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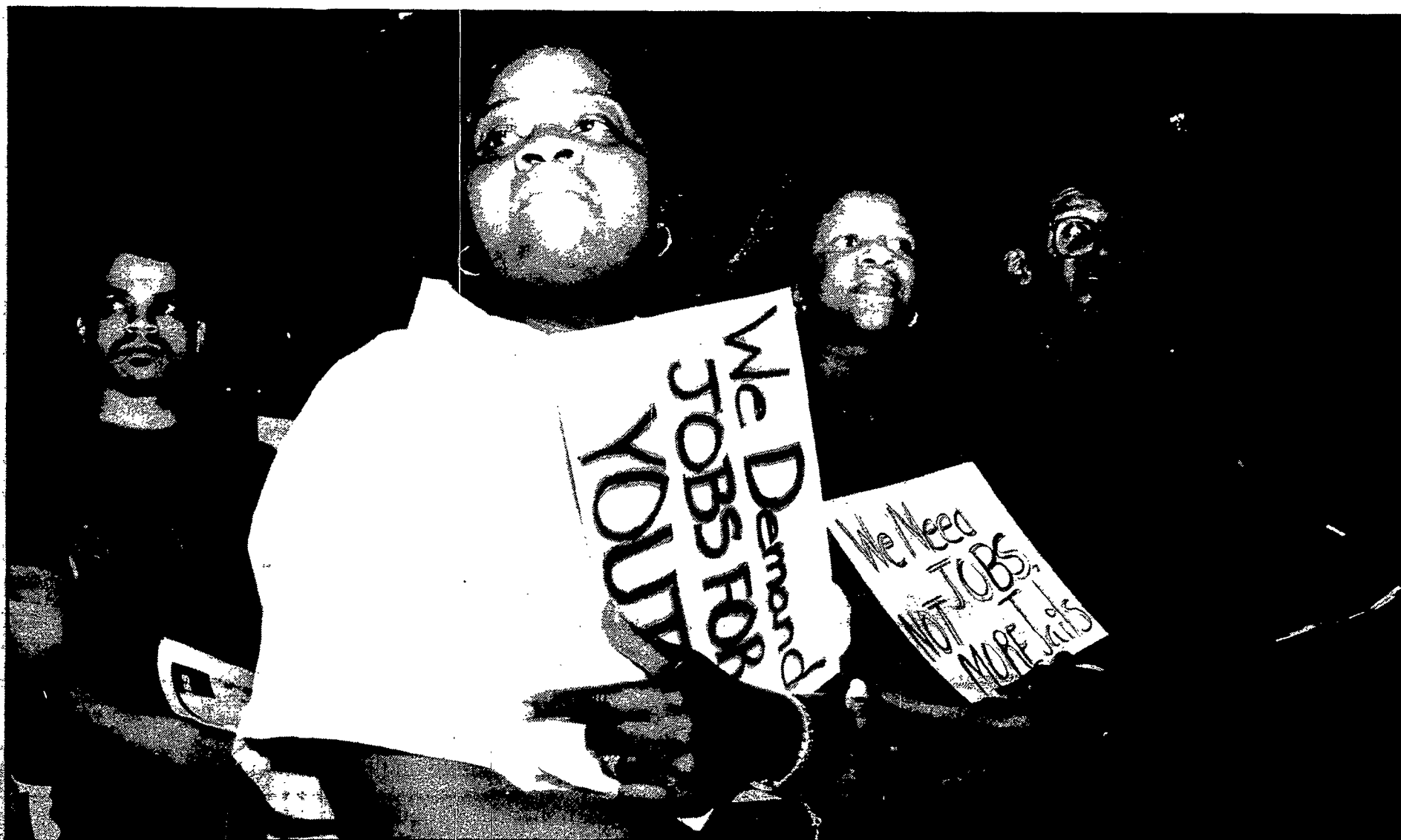
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These people were among approximately 350 participants at a June 16 City Council meeting at Rochester's City Hall. The event culminated the March and Demonstration for Jobs and Justice, which was sponsored by United Church Ministry-People's Coalition. Aris Economopoulos/Photo intern

Church attempts to cool tempers

EDITORS' NOTE: This is the first of two articles focusing on the church's response to turmoil following the verdict in the Rodney King trial.

This article features responses from diocesan Catholics and church officials across the country. Later this summer, another article will focus on efforts to combat racism in the Diocese of Rochester.

Gaynelle Wethers spoke directly about her expectations for improved race relations following recent outbreaks of unrest and rioting across the nation.

"They'll wake up for a little while," Wethers said of the nation's citizens. "But then they'll go back to sleep."

Yet some observers of the nation's racial scene are more optimistic than is Wethers, director of minority affairs for Nazareth College of Rochester.

And Wethers herself pointed to improvements over the past four years in efforts to monitor Rochester's Police Department as evidence that race does not have to forever divide whites from blacks, Hispanics, Asians and other ethnic minorities.

Currently serving as chairwoman of a committee overseeing community/police relations in Monroe County, Wethers noted that Rochester police officers no longer take aim during shooting practice at targets resembling African-Americans, as they did a just few years ago.

"I think that's a significant step," she said of the change. But she quickly added, "we do need to have some improvements in community relations."

Representing Nazareth College President Rose Marie Beston, Wethers has joined leaders of six other Rochester-area institutions

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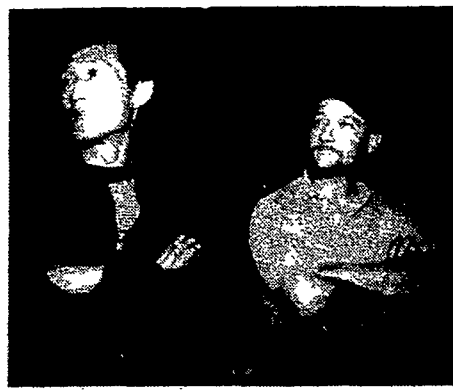
AP/Wide World Photos
A National Guardsman stands in a burned-out business district in Los Angeles on May 1 — the second day of the riots.



AP/Wide World Photos
A bullet cartridge ejects as an unidentified Korean merchant fires a weapon in Los Angeles April 30.



AP/Wide World Photos
This still-video image shows Reginald Denny being dragged from his truck during the Los Angeles riots.



AP/Wide World Photos
Don Pal (left) and friend, Brian Skiles, keep watch outside Pal's liquor store in the Koreatown section of Los Angeles May 2.