

# War experience in Afrîn, Syria

Interview from Radio Vedeng a Rojava #2

Radio Vedeng a Rojava

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In the 2nd episode you can expect an in deep interview with Argeş and Serhat – two internationalist revolutionaries from YPG, later International Freedom Battalion and Antifascist Forces of Afrin.

In this interview we talked about their experiences from Afrin and whole Rojava, difference between fighting with Daesh and Turkish state, light and dark moments of resistance, dealing with fallen comrades and last but not least about an importance of culture, music and joy in life and struggle.

In Dîroka Şehîd – history of fallen comrades – we spoke about Ş. Şevger Ara Makno. An Anarchist originally from Turkey, brave and warm heart and a friend of many who fell in the countryside of Afrin.

This program includes his story, explanation of his name and excerpts of emails and recordings from his closest ones and two poems.

We decided to record live as it gives the radio authenticity we strive for but this method brought a bunch of complications. In the place where the electricity is unstable or none, we had several black outs and that made its influence on the quality.

We kindly ask you to share our radio project anywhere you can. We also would very much appreciate any feedback or opinions of yours, please write us to vedengarojava (A) riseup (dot) net

You can check the brochure of the campaign for boycott turism in Turkey we shared in this program here.

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<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L1k-1TbSeRk>

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**Interviewer:** Vedenga Rojava, an internationalist radio project.

**Unknown Speaker:** An insight look on Afrin resistance.

**Interviewer:** You are listening to the second episode of Bedding Gardella following program will be an interview with Heval Argest and Heval Serhad. They will be speaking about their experiences coming from YPG over to the International Freedom Battalion to setting up an anti-fascist forces of Afrin.

And in this long, long interview, which I had to pre-record I'll be asking them about their experiences in Afrin and the whole time in the shower. Also, I'll pick their brain up on differences between fighting dash and fighting the Turkish state, the second biggest arm of NATO. I asked them on more sensitive things like how to deal with lost fallen friends and also they spoke about the beautiful moments of the resistance and struggle about internationalism. We will be touching on the topic of how a Bernie Sanders follow can become a revolutionary militant. And last but not least, we opened a discussion about how. Music, culture and joy in life and in struggle is very, very important to survive and to know what we're actually fighting for.

All of this, and in much more in this coming long interview. Please enjoy.

So dembash dembach how are you?

**Argeş:** Dembash.

**Interviewer:** For the beginning, welcome. Welcome. I really appreciate for you coming. This will be maybe a little bit stiff on my side because this is the very first interview in our new DIY mobile so-called Studio. So welcome you are the first ones. Introduce yourselves please.

**Argeş:** I'm Argast. I'm from Chicago, IL United, States of America. Actually, I'm our guest, chum chum.

**Serhat:** I'm Sarah tikun. I'm from France and over at 16 months with emoji.

**Interviewer:** Would you like to say why did you come to regal in the first place?

**Argeş:** OK. Well I guess this is the question I should really have a more concrete answer to, but I guess it changes all the time because in a good way, because the every every day here you kind of there's more more reasons really more or less to. Justified the decision to come here, but. I think personally

for me it was at a time in my life where I was kind of starting to evaluate again, OK, what what am I doing here? I mean, I had a nice a nice job. I can't complain about that. Like I was fortunate to have a. A good job, and like everything was going more or less more or less well personally, like there was some recurring issues. But but I had been introduced to the Kurdish movement when I was in, when I was at when I was in college and then the idea of the Spanish Civil War. So it all kind of came together and. Following the the Rojava Revolution and seeing like the ideas of the movement. Especially, you know, the foundation of the Women's Revolution and direct democracy. And like the floorless system and kind of approaching it like a sort of third way of neither this nor that and being very flexible and especially being sort of. I hate to use the word juxtapose because it sounds kind of pretentious, but juxtaposed to like the the alternative which was, you know, like where, where it's under a direct threat from from all sides. There's so many enemy enemies and it's, you know, like with Islamic State, with the Turkish Government to to the north and with the. You know with the. The Syrian regime as well, and. And so like seeing it directly under attack, I felt like it, you know, obligated to do something to, to take part, because I really believe that not only is it a, like, a a viable solution for for a more peaceful and. And just world and A and a better future for us and for the generations to come. But I and I lost my train of thought there. But yeah, I normally have that one really well, but. Yeah. So seeing it under, you know under under direct threat and seeing that it was something that you know like I was saying it's it's such like such a critical moment. Like to put it in the words of a friend of ours. It's not just the hope of the people, of Rojava or of northern Syria or Syria, the Middle East, but it's our hope as well. And seeing that there's an opportunity to to participate in it and to learn from it and to help defend it and do the best that we could to ensure that this, this project that this revolution could continue to. Grow. And develop and then I felt like, you know, as a human, there was an obligation because it's the the world that we live in now. It's all we have. It's all we know. And I think as a human, you know, put everything else aside. We have the obligation and the responsibility to decide what kind of world we want to live in and to try to leave it a better place. Then when we arrived. If that makes sense, sounds kind of cliché, but I think that makes sense to me.

**Serhat:** At the table to speak as much as him, but I would say about in Europe, I was militants like anti fascist. And like pretty involved in different countries and like the notion of international internationalism, like is familiar for me. And like it was making sense to come into Java because I see the different enemies of Rojava as like. Different form of fascism. So like we have dash which is like clearly like. Can green fascism, like Islamist fascism? We have a Turkish state and several several Islamist groups allied with it. And so I think it's making sense here to support regional level because of course, like historically. We don't have a lot of big examples of such revolution like happening, and it's very important to realize for it. And I think I was a little bit disappointed and frustrated to see that European and far left and left were really. Really far from this reality and we are not supporting enough for Java. So I decided to come and say to come because. I was personally feeling involved in this process with like all my values almost are presented in reserve to making sense for it.

**Interviewer:** You mentioned your anti fascist militant experiences back from Europe. Is that how would you describe yourself as like a internationalist, anti fascist or? If you if I would have to throw boxes on you also you can just throw them back and tell me this is not what we are up to here. How would you? Which which box would you choose? Or why would you? You wouldn't.

**Serhat:** Yeah, for me, sure. Like internationally. I think it makes sense or international visionary. I think both make sense after like a specific energy. And I think it's very important actually like you can be Communist anarchist and like kind of over socialist and until we are true leftist, I think it's important like I don't see really the difference. Differences between like the ideologies and more so economy and the common points where we can work together.

**Argeş:** I think Sarah said it really well there. I personally, I always kind of when. I came here, people. Often asked like what? Are you communist socialist blankets like? Is. I don't even. Know really what half of that is. You know, and like I thought I understood what you know, I thought I was kind of like. Well versed on? Well, not. I didn't think I was well versed, but you know, communism, socialism,

anarchism was like, OK, I know those things like I know I've, I've heard of this guy marks before. And like, I'm not that I'm kind of underselling myself, but like to just to to to get the point across that. I mean I had it. I wasn't like really active in, in the political scene in the back, but. Uh. But personally like this the the the whole foundation and tenants of this revolution really, really spoke to me. You know, a number of different levels. But like the, I think a lot. Of what happened? In the past, in the in the US is we have so many problems and the system is completely it's. Totally compromising, corrupted and. Seeing something that actually especially like for me, I and. I get a. Lot of Flack for being a Bernie Sanders supporter all the time. And you know, I get the, you know, the Liberal title and like, yeah, whatever, you know, you know, potato. No, wait, that's the wrong euphemism. Calling whatever what it is calling, I don't know. But yeah, I accept that. OK. Sure, yeah, I'm, you know, I'm not the most revolutionary person, but I think I. I'm slowly learning. What it means to be revolutionary, I think, and I think it's not a fixed thing, but in the past you know, I had a little bit of experience with. The seeing, like the Occupy stuff and then seeing how it completely fell apart. Because of a lot of like a lack of sort of direction and then sectarianism and seeing a lot of hypocrisy and revolutionary revolutionary movements and people that call themselves revolutionaries. So I've always kind of been averse to taking a title of one revolutionary because I don't know if I if I can honestly. It. But you know, I try every day to to do something and to continue to build upon what I've learned. But but yeah, more or less, I guess I'm just independent, independent. Whatever that means. But before I was not the most politically active.

**Serhat:** I think what agish means, but now is an apology.

**Interviewer:** I wanted to say the same thing, you know like. Wonderful. Real apologies right here.

**Argeş:** He's right, John.

**Interviewer:** Exactly. Yeah. I wish we had million and million of time in this interview, because even in this sentence and all that stuff, we could go really deep and talk about what these things mean to us and how Richard developed each of us.

**Unknown Speaker:** Thanks.

**Interviewer:** But I'm sure it's going to come as a side message out of next questions and so. Jump straight into. I'll open the can of worms and ask you directly how was the African experience for you? I mean, I didn't ask if you were in a friend. That's why you're here. That's why I invited you here. So, yeah. How was? How was that for you?

**Serhat:** You want to begin for.

**Argeş:** Yeah, you go ahead on this one.

**Serhat:** OK, Afrin Afrin, let's say that before leaving for affine, we're all very excited because and we have fought together in Raqqa or some of us before and like, get our top car and like we know we know each other well. We trust each other well, we are comrades and friends, important also Italian concept like friends also called Comrade. So I'm very excited to go together again to be united. I think we have to admit that we are so excited to go back to what we call like a true political war, like a clear war, because like dash, sometimes like OK and clear because we have to make some agencies with some in various countries but like against Turkey, it was very clear, very political. It was a true political involvement. So yeah, at the beginning, we're very excited actually I. Think. Like we are all very happy to to see how what this concern like beautiful, beautiful people, beautiful landscapes, beautiful city, very wealthy. But both the war itself interfering. I will talk for me personally, but I think it also involved like overcomes, but I think there's been like the biggest trauma from all my expense level like I've spent like more than eight months on frontline almost nine months and like. The eight months before, like maybe seven months before, like in Raqqa or Delta like it was nothing compared to nothing like, I think was really like. Mentally speaking, it was a disaster. I think we have to be honest with it, from from our part. I mean, like we are not. Ready for it? And even they already, like we couldn't have ordered like indefinitely, because like, it was too. Hard. Like we were like, we have to to remember and to remind to recognize that like we have a poor army like we don't have like all the means and like all the money that I have in Paris army or natural mean like for example Turkish army. So like of course like to fight

against an army but are first like in first line. Like they send their Salafist proxies and after like they have like the Turkish commando they have Turkish army like equipment, they have airplanes, they have drones, have helicopters, they have archery, they have. Tanks and like all this stuff, so of course like it's hard to fight against it and to resist a long time against it. And so you have, so both the strategy and tactics like. It was a little bit. Chaotic and confusing to organize there, so I think we had experience for it. So yeah, I think Arash can continue about it. I'll be like too sad.

**Argeş:** Yeah, yeah. I think a lot of what Sharad said was shared by all of us like, you know, before going, we had heard that there was, you know, that the preparations had been going on for, for years and years and that. You know, everyone was kind of expecting it to happen sooner or later. And then when the invasion finally happened, I was at the time working on the civil side after, because after the liberation of Raqqa, I went up and worked on the civil side and. And at this point, it had the opportunity to get to see the people and not just the fighting site, because I've been six months in, in in Raqqa and there wasn't a whole lot of the civil side of the revolution. There was basically just war. You know, you can imagine, I'm sure, a lot of people have seen the pictures of how Rocca was totally devastated. So you're not seeing a whole lot of. What's going on? It's mainly just focused on the fighting, but getting to know the people and getting to see the revolution. and how hospitable and warm and earnest the people were about this movement about. What what they had achieved and the progress that was making, you know, and then you see on the other side see that this the Turkish state and they're just completely illogical. Irrational hatred for everything. And in Rojava everything Curtis and. Everything about this movement. And then moving from the. Of secretly sort of supporting tacitly supporting the like Islamic State and Islamic proxy groups to just completely openly supporting groups like Al Nusra and Tarir Elsham, which I'm probably mispronouncing, but they're they're clearly like self, his proxy groups like Sarah. And putting all of this NATO power behind them and seeing how.

**Unknown Speaker:** They just.

**Argeş:** All they wanted to do was come in and wipe out everything that the movement had established and just like attacked this culture and, you know, knowing the people and having developed these. Relationships on a personal level, seeing that like these people have welcomed you at like they're like you're their own family, you know. And then seeing this. This force from Turkey and this South this groups wanted to destroy everything. That these that made-up like these people's lifestyle, you know. And on a political level, yeah, it was very clear cut. Like, this is a political war. Like, this is the for for all of us. Like we're we're. We're completely up for the task and we're ready to go in for it. But then on a personal level, getting to know the people it it made it very emotional and personal, like like they're attacking your own family, you know? And so then add to that that. The group that we had fought together with, you know, we were all coming back together to fight again. We had. Known each other so.

**Interviewer:** Does the does the group come under some name which is which is known like for the people out? Or is it just group of your friends which you don't go out as a as?

**Serhat:** A public name? Sure, it is not. It is alpha, which was like kind of collective of several groups because we were like. Coming from several all parties or like different groups from before, so like alpha was through grouping like some individuals from different parts. And also also like as a main part of it, the main component was like the Shade Michael Israel Brigade. Which was like, yeah, the biggest group in alpha, let's say, composed like of anarchist and communist. But like we have also like, some group of like a group and a group of anarchist friend. We had some comrades coming like sanitations coming from decade Burke, one of the Turkish party. Some comrades coming from Tico and another Turkish party like it was. Pretty iteration group but I. Think a very good group.

**Argeş:** Yeah, the group was. Definitely the best part about being in in in Afrin, because we we knew each other. The command was really good, our group itself or our to board Commander, battalion commander was really solid. Like we all knew each other as well. On the on the when it came to the team commander. So we knew each other from before and we completely trusted each other. So like going into it, despite like Spratt said, all of the shortcomings of the planning and the strategic. Shortcomings

that we as like as yet we gave failed to prepare. Knowing that we had people, that and commanders that we had fought with and like lived with on a day-to-day done. So much together with. Made it so much better to go into combat and give you so much more confidence.

**Serhat:** Sure.

**Interviewer:** What would you say was the the biggest difference, whether politically, strategically, personally, in between fighting Daesh just for European, for for listeners and West, when you say dash, we mean the the ISIS or ISIL, ISIS snow today, right the Islamic State?

**Serhat:** You don't. Yeah.

**Interviewer:** What was the biggest difference between fighting Turkey and fighting Dash before?

**Serhat:** A lot of difference. Like I love detail before like. Stay different kind of enemy like like the same, the same ideology. Kind of like animated by, like, reactionary reactionary. Yeah. Ideology like fascism and Islamism, but like the means that they have like. Different like for example like when you have like we had. The Air super strike like force on our side like against Daesh, like not to strike where on our side fighting Daesh. We had like the American artillery helping us. We had like different special forces like American English, French fighting alongside US against us. And like I think was like everything like all contrary. Like, yeah, we had like the commando from the the gendarme gendarme and like the. That kind of military police from Turkey we had, like, have the artery in the verbose.

**Interviewer:** You mean head against?

**Serhat:** You. Yeah. Against us? Yeah, of course. Yeah. So, like, today different. Like, we are, like kind of in the same position as direction. But as days in rocker. Like totally. Study surrounded and like not able to strike back because like too much forces against us.

**Arges:** Yeah. You really just like you couldn't move freely, which was like the hardest thing, you know, like, basically, it was a lot of a lot of the time between between the drones, the air power, there are strikes and artillery. You're kind of just in a static. Position. And well, where we should have been taking the fight to them, and especially in the beginning, we're trying to hold static positions, which is completely different to what we were doing in in Rocco, which was taking the fight to them and being on the offensive and kind of controlling it. But in like, through outside and Rocco, we had, we enjoyed all the. The air support and like military support of the coalition, but in in Afrin, that was definitely the biggest thing, like completely alone, just just us the just the EPA and everyone the local forces. So it was really completely different. And I think a lot of modern military. I wouldn't have that kind of experience of being shelled. Shelled and hit by airstrikes and. You know, under drones like. It was very, very intense experience.

**Serhat:** Yeah. Mental militaries like don't Fight nature army. We did. It's really not cool to do.

**Arges:** Yeah.

**Interviewer:** Well, I guess that all the forces under umbrella of SDF or anyone under Turkish left are very well known as a brief fighters and very good in contact and there is this. You can say it's true or not that the most of the people who fell Mark Tiersen fighting dash were not stepping on land mines or getting bumped by the. By suicide bombings, when the most of the people fighting Turkey got actually killed by the air strikes and from from the air by helicopters, by Kashif drones. Right drones. Yeah.

**Serhat:** Nice to go back tonight. I think it's important to remember that like, yeah, in in Raqqa and also before, like, the main danger was coming from from the ground with the minds, like anything, we are always looking the sky to always look like if some airplanes were coming on like specifically the drones because the drones like, even if you don't have any offensive capacity by. To like target your position and after like communicate it to or try to or to some airplane. So like yeah from looking doors we're looking always up so maybe very strange.

**Arges:** And they had this, the strategy, they called rabbits out and basically what they do is, you know, if they were, if they knew where you were, they just start. Pounding it with artillery or air strikes. And even they didn't know exactly where you were. But they did the general area. So a lot of it was just like. Like kind of white knuckling it, like trying to keep. Keep your calm and keep them cool. You

know, whereas like coming from, everything was really coming from the sky like you said in Rocco's snipers and mines, really. Completely different.

**Interviewer:** So military, that was actually the what I've heard very little contact with the actual enemy that they would clear it out with the air strikes and then check the IT just like the Kurdish Kurdish word for. The FSR FSA they would come in an air strike clear area if they saw the resistance is too big they would retrieve, send more air strikes and is going on until no one extra left and just take over the area. Is that what was happening?

**Argeş:** Yeah.

**Speaker 5:** I don't.

**Serhat:** Like kind of like, let's say specifically like as a better like infantry battle. We were, like, almost never fighting Turkish army directly, like it was almost like this groups called themselves Professor. But like you have to be realistic and our analysis like meta analysis like. On the infantry infantry perspective, you would have won the war without any doubt because like we are better like land fighters for sure we have we have a better infantry because like generally like fighters are like reversed. More, more trained, like more, more disciplined for like infantry fight. We know it and the fight intelligence. So for that no problem. Just like, yeah, we without that theory and the strikes we would have won like in terms of infantry fight. So this is. All the difference.

**Argeş:** Yeah, I think that kind of sums it up for from my experience as well, I mean the big majority of it like it was just showing showing air strikes and drones and like there was there was one one or two instances of like an actual ground force coming in. But that was in Roger, but yeah.

**Serhat:** Actually, as a statistic you have has told us like a statistic, it was between 90 and 95% of our of our lost that were coming from our striker theory like only 5 to 10% from like infantry combat. So this is nothing this is not.

**Interviewer:** Hmm. Also, talking about skills and military tools we have in our pocket, the thing we know is that us, we have actually much bigger reason what we we know what we're fighting for, we defending life and we know exactly. What we fighting for, whether whether the people come in here, they many of them do it for money, for very strange theology, being totally desperate. Or being just like total total tyrants to say it the nice way, yeah. If each of you can plump a memory or two which would like struck the strongest in your mind from a friend, it can be it can be bad and traumatic as much as it can be beautiful and inspiring. Don't have to be many like 1 memory 11 thought which comes first to.

**Serhat:** Beautiful 1 not so much, but. I mean, I don't know. I don't know.

**Argeş:** Ohh yeah, there's just.

**Serhat:** And my I might have an ID for me. Actually if you want.

**Argeş:** Yeah, you go ahead. Yeah, for sure.

**Serhat:** Actually like I think my first operation because I have done. Like. Four operation in Afrin and like my first one. It was a support one like in the in the hills, like almost mountains, very high hills. And like I was, we were team, we were like 4 and was like with freaker freakish comrades and me. And like cooperation. I think like it was almost 14 hours of operation, like all the night from. Was from midnight to 214 after. After. And like during all the nights and like almost all the day we have been bombed by artery and sometime by some, some drones like 2 times the drones source and like target us. And also like when I strike like fall at what 200 meters from us and 200 meters like it's nothing for an airstrike. It's really close and like yeah, all the night I have spent the night there. And it was very stressful. First time I was like, so, so close. I think, like, so close to death because like, so I don't remember, like how many? What you call abuse like it's like the the artery like how many like Albus fair. Fair, close to me. But it was like. I saw maybe maybe 100 and I don't. I'm not exactly like it was really like so much. We don't have any idea like how much the like I was shooting, shooting and shooting. And like sometimes, like only like 2 meters, 3 meters from us and the only thing like protecting us from this artery was like some rocks. And like, we were like hearing, like, the shrapnel from the from robust, like the shrapnel, like hitting the rocks all the night. And OK, we would, we would have been all dead. And



it was very stressful. And I remember I. Was. With this, every every window from 19 years old. And like she was like, the perfect model of cadro in the sense, like, very cold blood. Very serious, very, very nice, but very serious, very, very like the the kind of perfect Carol, let's. Say. I like at one point like the robust felt like so close was like I was with her, like behind the rock and like just reflects like to take my arm. But like very strange. Because like, they don't do these kind of things like specifically woman to a man because of a culture and like, very strange and like, just like for a few seconds like. We were like, trying to hide ourselves under her umbrella to not be discovered by by the drones. And like it was like just a moment, you can say like you're. Of pure humanity, like under underwater. It was very, very strange. And like here like 20 days ago like I have seen like intent but she felt she didn't feel like just. One week after this operation attended the service operation. This is the first thing I remember, like my first passion. I feel like maybe like the strongest woman that I've had there.

**Argeş:** Ohh man. There are a lot of a lot of things that come to mind. I don't know. I don't even know where to begin. I mean, I guess I guess for for me, Bob, Joe, the Rojo experience is probably the most the one that's would stick out in the head the most. And like especially you know like the whole time we were there we were we were sitting under under bushes like maybe bushes that were. Would be like 4-4 feet, 5 feet tall like so you like. You couldn't stand up and that's the American empirical measurement system coming through. So maybe like a meter, I don't know a meter tall. I don't know. Something like. And so like the first, when we when we arrived in our position, which was just a hill in in Rojo just had no idea what to expect or anything. There are three of us and we are just sitting under. The bushes and that was our. That was our position for the next 5 to 6 days. And at first there was number the artillery we could, we could hear, we could hear them in the distance. But then like, as soon as it went dark it. Was just like boom boom. Boom. And they were falling all over the place. And you try to figure out some kind of logic to the way they were. They were hitting and stuff like that. But it just it would constantly. Change and just sitting up at night when you're doing your non vet or guard duty alone, you know and just. Like. You know, there's nothing, absolutely nothing you can do about it. So anyways, you know that has its effect on your your state of mind. But and it's amazing how you adapt to it. Really quickly. So it gets to a point after three days that. We just come back from a A scouting mission and I guess we've been seeing coming back down the hill. They started firing like a booth. And like I just remember running down the hill. And just like like. Like laughing. I don't know why I just. I was like, this is crazy. Like, what am I doing? Here like you know. And like, anyway, so we we've moved our position to another Bush. And it turns out that was like the preemptive strike for the ground attack. So all these, you know, we're sitting there after this. We're like, finally relaxing a little bit after trying to set up our our new. Bush. Bunker or whatever. And the sun is just set and then we start hearing like. So it sounds like a radio was being played in the distance and we're kind of like still talking and just about to start falling asleep and then we can hear it getting louder and louder. And like, do you guys hear that? Yeah. Yeah. But it sounds like somebody's, like, listening to a radio or something. And then all of a sudden, it became very clear what it was. And it was. This just 'tack beer, alu akbar!' And it was like a group of probably like 50, maybe more. I don't know. I got this. And you know it's we're like, holy \*\*\*\*, you know, I don't know if I. Can say on the radio but. But you know like like is this real? Is this actually happening and like it's getting closer and closer and all it's a complete dark. So you don't know what's going on and. So to to to try and make a Long story short anyways, like an attack happens. You know the ground attack? Yeah, we're getting laid off by, like, a a douche, which is like a big anti aircraft gun, if I'm not mistaken.

**Interviewer:** The ground attack.

**Argeş:** Which they had somehow gotten up a hill on a pickup truck, which?

**Interviewer:** Which which is in Middle East, use against people very usually yeah make.

**Argeş:** It clear? Yeah. Yeah, it's very, you know, very common. And we, we had a bit of experience with that in rock as well.

**Interviewer:** The one on the cheap so people can imagine. Yeah, yeah, usually.

**Arges:** Yeah. Yeah, like the big one. Yeah, and. And so, you know, they somehow gotten one of those up on the hill, and we're firing into our position. There were like 11 of us against this force of like, 50 or maybe more. I don't know, you know. And anyways, they're just getting closer and closer. And they're. All right. You know what's, like, what's the plan called the commanders to like, you know, do. This is probably just a it's probably a, you know, they're just doing a scare tactic. And it turned out it was an attack. So they're like, OK, just do a hit and run. So.

**Interviewer:** How many of you?

**Arges:** Are there in in our team there was 3 but in the whole area of controlling the hill there was 11, so it was a pretty big hill and not a lot of people. And we are kind of. Separated by maybe? 20 or 30 meters of positions, so they're just the three of us. So anyways, the attack comes in. We tried to do a counterattack and it turns out they had basically surrounded us. Like. Using the cover of artillery fire and drones, they had completely surrounded our position. And so during the attack, I just remember one of the the strangest things was there. There were two points at this point we were. Like. They when we realized we were surrounded, so we're trying to move to the back point because we're beginning to lose track of exactly where we were because it's, you know, out in the hills, we don't really know exactly where the village is, where we came from. Where everybody is, it was total. To us, so we've come, we're moving back and we come under fire from maybe like 3030 meters away. And as the trace around, you know that you can see it's like Star Wars and we're sitting behind a a tree. There was 2 pine trees that ended up being really, you know like. Life saving. I don't know how, but so we're running across, you know, 1 by 1 to the next position as all the firings coming at us. And I just remember like the the Queen so. Going don't stop me now. It's just like running through my head. It's like, don't stop me now. I'm having a good time.

**Interviewer:** Wonderful. Wonderful.

**Arges:** I don't know why. You know, so we're we're running, we're running through these hills with all this, and this is going on in that in my head and we get to another pine tree where we ended up sitting under and we came under fire there as well. And that was behind our position. So at this point we realized we've been completely surrounded. And so we're sitting there and the drone comes in and circling around and. There. We're like, alright, we're going to get through this and the strange thing was in my mind, like we all at this point where I come in, I don't know if like like actually we're like, we're probably going to die. This is like, we're not going to get to this tonight. But then all of a sudden, the image of our apartment came into our apartment in Akron City, which was like our. Our base came into my head and I was like, oh, I'm going to get back to that room. In the apartment, our little apartment in. And it was such a vivid picture. And now is the moment I was. We're going to get through this. We're going to get back to the apartment and we're going to sit around eating sunflower seeds. God dammit, I'm. Going to get back. And watch Ronnie TV for for 24 hours a day eating sunflower seeds when the power is on. And you know, so we so we were looking around pointing in direction where we're going to go, guessing that maybe our village maybe it's not an enemy ends now and we kind of pause and everyone's looking at each other and it's like kind of intense and we're just like someone just goes.

**Interviewer:** Well.

**Arges:** It's, which is like a thing like one of our friends always like, we always make fun of him because he's always, like, broke. What was it? And like, it's the way he says what sounds like he's saying flop.

**Interviewer:** Is it his accent or is? It OK.

**Arges:** Yeah, yeah, it's exactly he's he's he's from the Netherlands. And so we we constantly did that. So I forgot who started it, but we're sitting there under fire with the drones and then someone was like.

**Interviewer:** Have you?

**Arges:** And then we go bloop, bloop, bloop, bloop, bloop. And so yeah, that's just wanted. You know, one of the memories of that, we ended up surviving.

**Serhat:** OK.

**Argeş:** Which was a good thing.

**Interviewer:** It's it's a. It's a beautiful. I love that story. I love both of those. Don't you know which enlightening moments? You each have a song. I would ask you first to pull out your song, OK? And then afterwards you can talk about. Musical but if you want because we are radio, we also want to talk about culture bit right and how you relate to it. I have a few more questions after that also. UM. Yeah, you can. You can put it out. Basically, anytime you want you. Just hit play. You can just hit. Play it's not going. To be really loud, is it? You will see. Yeah. I just want to say that from here we can come to it later. But what's really? To me. Something like what gives me big inspiration is exactly these moments that you know, that we still keep our people here, especially keep their spirit very high. But you know it is something to to learn and develop. I think in our struggles too, because that's that's the only way how they could survive like all these decades and centuries of. Crazy, crazy Empires just taking over and doing things I don't want to even mention here. So yeah, roll on with your.

**Argeş:** Song all right. Sometimes I feel so happy. Sometimes it feels so sad. Sometimes feel so happy. But mostly you just make me mad. Maybe just make me. Linger. Your pale blue eyes. Thought of you as my mountaintop. Thought of you as my peak. You thought of you? Everything. I've had but couldn't keep. I have had but couldn't keep. Kill blue eyes. Blue eyes. If I could make the world as pure and strange as what I see.

**Serhat:** I Put you in the mirror. Put in front of me. I put in front of me. You pale blue eyes. You failed. Skip life completely. Stuff it in a cup. She said he is like us in time. It lies but can't stand up. Down for you is up. Linda. Failed. Pill blue eyes. It was good what we did yesterday. And I do it once again. The fact that you are married only proves. You're my best friend. But it's truly, truly sin. Girl.

**Interviewer:** So today we're speaking with Sirhan Argeş to yeah, Vega fighters and the revolutionaries from collective organization called anti fascist forces in Afrin. This was a song called Blue Eyes, I believe from Velvet Underground. Correct, correct. Why did you choose this song? Or if you don't want to answer that? One, you don't have to. But what does music mean for you? Like, you know, like we are not soldiers and robots, we are also people, live in some culture so. Hear music dancing. My things are big things. So what? What does music? What does music mean for you?

**Argeş:** Oh man, it's well, well, I guess for the first to answer the question why I picked this. I really don't know, but like I love the velvet under. I absolutely love it. Love them. My dad introduced me to the Velvet Underground when when I was a lot younger and it was strange because when you when you like you said oh, you should pick a song for the podcast. It was just the first thing that came to my head. and like I've been waking up with the song. In my head for. The last week and then it was strange again when I went to check if it was downloaded on my phone, it was already had been played, which I don't remember playing it, but anyway, so that's why I went with it because I was like, this is the first thing that came at. And it's strange because. It wasn't on. We had like playlists that we listened to in in Afrin, like when we like, sometimes even on the front, like we had music and like it was the same in Rocca. We had music for everything from, like, doing the dishes to, you know, building our our Menzies or our bunkers, as you say in English. And like literally everything, there is always music, you know? And personally for me, it's like we've always like had music always through throughout, like, throughout my childhood. It's like always attached to memories are attached to songs because my dad had, like a really big CD collection. It was like. And then like before it was. You know. And it was always something like he was. It's a big part of every part of, you know, every aspect of our family's life and, like, continued in my own personal life as well. And I think, you know. I don't know as a person it's it's music, man. I don't know. But yes.

**Serhat:** I know, I know why you chose this song. I won't say it.

**Interviewer:** Yeah, it's. It's good to keep some secrets and it's it's it's beautiful to see your smiles and know that there is some hearts heart connecting issues probably to it which is which is great but.

**Argeş:** I swear there was, like I just maybe subconsciously there is like but, but and then I was listening to and the lyrics was like oh man, there's like a lot of references to it, but subconscious maybe.

**Interviewer:** Ohh ducks everywhere, every every prison dogs. Well, yeah. I mean, laugh is subconscious. That's what is beautiful. You don't have to. You don't have to think about it, right.

**Argeş:** The dog.

**Interviewer:** It just. Comes and goes sometimes, but yeah, that's that's what you fighting for in the end here, right?

**Argeş:** The human experience.

**Interviewer:** Have a question which you totally can not answer at all as with any other question, do any of you have a military experience from before the time coming through Java?

**Serhat:** Mm-hmm. In my case, yes, I have one detail, but yes, little little bit.

**Interviewer:** And. When you were whatever you were doing or preparing where you have in mind already coming. Here to Rojava? Or was it?

**Serhat:** Yeah, of course. Yeah. I mean, I did it before planning to come. That's was the main reason. The main reason was because I think. As we share with fighters like fighters, including Europe, I mean like Milan. We have. We should have all of us. I think some things important like to understand about like militants and militaries like are connected and. At point point of view over like. I'm struggle like we'll be very connected to our critical activities. So we have to be ready for that.

**Interviewer:** All right. Talking about the the the political activity. And thanks back home. Do you think do you feel? Or do you see a big connection in between what you're doing here, or what the the revolution here means and the struggles back home in your?

**Argeş:** Or.

**Interviewer:** Countries, if I can say that or any places you coming from. Do you do any solidarity actions from here, or do you just like focus or become revolutionaries really here and don't much follow. What's what's happening elsewhere?

**Serhat:** I guess you follow you. Of time, OK.

**Argeş:** So for me personally, I think you know. There's definitely. There's definitely a need for, I guess in the sense of of a revolution. Yeah, especially in the United States. Like we we we kind of made some some attempt at it with like again I'll get criticism for what Bernie Sanders like with his presidential campaign. For us, it was something completely new. Completely different, you know, like normally like we have. We're used to like the two for lack of a better word. I hate to use the ones they always use, but establishment politicians like, you know, Hillary Clinton and then, well, Donald Trump wasn't really establishment, but like it was representative of, like, everything that was going. And then we had Bernie Sanders, which was everything was being organized on a grass roots level, and it was completely different to like the almost like, corporate style politics that we have been used to and also during that election it was, it became abundantly clear that the interests of the people weren't. Weren't at all being considered by. Neither the Democratic Party nor the Republican Party, so we definitely need something to change. We need a lot of, well, not reform. We need really revolution in sense. However. I think personally coming to Rojava and everything here, I mean my focus is here in Rojava and you know. Building the the the movement that we that we have here, you know, and focusing on that and focusing on allowing it to have a future to grow and then I think you know the rest of the world can draw lessons from it. It's it's great here because you have a lot of things. You know, you have a lot of people that are genuinely energized and fully committed. You have cadre who have, like, devoted their lives to it. And I think, you know, that makes so much. Of a change. Possible, whereas in the US that there's so much division and polarization and people just get lost and naturally. Like in capitalist society, people have their everyday life and you know they have their jobs and then you know, they get especially with social media kind of. Almost shackled to the idea of creating the curate itself. So. Revolution and affecting change. And more importantly, the amount of work that it actually requires. I don't see something like that happening in the immediate future. I mean it would. It would take some really significant changes because people in America, for the most part, are going to say, OK, yeah, the system's bad, but it's not affecting me on a day-to-day basis. So hopefully. I think what what in the United States people can learn from is to start focusing on, in my opinion, the local

level and building from the bottom up. And I think a lot of the ideas. That are here and the movement and Rosalba revolution can be transferred to building a better society and a more progressive society, and achieving that kind of revolution that we need in the United States. And I think #1 my priorities here in Rojava and the movement here and hopefully after people can start to learn from it. And.

**Interviewer:** That's it. Before Sarah jumps in his hands where you open like a a thing which can be big discussion, and we definitely don't have frame for it. So I'll just ask like. Question can I yes or no? Don't you think that actually this like misleading idea that? People like Bernie Sanders can change, actually anything wasn't. In the end, resonating. In. The minds of many people, and wasn't that the reason why they voted for Trump because they saw that they thought that, OK, you think that the even if leftist thing that the this guy could be something else than many people would think that he actually is the working class kind of hero and believed his like. \*\*\*\*\*. Which was? We just showing up as like some alternative to the old two side of the same coin, which obviously he falls as much as Bernie Sanders and then falls in this the same old two sides of the same coin.

**Unknown Speaker:** But.

**Interviewer:** Wasn't that that, that what? What people would maybe think that that's the alternative. Like wasn't that a big part of the? The reason why people would vote for Donald Trump because they would see it as something really.

**Argeş:** Going to change? Yeah, I think so. Like, I think in that an aspect that that there's definitely. Some part of that because. There was a lot of reaction from people that just didn't like Hillary Clinton like and, you know, there was the people from the Republicans that head-to-head, according to all the polls, Bernie Sanders versus Donald Trump. Across the board from different polls were showing Bernie Sanders would win because he was able to. He was able to reach reach out to especially like a lot of the voters that ended up voting for Trump in the end were like white working class voters and he was able to, you know, relate to them as well. But because of for, you know, for a number of reasons. They really hated Hillary Clinton so much that they voted for Trump. Out of almost like a protest because they said any this is and this is common, you know, in the US elections is like well, it's the lesser of the two evils. But you know and like, I think they're like it's like you said, they're also other reasons, for example. Trump was something completely different to a lot of people, and he appealed to the to the common denominator. And you know, especially with this whole like build up of the word establishment, politicians and people, some people, maybe we're looking at them like, OK, yeah, this guy knows how to run businesses or he's totally different to, you know, in theory he knows how to run businesses or. He's totally different. He's so crazy. He might be able to do it and I think people are just like, push the button. Let's see what happens. You know, that kind of vote rather than you know, when they would pick neoliberal like, like Hillary Clinton, that's going to be more of the same thing. People just wanted something different. So I think yeah. And that's. In a sense, that's true. There are so many things. If you do an analysis on this election, like what the the conscience of the American voter was at the time and. And. And it's continuing to change, I think.

**Interviewer:** Yeah, this is just what you know the question what in general worries me that if you were showing them that maybe there's a little better candidate that it's still showing them that the push the button is going to change instead of like the revolution every day and everyday struggle and everyday organizing and everyday relations. What we see here on a huge scale and I believe. See in the West, US and Europe popping up more and more also. So Yeah. So hopefully some. Crossed over and the revolution was spread and. I believe. We can learn a lot from our Java in the West as there are some ways of organizing Rojava can learn from the struggles out there.

**Argeş:** Yeah, I think that's one point just to say again like what you said. About the everyday struggle and the everyday effort to change, like that's where people, it's not just going to happen by picking a different president. For example, in the United States, picking one leader, it's not going to happen. People need to put in the work and I think that's the problems lie rather than focusing on, OK, we can start with the local community and organize. On a grassroots level level not to use another like term, but that's the thing that people need to see that it doesn't just happen overnight. You have

to put in the work. You can't just sit and expect, OK, I'm going to go in one day, do a protest, go in one day or make a vote and everything's going to change and people need to realize that you have to put in the work if you want to change.

**Serhat:** Sorry, what was the original?

**Unknown Speaker:** Question.

**Interviewer:** Yeah, we we got into into the trap of the elections and I'm sorry for that. The question was about actually the connection to the struggle back home.

**Argeş:** Yeah, imperialism.

**Interviewer:** How you how you see if you feel solidarity with things going back home or if you like fully focus the year or. If you see that you can learn here and bring it back home or vice versa, how you see the intersecting of the the struggle from your country and this place.

**Serhat:** Well, obviously nowadays I feel more focused on Reserva. I think even if I think. That. We always must keep contact with our local struggles, our duty, because we know this reality pretty well coming from these countries, from France. And I think it has been important to have connection between struggle in the world. The fact is, like with Rojava, I've told before like.

**Argeş:** I think we.

**Serhat:** Have enough connection in Europe with Rojava? Specifically in France. I think also because one of the big disease of far left community. Is to be what I call like politically Algenist. And like if you don't see a perfect revolution. Like well done on all the aspects, we don't want to support it. And I think this is not only certainly a mistake, but like this is very like a big what can I say, like a big shame for them because like, we don't have, we don't have the possibility like to have a perfect revolution already done. Like as we want. And so sometimes we have like to support some some movements that are not really exactly as you would like them to to be. But still like movements that are truly progressive and that have inside them like a true. New line, so I think is very important, like for viewer leftist in Europe for the same thing. And if I don't know so much reality, but for Europe, for sure, I think it's very important for realities and for leftist to support to have far like very deep connection with. I mean you don't need to come in Middle East. Supporters, I think like from from, from Europe, it's very easy to support like. Like several kind of support that are very appreciated from us and from our Kurdish comrades and Turkey. Right. So I think yeah, of course like. Of course, nowadays more involved in reservoir, but still very important to support the local struggles from the country we come from. And nowadays in France, like we we were. New dear presidents, like we have a lot of struggles going on like we have sad. We have, we have the struggle of the the workers of the hospital. We have the trained workers also struggling. We have the students. Like in like entrance notice like all these all these struggles like like really connected to each other because. All these people are attacked by the government, so it's very, very interesting to see, like, Oh yeah, you can try like to manage like all these people to. Be. To be struggling together. Like to be working together to like to create some political things together and eventually after like how you can write it all these people to other places in the world. I mean it has worked. Very. Well, with with the Palestine, it has worked pretty well with the Sherpas. No, it has to work. So reserve is very important, very important for us.

**Interviewer:** And soon, if I'm not mistaken, there is a 50 years anniversary of the 1st of May 1968. Right, exactly. Hey, it's going to be.

**Serhat:** Yes.

**Interviewer:** A big party. It will be very good.

**Serhat:** I hope so.

**Interviewer:** OK. I'll be in my heart with all the all the folks in in Europe in general, but especially and friends that day.

**Serhat:** We have to be stuck here for a few months for sure, maybe one year. So we think the comrades like, but we'll be struggling and rioting will be like stuck. In the desert here.

**Interviewer:** And struggling and maybe not rioting, but struggling and struggling, struggling.

**Argeş:** For sure, the strugglers there. Put on janeman.

**Interviewer:** Definitely we don't have much left on the list.

**Argeş:** I have one thing I have a confession, Sir. Had also had a. Song he picked.

**Interviewer:** He also, I just, I know I know I know about it.

**Argeş:** Yeah, OK. OK. I just want. I didn't want to, you know, come in and be like there's only the one song we picked.

## How different cultures deal with soldiers deaths/martyrdom

**Interviewer:** Almost. It together, but I'm heading into maybe set, maybe actually very positive. Said question with maybe positive answer because of what we learned from the culture here. In the meanwhile, you can put that cable to his device so he's ready for the song. Oh, sorry for some. OK, so after this question and answer the topic of Shahid, which we would translate as martyr martyr.

**Argeş:** OK. Yeah.

**Interviewer:** People dying here, people dying here a lot because it's \*\*\*\*\* constant war, self-defense, defense of life, cost lives. Umm. People sometimes throw a lot of jokes around. People say, you know, let's enjoy it. Life is short in Kurdistan, and yeah, the approximate time of life of Daria, it's now I think like two to four years in the mountains and. Approximate like. I mean, since the moment you join the the the front the struggle and approximate time. Now of like Surgers going to build like a friend. If Turkey will come closer the likelihood of dying is just too great, right? I believe that in the meantime here. You must have experienced fallen friends or very close people. Fallen comrades, seeing a lot of wounded. People and going through great Thelma.

I'm opening very serious topic, especially coming from European background myself, but I'm also. Opening. That's a question because I know that people here deal with this stuff quite in different way, which you know, make them able to actually survive and go on. Keep going and struggle. Keep going in full life. If you would like to share how people's perception of you over fallen comrades changed since you came here. Since you experienced these different battles, experience of freeing till today. How how this experience of like not only falling friends, but this whole culture of Shahid, how what, what does? How do you? How do you see it now? And what makes you what makes you yourself able to go on to not just like, break down in pieces?

**Serhat:** It's a heavy question, he wants me to go first (laughs)

**Argeş:** Yeah, go ahead, Serhad.

**Serhat:** Well, the Kurds always say like 'shade namerin', which means like 'martyrs don't die'. Which I slightly disagree personally, and I can say with respect like the conception of the 'shade' thing, but I've always refused like saying, like not one time have I said 'shade namerin'. Seriously, like the martyrs are dying, but precisely why they are martyrs and it's too easy to like try to hold it, by just saying like 'sahid namerin', because no, like, it's very, very heavy stuff. So of course it happened a lot. So like we have to deal with it.

But I think it's important to like to remember that like each each life lost like its. A cause for revolution and like it's it's a loss for humanity because, like there are good. People. All of them people are dying. We are good people, like from our side for sure. I think also we have to understand that this Middle East and like this guerilla culture and like these both things. Totally change the perception of the material. So yes. So of course like we have to own our memory. So we have to remember them. So like we don't totally die in our, in our spirits and mind, fortunately our hearts.

So I think. It's useful, like as Westerners, I think to have also our approach to think that. Each each lost we have to. To like to ask ourselves like. Could could we have managed to organize like this thing differently, so this person don't die. I think it's important. Like for example, nowadays in in NATO army like each soldier it's it's a shame to lose a soldier, like every time there is a long investigation to know how this soldier died.

Unfortunately, it's like a little bit quick, like just oh, it's normal. So yes, *sahid*. So I think now, yeah, we have to change it, I hope. I hope one day like the Kurdish. Friend. Will change it like we've understand, but no, like it's not normal. And but yeah, of course we have to deal with it and we have to be strong, but we have also like I think always wonder like could we change things, correctional organization could change the way to fight. Could we change like some? Cultural aspects. But sometimes I think are problematic for the military part to like try to avoid to have so much like.

Because like a lot of *sahids*, I think, OK, like we don't say it enough and you know, like I don't say it because like it was. Kind of very hard to say, but like a lot of achieved like he could have stayed alive very easily with some basic rules, material rules. Different from what Verano thinks is important? Like, yeah, some *sahids*. Like, they don't die for nothing, but sometimes. Sometimes they could stay alive. And I think it's important to remember that.

After like on a psychological level, I think like we get used to it. And the way the way to deal with it is like. To try to stay very, very light with it, you know, summer time, you know, it's very light like. At the beginning of Chris very heavy because you are not used to it to lose friends, but like are like not only comes like very close friends. After I think you have to deal with because like, it's too much too much. Like, I don't remember, like, how many friends? I've. Lost like I really like. It's like 10s and 10s. Like more than 10s and 10s. Maybe it's 100. I don't know where people that I have know that I was like close with. Like people that I've met before, like some internationals. Some Turkish friends, some Kurdish friend like, it's so much so much like for example in Afrin like we've all people have done operation with around like around 30 or Kurdish friends or Turkish friends or Arab friends or internationals. And like 2/3 of them are *sahids*. No. It's like how to deal with it again. Like, I think you have to be light. You have to. I don't even know how to. Actually, I don't know. I think is very important also to talk about it with the work and what's around you. And to try to try to stay like and to think that, OK, no, they're dead. So no, what do we do? Like how we how we say destroy and we don't do anything. Or you try like to use your pain and I think also your anger because you have a lot of anger when it happens and you try to use it to struggle like. Like stronger to be stronger and to struggle more and more and to continue to struggle.

**Arges:** Yeah, I think what Sarad said, especially about like the *sarad* culture is one of the things. Especially the ability to prevent some of these, you know by simple strategic and tactical changes. And for example like you see with tourniquets. There's almost like an aversion to carry a tourniquet. Like why are you carrying a tourniquet? You don't need that. You know, you should just go fearless into the battle. And like, yeah, of course you want to go fearless into the battle, but you have an experience. Like each one of us with experience is really valuable to the military structure as well and to the revolution as a whole. And like a simple thing like a tourniquet, you can save a life, you can add extra time to get you to the hospital and get you, you know, treated and a lot of lives can be saved. And thankfully, there's some programs in place. But. I think I agree with everything he said.

But and then on, you know, on a psychological level, personally in the same situation, the same. I've seen a lot of friends falling as well, *sahid*, and between Raqqa and between Afrin, especially in Afrin, was just like one after the other, but. I don't know. I think you know the only the only way we can really fully understand how, how, what kind of effect it's had on us as individuals. Is when we know when we if and when we go back to our homes you know and when. We're out of the. The sort of culture. Where you can kind of take. It sort of lightly. So that would be interesting to see how it develops. I mean, in the meantime, initially after when we are dealing with some of the. Some of the stuff related to the Shaheeds and their families, you couldn't really just go into it. You didn't have. You didn't really have time to just to process it. So it's almost like for me, I just kind of put it there and left it, which is maybe not the most healthy decision, but I think it works for now and like I think I'll probably continue to do that and like I said, maybe it's not the healthiest decision and like we just go with it lightly. Like as a group, we've been kind of dealing with a lot of this stuff as light as we can and to a certain degree we've all become really desensitized to death and to like the all this stuff that you imagined war entails. And



I think it will be interesting as individuals like to see what kind of effect that will have in the years to come.

**Serhat:** So I think we can say that for some of us it could become very cynical generally because of everything that we have seen and lived. So because so like it's gonna be very strange for some people that are new coming here, but people that maybe we might see one day again like in in Europe or in America. Like you can very cynical. And like, of course, of course, become very cynical because we don't have any trust like it's, I think. Yeah, like moral moral mechanism of of deep. And like even like if we try to hide all this. All this chaos in our brain, like when do you ever think it will? It will come back. It will occur again. Like we'll have to deal with it sooner or later.

**Interviewer:** OK. That would be after our interview. Part of the program is also coming back and in each issue like you know talk about 1 sahid. So I'm pretty sure that at least in our memories like these people always, always mean a lot even in this room which was built today break quickly, we sitting here and sharing Sehid Helin, she had gotten handing pictures just recently here on Helena Leguin. Commemorate al. Yeah, it's a it's a lot of like for me. Also, it's been waking up and falling asleep with my. Friends missing who I know I'll never see again, but. The culture here in a way. Helps to overcome that, yeah. So we're going to bust another song before we wrap it up.

**Amy Winehouse song:** Hello. It's me. I was wondering if after all these years, you'd like to meet to go over. Everything they say that time supposed to heal you, but I ain't done much healing. Hello. Can you hear me? I'm in ...

## A close call story

**Serhat:** Yeah, I can tell the story because it's a little bit funny and like become was like it. So like in in Guitar, like a city that's more or less 25 kilometers, enough for for like we were. Fighting outside and like taking villages to try to to go close to the city and to to surrender our city. At one point there was this this big canal, which was after like to be known as the Battle of the Canal. And like it was a canal of, I think 10 meters large. And after was a road and what you call a Satya like a big Satya in English like.

**Argeş:** A barrier made out of earth

**Serhat:** Yeah Exactly. Yeah. Same thing. Like 10 meters large and on one side was us on the other side, the same thing on our side here and dash. And next we were like, it's just like 30 meters from us. Everything like we are hearing him like talking between them and like insulting us in Arab and everything of course. But like, I guess was not very nice. And like screaming, always a classic like 'tak beer and Alu akbar'. And at what point like the the first grenade? A Chinese grenade that come until our our sat here. And by some ordinate explode. It was very like fortunate for us and like never and nothing happened. So like after like some convert specialized in sabotage like to the grenade and. Took off for the night and all this stuff, but like, very funny thing. I didn't explode and like. After doing the, I think for two next days I was singing every time like this this song like. Just to try to to troll them and like to provoke them. So like, yeah, you know, for me we have a set of a canal. And so like they were like answering me like in Iraq and like, very angry. And like, after two days, you know, like. We just bomb them with artillery, like from the Americans like and also like some some helicopters strike like two Apaches came to cover us just up to us. And so like they just destroy them and also like some abstract like what you call this big big plane like with that here inside like American airplane yeah I think yeah.

**Argeş:** C130.

**Serhat:** Yeah I think this one, like just bomb them like during all the night and after like nothing remained of them except little bit like little pieces so. OK, maybe like very say that, but it was very, very cool at the time. Like just to destroy them. So this song became famous and like one international

comment was made at the time like. While internationalist also and I really love this story, so I. Told it to all internationals and over all those stories. So it's yeah. Nice story from garta.

**Interviewer:** Cool. Cool. Those were the those were the lucky. Yeah, OK. The Big Brother behind our back. However, we liked it or not, it was convenient. And now the future is fucking scary.

**Argeş:** Democracy.

**Interviewer:** Yeah, no justice. Just us, right? How do they say it up in the mountains? No. Allies but mountains.

**Serhat:** Yeah. No friends. But mountains, yeah.

**Argeş:** Or is have no friends but the mountain.

## The Future

**Interviewer:** OK Almost. Almost done and your double exceeded our time frame right now. OK, so one of the last questions how to how to roll on then now what do you what are your personal plans or plans of your group or how do you see it in? In Rojava or elsewhere? And yeah, like there was some criticism being pulled, some things which were failed, we all went through it. That was supposedly part of this question. But I don't think we have to go back to it because you already touched on these topics. But yeah, how to go on.

**Serhat:** So for the next month, like for sure we'll. Stay in Rojava. Like I think at least four months, maybe 6, maybe more. And after like after here we have discussed with both of our friends. International Turkish rosaries. Kurdish Kurdish friends also and like we have decided, I think like. To go in civil life more because they're a little bit sick of war, I guess we'll talk further about it later. But just for the big lines like like just like create a kind of network civil legal no problem for that like. Only things that we can work with, like associations in Europe and America and like we eventually like some parties, organizations like. I think we are like, so sick and disturbed for for to avoid any any further troubles back back home. So like yeah, to work to work on this like civil projects. Link with. Driver. Like to develop, like cooperation like solidarity network and support, specifically Europe. For now, at least, I think this is this is our project and we already already begin. It works. We have a lot of comrades and France, Italy, Germany, UK like already supporting us. So it's pretty cool. Some file also in in USA. So we just want to to to create it bigger and like to see riches and eventually like. To bring people here so you can discover, like, civil life and work like you want to be with organization like, take them like the diplomatic part of. And oriental organizations like also to bring some women comrades that can work with the genealogy project. These kind of things very important. Maybe I want to continue.

**Argeş:** Yeah, I think you summed it up really well that the network is going to be focused on trying to raise awareness about Rojava and the Rojava Revolution from all over the world, with the specific focus. Europe and North America, because of our personal connections there, but we're open to obviously everywhere because we want to try to reach the most people. As possible. And try to bring people here so they can experience the the revolution, especially on the civil side in person, because I think that's the best way we can. We can win allies is if people can come here and see it for themselves. They can see that it is worth fighting. It is our hope and it is the hope for a better humanity. So. In that sense, that's what we're going to be trying to do with this, with the, with our network here and obviously building solidarity in conjunction with the raising awareness so that we can get the kind of recognition and support that we need to ensure that there is there is a future that there is a the possibility for this. Revolution in this project to continue. To grow and develop. So that we can all learn from it. So that's kind of what what we're doing, you know, and especially after after fighting and especially after after. A lot of it has changed now. Like this is kind of. You know, I think in my opinion, but it might be the same, but this is kind of like our life now. This is like it's after seeing all of our shaheeds and the friends and sacrifice that have been made for this. Like we we personally can't. And I personally can't think

of anything else. We have to make sure that this works. We have to keep on fighting. We have to keep ensuring that this revolution has a future.

**Serhat:** And of course, we're ready to go back. Military life in reservoir if reserve is attacked, but not so like. We don't want anything else for. Now it's too too heavy.

**Interviewer:** Beautiful. Beautiful. Many questions put them to my mind, but to give space to the others and. And other people you want to interview another part of the program, you have to wrap it up. I have a last question to you and it is. A little bit more personal, of course. Again, it's up to you if you answer or. Not, but do you? Do you mention the music? What it means for you and stuff in different moments? Do you also read a lot? Something to say? The dinner we made was. Not that's for sure last. Like if the dogs don't eat everything like there is more food coming.

**Serhat:** If you want to go in first.

**Interviewer:** Yeah. The high gain of the microphones, yeah, there's a danger of sitting too far from the MIC. Then I have to blast it a lot, and then it takes everything. Like the question, yeah. If you've been reading something, you have a favorite book or something which keeps you alive, or if you carry a picture of somebody, a a token or an artifact, which is really important for you. And what does that mean for you?

**Arges:** Oh Yeah, yeah, I mean. I got a few, a few trinkets and bobbles that I carry around with me, like stuff that you know that my family gave me before coming here. And like a few things along the way, like, I think one of the big things about especially being in in the FPGA and PJ is the the culture of like giving them. Mementos, and I don't want to say the words of Sarah can say it's like.

**Serhat:** Yeah.

**Arges:** It's like a memento. So yeah, it's a memento that you would give someone so that they can remember you, you know, or you can remember them by it. So like, you know, like the patches.

**Serhat:** Yeah.

**Arges:** That we wear. Or like I mean it really could be anything like a hat or whatever, you know, a light or even like a cheap, you know, zip or not zip a big lighter. You know, actually you don't get pics here either. But like this lighter right here. Like, you know, something like.

**Interviewer:** Sheep zip dog.

**Arges:** Just you remember it. You're like, oh, yeah, someone. Gave me that.

**Interviewer:** Once we get the logistics.

## Favorite Books

**Arges:** Yeah, the logistics sliders. Yeah, but what? Let's see. I have a few different things, but books in in Afrin. Sorry, changed the subject there very the details, the books. One of the things in Afrin was when it was getting particularly difficult. I don't know why, but on on my. iPad I had. My son, so busy when I sit on my. iPad I had. Alexander Dumas. The Count of Monte Cristo. But really I did and I started reading it and it's an amazing book. Is really good. And it was. It was like a really a nice change of scenery because, you know, with everything going on to be reading this great story, this, like, sort of epic adventure. And like revisiting it when I had read it years ago, it was nice, you know, like stuff like that. I mean, obviously I read. Democratic and federalism every single day (laughs).

**Arges:** Apo, of course. But when I'm not reading it...

**Interviewer:** I mean, you know, we hopefully get a broadcast to people who didn't hear much of, so yeah. OK, I'll do our.

**Arges:** Abdullah Ocolan. But you know, but that was it. Like the. The Count of Monte Cristo was was really. Really. One of those books, you know, I don't know. I'm trying to think of other was other ones. I mean, there was a lot of political reading in in Raqqa like that. Everyone showed around. We had a lot of the same PDF's and we were just kind of read through those and which are really interesting.

But that was the only non political which is nice to take a break sometimes from all the heavy political stuff.

**Interviewer:** Definitely.

**Serhat:** Well, for me, I came in Rojava with lots of books like, but only pretty political, military. And I had to let like leave 2 or 3 of them in Bashir, because I had too much stuff. So like. I think after one month I've read all my books and like I've read all of them 2 or 3 times maybe so I have read again like maybe like half of all of the Invisible Committee or like Tiqqun books because like very close to this tendency.

**Interviewer:** Hmm.

**Serhat:** It's not a secret, but most of you have cemetery books like. Or what else? What did I read? And also by Michael, who has also written a book like very interesting. And after like four months and months like I was really depressed because, like, no more books to read. And the only books that I found there like. In some languages that I understood like was like or the Quran. So OK, I read it little bit but it was not the purpose of it. Very interesting but something like more I say. More pop culture, eventually. And like yeah, I've only found, like books in Turkish or Kurdish or Arab. But finally, finally like I have found some PDF's in English, one like the king in yellow. So for ones who don't know, like, you know, like it's very, very interesting books like. Kind of like Proto Lovecraft style. And like you, just like, think to understand the story because it's kind of funny also it's. Like a story of like a book. And like after like people read this book and like become crazy like and they like still crazy. Like after after they they read this book. And it also works for for two of us like also as well this book and like, yeah, like yeah, we become really creative of this book. Like I begin like before I feel and I like. Like really again? Like after our feeling like, yeah, in fact, like, drop off today. Crazy like this kind of today's story, like maybe weird story. So like, this was my last book here and I hope I will find other PDF like to read. Because for now like I have only like some political PDF left and like since I think I guess right. Like we have to disconnect from. Politics and to read like some uncritical books is important.

**Interviewer:** I'm not going to say which, but I saw on your vest which here. Is called rache. And a beautiful thing which I commended you maybe thought that I was making fun of it, but I actually very appreciated that. But I'm not going to.

**Serhat:** Say, what was it? You can you can, you can.

**Interviewer:** The the the the deadly Hallows, of course, the Deadly Hallows.

**Serhat:** Yeah, yeah, yeah. It was a gift from a Turkish woman, Fred. Like she gave it to me, like before. Just like last day, she was on frontline with me. And so yeah, I put it on my on my wrist, like on my combat vest. And I think it makes sense. So like what? You say in English. But hellos, hellos to have it with me, like I don't think to protect me from that, but like it was for you to keep it.

**Interviewer:** With me. So yeah. And it's one of the best books I've ever read, to be honest. Like, I was definitely not joking back then.

**Serhat:** You don't. So I don't know. Probably probably.

**Interviewer:** Friends, well, this was this was a blast to to talk to, to have this. Have this interview, it was uh. My pleasure to have you as like the first people in this. So-called studio. It was much longer than we expected, which is a lesson for me to learn from, but I'm actually really happy and. Yeah, I appreciate your visit your time. I know you should be by now. Back in. Your. Tabur they might be looking for you. I'm sorry if I caused troubles. Criticize myself for that, but I guess we will be pushing to each other in next weeks and months. And yeah, I wish you long and happy and revolutionary successful headed word revolutionary life in here or elsewhere. Thank you so much for coming. I appreciate it. Thanks for having us. Really appreciate it. It's so gifting.

**Serhat:** Thank you for having us.

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War experience in Afrîn, Syria  
Interview from Radio Vedeng a Rojava #2  
June 2, 2018

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