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15th November 2018

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An attack on the FSB building in Arkhangelsk inevitably caused a storm of discussions in the left and anarchist segment, and even in the latter, the range of opinions changes from complete approval to little restrained skepticism. How to evaluate the act of Mikhail?

First, about choosing a goal. There should be no doubt at all – the comrade chose the best of what was available to him. It may be asked what the Arkhangelsk FSB officers were guilty of, who, it seems, are not involved in the torture of the “Network” case, and in this case, is the attack on them a manifestation of the principle of collective responsibility?

Yes, it is, but the principle of collective responsibility here is the inevitable answer to the principle of mutual responsibility. Did the FSB chiefs remove the investigator Tokarev from work, after they had promised to sort it all? They did not. Did the employee who was injured in the explosion retired after learning about tortures in Penza and St. Petersburg, which were not followed by any internal proceedings? Also not. Then what are we talking about? At the moment, any active member of the FSB is guilty of torture.

In addition, it should be noted that Mikhail's action is the only serious response to torture and repression against the anarchist movement. It is opposition to violence by action, and not in words, a reward of merit to those who deserve retribution for their crimes.

Until now, the FSB officers could, on the basis of life experience, believe that they can torture and mock people, and nothing will happen to them for this. Mikhail showed that they were mistaken. And he showed it not only to them, but to all of us.

A more weighty objection to the choice of an object may be that in an explosion in the waiting room civilians, not employees, could have perished. But look — all three victims — in uniform, the explosion occurred early in the morning, at the very beginning of the working day, most likely even before the official start of receiving visitors. So Mikhail clearly thought about this problem and correctly calculated the time of the attack.

Now let's turn to a more difficult question. Is it right to make such an attack at the cost of your own life? Why didn't Mikhail choose another way of struggle, and what are the motives for such a decision? Many comrades express the view that it is better to wage an armed struggle, staying alive, or engage in organizational activities — since this is more effective from the point of view of results. Someone even descends to inappropriate chatter about psychological motives. To delve into the soul of a stranger to you is, of course, both senseless and unethical, although we should be aware of the motives of human actions.

Probably, one can try to assert that Mikhail was mistaken when he concluded that his future life and his participation in the revolutionary struggle were hopeless. But who among us has never made a mistake, even on crucial issues? It can be assumed that he was pressured by emotional distress. But which of us did not make important decisions under the influence of strong emotions? And in the end, how many of us imagine what it is like to be a thinking and caring young man in Arkhangelsk in 2018?

Surely, if any of us were close to Mikhail, he or she would try to dissuade him. But we were not there, and he made a conscious decision, made his choice. Now this attack on the FSB is the meaning of his entire short life, the main thing for which he was born. And now, as anarchists, we have only two possibilities — either to destroy this meaning with our negative attitude or to defend it — the latter is what Mikhail himself asked us to do in his last letter.