

By the SF Bay Area Chapter of World Can't Wait

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The week after our big protest at Boalt Hall (UC Berkeley Law) where we had confronted Torture Professor John Yoo himself, August 27 was the second day of classes for the main UC campus and World Can't Wait had called for another action. This time, we took to the campus crossroads of Sproul Plaza during the noon hour to be out among the students there. This demonstration – again protesting John Yoo's continued tenure at UC – was a great success. In fact everyone thought the action was so successful that on the spot we agreed to do it again the following week, which we did.

On the 27th about twenty of us did this action together from World Can't Wait and faith-based activist friends (Pax Christi, St. Joseph the Worker Church, School of the Americas Watch). One man came because, as a Korean American, he felt especially moved to speak out against John Yoo. Overall we got a good response from many students and others. A lot of people got our flyers and signed up, during many good conversations. A lot of students gravitated to the people wearing jumpsuits on the ground, coming up to us, taking pics, asking what this was all about. Many didn't know who John Yoo is; when they found out, they were upset that a lawyer who helped set up the whole torture state is actually on campus teaching at the law school, but they were literally learning about this for the first time from us, just now. Others came up to talk, who knew more – many of them said they couldn't believe Yoo is still teaching, they had thought that he would've been fired by now.

Our hooded "detainees" posed standing or kneeling as others talked to students and gave out leaflets around them. The "detainees" were mostly silent, but a couple of them shouted to the crowd: "I have been here five years without a lawyer... Why are you torturing my son?" and "John Yoo is a murderer, as guilty of torture as if he had performed the act himself." In spite of the campus prohibition of a bullhorn, we managed to keep people aroused and interested. We passed out flyers, had many opportunities for conversation and many signed out contact sheets to receive more information.

The next Thursday, September 3rd, was another great success! With five orange jump suited detainees, draped in chains, we returned to Sproul Plaza again. We handed out hundreds of flyers, and signed up more new supporters, including a couple who are ready to get involved. As with the week before, the predominant response was curiosity and often amazement that

someone like John Yoo, who directly facilitated the torture of thousands of people, would be teaching law at UCB.

The highlight of the day was when a big group of Latino high school students from San Jose walked up. They were touring the campus with their teachers. Right at that moment, one of us was being harassed by the campus police because they claimed that her sign was larger than UCPD regulations. She wasn't about to lay down her sign and said she did not mind being ticketed, but then the police threatened to confiscate the sign to be used as evidence against her. She still said she would not give up her sign. An attorney with the National Lawyers Guild stood by to protect the rights of the protester should she get arrested. Eventually she decided to go to the public area in front of the plaza with her oversized "super picket" and one of the "detainees."

A teacher with the students asked for an explanation of what was going on. They gathered around a spokesperson from World Can't Wait for a quick orientation about what our protest was about. They listened and learned who John Yoo is, what he had done and why the police were trying to stop our message from getting out. One young woman student called out, "Let's start a chant. What should we say?" "No torture," was suggested which they all started chanting, with another student also yelling out "Fire John Yoo! Fire John Yoo!"

We're going back to UC Berkeley. Serious protests and a climate and culture of resistance are what's required now, bold and frequent and growing. Whether protest takes the form of marching or holding speakouts and press conferences, going among students with challenging information and calls to action, or organizing debates and programs, more and more people have to take part in challenging the entire university community over the presence of this war criminal. John Yoo must be fired, disbarred and prosecuted for war crimes. The world can't wait.