

13 April 2005

GESO  
425 College St  
New Haven, CT 06511

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

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

We are writing to express our support and solidarity for the courageous members of the GESO and GSEU---the graduate teachers unions at Yale University and Columbia University---during your first joint strike at the Ivy League colleges to gain union recognition. Your struggle is an important one that will not only benefit yourselves and over 40,000 graduate teachers at private university in United States. It is our belief that they look to you for your inspiration.

Since your fight is of historical significance in your country, we believe that the actions of the National Labor Relations Board under U.S. President George W. Bush is a direct attempt by the current Republican administration to deny your fundamental right to organize by denying protection under U.S. labor law. We wholeheartedly condemn this action, as it is a clear violation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which declares that the right to form a union is a basic human right.

In South Korea, we too have experienced many challenges in our struggle for job security, living wage, decent working conditions, and academic freedom. It is because of this, we know first-hand the difficulties that you are currently facing. When workers unite and organize to form a union in order to improve their working conditions, employers, be it a corporation or an academic institution always feel threatened. Thus, employers will take whatever measures necessary to break the bonds of worker solidarity and unity. In this backdrop, it is important to us that we extend our solidarity to you.

Although U.S. labor law may not extend to graduate teachers, the world expects institutions like Yale and Columbia to conform to a higher standard. It is our understanding that Yale hope to create a global university through alliances and relationships with university all over the world including key academic institutions in South Korea. We oppose this vision if during the process the graduate teachers are denied their rights to organize.

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 and commitment in taking this extraordinary action, and we stand with you in your struggle.

In Solidarity,

Korean Irregular Professors' Union(KIPU) – KCTU Affiliate  
Korean University Workers' Union(KUWU) – KCTU Affiliate  
Korean Professors' Union – KCTU Affiliate  
Korean Institute for Progressive Education  
Solidarity for Education Rights of the Disabled