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18/05/05

Dear Comrades,

In my capacity as President of the Council of Australian Postgraduate Associations (CAPA), I write to express our support and solidarity for the members of GESO and GSEU, the graduate teachers' unions at Yale University and Columbia University, during your current strike to gain Union recognition.

The Council of Australian Postgraduate Associations acknowledges the important work that you are doing, not only for yourselves but also for thousands of other graduate teachers. We condemn this clear violation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which declares that the right to form a Union is a basic human right.

As the peak national postgraduate body representing the 247,000 postgraduates enrolled at Australian universities, CAPA considers your action as being extremely important in defending and promoting the right of postgraduates, employed as academic staff, to freely and collectively organise in defense of their rights and conditions.

Even though US Labor law does not extend to graduate teachers, CAPA expects institutions like Yale and Columbia to conform to a higher standard. We therefore call on Yale's President, Richard Levin, and Columbia's President, Lee Bollinger, to voluntarily recognise the GESO and GSEU respectively, and to immediately begin contract negotiations.

In Solidarity,



Stephen Horton
President, Council of Australian Postgraduate Associations