

# Blacks win discrimination settlement

A settlement in a five-year-old discrimination suit lodged against the Burlington Northern Railroad and 13 rail unions estimated to be worth about \$50 million was called one of the largest ever made by the attorney for the plaintiffs.

The settlement ends a lawsuit filed in 1978 by former Burlington employees William McBride and William Butler, who charged the railroad and unions forced them from their jobs, and alleged systematic discrimination in hiring, initial job assignments and promotions.

"This is the largest pre-trial settlement in a race discrimination case that I'm aware of," said Charles Barnhill Jr., attorney for the plaintiffs.

In addition to a \$10 million cash settlement, the railroad agreed to hire Blacks who had previously applied and were rejected, if they meet

the minimum standards. "The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (which was a party in the suit) estimates this part of the settlement to be worth about \$40 million and affect some 5,000 people," Barnhill said. The combined number of persons affected by the settlement numbers near 8,000. Under terms of the settlement, neither the railroad nor the unions admit any liability.

The case was set to be heard last Monday in U.S. District Court. Agreement on the terms of the settlement was reached "At 10:30 the night before we were to go to trial," the attorney noted. Negotiations had been ongoing for the last four months, he said.

McBride, 65, had joined Burlington Northern in 1943 and worked in the dining car of the General Pershing, which traveled between St. Louis and Lincoln, Neb. "I was

nervous because it took so long but now I'm real happy," McBride said after learning of the settlement.

The EEOC joined in the suit, which was later consolidated in Chicago with a class action suit brought in Minneapolis.

According to the suit, dining car waiters like McBride could choose to stay with Burlington Northern or switch to Amtrak, which took over Burlington's passenger service in the early 1970s. It charged the railroad offered them menial jobs instead of positions with comparable pay and fired employees who refused the lower paying jobs.

Under the terms of the agreement, Burlington, one of the nation's largest rail carriers, agreed to:

- Pay \$5 million in back pay to hourly employees between 1970 and 1983, including workers who were excluded or removed from the Locomotive Engineer Training Pro-

gram due to unvalidated tests. The latter group will be given priority entry in new hiring in a class which will double the number of Black engineers on the Burlington Northern system over the next two years.

•Pay \$2.1 million to job applicants rejected on account of race from 1970 to 1983.

•Pay \$2.05 million to workers demoted or fired between 1972 and 1983.

•Pay \$825,000 to workers who alleged they were denied promotions to road foreman, train master and mid-level supervisor.

Additionally, the settlement provides for job transfers and training for new crafts for Black workers. Special promotional opportunities will be made available for mid-management jobs which are non-union.

A hearing will be held November 21st to determine if the consent decree will be accepted.



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# Central America: Contrasting views

by Terry Rogers and Gregg Kleiner

**MOUNT ANGEL**—"Christianity and Crisis in Central America," a forum held here November 3rd through 6th, brought together two distinguished figures: the retired bishop of Cuernavaca, Mexico, Sergio Mendez Arceo, and the U.S. Ambassador to Guatemala, Frederick L. Chapin.

Two hundred participants from the Northwest listened as Mendez and Chapin expressed opposing viewpoints on democracy in Central America.

According to Chapin, the United States is "actively supporting democracy, reform and human freedom" in Central America.

"What I simply cannot understand," he said, "is how reasonable people in the United States can criticize the government in El Salvador, which represents the results of an election in which 80 percent of the eligible voters went to the polls. . . . By virtue of said participation in the March, 1982, elections, he concluded that democracy exists in El Salvador."

Chapin held a diplomatic post in El Salvador prior to his appointment in Guatemala.

Mendez, an historical figure in the Church's commitment to the poor and oppressed of Latin America, criticized Chapin's definition of democracy.

"It is said that democracy does exist in El Salvador because they have elections," Mendez said. He pointed out, however, that the voters were persuaded to cast their votes under the aim of machine guns held by government troops, and that they did not have the opportunity to choose candidates who were not sanctioned by the ruling government. This effectively prevented the Salvadoran people from expressing dissatisfaction with the government or support for basic changes, he said.

Chapin sharply criticized the four-year-old government of Nicaragua for not holding immediate elections, but not contradicted himself as he explained the grave human rights violations and weak democratic structures in El Salvador and Guatemala, saying, "Building democracy takes time. The road is a long one."

Mendez said, "I can admire the 'American way of life,' but not necessarily accept it for all our coun-



BISHOP S. MENDEZ ARCEO

tries. There are other ways."

In reference to U.S. policy in Nicaragua, Mendez asked, "Why not support a different kind of socialism in which there is authentic democratic participation—not necessarily with traditional democratic forms—but looking for new ways in which there is authentic economic and political participation of the people?"

Relating his responses to the Christian theme of the forum, Mendez cautioned the Church and Christians in the United States against anti-communism or anti-Marxism.

"Capitalism," he said, "is founded on the exploitation of mankind and is characterized by the accumulation of wealth and property. Capitalism is anti-Christian. I am not a Marxist, for many reasons, but neither am I an anti-Marxist. . . . Anti-Marxism is a disease against which . . . the antidote is knowledge, intelligence and recognition that there exists a right to search for other ways of life in the world."

When asked what could be done by U.S. citizens to help the situation in Central America, the former Bishop reflected on the constant flooding of U.S. citizens by one-sided information and exhorted them to inform themselves above and beyond daily newspapers and television coverage. He also emphasized the need to examine the roots of anti-communism in light of Christian faith.

The Ambassador, on the other hand, replied, "I know of nothing anyone can do. We've tried all we can."

## Central America:

# What does democracy mean?

by Robert Lothian

There is something in the seriousness with which 22-year-old Salvador Martinez describes the struggle in his country which belies his youth.

Martinez, a former medical student at El Salvador's National University, saw his name on a death list while teaching preventive medicine in the shanty towns around San Salvador. He came to the U.S., and is now a representative of the Democratic Revolutionary Front of El Salvador to the people of the United States. He was in Portland November 12th to speak at the national day of protest rally.

Martinez and his "companeros" in the U.S. talk to Americans about their struggle, knowing full well that they could be deported to a terrible death back home.

Their main concern now, he said,

is a threatened invasion of Central America by the U.S.

"An invasion of Central America at this point is irreversible," according to Martinez, who said the Grenada invasion was "part of an escalation to show how the Reagan administration is going to deal with the problems. What they are planning is what they did in Grenada."

An invasion of Nicaragua would mean an invasion of El Salvador and vice-versa. The tragedy would be destruction of the new society growing in those countries, he said.

About 30 percent of El Salvador is now under local popular power, said Martinez, with elections to local assemblies, new laws, schools and new means of production and distribution of food and other goods.

"The people there are living in a new society," he said. "We are talking about hundreds of thousands of

people—students, teachers, workers, peasants, Marxists, social democrats, and church people. There is a common bond between them."

In an invasion, he said, "They will destroy those areas. They will destroy the seed of the new society. We know a lot of people will die."

"On the other side, we have the government." Infighting between the various ruling factions, sometimes involving gunplay, he said, is the reason that elections have been postponed. The civil life of the country in areas under government control has broken down, according to Martinez, and there is little or no access to education, medical care and other services in those areas. In "pacification" campaigns, he said, peasants are uprooted from traditional land and resettled in what amount to concentration camps.

"The direction of the war is in the hands of North Americans. . . . 56 advisers represent ten percent of the high command of the army. They fly the helicopters; every day they are planning the war and deciding what to do," even, he said, directing massacres.

"We tried all the specific ways you can try—strikes, demonstrations, we went through all of that. There is a moment when people realize that the only thing left is to carry out the struggle."

"We have to talk about revolution. It's happening. It is an answer to the problems that we have. What a revolution means is changes, and we need changes in El Salvador."

"If an invasion happens in Central America, they would have to defeat the whole population of El Salvador and kill millions. In ten years, we will have an FMLN ten times stronger. That's why they kill children, because they know they will be guerrillas in ten years."

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## Street Beat

by Lanita Duke and Richard Brown

The topic of union-busting is in the news this week, as the **Street Beat** team asked, "Would you accept pay cuts to keep your job?"



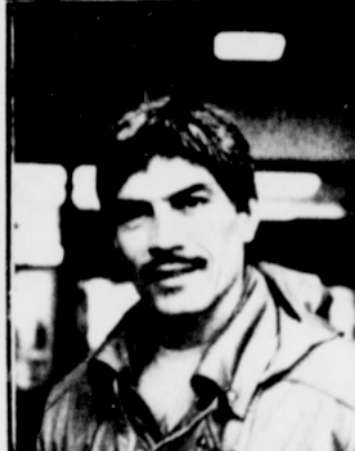
Denise Williams  
Student

If there was some degree of advancement I would take a cut. But for a basic clerical job I wouldn't take the cut.



Carolyn Spaulding  
Housewife

The job is more important so I would opt for the job. Jobs are hard to find and I would rather have some money than none.



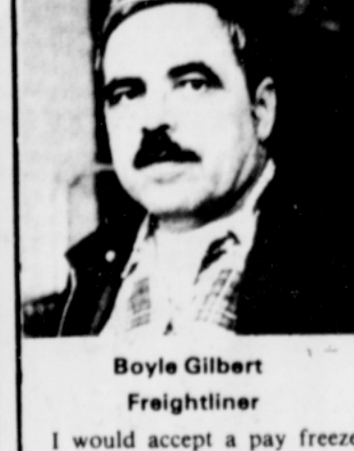
Tom Graven  
Marine Digger

No, I wouldn't. I have a hard enough time keeping even as it is with inflation the way it is.



Mrs. D. Uphoff  
Housewife

I would take a cut. There are no jobs. I think a bus driver making \$35,000 a year might be a bit too much.



Boyle Gilbert  
Freightliner

I would accept a pay freeze but not a cut. I would also accept a reduction in benefits to keep my job.



Alex Peterson  
Retired

I would take a cut if it wasn't too large. I would want to keep my job.

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