

German woman detained for over a month by ICE

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On January 25, at the San Diego, California border with Tijuana, Mexico, a German tattoo artist and tourist, Jessica Brösche, was detained indefinitely while trying to enter the US through a port of entry.

Brösche was accused of violating the terms of her visa waiver program. This was despite Brösche having her passport, confirmation of her visa waiver, and a copy of her return flight ticket to Berlin for February 15. Brösche was detained by US Customs and Border Protection (CBP) for days and then transferred to Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) custody at the Otay Mesa Detention Center, where she has faced horrific conditions and remains to this day.

Amelia Lofving, who is a friend of Brösche and was traveling with her, was told they were deporting Brösche back to Germany. Lofving explained to KPBS TV in San Diego that a CBP agent told her she would be able to communicate with Brösche again in a few days when she was back in Germany after having been deported.

But after Lofving and other loved ones had not heard from Brösche for over a week, and had been given no information as to where she was, they became extremely concerned for her well-being and appealed for help on social media. By using the Federal Detainee Locator website they were eventually able to track her location to the ICE detention facility in Otay Mesa in Southern California, which is run by the for-profit prison corporation CoreCivic.

Interviews conducted by ABC10 with Brösche and Lofving have exposed the nightmarish conditions faced by victims of ICE. Brösche described how she was held in solitary confinement for nine days. She was isolated and left without a pillow or blanket, in what amounts to a form of torture.

Lofving was able to visit Brösche in custody after 25

days, and explained:

She says it was like a horror movie. They were screaming in all different rooms. After nine days, she said she went so insane that she started punching the walls and then she got blood on her knuckles.

Brösche continued, “It’s really horrible. I just want to get home... I’m really desperate.”

ABC10 News also spoke to an immigration attorney in San Diego, who explained that “in the flurry of the first few weeks of the new presidency, a lot of people were getting turned away that usually wouldn’t. They had permission to come in or have been traveling back and forth without issue.”

This case has gone viral, with countless examples of people voicing their outrage online over the injustice. One Reddit user said, “So, they’ve kidnapped someone for profit/ransom. Absolutely disgusting.”

The ordeal that Brösche, a German national, is enduring is an expression of broader political trends in the context of the fascist Trump administration’s increasing pressure on the European powers. Last month, Trump began threatening the European Union with 25 percent tariffs and claiming that the EU was set up to “screw” the US.

The aggressive tariffs imposed against Mexico and Canada have already sent shock waves through the international economy, as the political structures and agreements established as part of the post-World War II restabilization of world capitalism disintegrate.

The detention of Brösche comes as well in the context of a ruling class war on immigrants, the

spearhead of an unprecedented attack on the democratic rights of the working class. One aspect of this is the detention of people at border ports of entry and their transfer to ICE custody. Currently, nearly 42,000 people are in ICE custody, a majority of them with no criminal history and many facing conditions similar to those endured by Brösche.

The Trump administration is operating under the pseudo-legal pretext that asylum seekers seeking a more stable life or escaping extreme danger constitute a military “invasion” that requires military solutions. Just at the beginning of this month, the Pentagon ordered 3,000 additional troops to the US-Mexico border, in addition to the 2,500 Marines and 1,600 soldiers deployed to the border last month.

The administration has also begun to compile a database of undocumented immigrants, including children, for the purpose of tracking them down and deporting them. If undocumented immigrants fail to register with this database, they will face criminal prosecution, according to Department of Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem, who said:

They will be fingerprinted. They must announce that they are here. And if they do so, they can avoid criminal charges and fines, and we will help them relocate right back to their home country.

This is amidst a flood of executive orders that constitute an unprecedented attack on everyone’s democratic rights. Among the most reactionary is an attempt to revoke birthright citizenship, a foundational democratic right established through the second American revolution—the Civil War that abolished slavery—in which citizenship is a fundamental and irrevocable right belonging to everyone born in the United States.

One example of the dire consequences thus far is the tragic death of an eight-year-old Venezuelan boy in the treacherous waters off the coast of Panama last month, where his vessel sank. This child was part of a group of mostly Venezuelan and Colombian immigrants forced back south from Central America and Mexico, where they could not find refuge due to Trump’s intensified

immigration crackdown.

As the ruling classes internationally continue their lurch to the right and embrace fascism and dictatorship, the working masses of the world are moving to the left and expressing a desire to fight back. Educators and healthcare workers across the US have pledged to one another in their workplaces and on social media that they will not allow ICE to take their students or patients, with some immigrant rights groups and volunteers patrolling for ICE and Border Patrol agents to warn communities.



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