosalio Mendiola, 59, is a restaurant worker at the Beverly Wilshire Hotel who joined the BRU’s planning committee last year. Plainspoken and serious, the Mexican immigrant is an active member of Local 11 of the Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees Union, and a supporter of its ongoing strike against the New Otani Hotel downtown. He says he was attracted to the BRU’s stalwart sense of mission and its egalitarian slant. “I have a voice, an opportunity to speak,” he says. “One of my co-workers said to me, ‘You can fight the MTA, but you won’t win. It’s a multibillion-dollar agency.’ I told him, ‘No matter what, I’m going to fight.’”

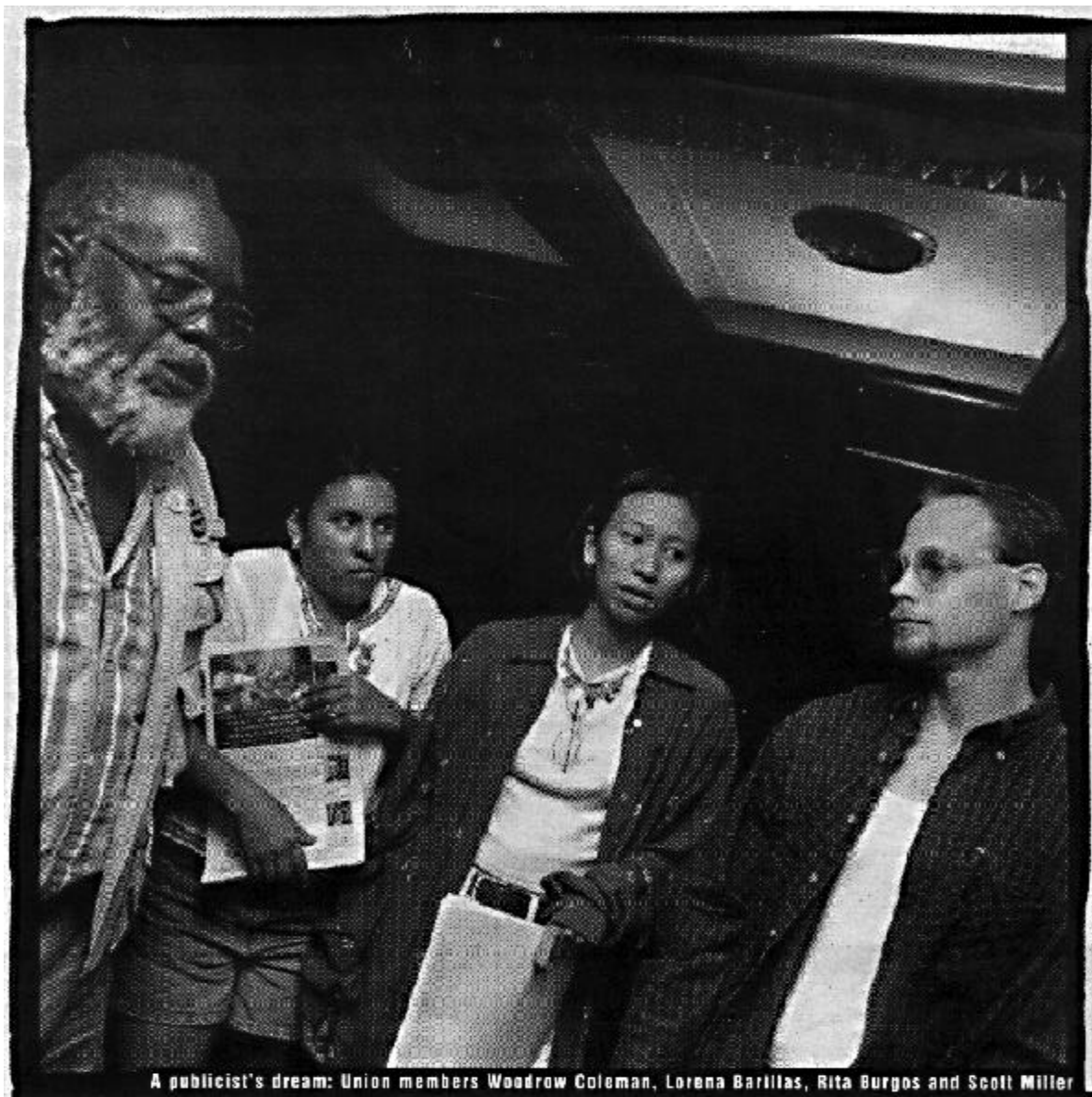
Woodrow Coleman is as talkative as Mendiola is reserved, a 63-year-old African-American man with a voluminous beard and folksy disposition. A seasoned activist who most recently worked loading produce trucks, he “kept running into those BRU guys” on the bus and eventually came to a meeting, drawn like Mendiola to the union’s vision for wholesale social change. “I was always interested in how transportation affects people, in how the economy privatizes public services more and more,” he explains, echoing the union’s contention that the most sinister political development of the

*“It’s a whole new ball game now...There have been bigger forces than the BRU that never got on the radar screen.”*

Connie Rice, attorney  
Legal Defense Fund

past decade has been “corporatized government,” complete with fat contracts and backdoor deals. “When I came to a BRU meeting I realized that organizing is the key.” Coleman clearly enjoys working the bus crowds, and seems happiest nabbing new converts. “We got to constantly get new blood,” he says. “I keep fliers with me, get rid of stuff wherever I go. I always have at least 30 leaflets on me at any given time. Organizing the unorganized—that’s what we got to do.”

The Bus Riders Union put itself on the map in 1994 when members, represented by Legal Defense Fund lawyer Constance Rice, went to federal court and blocked an MTA proposal that would have raised bus fares and eliminated monthly passes. It made more startling history last October with the consent decree, in which U.S. Judge Terry Hatter legally sanctioned what the union had been saying loudly since it began: Decent public transportation is a civil right. Rice admits that the issue would most likely have



A publicist's dream: Union members Woodrow Coleman, Lorena Barillas, Rita Burgos and Scott Miller

not wound up in court, where most civil rights battles are finally fought, without the full-on push it got from the union. "It's a whole new ball game now," she says. "Courts and federal agencies typically respond to bigger pressures, not necessarily an outfit like the Bus Riders Union. There have been bigger forces than the BRU that never got on the radar screen."

But the union hasn't yet raised any champagne glasses—it's too busy watchdogging the MTA, more vigilantly than ever. In the nine months following the settlement, BRU organizers say, the 13-member MTA board has been doing pretty much what it was doing before about improving bus service: nothing. The MTA is still grabbing headlines mainly for administrative shakeups and fiscal extravagance on rail projects. (The latest fiasco involved the purchase of millions of dollars' worth of imported Italian subway cars that sit, unused, in storage.) The CEO seat has been empty since January. Continually upstaged by all the MTA's internal problems is the consent decree: Essentially a 10-year bus-improvement plan, its provisions are sweeping but largely unspecific, with much depending on how quickly the Joint Working Group can agree on how many new buses will be ordered, when to order them (a purchase order takes 18 months to fill), how much money will be spent. There are other provisions—reduction of bus overcrowding, the creation of a demonstration program with at least 50 buses that will determine how to better provide patrons access to employment and education—but they are all subsets of new bus purchases, which are the heart of the union's demands and require the MTA to commit money it is quick to say it doesn't have.

That doesn't faze union organizer Norma Henry, a member of the Joint Working Group. Henry is a pleasant-faced African-American woman, a legal secretary and bus rider for the last five years. "Historically, buses have never had priority," she says. "The debate about money for buses is a lot of smoke and mirrors. The reality is that corporate rail developers generate profit, buses don't. We're a small organization fighting a huge agency with an enormous staff. The MTA's job has been to trip us up, and all we can do is watch and monitor. I don't think they ever had any intention of fulfilling the consent decree."

Nobody publicly opposes the BRU's grievances or the consent decree's requirements. MTA board member and County Supervisor Yvonne Burke admits that the agency's administration of bus services has been god-awful and is in serious need of

retooling, but she came to the MTA relatively recently and says the fiscal mess she inherited precludes any quick fixes. She objects, however, to the union casting the transit problem as strictly a bus-vs.-rail debate and demonizing those politicians who call for some sort of compromise. "The MTA feels it's going to be able to meet the requirements of the decree, but the interpretation of the Bus Riders Union is making things impossible," she says. "We need a balanced transit system, but poor people need rail, too. The Blue Line [which serves inner-city communities like Watts and South-Central] gets awful crowded at rush hour."

Union members are quick to point out that they're not against rail per se, but the MTA's racist administration of it. The MTA, for its part, says it has been moving on bus improvements, just not at the pace the BRU would like. "We authorized a new bus order two months before the decree was even settled," says Dana Woodbury, a deputy executive officer with the MTA's Operations Planning and Scheduling division. "We're considering ordering 223 more. The BRU's sense of urgency is driven more by a sense of need to see action than anything else. They basically are not agreeing on the rate at which we're replacing buses."

But the union accuses the MTA of expertly fudging the facts. It says the agency is counting buses ordered pre-decree as fulfilling post-decree requirements; that it is counting old, reconditioned, dirty-fuel buses as "new"; that it is nowhere near even following its own mandate of replacing buses 12 years old or older (about half the current fleet of 2,000 qualifies for retirement). By the BRU's reckoning, the MTA owes L.A. bus riders 600 new machines—for starters. "The MTA is violating its own standards of bus replacement," says union organizer Rita Burgos. "Part of what we're trying to do is just get them to adhere to their own rules."

Not everyone believes the BRU's uncompromising position on bus improvements is heroic, or even appropriate. One transportation-policy observer, who asked not to be named, thinks it may even be as self-serving as the political system the union so loudly decries: "I totally agree with the working-

poor organization work of the union, but I totally disagree with its analysis of the issues. Eric [Mann's] problem is that his interest is not in providing the best service for the city, it's in proving that capitalism doesn't work. That's not the union's role. Not to downplay their work, but they need to take a hard look at how rail can benefit the inner-city economies."

While many BRU members are in labor unions, and Mann himself is a veteran of union fights, unions are not automatic BRU allies. For example, the local United Transportation Union, which represents MTA bus drivers, says the BRU simply refuses to meet its concerns—or anyone's—halfway, which makes for strained relations. "We have common interests and goals, of course, but they feel we should stand up and completely represent their interests," says UTU spokesman Goldy Norton. "We want more buses, better service, more drivers. But we have to make sure that our union is protected. We have to focus on a labor contract for us. We're not enemies."

Frances Fox Piven, a political-science and sociology professor at City University of New York, wonders how long the union can sustain its full-throttle intensity. "The problem with a commuters' union is figuring out what leverage you have—what kind of damage can you really do to a big transit agency?" she says. "More power to the consent decree—it's a very significant ruling—but it's going to take a lot of watchdogging." Yet Piven concludes that Mann and the BRU may have no choice but to make a federal case out of the bus problem. "One of the issues that came out of the study of the Watts Riots was that the transportation was terrible and inequitable," she says. "Thirty years later, that's still the case. It may be that it'll take a social movement."

*At the MTA's full board meeting in May, the agency takes more than three hours to decide to put off ordering 200 new buses—again. As board members make hasty exits, about 50 folks from the Bus Riders Union rise up from their seats, link arms and surge toward the gate separating them from the board's*

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*Norma Henry  
BRU Planning Committee*

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now-deserted round table. They begin swaying and singing the civil-rights anthem "We Shall Overcome."

Board president Richard Riordan seems puzzled by this, then peeved. He walks toward the group waving his arms, like he's trying to shoo away a flock of pigeons. "You're losing my support!" he finally cries above the din of song. But the union members look through Riordan, their ally as recently as an hour ago, as if he isn't there.

### The '90s are strange political days,

and union organizers say that what makes their fight especially tough is the new class dimension of racial politics—middle-class black and Latino political leaders vs. the interests of their own working-class constituencies. They say L.A.'s minority leadership—represented on the MTA board by Burke, Supervisor Gloria Molina and Councilman Richard Alatorre—has proved to be no more sympathetic to the cause of more and better buses than its white counterparts. Everyone from Crenshaw to East L.A. to the San Fernando Valley is nursing pet rail projects; so are black and Latino rail-construction lobbyists, who may voice solidarity with the BRU but whose first loy-

**"It may be that it'll take a social movement."**

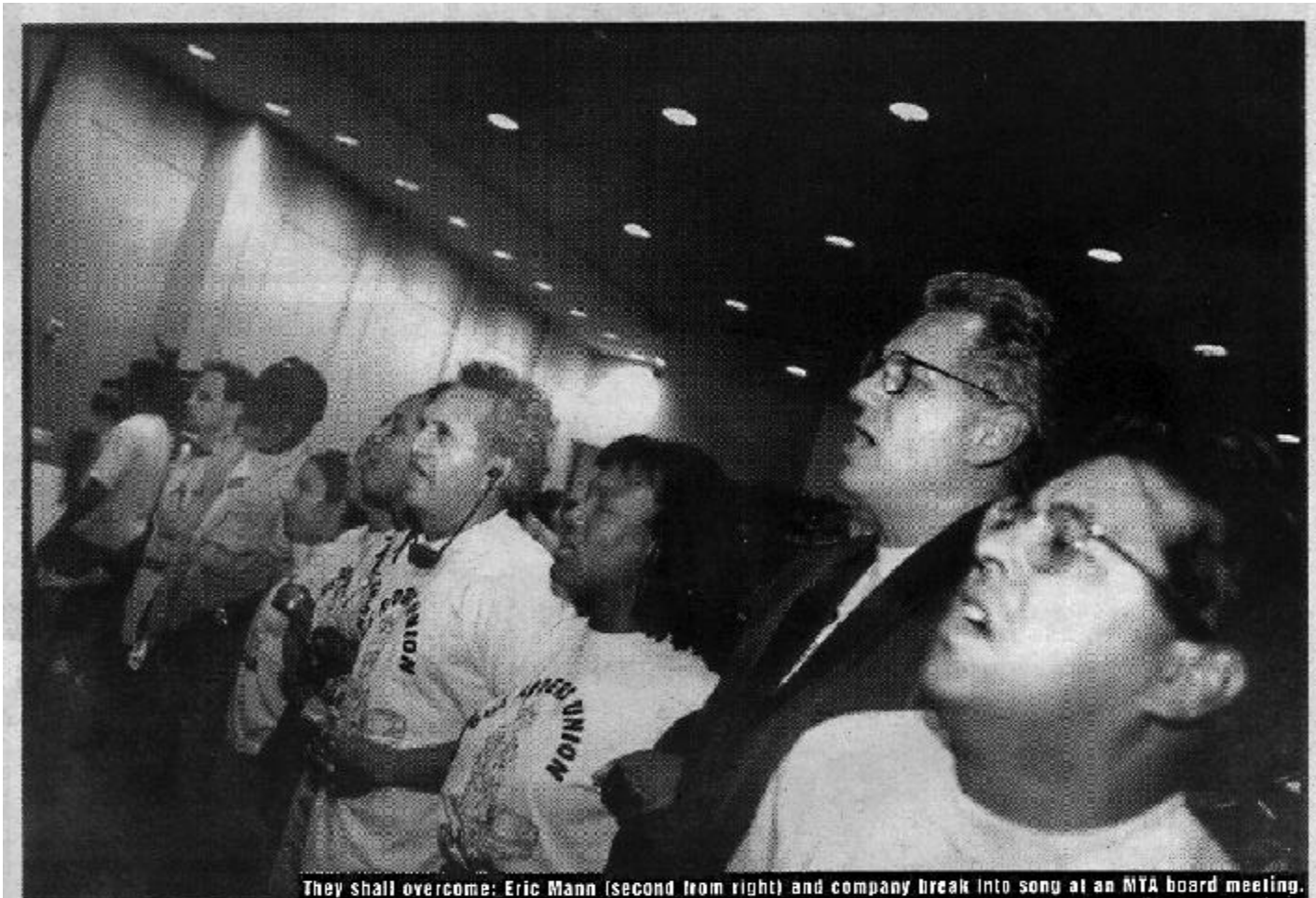
Frances Fox Piven  
City University of NY

alty is to their jobs. "Buses aren't sexy, politically speaking," says union organizer Martín Hernández. "They don't require big contracts or involve big construction projects or involve a lot of dollars."

At least one transportation expert, who also declined to be named, objects strenuously to the union painting L.A.'s transportation problem racially, accusing Eric Mann of too easily exploiting white liberal guilt instead of working to actually bring together the different ethnic groups that he claims are the union's lifeblood. Mann, however, is adamant about the still-alarming depth of America's race problem and its influence on everything from environmental crises to bus fares; he says the black-on-black—or brown-on-brown—political sellout is one of the most distressing social developments in post-affirmative-action America. In the absence of any real moral impetus, he says, politics has come to embrace a moral impotence. "Race has

become the most divisive force in this society," he says. "If we don't see race issues first, we can't deal with class. People experience class, race, gender, but they experience them separately. And it's difficult for one organization to address all three."

When the union began four years ago, Mann says, people weren't exactly beating down the door to join the cause. "Who's really building the left when this country is listing to the right?" he asks in a steady, slightly gravely voice that is Brooklyn-tough around the edges. "Who wants to take the road less traveled?" To narrow membership even further, Mann also required inviolable "personal integrity." "This is a highly pedagogical institution, and the most important thing is ethics," he says. That means, as far as the union is concerned, a core belief in social and racial equality is not only the most important thing, it is an end in itself. "That's got to be enough," says Mann. "We study



They shall overcome: Eric Mann (second from right) and company break into song at an MTA board meeting.

the best use of human capital. Period. We go against that 'don't bring in your own agenda' bullshit."

Cultural cross-fertilization seems to be built into the union's work: Organizer Kikanza Ramsey is an African American woman who is fluent in Spanish; organizers on the street don't hesitate to approach bus riders of any color. Mann likes to compare building an organizer corps to Miles Davis building his famous all-star band, by assembling all the jazz luminaries of the age in one studio. Union members shine partly because Mann insists that they do; at any given time one person is in charge of an issue or event, what Mann calls a "point." "That's our mantra around here—'Who's point today?'" he says. "I like to build the opportunity to let other people fly solo."

But the democratic ideal can thud to earth. In the union's beginning, though Mann and other organizers took equal time at the microphone or with reporters during press conferences, the media tended to quote Mann exclusively and identify the union as his. Hurt by the possibility of the union being perceived as white-run and thus more legitimate, Mann started staying home—not exactly something an ego as healthy as his enjoyed doing. "Yeah, I have great experience in organization, but I tend to take up space," he says, a little wearily. "But I was trying to create a collective culture of leadership, so I had to work against the stereotypes. I mean, I'm a white, male, Jewish, middle-class guy, and this union is poor, working, minority, mostly women."

Many people say that Mann has the ego of two men, and at least one critic accuses him of trying to build a cult of personality rather than a political constituency. Instead of the fruit of real community organizing, this critic says, what Mann really has is a handful of people, a lawsuit that turned in his favor, office letterhead and the beneficence of a few liberal foundations, whose donations account for much of the center's \$600,000 annual budget. (The reluctance of even the union's harshest critics to talk on the record speaks either to a penchant for political correctness or to Mann's reputation for harassing non-believers.)

Larry Fondation of the Southern California Organizing Committee lauds the BRU's attempts at organizing commuters as creative, but isn't so sure about its long range tactics. "When you're first establishing yourself, you have to be more militant, but once you're at the bargaining table you have to adjust your approach," he says. "You can't get so caught up in your own rhetoric that you won't bargain with the devil. It's not that you're wimping out. But the whole point of confrontation is to get to the table."

Yet organizer Anthony Thigpenn of the South L.A.-based AGENDA appreciates Mann raising his voice so loudly for the cause of minorities, something he doesn't see too many community groups doing. "I have no question about Eric's sincerity to build social movements and efforts to empower other people," says Thigpenn. "That's an important thing to do, build the left. No one organization can do it." He sympathizes with the union's dilemma of "preserving its own progressive agenda while trying to build alliances with other like organizations. It may be that they're still in the first phase of development. And in terms of building relationships with other community groups, we're all guilty of failing at that. We've all had a history of wanting to be the biggest and the baddest."

The union's de facto public-relations person is organizer Martín Hernández, a 40 year-old part-time actor (and freelance theater critic for the Weekly) with an easy, garrulous charm and a knack for making knotty transit issues accessible. Raised in East L.A., Hernández worked on various Democratic campaigns—Gloria Molina, Michael Dukakis—to satisfy a vague need to make social change. But the strategy meetings tended to be overwhelmingly white and, in Hernández' mind, far removed from the pressing concerns of his neighborhood. He also worked as an accounts collector for First Interstate Bank for seven

if we want to be dealing seriously with the MTA.' That kind of put it all in perspective. We are truly fighting for the needs of bus riders. There are people who don't buy into the whole center philosophy, don't give a damn about it, and that's fine. [Staffer] Della Bonner came because she's pissed off about the buses. Woodrow [Coleman] came because he's an old-time leftie. We're trying to grow a leadership body out of a very disparate group of people."

Lisa Durán, a former BRU organizer who left in 1995, says that's true—to a point. She speaks glowingly about her political education at the center but criticizes its organizing approach as stifling at times. "The [center'] philosophy is very interesting, very worthwhile, but it is very dependent on people dictating things to each other," says Durán, now a project manager at a Denver clinic that caters to immigrants and women. The irony, she says, is that "I was taught to think for myself, but my own conclusions were not welcomed, in the end. The viewpoint of the center was pretty defined. Even though Eric was always willing to listen and debate, he would argue that their inflexibility was necessary for what they were trying to do. Social movements can be anarchic."

Rita Burgos runs the center's small organizing school, called the National School for Environmental and Civil Rights Organiz-

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Eric Mann  
Strategy Center

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years before a layoff rudely awakened him to the realities of private enterprise. "I was a typical working drone with some sense of socialism," he says. "I figured there just shouldn't be such defined rich and poor classes in this country. The first thing I had to do was get out of corporate culture."

While Hernández finds the union culture more-enriching, it is hardly homogeneous. He says black and Latino members have split over Proposition-187; they have argued heatedly about translating meetings into Spanish. He recalls one black union member standing up in the middle of a meeting and declaring, to the horror of Hernández and others, that she was decidedly against bilingualism. "And then she said, 'What I'm really for is polylingualism,'" says Hernández. "We need to be speaking Korean, Chinese, everything,

ing, a six-month program that trains about six people at a time. The history of the Bus Riders Union is the school's first lesson in social empowerment. From there, students are taught how to unite around larger issues such as civil rights, workers' rights and transportation. Burgos brings in guest lecturers in the history of black, Chicano and Asian liberation movements, L.A. author and political historian Mike Davis is a regular.

The organizing work itself, on and for buses, is not for those with good intentions alone. "People have to really be driven politically," explains Burgos. "They have to want to challenge themselves, and they have to be driven by ideology and sincerity. Riding buses four hours a day is not an easy thing" Petite and tough-minded, Burgos says she would like to help fashion a left that is affili-

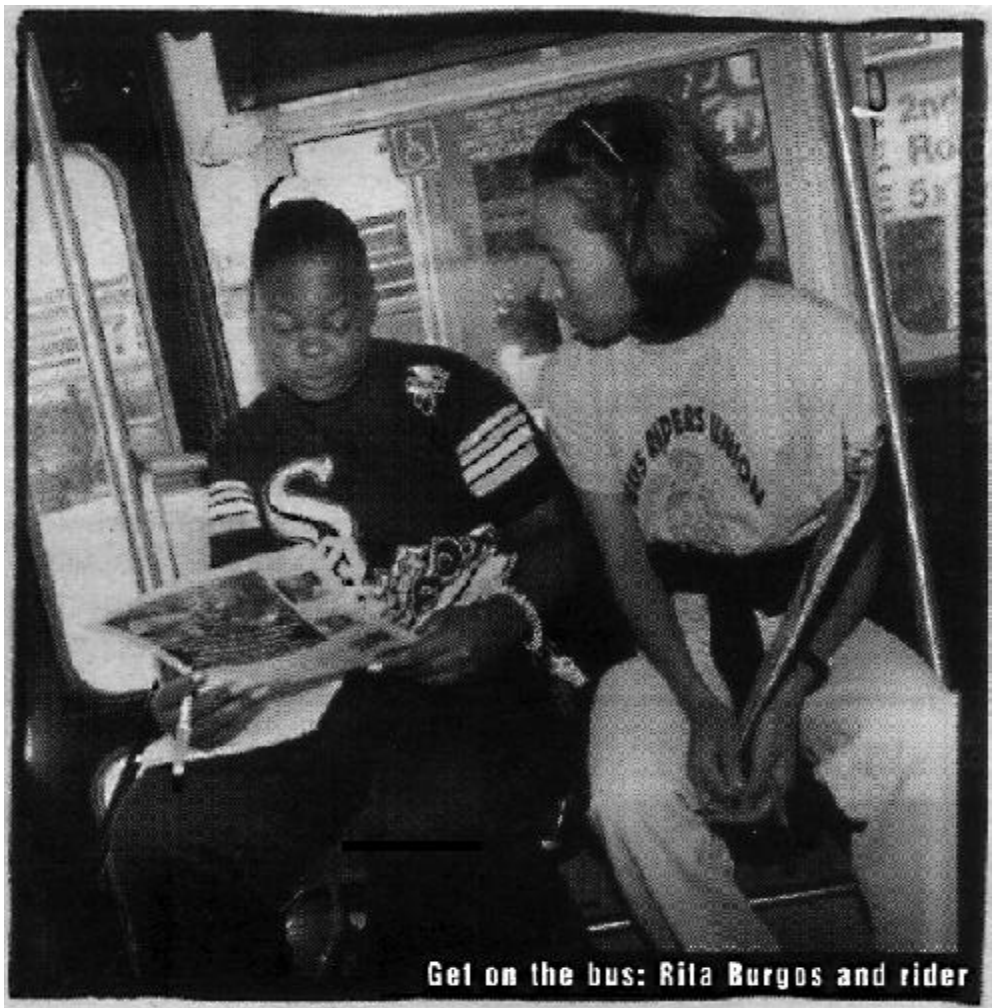
ated with, but wholly independent of, the Democratic Party. "We're trying to shape the debate differently, give people the space to dream about things," she says, "in order to get people excited about the program." She adds, a tiny bit wistfully, "right now, the Right is doing that. They've shifted the terms of the debate. That's what we want to do."

**Eric Mann recognizes the paradox** of at once having no faith in the system and having complete faith in the pure democratic ideals of change on which the system rests. He says the Bus Riders Union works piecemeal, drawing on whom-ever and whatever it can—the courts, public opinion, the paper-thin promises of the MTA—to advance its cause. It's even sent a delegation to Washington to lobby top transportation officials. He doesn't worry about the union's future as such; at regular meetings bus riders are already talking up other pressing concerns: rights of the disabled, immigration, welfare reform.

"We're getting pushed into multiple issues naturally. It's not a question of 'What will the union do next?' It's 'What do people do next?' And we're the biggest optimists there are," he says, sitting in his office at the Labor/Community Strategy Center, some 12 stories above L.A.'s amorphous skyline in a suite in the landmark Wiltern building. Mann says that whenever he feels his resolve waning he imagines being a black person in the 1950s, being politely told by government officials that they would like nothing more than an integrated school system, but they must first conduct this study or that to measure its impact, consult with this group and take this survey first. "When I think of that, when I put myself in those shoes," he says, "I get mad."

Tall and silver-haired at 54, Mann cuts an imposing figure, though dressed down in chinos and sneakers. A Long Island native brought up in a "Jewish socialist" household, he was raised on eyewitness accounts of pogroms and Hitler; his family was at one point driven out of czarist Russia. Despite his creature comforts, he embraced early on the necessity of fighting persecution. "My mother always talked about the good Christians who hid the Jews when the Jews had no place to go," he says. "Everyone, in the face of wrong, has a moral obligation to act."

As a Cornell University student in 1962, Mann joined the burgeoning civil rights battle by organizing boycotts of the segregated lunch counter at a local Woolworth store. He got some static, though not entirely the kind he expected. "Some black people said to me,



"What are you doing here, with your privileged ass? What do you know about it?" he recalls. "They asked, 'Are you going to join the revolution?' And I said, 'Huh?' But crusades—that's what it's about for me." He sees the BRU as part of a great continuum of human-rights struggles and likens it to *Brown vs. Board of Education*, the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, the broken pacts with Native Americans that litter our history.

Mann went on to join the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), move to Harlem and become a field organizer for the Trailways boycott of 1964, the first successful civil rights action against the company in history. He worked alongside black and Puerto Rican porters, though none impressed him more than a man named Eddie Barnes; were it not for him, Mann might have stayed his college course and become an attorney. "Eddie was a courageous genius," says Mann. "He was a

porter for a long time who went and took the driving test because he, and a lot of other porters, literally wanted to put themselves in the drivers seat—no more tote that barge, lift that bale. They said he failed the test. But he didn't go home and hang his head and feel ashamed—he got a lawyer and said, 'Fuck you. I'm gonna bust this company for racism, from ticket punchers on down.' That's when I said, yeah, I'm interested in this."

But interest alone didn't qualify Mann to be an organizer, not right away; he had to first walk in other, less well-heeled shoes, or at the very least imagine it. "I came to really empathize with the phrase 'Do you know what you're asking me to do?'" he recalls. "And I had to say, 'No, I don't really know the severity of your life.' I had to recognize that I didn't know, and I had better know if I wanted to do the kind of work I was doing."

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