

Stop Exclusion Proceedings Against Róger Calero!

On December 3, Róger Calero, the associate editor of *Perspectiva Mundial*, a Spanish-language news magazine published in New York, was returning home to the United States from a reporting assignment in Havana, Cuba, and Guadalajara, Mexico. At Houston Intercontinental Airport, Calero was seized by the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS), told he was denied entry to the United States, and carted off to an INS jail. He now faces exclusion from this country.

Calero has lived in this country for the past 17 years and has held permanent residence since 1990. Besides his position as an editor of *Perspectiva Mundial*, Calero works as a staff writer for the *Militant*, a New York-based newsweekly. As a reporter he has traveled widely, both in this country and in Latin America, covering labor and political events.

This attempt by the INS to deport Calero from the United States to Nicaragua is an attack on his rights as a permanent resident, on his right to exercise his work as a journalist, and on the rights of all.

Supporters of freedom of the press, of the rights of immigrants, of the trade unions, and of civil liberties have launched a public campaign to stop his removal from the country and win the restoration of his rights. Your help is needed. Join the fight!



Róger Calero, associate editor of *Perspectiva Mundial*.

December 3: INS detention

The INS seized Calero on December 3 at Houston Intercontinental Airport. Calero was on a one-week assignment for *Perspectiva Mundial* to report on an international conference in Havana on the Free Trade Area of the Americas, attended by trade unionists and other delegates from Latin America, the United States, and Canada. He then spent several days covering an international student conference in Mexico, sponsored by the Continental Organization of Latin American and Caribbean students, and the largest annual Latin American bookfair, both held simultaneously in Guadalajara. In Houston, Calero was detained and then transferred to an immigration jail run by a private company, the Corrections Corporation of America.



Calero (center) checking newly printed pages of the *Militant* newsweekly.

Charges against Calero

The INS is seeking to deport Calero to his native Nicaragua, based on a 1988 conviction, when he was a high school student in Los Angeles, on a charge of selling an ounce of marijuana to an undercover cop. Faced with the prospect of jail, Calero copped a plea and received a suspended 60-day sentence with three years probation.

Permanent resident for 12 years

When Calero applied for permanent residency in 1989 he specifically included information about his conviction, which immigration officials waived in order to grant him a green card giving him the right to live and work in the United States. In 2000 the INS renewed his card, no questions asked. Today, Calero, who is married to a U.S. citizen, lives in Newark, New Jersey.

For the past 12 years Calero has exercised his rights as a permanent resident, including most recently as a journalist for a Spanish-language news magazine. INS officials are now trying to take away those rights.

Prior to beginning his job as associate editor of *Perspectiva Mundial* and staff writers for the *Militant*, Calero worked as a meat packer in Des Moines, Iowa, and then in Twin Cities, Minnesota, where he participated in a ground-breaking union-organizing drive at the Dakota Premium plant in South St. Paul.

December 13: Calero wins release from jail, INS continues drive to deport him

Support for the fight to stop the INS campaign against Calero mounted rapidly. Messages urging the government to drop the move to deport him were sent from Bill Pearson, president of United Food and Commercial Workers Local 789, where Calero helped win the union; from the Committee for the Human Rights of Immigrants; from Bruce Nestor, president of the National Lawyers Guild; from Hollywood director Nick Castle; and hundreds more. The fight was publicized by the Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press; *El Día*, the Spanish-language daily paper in Houston where Calero was jailed; the National Network on Cuba; and many others.

Faced with this support, the INS paroled Calero out on December 13. Their goal is to slow down the campaign on his behalf. They are continuing to push to exclude Calero from the country.

Action is needed now! You can help!

Calero is fighting today for an immediate halt to government exclusion proceedings against him. He has retained an attorney and is appealing for public support to press the INS to restore his rights.

■ Send a letter of protest to Hipolito Acosta, District Director, Immigration and Naturalization Service, 126 Northpoint Drive, Houston, TX, 77060; fax: 281-774-5989; tel: 281-774-4610. Please send copies to the Róger Calero Defense Committee, c/o PRDF, Box 761, Church St. Station, New York, NY 10007.

■ Sign and distribute petitions demanding the INS drop its deportation of Róger Calero.

■ Make a financial contribution to help cover rapidly mounting legal and other expenses. Checks can be written out to the Political Rights Defense Fund. Contributions are tax-deductible.

Clip & mail to Róger Calero Defense Committee, c/o PRDF, Box 761, Church St. Station, New York, NY 10007

E-mail: prdfinc@yahoo.com

☐ I support the fight to stop the deportation of Róger Calero. List me as an endorser of the Róger Calero Defense Committee.

☐ Enclosed is a contribution of \$_____ to PRDF to help cover the costs of this fight for justice.

Name_____ Telephone_____

Address_____

City/State/Zip_____ E-mail_____

Organization/Union/School _____