

NEWS RELEASE
STUDENT NONVIOLENT COORDINATING COMMITTEE
6 RAY MOND STREET N.W.
ATLANTA, GEORGIA 30314
PHONE: (404) 688-0331

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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AMERICUS, GEORGIA-- Charges of "assault with intent to murder" an Americus policeman against four civil rights workers have been dismissed but one of the four faces the death penalty in nearby Albany, Georgia.

The four-- Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) workers Donald Harris, 24, of New York City; John Perdew, 23, of Denver, Colorado; Ralph Allen, 24, of Melrose, Massachusetts; and Americus citizen Thomas McDaniel, 21,-- were freed when Solicitor General Stephen Pace, Jr. announced he was dropping the charges against them. Harris and McDaniel are Negroes; Perdew and Allen are white.

The four along with a 14 year old Americus girl, Sallie Mae Durham, and CORE staff member Zev Aloney were arrested in August, 1963 following a night demonstration against a segregated movie theatre.

Harris, Allen, Perdew, and Aloney were charged with "attempting to incite insurrection", an 1871 Georgia statute that carries the death penalty. They were held in jail for 87 days and finally freed November 1, 1963 when a three-judge Federal Panel declared the "insurrection law" unconstitutional.

When Solicitor Pace originally placed the charge against the 4 he said he had done it "to deny these defendants bail".

After they were freed, a Grand Jury here indicted the four on "assault with intent to murder" charges. White SNCC staffer Ralph Allen was tried in December, 1963 on the charge, but the Georgia Supreme Court overturned his five-year jail term because there were no Negroes on the jury that convicted him.

Harris, who directs SNCC's Southwest Georgia Project, faces the insurrection charge again in Albany, Georgia. Warrants charging him with "insurrection" were taken out after a protest march following the slaying of an Albany Negro by a white policeman there.

A Federal Panel of judges has taken under advisement motions made by Harris' attorney, C.B. King of Albany, to prevent Albany officials from using the twice-outlawed law.