

Sisters and Brothers of the Solidarity Alliance at UC Berkeley,

We, Zengakuren (All-Japan Federation of Student Self-Government Associations), send you heartfelt greeting of support for, and solidarity with, the historical three-day strike and walk out by workers and students in California and the Solidarity Alliance at UC-Berkeley-on September 24. UC workers' and students' statewide strike and walkout against privatization of public education deeply moved us; we in Japan are fighting against the same privatization of universities as yours.

Two weeks ago, sister Claire Keating from the Student Worker Action Team of UCB attended our rallies and meetings in Japan, including International Workers' Rally of November 1, and shared her wealth of experiences in the struggle in UCB with us. We thank you, sister Claire, for your warm comradeship and solidarity with us Japanese students.

In the global economic crisis and massive unemployment, the governments are desperately seeking to restore capital's domination of the world at the sacrifice of hundreds of millions workers. This is the policy of privatization and war.

On Friday, US President Obama came to Japan and held talks with Prime Minister Hatoyama. Their administrations are aiming to strengthen the US-Japan military alliance and to construct a new US military base in Okinawa in order to continue the war in the Middle East.

We are facing common problem, both in Japan and in the USA and in every country around the world: the governments are destroying public education and cutting social welfare, while spending huge amounts of tax money to bail out banks and big businesses and to expand war.

In Japan, the neoliberal policies were launched with the privatization of the National Railways in 1980s. Since then, the government accelerated the attack on labor unions to weaken them and to compel their submission. Irregular jobs have been rapidly increasing and social security system has been violently dismantled.

As for education, public education has been continuously attacked. The national universities have been turned into "national university corporations." The objectives of education have been overtly subordinated to the state and capital. The tuitions of private universities have been increased by 240% in 30 years and that of the national universities nearly by 5,000 % in the same period. Restructuring of universities has been railroaded with the battle cries: "enhance employability" and "offer human resources for corporations." Independent students' activities, such as student self-government associations, cultural circles and dormitories have been destroyed one after another.

Most of Japanese private universities invested large portion of their financial resources to dubious financial instruments and incurred enormous losses amounting tens or hundreds of millions dollars. Every year, around 8,000 students drop out of universities because of increased tuition fees. Many students are forced to take side jobs to pay tuition fees and are driven to job hunting; they can "study", not to mention group activities.

In one of the most prestigious private universities in Japan, Hosei University in Tokyo, repressive measures, such as repeated punishments, physical attacks and arrests by police are imposed upon students who protest neoliberal policies of the university administration mentioned above. Since March 2006, the security police have arrested 112 students; 8 of them are still in detention. The Hosei University administration justifies all these brutal attacks as necessary measures against "violation of 'business right and interests'" —profiteering interests.

However, we have never caved in. Our struggle is more and more spirited. "Fight uncompromisingly

against privatization of education!” “Don’t allow education to be a tool of making money!” “Take back universities, education and our future in the hands of students” are our slogans.

Today, it is increasingly important for us to fight against neoliberalism in our own workplaces and campuses and internationally develop unity and solidarity of workers and students who fight against war and privatization.

The workers and students internationally united have a power to change society and create a history. This is our conviction.

Struggle of sisters and brothers in California will win an immeasurable support and sympathy from the workers and students of the state, the nation, and the world.

In Solidarity,

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Acting President of Zengakuren
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