

# RESISTANCE!



## GATE GOURMET? YANKS

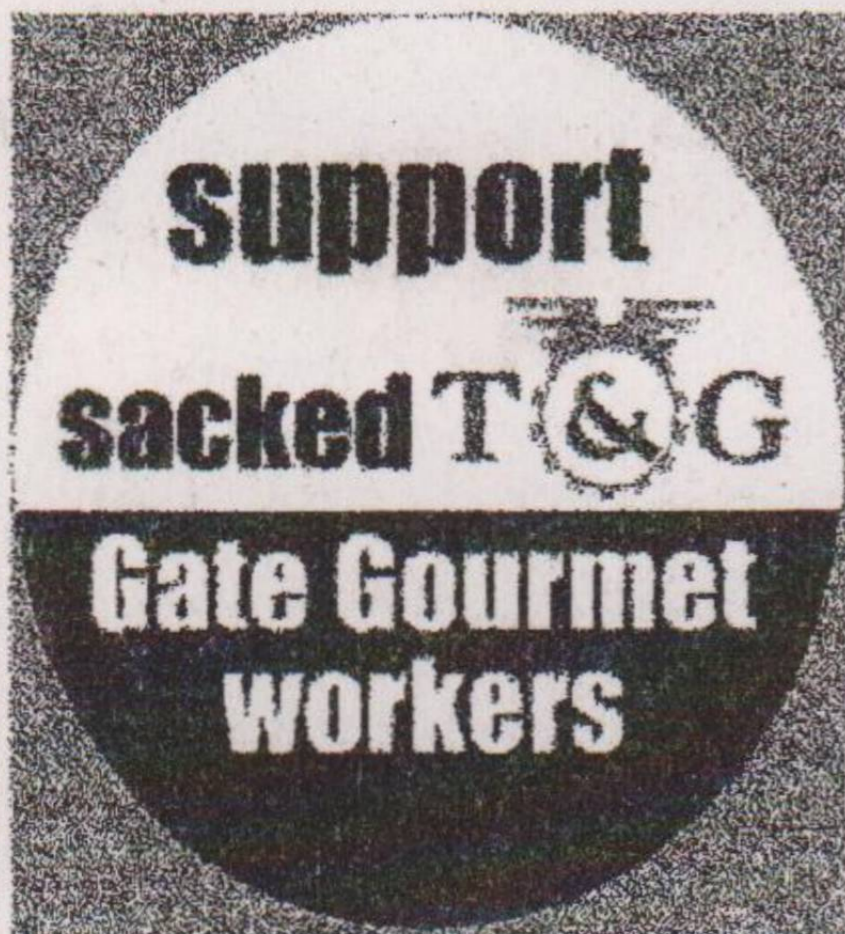
## GO HOME!

## SOLIDARITY ACTION IS OUR RIGHT - WE MEAN TO GET IT!

If you only read the capitalist newspapers or watch BBC News, you'd be forgiven for thinking the Gate Gourmet strike has been settled and the middle classes are safe to fly BA again – you'd be wrong! Sacked workers are still on the picket line outside Gate Gourmet after the T&G struck a deal with the bosses on 27th September. 144 workers were forcibly made redundant and 7 sacked with no compensation. 3 baggage handlers at Heathrow who took part in the 1000-strong one-day solidarity strike are still suspended. According to the Gate Gourmet workers "it is not over yet!"

### This Could Happen To You

On 6th August 2005 Gate Gourmet sacked 670 of its workers, the majority Asian women. The company had previously brought in 130 agency employees without consultation with the T&G. When workers questioned this they were told either to go back to work or leave. When they continued to demand answers, they were sacked in the now-infamous megaphone incident. They were then locked in the canteen with no food, water or access to toilets for eight hours, then dragged out of the building with two private security guards on one side and two policemen on the other. Is this why we pay the coppers' wages? The next day 1000 baggage handlers at Heathrow came out in support of the sacked workers with well-reported consequences.



### What Caused The Strike?

After being taken over by Gate Gourmet, the workers found they were having to prepare meals for more and more flights, without additional wages. Incentive schemes were proposed but never introduced, wages were frozen because of 'company losses'. Workers were often threatened with being replaced by cheaper agency workers and when they raised concerns – for instance about food quality – they were either ignored or another layer of 'management' was put in place to bear down on them. And while manual workers had their wages frozen, foremen, supervisors, controllers, managers and executives all got hefty annual pay rises from 2002 onwards. The workers refused to accept a reduction in paid sick-leave from three weeks to five days but that's now what the scab labour who have replaced them are working to. The bosses constantly tried to persuade people to take redundancy and when 15 did in June 2005, they brought in 130 agency workers. When workers objected they were immediately dismissed. Here's one account: "Women had water chucked on them and were dragged from the building by management; it's disgusting behaviour. People were not allowed to get water, to go to the toilet and some of these people were diabetic or pregnant. Also, they were only given three minutes notice to get back to work and meanwhile the temporary staff had already taken their positions and were doing some of the work." In some cases husband and wives were sacked, workers who on their holidays at the time or on sick leave. Could there be anything more despicable than the bosses, supervisors and security guards who went about such dirty work in such a way?

### Just Who Are These Scumbags?

Gate Gourmet is an American company with headquarters in Switzerland on account of it being picked up cheap from the bankrupt Swiss airline Swissair. It is owned by Texas Pacific – which also owns companies like Burger King, Del Monte, Ducati, Time-Warner Inc and Continental Airlines – which buys companies with \$20bn given to it by vulture-capitalists to asset strip them or drive down wages and conditions until they become as profitable as possible. Gate Gourmet is the world's largest supplier of in-flight meals and operates in 29 countries. Although the company reports losses on its UK operations and using them to justify its attacks on workers' rights, internationally the company has been making annual profits of £1bn and has assets of £15bn. It is locked in disputes with its workforce around the world: in the US, where the company is trying to cut \$42 million in costs, Gate Gourmet was successfully sued by the union representing its workers after they attempted to eliminate workers' health benefits.

The founding partner of Texas Pacific – David Bonderman – is also chair of Ryanair, another macho employer with a reputation for oppressing workers. He recently spent \$10m on his 60<sup>th</sup> birthday party while workers at Gate Gourmet earned less than £6 an hour. David Segal, the owner and chairman of Gate Gourmet worldwide, has a history of trying to smash unions in Texas. Eric Born, the UK MD of Gate Gourmet, is also a director of Verso Logistics who supplied the agency workers that caused the trouble in the first place and is now providing the cheap labour brought in to work at Gate Gourmet in place of sacked workers.

**It could happen to you, to us, to anyone!**

### Can Anything Be Done?

Workers continue to fight for reinstatement and to defend baggage-handlers at Heathrow who are being victimised for taking solidarity action. The picket line is being maintained at Beacon Hill and there are daily demos outside Terminal 4 Cargo (to find the demo, go to <http://sackedbygategourmet.org.uk/>). Workers at Heathrow and making deliveries continue to show their solidarity. Families and the Sikh temples are keeping the picket lines going while the union negotiates their jobs away. Money is being collected in a hardship fund though the T&G was slow to tell the workers about it or about the tremendous levels of support they have around the country. But their determination needs our support and solidarity: "I think the company's aim is to ultimate break the union. People are desperate, they need money and solidarity is breaking. People want to work and want to be able to earn for themselves. For many people it is a real blow as often both a husband and wife have been working at Gate Gourmet and both have lost their jobs now, so you can imagine the effects of losing two incomes."

To support the Gate Gourmet workers, send money to: Gate Gourmet Hardship Fund c/o Mr E McDermott, Regional Secretary TGWU, 218 Green Lanes, London N4 2HB Send messages of support to: [media@tawu.org.uk](mailto:media@tawu.org.uk)

For up to date info, visit, <http://sackedbygategourmet.org.uk/index.htm>



## An Anarchist Eye On The World

### WHY ARE POSH KIDS SMART, POOR KIDS THICK?

They're not of course. But the reason this appears to be true and one of the reasons children of the middle classes seem to do so much better has been scientifically proven. They just nick places in the best schools that ought to go to the families who live nearby. The Sutton Trust has revealed the extent of fraud and selfishness being perpetrated by the middle classes to get their children into good schools. It surveyed the top 200 state schools and found that local children were four times less likely to be in schools they live near. Middle class parents are spending thousands to take places for little 'Saffron' and 'Tarquin' that ought to go to local kids. And the schools are conniving with them by insisting on interviews, complicated application procedures and their specialist status to discriminate against working class kids from local neighbourhoods. Why? To get better results in the schools league tables, of course! Tony Blair's latest proposals to allow the best schools to become independent trusts run by businessmen, looney Christian cults and middle-class do-gooders while less-good schools are left to sink (i.e. where children from poorer families will end up dumped) will only intensify the struggle for 'choice' and widen the educational and social divide. While THEY get better educated and the best jobs, WE will end up waiting on tables or stacking shelves in suburban Tescos. Our society is becoming more and more like America, where the rich and well-off demand that it is they and their children who benefit most from government spending, rather than the government using money to create a fairer, more equal society. And if it can't - or in Blair's case, won't - treat all its citizens fairly, what use is it? Its time us, our communities, the unions and teachers got off our backsides and started telling Blair and his lickspittle MPs and 'advisers' (my arse!) to shove their reforms and piss off to la la land where their ideas come from.

### IF YOU OPPOSE THE IRAQ WAR, YOU'RE A NAZI SAYS NEW LABOUR

The odious Jack Straw declared at the recent (neu-tered, New Turd) Labour Party Conference that those who voiced objections to his bosses illegal war on the people of Iraq should be likened to the Nazis. Must be a hell of a lot of brownshirts about then Jackie! How pathetic is that? A leading stuffed-shirt politician, a sleazy, puffed-up bullfrog stooping to name-calling with such a despicable disregard for the truth. Opposing the slaughter of thousands of innocents makes us all Nazis does it? Come off it, you disgusting little twerp! If anyone around here bears similarities with the Nazis it's a government machine that cuts back on foreign aid, vilifies all immigrants, blaming them for the ills of society, promoting a diseased Englishness as the only culture allowable and demanding loyalty oaths far worse than the Tories' infamous "which cricket team do you support?" test. Worshipping militarism's toys for the boys, banging the drum of 'national security', calling people who oppose them traitors, ignoring the growing opposition to their stinking policies of

interference and invasion, denigrating (because they want to abolish) human rights while they try to force sick people back to work, obsessing about crime and punishment but doing sod all about the causes, curbing free speech, lashing media critics until even the BBC daren't say bugger all or try to hold people to account for things like the Hatfield train crash, disasters caused by neglect and financial greed, criminalizing protesters, environmentalists,



animal rights defenders, anyone who challenges their regimes, the ones who cause destruction and unspeakable deeds in the name of science, who condone police murder of innocent workers going about their business, detaining 'suspects' for months, even years on end, imprisonment without trial, helping the Americans kidnap people to be handed over to torturers and murderous police states..... The list goes on and on.

**Who are the REAL Nazis, Herr Fucking Jackboot Straw!?!**

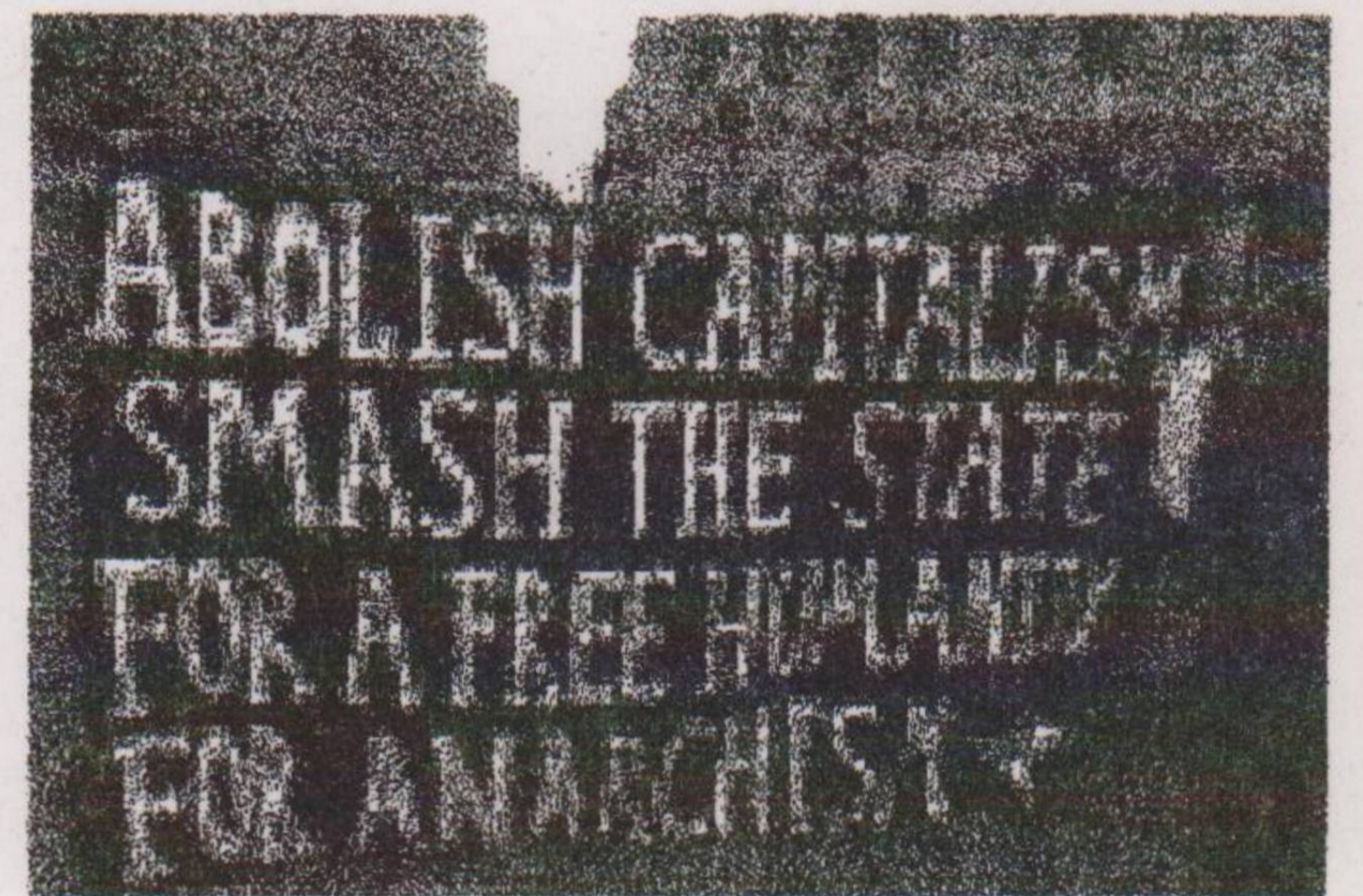
### SOLDIERS DESERT! (THEY GET PAID BETTER IN IRAQ!)

The British Army is so concerned about the way officers and specialists are being lured away by private security firms to work in Iraq, they have introduced serious counter-measures - not 'terminal', unfortunately! Interestingly, one measure is to suggest that garrison commanders ban

but let one protester set foot on the Army's sacred soil and its 'goodbye charlie!' The security firms are reputedly offering members of the SAS £17,000 a month to work in Iraq. Why, that's as much as a League One footballer gets! Don't think this is small potatoes, either. There are 30,000 private security personnel in Iraq, more than the soldiers we ever sent to Iraq. And the security firms are lobbying the UN to allow them to take over peace-keeping duties when Britain and the US start pulling out next year. That's right, Blair will get rid of the political embarrassment of British soldiers in body bags and unwelcome headlines and replace them with ex-soldiers in body bags working for private security firms that no-one (except their friends and relatives) gives a fuck about. Which you'll end up paying for with your taxes. What the hell do we go on working for?

### ANGELS WITH DIRTY FACES AND STICKY FINGERS

The Angel Group was set up in 1999 to offer housing to asylum-seekers on government and local council contracts paid for by you and me. Its only director, Julia Davey, pays herself £500,000 a year, the company is worth £40m and she herself has business interests all over the world as well as top of the range limos. A rags-to-riches story about an entrepreneur supplying a vital social need? No, just another sordid tale about Britain's get-rich-quick culture spawning a vicious parasite leaching off the tax-payer. Sad, isn't it? The Angel group made its money buying up and renting unfit properties, claiming to put asylum-seekers up in empty properties, double-booking properties and 'wrongly' claiming council tax relief. Angel Group's first property in Newcastle was so bad that within a few weeks its Iraqi inmates, sorry 'tenants', rioted. By 2001 Angel Group owned 800 properties which the National Asylum Support Service (Nass) paid for whether they housed asylum-seekers or not. Amazing! Only the state would pay landlords to keep properties empty. Angel Group couldn't so up all the properties at once but claimed payments anyway, even if the houses proved uninhabitable when inspected. One tenant said, "it was filthy. My partner took one look at it and wanted to leave. It took me two days to clean all the grease off the cooker". In some cases Angel Group registered properties with Nass so they could collect payments but never owned them - they were simply bogus or 'ghost'



properties. In other cases Nass paid for housing which was also contracted for by the local council or which Angel Group never paid rent on themselves. Was Nass a victim of sharp practice? Undoubtedly, but Nass itself should have known that 33% of the properties housing asylum-seekers were unfit. All of these shoddy and despicable happenings were made known to Nass but they continue to contract with Angel Group and other agencies and none of them have suffered any financial penalties for their obvious frauds. Next time you think asylum-seekers are "taking our jobs", think about this middle-class bitch lining her pockets at your expense, making money out of misery.

### Feeling Tired? Don't Blame The Weather, Blame The Boss!

This time of year is usually when we feel most tired and depressed (apart for Xmas that is, the season of family break-ups, suicides and nervous breakdowns). But this year - like other years, truth to tell, we have another reason for feeling knackered. British workers work the longest and hardest hours of anyone in Europe. 25% of us work a 50 hour week and 20% of us - 1 in 5 - work up to 60 hours a week, the highest levels of overwork in Europe. Are we just harder working than other people? We have to be, we have to work longer, harder, using less equipment just to earn a decent wage. That's our 'choice': take two jobs or work long hours just to survive, feeling like shit and too tired to enjoy life, not whether to buy that second home in Marbella. They're welcome to it, but get off our backs first!

The AF is a federation of individuals and groups who oppose capitalism. We want a free society based on social justice. We publish a monthly newsletter, **Resistance!** and the next 12 issues can be had for £4.

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