



UNFAMILIAR GROUND – ANNA CAMPBELL

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The world of international terrorism, geopolitical stress and bloodshed is indeed unfamiliar ground for a family history trust. But is it? Everybody is somebody's son or daughter. So, when people die for a cause, the grief is just as profound or maybe even more so. It doesn't matter whether one agrees or disagrees with the cause, the grief remains unmitigated. We have been reminded of this just recently in the case of **Anna Campbell (1992-2018) #1990** on the web family tree, daughter of progressive rock musician, **Dirk (Mont) Campbell (1950) #883**.

Anna was a British feminist, anarchist and prison abolition activist from Lewes in Sussex who fought with Kurdish Women's Protection units in Syria. She had been educated at St Mary's Hall, Brighton, and Sheffield University before moving to Bristol where she worked as a plumber. She was involved with many political movements including UK student protests, the Hunt Saboteurs Association, Anarchist Black Cross, and other abolitionist organisations. At the time of her death in 2018, in Afrin, north western Syria Anna was fighting with the People's Protection Unit (YPG) which has been supported in its fight against ISIS by the UK government. However, more concerned about the Kurds at its borders than the threat of ISIS, Turkey launched a missile strike on the YPG which resulted in Anna's death.

Dirk declares Anna to have been a beautiful loving daughter, a feminist, an activist, a woman of courage who dedicated her life to fight for a better world for the rest of us, but Anna's remains still lie on the battlefield which is now in Turkish controlled territory. We know the exact location, he says, but despite hiring leading human rights lawyers the Turkish authorities refuse to engage with our request for the return of her remains and possessions. It is argued that Turkey has violated its international human rights obligations so now Dirk is to take his case to the European Court of Human Rights. As a family history body, we support Dirk, not because we subscribe to one or more of Anna's causes but because we believe she should be returned as a simple act of decent family advocacy.

Anthony Cobbold