

FSM DEFENDANTS' EXCESSIVE BAIL

Starting today, certain defendants will decline to post bond and, if Judge Crittenden so orders, go directly to jail even though their cases are on appeal. This action will allow us to seek an order from a higher court restraining Judge Crittenden from setting excessive bail, and will relieve the financial strain on the Free Speech Defense Fund.

Judge Crittenden has been setting bail at such outrageously high levels that there is a serious chance that we may not be able to appeal at all. The appeal bail has been set at roughly five times the original bail posted after our arrest in December. For all 800 defendants, it comes close to a total of half a million dollars.

We cannot, of course, raise that amount. To raise even the premium on the bail (\$45,000 non-refundable) will tax our resources to the utmost.

The defendants who have so far appeared and posted bond have done so on credit. Money has been going out much faster than it has been coming in. The Free Speech Defense Fund has at this point just barely enough money to pay for transcripts, filing fees, and office expenses. If we continue posting bond at the present rate, we will be at least \$30,000 in debt by the end of next week.

The amount of bail — like the sentence — is completely out of proportion to the offenses of which we have been convicted. This is especially shocking in that Judge Crittenden has in the past been prominent in the movement for bail reform in Alameda County. He has taken public positions in favor of releasing prisoners on their own recognizance. Yet in this case he has been setting the same high bail for everybody, whether they are transients or long-time residents with families here.

info: Mrs Susan Stein
849-3375