JUSTICE FOR MARK COOK...

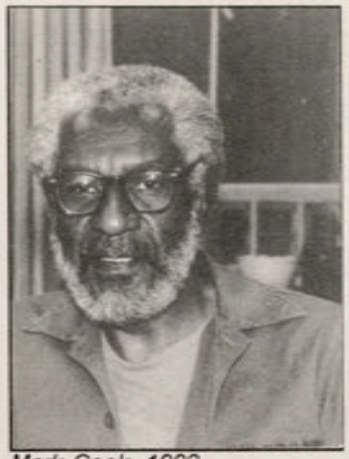
...IT'S WAY PAST TIME

By the Mark Cook Freedom Committee

The Vietnam War was fought not only on the soil of Southeast Asia, but in the cities and towns of the U.S., as well. An anti-war populous struggled to end a conflict they knew to be unjust and extended their fight to include justice and equality for all human beings. Some felt compelled to take measures outside the law to stop a declared war between governments that killed thousands weekly, and to end an undeclared war of racism and poverty that took thousands more lives each day.

Beginning with the pardoning of draft dodgers in the late 1970's and ending with this year's lifting of the trade embargo with Vietnam, one of the most discordant periods in recent U.S. history has been reconciled. If the time has come to heal the rift between two warring nations, isn't it time for a nation to reconcile its' differences with its citizens who opposed that war?

WHO IS MARK COOK?



Mark Cook, 1992

Mark Cook is a Seattle native, who has dedicated a lifetime of working for justice and equality. He was an officer of the Black Panther Party, which established community programs such as breakfast for children, free food giveaways, and medical clinics. With his founding of groups such as CONvention and the Bridge Project, Mark helped prisoners and ex-prisoners through establishing job training programs in prison, supporting prisoners' labor rights struggles and creating job placement programs for those recently released.

Throughout the late sixties and early seventies, Mark fought to end not only the Vietnam War, but the systems of racism and imperialism that caused that war. In many cities, people struggled on different fronts: electorally, non-violently, and militarily to put an end to the war. Here in Seattle, the George Jackson Brigade (GJB) waged an armed struggle, attacking the property of those who perpetuated injustice.

In January, 1976, two members of the GJB were arrested in a Brigade-sponsored bank robbery attempt, where one was fatally wounded and another required hospitalization. In March of that same year, the hospitalized member was rescued from custody. In the process, a King county sheriff was shot and wounded. A few days later, Mark Cook was arrested as a suspect in the bank robbery and charged with robbery and conspiracy. Months later, Mark was charged with the escape and shooting the officer. He was convicted of all charges and sentenced to serve a 30 year federal term and two life sentences plus ten years by the state. Mark has never admitted guilt in any of the charges against him. Of such actions, he stated, "actions in support of justice are never criminal."

MARK IS A POLITICAL PRISONER

Mark Cook is currently being held in the Washington State Prison at Monroe. He has served nearly 20 years for actions intended to stop an unjust war. The average length of stay for the crimes of which Mark was convicted is only 5 years, 1 month. In other words, he has already served fifteen years longer than the average prisoner convicted of similar crimes. Mark's time has been served for his crimes, he continues now to be jailed only because of his politics.

Throughout the past two decades of incarceration, Mark has continued to fight for justice and equality for those behind bars and on the outside. He has never once renounced his political beliefs.

The courts too, have recognized the injustice of Mark's imprisonment. In 1978, a sentencing court judge ordered that Mark's state and federal terms be served concurrently. After that judge died, one year later, Washington State has ignored this legally binding decision and made Mark serve his term consecutively. His co-defendant in the case served his state and federal time concurrently and was released this year. Why is Mark's case being treated differently? Could it be racism?

There is no excuse for the continued imprisonment of Mark Cook. He has served his

time, and the courts have recommended his release. The parole board still refuses to review his case, even though no complaints have been filed against Mark's behavior in prison. Mark is a man who believes in justice and equality and has continually stood up to fight for freedom. Each year he sits behind bars is one less year of continued community service. To continue his imprisonment is a crime.

WHAT YOU CAN DO TO HELP

The most important way to serve justice in Mark's case right now is to let others know about it. Talk with your friends, family, and members of your community, church and political organizations. Duplicate this pamphlet and distribute it among friends and acquaintances.

The Mark Cook Freedom Committee plans future letter writing and petition campaigns to the parole board and governor if necessary, and a fundraising drive to hire a lawyer to file Mark's appeal. If you would like to be placed on our mailing list to be notified of future events and kept up to date on Mark's case write to:

THE MARK COOK FREEDOM COMMITTEE
P.O. BOX 85763
SEATTLE, WA 98145-2763

Bundles of this pamphlet are available for distribution upon written request.

BEGINNING WITH THE PARDONING OF DRAFT DODGERS IN THE LATE 1970'S AND ENDING WITH THIS YEAR'S LIFTING OF THE TRADE EMBARGO WITH VIETNAM, ONE OF THE MOST DISCORDANT PERIODS IN RECENT U.S. HISTORY HAS BEEN RECONCILED. IF THE TIME HAS COME TO HEAL THE RIFT BETWEEN TWO WARRING NATIONS, ISN'T IT TIME FOR A NATION TO RECONCILE ITS' DIFFERENCES WITH ITS CITIZENS WHO OPPOSED THAT WAR?

The Mark Cook Freedom Committee
P.O. Box 85763
Seattle, WA 98145-2763