

NEWS RELEASE
STUDENT NONVIOLENT COORDINATING COMMITTEE
6 RAYMOND STREET, NW
ATLANTA, GEORGIA 30314

85
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
November 27, 1964

McCOMB, MISSISSIPPI - The Atlanta-based Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) said there had been more than 20 bombing or arson attacks aimed at local Negroes or civil rights workers in this Southwest Mississippi town since last April.

SNCC said nine white men, among them the self-confessed bombers of Negro homes, churches and businesses, were still at liberty following the last bombing three weeks ago despite a judge's warning they would be arrested in bombings continued.

The nine men were arrested and tried October 23. They entered guilty pleas, and were freed on probation after being sentenced to five years in jail each. The judge, W. H. Watkins, said the nine had been "unduly provoked" in the bombing attacks that included bombing a home where Negro sleeping and the bombing attack on the McComb SNCC Freedom House where 10 civil rights workers were asleep.

Judge Watkins - appointed to the bench by former Governor Ross Barnett - said he freed the nine because they "come from good families and deserve a second chance." He did indicate, however, that they would be required to serve their five year terms if further bombings occurred. Three weeks after the latest bombing in Tylertown, 20 miles from here, all nine whites were still at large.

650 white residents of McComb issued a statement November 17 calling for an end to racial violence and for equal treatment under the law for all citizens.

The statement followed the recent bombing by a few days and - according to local citizens - was rushed into publication to beat by one day testing of public facilities under the 1964 Civil Rights Act.

SNCC began its first deep South voter registration project here in 1961.

The 25 bombing and burning attacks included seven attacks on Negro churches, 13 attempts to burn or bomb private homes, the bombing of the Freedom House, the bombing of three Negro businesses and the November 7 bombing of a Negro home in Tylertown.