



By Bob Burchette—The Washington Post

Waiters picket Rive Gauche after a dispute arose over wearing of union buttons.

By Arnold L. Thibou  
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Officials from the Hotel and Restaurant Employees Local 25 and four waiters picketed the Rive Gauche restaurant yesterday following a dispute between the owner and the waiters over the wearing of union buttons.

The waiters said they were fired by the owner, Anthony Greco, in the middle of a crowded dining room Thursday evening.

According to one waiter, Greg Meyer, Greco "told me he didn't want me working there as long as I was wearing the button. I said, 'Am I to understand that I'm fired?' He said, 'Yes, I want you to get out of there right now'."

Another waiter, Daniel Batigne, said he also was fired by Greco over the phone.

Greco last night denied that he had fired the waiters. "We didn't fire anyone. I never told anyone that they were fired," he said. "They left under their own accord."

Greco does say, however, he objected to the waiters wearing the buttons. "I didn't feel it was in the proper tradition of the waiter's uniform to wear buttons" he said.

Although Greco would not say what was the status of the four waiters. He said he had already replaced all of them.

"All I can say is that they're not working tonight," Greco said.

The waiters said most of the Rive Gauche's employees want to form a chapter of the Hotel and Restaurant Employees. They complained that overtime is rarely paid, that they have little job security and that favoritism is displayed in dispensing tables, since the choice seating of patrons often affects the tipping by the customers.

According to Greco, most of his 40 employees "don't have any desire" to join a union.

The waiters, who picketed yesterday in their tuxedos and gold braided uniforms, said they will continue to picket until they get their jobs back. According to Ron Richardson, executive secretary of the Hotel and Restaurant Workers Union, the local represents more than 2,000 hotel and restaurant employees in the Washington area.

THE STRIKING EMPLOYEES OF RIVE GAUCHE  
HAVE BEEN FIRED FOR TRYING TO JOIN A UNION  
THEY HAVE BEEN THREATENED AND  
INTIMIDATED BY MANAGEMENT  
PLEASE DO NOT  
PATRONIZE

Hotel & Restaurant Employees, Local 25 AFL-CIO