

FREE MARIO BANGO!

Mario is a victim of racism



Mario Bango is an 18 year old Roma activist in Slovakia. He has just been sentenced to 12 years in prison. Mario's crime? Defending his family from a racist attack. There is an international campaign to support and free Mario. You can be part of it.

Mario's case is symbolic of the plight of the Roma people, so-called "Gypsies," in East Europe today.

Nearly six decades after 4 million Roma were murdered by the Nazis, Roma people in East Europe are again afraid to walk the streets. As people of color, they have become the targets of a new Nazi movement that has arisen in that region over the past decade. They are beaten and murdered by "skinhead" youth gangs and are victims of official discrimination as well.

Rightwing governments and political parties make them scapegoats for the devastating poverty and unemployment imposed on East Europe in the last 10 years by the policies of the International Monetary Fund. In reality Roma people have suffered the most from the economic catastrophe. They have the highest unemployment rate and the lowest income.

On March 10 2001, Mario, his brother Edo and their mother were riding on a bus in the largest high-rise estate of Bratislava, the capital city of Slovakia, when Edo was attacked by a young Nazi. Mario came to his brother's aid and, in the course of the struggle, the attacker was stabbed 5 times.

The brothers themselves called the police and waited for them to arrive while the attacker was taken to a hospital. When their mother asked for water during the interrogation at the police station she was called a "Gypsy c_t" by a policeman. This was not the first such attack suffered by the Bango family. A year previously Edo spent a week in the hospital after being beaten by racist skinheads. Such tragic experiences have become routine for Roma people in Slovakia today.

Mario was jailed immediately. When his attacker died several days later, Mario was charged with "causing injury leading to death." Although the deceased was an active member of a Nazi organization, Slovakia's media (much of it owned by US companies) and rightwing politicians have portrayed him as "an innocent boy attacked by Roma." They are using this tragedy to intensify anti-Roma bigotry. From an early age Mario has been a fighter for justice and equality. Together with Edo, he organised a youth march against fascism in Bratislava.

In early September 2000 the brothers organized a demonstration against the International Monetary Fund as a show of solidarity by Slovak youth with the planned protest against the IMF summit in Prague. The brothers went to Prague to protest against the IMF and took part in the peaceful blockade of the Nuselsky

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Bridge. Believing in working-class unity, Mario and Edo have supported the Slovak labor movement in its fight for decent wages and working conditions and have taken part in all major trade union rallies in Bratislava.

They helped poor tenants in an industrial suburb of Bratislava resist eviction by a wealthy speculator who had bought their homes. Mario and Edo are also avid students of the history of Black and Native American people in the United States, which is so similar to that of the Roma people.

Mario's life in the service of the oppressed has now been interrupted by the attack of a misguided racist. After one experience of a direct racist attack, after years of fear of skinhead attack, after years of nonstop stress while simply walking in the streets, after being forced to stay at home every night to avoid violence and after escaping several attempted attacks, what happened was inevitable. Mario has been fighting for others for years. It is now time to support him.

WHAT CAN YOU DO TO HELP?

Become part of the international campaign to support and free Mario.

Join us in demanding that the Slovak government drop all charges against Mario Bango.

Please send protests and appeals for the release of Mario to the following addresses:

Urad Vlady, Namestie Slobody 1, 813 70 Bratislava, Slovak Republic, tel: 011 421-7-5729 5111, 011 421-7-5249 7595

Kancelária prezidenta SR, Štefánikova 14, 814 38 Bratislava, Slovak Republic, tel: 011 421-7-5441 6624

Ministerstvo spravodlivosti SR, Župné námestie 13, 813 11 Bratislava, Slovak Republic, tel: 011 421-7-5935 3497, fax: 011 421-7-5443 0467, e-mail: tlacove@justice.gov.sk

Please send letters of solidarity to the following address:

Mário Bango, Ústav na výkon väzby, priečinok 1077, Chorvátská 5, 812 29 Bratislava, Slovak Republic

Please send donations to the Mario solidarity fund in Austria:

Bank Austria, Vienna
Bank account: 502-009932/00
Bank code: 12000

More information: <http://www.workerspower.com/wpglobal/Mario-index.html>

FAQ...

Who are revolution?

We're socialists and activists involved in a whole range of campaigns.

What do you do?

Right now we're part of the campaign to Stop Killer Coke, in support of Colombian trade unionists. We're also part of the solidarity campaign for Mario Bango. And of course we're active around issues like education and medicare.

Do you have international links?

Yes! We're part of World Revolution. Take a look at the UK website <http://worldrevolution.org.uk/>

How can I get involved?

We meet every Saturday at 11am in Bourke St Mall to run a campaigning stall and plan our weeks activities. Come along and help out.

How do I contact you?

www.onesolutionrevolution.org

contact@onesolutionrevolution.org

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