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11 April, 2005

GESO
425 College St
New Haven, CT 06511

GSEU
430 W. 119th St.
New York, NY 10027

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

We write to express our support for the courageous members of GESO and GSEU, the graduate teachers unions at Yale University and Columbia University, during their current strike to gain union recognition. Your fight is an historic one that benefits not only yourselves, but the over 40,000 graduate teachers at private universities in the United States who look to you for inspiration.

Unfortunately, under US President George W. Bush, the National Labor Relations Board stripped graduate teachers of the right to organize collectively by denying them the protection of US labor law. 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.

In our country, academic unions have been extremely important, helping to create and protect good jobs, and defending academic freedom.

US Labor Law may not extend to graduate teachers, but the world 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 recognize GESO and GSEU, respectively, and to immediately commence contract negotiations.

Once again, we commend your bravery in taking this extraordinary action, and we stand with you in your struggle.

In Solidarity,

Rod Crewther,
Branch President.