

**Slyusar Vadym**

*Doctor of Philosophical Sciences,  
Docent, Head of the Department of Philosophical and Historical Studies and Mass Communications  
Zhytomyr Polytechnic State University  
<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5593-0622>*

**Vitiuk Iryna**

*PhD in Philosophical Sciences, Docent,  
Associate Professor at the Department of Philosophical and Historical Studies and Mass Communications  
Zhytomyr Polytechnic State University  
<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2998-6323>*

**Volkova Kateryna**

*Postgraduate Student of the Department of International Relations and Political Management  
Zhytomyr Polytechnic State University*

**Political violence: the attributive dimension**

---

**Abstract.** The article analyzes the main features of political violence. The author substantiates the view that political violence is aimed at preserving or changing social or international orders and conditions, and is realized in the following forms: war, exile, genocide, persecution, repression from above, uprising, terrorist acts from below; and is also carried out by specially created combat units or relevant authorized security forces. It is argued that one of the key features of political violence is competence, which expresses its organizational nature and focus on preventing the emergence of irrational forms of violence and protest behavior. Competence means that through mastering the skills of violence, an organized influence on social relations is exercised.

**Keywords:** violence; power; political violence; political processes; political institution; state violence; terror.

---

**Topicality.** Political violence, which implies the establishment of a type of social relations in which the will of a socio-political subject is restricted or usurped through external coercion with the infliction of physical, psychological and/or emotional harm, occupies an important place in the political life of states and in the system of international relations. Despite the use by political actors of mechanisms for the degradation of political violence, political practice shows that their functionality does not have a long-term temporal lightning rod effect. Political violence is expressed in the most radical forms - internal and external terror and its subjects can be both state authorities and non-state entities, such as private military companies that carry out orders from the state authorities. Also, genocide as a radical form of political violence, despite the introduction of a legal basis for its establishment and prevention, can be traced in various manifestations in certain cases of internal and external political struggle.

Political violence remains a factor of political instability in transitional states. The absence of unified models of civil society and the rule of law, the influence of mental factors, unstructured society, and unformed interest groups lead to a state of political polarization. In this state, with only formal signs of political culture, opponents articulating the position that "losing is tantamount to death" often use instruments of political violence. Political polarization, as a precondition for political violence, is significantly influenced by the establishment of the post-truth era, in which political communication is reduced to the proclamation of one's own positions without the desire to establish a dialogue.

**The degree of research of the problem.**

The problems of the phenomenon of political violence as a type of socio-political relations and a phenomenon of social existence have been studied in the subject field of political and philosophical sciences. The German philosopher H. Arendt reveals the meaning of violence in the antinomy «violence – power», believing that it is the second component that should be the basis of the state and its institutions [1], and P. Ricker analyzed the history of mankind in the context of the formation of the state. Ricoeur analyzed the history of mankind in the context of the formation of violence, substantiating the idea that violence is the driving force of history, which at first is completely identified with the history of violent power, and at the ultimate limit it is no longer the institution that legitimizes violence, but the latter gives rise to the institution, redistributing power and authority between states

and between classes [14]. The Ukrainian philosopher Yevhen Bystrytskyi, analyzing the works of Hannah Arendt on violence, draws attention to the peculiarities of violence as an attribute of political power [9].

Attempts are currently being made to systematically analyze this social phenomenon and its forms of manifestation in an interdisciplinary manner, in particular in the collective monographs *Violence: Trends, Structures, Problems of Analysis*, *International Handbook of Violence*, *Violence: Interdisciplinary Handbook*, and *Lexicon of Politics*, which address the problems of political violence. In particular, Hans-Peter Nolting in the chapter "Psychology of Political Violence" of the collective monograph "War and Peace" reveals the nature of political violence at three levels: relations between groups, influences within groups, and activities of individual actors [4]. Domestic political scientists also address the problem of political violence. For example, L. Levchenko analyzed the main approaches to the definition and interpretation of the concept of «political violence», characterized the main types of this phenomenon [11], and V. Pavlyatenko described «structured» and «unstructured» forms of political violence [13].

The purpose of the article is to identify the main features and characteristics of political violence as a form of social violence.

**Presenting main material.** In our previous studies, we characterized forms of social violence in the context of social transformations. Considering the typology of forms of violence by subject and focus, we distinguish self-directed, interpersonal and collective violence. The first two forms have an indirect impact on social transformations: as a provocation that will lead to the beginning of structural transformation processes; as a typicality that becomes massive. Social violence is expressed in political, economic and collective forms. Depending on the presence of an actor and the nature of the social manifestation, the following forms of violence are distinguished: physical, structural, and systemic. The use of physical violence makes it possible to deny the social norms and rules defined by its subject as irrelevant during the period of social transformations on the basis of fear of physical pain. The use of violence by repressive structures is characterized by the support and coordination of people's actions, including those to whom it is directed. Systemic violence is realized in the relevant social institutions that exercise control on the basis of the system of "social orders" developed and approved in the laws and through a system of intimidation mechanisms [2; 3].

One of the main forms of violence that determines social transformation processes is political violence. Political violence is «measures of physical and/or psychological coercion carried out by a political actor to gain, maintain and use state power, achieve political domination, and control the socio-political process» [1, p. 482]. Political violence is aimed at preserving or changing social or international orders and conditions, which is realized in the following forms: war, exile, genocide, persecution, repression from above, uprisings, terrorist acts from below [4, p. 18]. It is carried out by specially created combat units or relevant authorized law enforcement agencies: armed forces, national security services, police, internal troops, national guard, etc. Political violence is a tool for seizing or retaining political power through influence on the political activities of opponents, including in the most radical form – physical elimination.

It should be noted that the concepts of "political violence" and "power" are quite close, but not identical. Hannah Arendt, distinguishing between them, points out that violence is destructive, inhumane, based on the confrontation of one against all, and acts as a tool that requires a goal and a system of justifications. Whereas power is constructive, as a coordinated action, it is based on the opposition of all against each other, and exists both before and regardless of the realization of a specific goal [5]. In the political science discourse, the idea that power is perceived as violent to the extent that it forces a person to act against his or her will and desires is sporadically expressed. However, in our opinion, there is a question of quantitative and qualitative determination of this degree of influence on the will. Also, it is not taken into account that coercion is an attribute of both power and violence, so it cannot serve as a criterion for distinguishing between these concepts. The Spanish philosopher J. Ortega y Gasset distinguishes between power and violence on the basis of an analysis of force as their component. Force only seems to be the basis of power, but its use is not enough for domination. For example, he gives the example that although Napoleon invaded Spain with an army and stayed there for some time, he did not rule for a single day, since power is the normal use of authority based on public opinion [6, p. 92–93]. In other words, domination as a manifestation of power implies not its seizure, but its use.

The insufficient realization of the functional purpose of public opinion or even the absence of the latter at all, makes it impossible to establish power and leads to the emergence and further consolidation of violent forms of political struggle. On this basis, it is necessary to emphasize the substantive closeness and interconnectedness of the concepts of «power» and «violence», because this has a social expression that manifests itself in the following pattern: the decrease in the influence of power in society leads to an increase in violence in it. Political violence can be aimed at persuading government institutions to make specific changes to social, economic, political, and cultural systems, to change the structure of power, to protect group interests, to suppress the opposition, to resist government activities, and to create a situation of general fear and panic.

An important feature of political violence, which expresses its organizational nature and focus on preventing the emergence of irrational forms of violence and protest behavior, is competence. We agree with H.-P. Nolting that someone who is «prone to violence» for certain motives or attitudes does not always have the skills to commit

violence, and therefore in the political field of violence relies on a wide range of competencies that are taught [4, p. 29]. Moreover, this training is not limited exclusively to government institutions such as the army and police. It can also take place in terrorist military camps. But the implementation of political violence itself involves the cooperation of individuals who have different motives and attitudes, as well as competencies. On the basis of competence, hierarchically structured different subjects of political processes as carriers of violence, including political fanatics, adventurers, sadists, prudent power strategists, submissive citizens, etc. are united for adjusted joint action. [4, p. 29]. Thus, through mastering the skills of violence, an organized influence on social processes and social transformation is carried out. In this context, Polish researcher D. Mieder, studying the determinants of political violence, points to the dualism of Western culture in its views on the role of the latter in social transformations. On the one hand, it condemns any manifestation of violence, defining it as the antithesis of democracy, and on the other hand, it abuses violence and standardizes it in political practice. European culture has developed through political violence in the form of conquests, wars, colonialism, exploitation, and on the basis of political and social revolutions, coups, and ethnic conflicts [7, p. 190]. Of course, any other culture develops under the influence of the same factors, but they are usually not characterized by this ambivalence, because since the French Revolution, political violence has been accompanied by both the support of the slogans of freedom, equality and fraternity and the assertion of faith in the purifying power of war and terror. This ambivalence, in our opinion, can be explained by the significant resource consumption of political violence. Violence is one of the most expensive means of power, as it is accompanied by human losses, destruction of material and spiritual values, and dehumanization of interpersonal relations. But the question logically arises as to why political violence is actualized as an instrument of political struggle during social transformations.

The factors that demonstrate the effectiveness of using this particular tool include the use of violence as the fastest way for political leaders to gain political power and achieve certain goals. Another factor of political violence as a tool is that its use simulates the effect of demonstrating one's strength, authority, and superiority over other rivals. Violence is also the least expensive way to achieve political goals, i.e. it requires accumulated resources that give quick results, i.e. other tools may require fewer resources in the early stages (for example, small negotiation groups may be created to reach political consensus), but due to the duration of preparation and action, they generally require much more. At the same time, it should be noted that the commission of violence might also require significant expenditures of resources, in particular for the development and manufacture of weapons that must be technologically superior to those available to the target of violence, and for supporting the development of human, financial, economic, and production resources. The inability to legalize the newly established changes at the initial stages of social transformations, the lack of government resources for further transformations or for preventing them, actualizes the assertion of political violence as the only tool to influence these processes. Given its high resource intensity and low efficiency, political violence leads to the emergence of other forms of violence that either amplify its effect through mass terror or remove its direct effect through self-organization of society.

State violence as a type of political violence appeared only two centuries ago, despite the fact that the state itself as an institution appeared much earlier. State violence is distinguished among others by its monopoly on violence. Max Weber first conceptualized this idea in his work "Politics as a Profession". He emphasized that unlike past unions, starting with the very first one, physical violence was a normal means, while today the state is a human community that claims a monopoly of legitimate violence within a certain sphere; because it is characteristic of our era that the right to physical violence is attributed to all other unions or individuals only to the extent that the state, for its part, allows this violence: The state is considered the only source of the «right» to violence [8]. Physical state violence, according to P. Ricker, has a set of tools as criminal violence, which is reflected in the fact that the state has a monopoly and mental coercion; it takes away the right of individuals to administer justice themselves; it has collected together and appropriated all types of dispersed violence that it inherited from the primitive struggle of man against man; at the same time, an individual can appeal to the state with a complaint about any violence, but the state is the last instance to which there is no one to complain [9, p. 80]. This allowed him to conclude that all the functions of the state are sanctioned by its ability to resort to violence.

However, the state's assertion of a monopoly on the use of violence is a permanent process that is accompanied by opposition from certain social groups and communities. German political scientist G. Sineker, studying the peculiarities of state violence in Latin America, identified types of political non-state violence. These include anti-state violence (manifested in guerrilla and civil wars), the main purpose of which is to combat state violence; parastate or paramilitary violence, designed to compensate for the lack of state action; extra-state, or parasocial, which complements its action (in forms ranging from "social cleansing" and lynching to the activities of public organizations to maintain order); mafia, aimed at undermining state power; «normal delinquency» – ignoring it [10]. Of the above forms of non-state violence, only anti-state violence proclaims the need for social transformation as one of its main requirements, but all other forms indirectly also cause it, since the main goal is to establish and consolidate in social norms and rules the privileged position of those social groups that are the subjects of this violence (mafia clans, military organizations, criminal groups, social activists, etc.).

An important issue is the organizational nature of political violence. In their studies of social orders, D. North, J. Wallis, and B. Weingast distinguish organized violence as violence committed by organized groups, which is

essentially a special form of collective violence and to some extent close to structural violence. The development of large groups in a society leads to the formation of relevant social institutions, the main functional purpose of which is to control violence, they include formal rules, written laws, formal social agreements, informal norms of behavior, as well as beliefs about the world and means of enforcing these rules and norms [11]. Control over violence by formal institutions is possible only if there are appropriate organizations that can ensure impersonal compliance with the rules. Some scholars, in particular P. Imbush and P. Waldman, distinguish institutional violence, which is defined as the power of command, supported by physical sanctions, granted to those who hold hierarchical positions of subordination and dependence [12, p. 431]. It has many varieties, depending on the forms it takes and the organizations that carry it out. Such institutional violence, in our opinion, is more likely to be structural in nature, although it contains features of systemic violence. Domestic political scientist L. Levchenko proposes to distinguish between the following: structured violence is political violence that is carried out according to certain rules, and unstructured violence is political violence that does not have clearly established rules, is spontaneous and unpredictable in its manifestation [13, p. 14]. The nature of political violence allows us to distinguish between direct and covert. If direct political violence is institutionalized, included in the mechanism of action of society's values, embedded in the social structure by various methods and turns into a tool for organizing social order, primarily through coercion, stimulation and persuasion, then covert political violence, on the contrary, stimulates the growth of uncertainty and chaos in everyday life [14, p. 105]. At the same time, we note the destructive effect of both types of political violence, as they are aimed at restricting the freedom of citizens.

**Conclusions.** Political violence is a tool for seizing or retaining political power through influence on the political activities of opponents, including in the most radical form – physical elimination. An important feature of political violence, which expresses its organizational nature and focus on preventing the emergence of irrational forms of violence and protest behavior, is competence. At the same time, political violence can be aimed at persuading government institutions to make specific changes to social, economic, political, and cultural systems, to change the structure of power, to protect group interests, to suppress the opposition, to resist the activities of the authorities, to create a situation of general fear and panic.

#### Список використаної літератури:

1. *Arendt H. Macht und Gewalt / H.Arendt* ; Herausgegeben von *T.Meyer*. – München, Zürich : Piper Verlag, 2024. – 194 s.
2. *Kozlovets M.A. Privatized violence: the essence and types of its implementation in modern world / M.A. Kozlovets, V.M. Slyusar* // The Bulletin of Yaroslav Mudryi National Law University. Series : Philosophy, philosophy of law, political science, sociology. – 2020. – № 4 (47). – P. 94–111.
3. *Mider D. Determinants of political violence: A study of the literature / D.Mider* // Journal of social science studies. – 2014. – Vol. 1, № 2. – P. 177–197.
4. *Nolting H.-P. Psychologie politischer Gewalt : drei Ebenen / H.-P. Nolting* // Krieg und Frieden. Handbuch der Konflikt- und Friedenspsychologie / hrsg. *G.Sommer, A.Fuchs*. – Weinheim, Basel, Berlin : Beltz Verlag, 2004. – S. 18–30.
5. *North D. Violence and Social Orders: A Conceptual Framework for Interpreting Recorded Human History / D.North, J.J. Wallis, B.R. Weingast*. – Cambridge University Press, 2009. – 308 p.
6. *Waldmann P. Politik und Gewalt / P.Waldmann* // Lexikon der Politik / herausgegeben *D.Nohlen*. – München : Verlag C.H. Beck, 1992. – Bd. 1: Politische Theorien. – 1992. – S. 430–435.
7. *Weber M. Politik als Beruf / M.Weber*. – Köln : Anaconda, 2014. – 96 p.
8. *Zinecker H. Gewalt als Legat. Überlegungen zur Präfiguration unvollendeter Transitionen in Kolumbien und El Salvador / H.Zinecker* // Politische und ethnische Gewalt in Südosteuropa und Lateinamerika / herausgegeben *W.Hörken, M.Riekenberg*. – Köln, Wien, Weimar : Böhlau Verlag, 2001. – S. 149–171.
9. *Бистрицький С. Насилля, ідентичність і комунікація / С.Бистрицький* // Філософська думка. – 2019. – № 2. – С. 55–61.
10. *Зеленько Г. Насильство політичне : політична енциклопедія / Г.Зеленько* ; редкол. *Ю.Левенець, Ю.Шаповал та ін.* – Київ : Парламентське видавництво, 2011. – 808 с.
11. *Левченко Л.О. Деякі аспекти щодо визначення категорії «політичне насилля» / Л.О. Левченко* // Наукові праці. Політологія. – 2012. – Вип. 185, Т. 197. – С. 12–15.
12. *Ортега-і-Гасет Х. Бунт мас / Х.Ортега-і-Гасет* // Вибрані твори. – Київ : Основи, 1994. – С. 15–139.
13. *Павлятенко В.В. Політичне насилля і маніпулювання цінностями / В.В. Павлятенко* // Наукові записки Інституту політичних і етнонаціональних досліджень ім. І.Ф. Кураса НАН України. – 2011. – Вип. 4. – С. 38–48.
14. *Рікер П. Держава й насильство / П.Рікер* // Часопис «Ї». – 2002. – № 25. – С. 79–94.
15. *Слюсар В.М. Насилля: соціально-філософська природа : монографія / В.М. Слюсар*. – Житомир : Вид-во Євенок О.О., 2017. – 450 с.
16. *Слюсар В.М. Соціальне насилля: зміст і форми реалізації у трансформаційних процесах / В.М. Слюсар* // Вісник Житомирського державного університету імені Івана Франка. Філософські науки. – 2016. – Вип. 1. – С. 127–132.

**References:**

1. Arendt, H. (2024), *Macht und Gewalt*, in Meyer, T. (ed), Piper Verlag, München, Zürich, 194 p.
2. Kozlovets, M.A. and Slyusar, V.M. (2020), «Privatized violence: the essence and types of its implementation in modern world», *The Bulletin of Yaroslav Mudryi National Law University*. Series. *Philosophy, philosophy of law, political science, sociology*, No. 4 (47), pp. 94–111.
3. Mider, D. (2014), «Determinants of political violence: A study of the literature», *Journal of social science studies*, Vol. 1, No. 2, pp. 177–197.
4. Nolting, H.-P. (2004), «Psychologie politischer Gewalt : drei Ebenen», *Krieg und Frieden. Handbuch der Konflikt- und Friedenspsychologie*, in Sommer, G. and Fuchs, A. (ed), Beltz Verlag, Weinheim, Basel, Berlin, pp. 18–30.
5. North, D., Wallis, J.J. and Weingast, B.R. (2009), *Violence and Social Orders: A Conceptual Framework for Interpreting Recorded Human History*, Cambridge University Press, 308 p.
6. Waldmann, P. (1992), «Politik und Gewalt», *Lexikon der Politik*. Vol. 1. *Politische Theorien*, in Nohlen, D. (ed), Verlag C.H. Beck, München, pp. 430–435.
7. Weber, M. (2014), *Politik als Beruf*, Anaconda, Köln, 96 p.
8. Zinecker, H. (2001), «Gewalt als Legat. Überlegungen zur Präfiguration unvollendeter Transitionen in Kolumbien und El Salvador», *Politische und ethnische Gewalt in Südosteuropa und Lateinamerika*, in Höpken, W. and Riekenberg, M. (ed.), Böhlau Verlag, Köln, Wien, Weimar, pp. 149–171.
9. Bystrytskyi, Ye. (2019), «Nasyllia, identychnist i komunikatsiia», *Filosofska dumka*, No. 2, pp. 55–61.
10. Zelenko, H. (2011), *Nasylstvo politychne*, politychna entsyklopediia, in Levenets, Yu., Shapoval, Yu et al. (ed.), Parlamentske vydavnytstvo, Kyiv, 808 p.
11. Levchenko, L.O. (2012), «Deiaki aspekty shchodo vyznachennia katehorii “politychne nasyllia”», *Naukovi pratsi. Politolohiia*, Is. 185, Vol. 197, pp. 12–15.
12. Orteha-i-Haset, Kh. (1994), «Bunt mas», *Vybrani tvory, Osnovy*, Kyiv, pp. 15–139.
13. Pavliatenko, V.V. (2011), «Politychne nasyllia i manipuliuvannia tsinnostiamy», *Naukovi zapysky Instytutu politychnykh i emonatsionalnykh doslidzhen im. I.F. Kurasa NAN Ukrainy*, Is. 4, pp. 38–48.
14. Riker, P. (2002), «Derzhava y nasylstvo», *Chasopys «Yi»*, No. 25, pp. 79–94.
15. Sliusar, V.M. (2017), *Nasyllia: sotsialno-filosofska pryroda, monohrafiia*, Vyd-vo Yevenok O.O., Zhytomyr, 450 p.
16. Sliusar, V.M. (2016), «Sotsialne nasyllia: zmist i formy realizatsii u transformatsiinykh protsesakh», *Visnyk Zhytomyrskoho derzhavnogo universytetu imeni Ivana Franka. Filsofski nauky*, Is. 1, pp. 127–132.

**Слюсар В., Вітюк І., Волкова К.**

**Політичне насильство: атрибутивний вимір**

**Анотація.** У статті аналізуються основні ознаки політичного насилля. Обґрунтовується думка, що політичне насилля спрямоване на збереження чи зміну суспільних або міжнародних порядків та станів, яке реалізується у наступних видах: війна, вигнання, геноцид, переслідування, репресії «зверху», повстання, терористичні акти «знизу»; а також здійснюється спеціально створеними бойовими загонами чи відповідними уповноваженими силовими структурами. Стверджується, що однією з ключових ознак політичного насилля є компетентність, яка виражає його організаційний характер та спрямованість на запобігання появі ірраціональних форм насилля, протестної поведінки. Компетентність полягає в тому, що через оволодіння навиками до насилля, здійснюється організований вплив на соціальні відносини.

**Ключові слова:** насилля; влада; політичне насилля; політичні процеси; політичний інститут; державне насилля; терор.

Стаття надійшла до редакції 06.02.2024.