

The National Union Of Political Scientists

POLITICAL **ISSUE 1(25-26), 2017**
SCIENCE ISSUES
Academic journal

MOSCOW, 2017

POLITICAL SCIENCE ISSUES

Academic journal

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**ESTABLISHED BY LLC
"PUBLISHING HOUSE
"SCIENCE TODAY"**

The Journal is published with
the participation of the Institute
of modern policy of the Peoples'
Friendship University (RUDN)

The Journal is registered
by the Federal Service
for Supervision of Mass Media,
Communications and Protection
of Cultural Heritage

Reg. Number PI No.FS77–46176
of August 12, 2011
The Journal is published quarterly

The journal is included
in the database of the Russian
Science Citation Index

The Five-year Journal's
impact factor is 0,808

The Journal is included
in Ulrich's Periodicals Directory

Academic papers published
in the journal undergo obligatory
editorial checking.

The authors' opinion not always
coincides with the opinion
of the Editorial Board.

At reprint of the article or a part
of it the reference to the Journal
is obligatory.

Address of the editorial office:
10, Zagoryevskaya street, building 4,
office 4, Moscow, Russia, 115598
Tel: (910) 463-53-42
www.voprospolitolog.ru,
www.souzipolitolog.ru
E-mail: voprospolitolog@yandex.ru,
souzipolitolog@yandex.ru

Executive Secretary
Shkurina S.S.

Computer-aided makeup by
Antsiferova A.S.

Translated by
Chernyshova E.V.

Signed for printing on 25.06.2017
Format 60x84/16. Offset paper.
Offset print.
Number of printed sheets
Circulation 500 copies.
Order 000.

Printed at the LLC "Bely Véter"
Str. Shchipok, 28,
Moscow, Russia, 115054
Tel.: (495) 651-84-56

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I. Yu. ZALYSIN

*Doctor of political sciences, Professor,
Head of the Department of political science,
Russian state agrarian university
(MSKhA) named after K. A. Timiryazev,
Moscow, Russia*

PROBLEM OF VIOLENCE IN STUDIES OF MODERN RUSSIAN POLITICAL SCIENTISTS

The article is devoted to the studying of the concept of “political violence” in the works of Russian political scientists during the last decade. There are two main approaches to the interpretation of political violence. Supporters of one approach reduce it to physical coercion to achieve political goals. Adherents of the second approach include in it different types of imposing of political will (psychological, information, economic, physical, etc.). The article analyses advantages and disadvantages of both approaches.

Key words: *power, means of power, political violence, coercion, approaches to the study of political violence, Russian political science.*

Violence is the subject of research of sociologists, psychologists, philosophers, lawyers, teachers and political scientists. Judging by the collection of theses of the Russian state library, the issue is most actively studied by representatives of legal (leading with a large margin), pedagogical and philosophical sciences. The fourth place is occupied by works on political science.

This article attempts to analyze how the concept of “political violence” has been interpreted by Russian political scientists in the last decade. Among the works of recent years, of course, it is necessary to highlight the thesis by S.I. Kuzina “*Political violence: nature, manifestation and dynamics in a globalizing world.*” The purpose of her dissertation research is “the construction of an integrated concept of political violence, reflecting its genesis, the processes of its deproblematization and manifestation as objective factors of globalization of social development.”

The author adheres to the so-called “broad” interpretation of the concept of violence. According to S. I. Kuzina, political violence can be defined as a way of institutionalizing social relations, during which some individuals or groups of people by various means of external coercion and manipulation subordinate the consciousness, will, abilities, productive forces, property and freedom of others for acquiring power, its retention and functioning¹.

¹ Kuzina S.I. Political violence: nature, manifestation and dynamics in a globalizing world. Abstract of dissertation for the rank of Doctor of political sciences. – Rostov-on-Don, 2010. – P. 3.

In this sense, it includes both direct physical violence, such as murder, bodily injury, torture, military, terrorist and other actions and political violence, involving the creation and existence of certain conditions and structures that infringe on the interests and needs of people, the so-called structural violence. The author emphasizes that for its preservation and successful functioning the state power applies not only social and physical (open) violence, but also symbolic violence, imposing on the population its values and norms, its ideology, manipulating the mass consciousness, forming its desires, tastes, needs and models of behavior. Symbolic violence has a high degree of latency due to the society's rejection of open violence¹.

Accordingly, concludes S. I. Kuzina, in modern geopolitics political violence manifests itself in two fundamentally different versions: as manifesto (open) and as deproblematized (hidden, symbolic). Based on the broad approach to political violence, the author highlights such types of violence as: informational, ideological and cultural. According to the methods of influence by the actor on the object the thesis differentiates such types of violence as physical, symbolic (structured, systemic), psychological and moral.

The work pays special attention to the process of institutionalization of violence, as a result of which it changes its shape, takes root in the human consciousness and is embedded in social relations. According to S. I. Kuzina, administrative and disciplinary control over various spheres of people's life is also a transformed form of political violence by the authorities.

Moreover, with the advent of information and technotronic era, the field of state violence has expanded significantly, capturing the area of the unconscious. Now this sphere is more and more subject to regulation by the authorities with the help of medicine, psychology, genetics, educational and manipulative technologies. As we can see, in case of such interpretation of political violence, it essentially dissolves in the generic notion of coercion.

The author restricts political violence from its other (non-political) types, rightly emphasizing that "the sphere where political violence manifests itself is the state power and processes and phenomena related to the interests of large social groups." S. I. Kuzina emphasizes that the regularities characteristic of political violence as a social phenomenon should be attributed to the regularities of the collective type of violence.

The thesis stresses two different directions of the vector of political violence. The first is the political violence used by the authorities under the hierarchical "domination-submission" scheme and the second is the retaliatory (protest) political violence of the masses against the authorities.

D. A. Myakinchenko develops the basic ideas of S. I. Kuzina. His research is devoted to the problem of institutionalization of political violence in the mod-

¹ Ibid. – P. 35.

ern world¹. The author also takes a broad approach to the understanding of political violence: “Modern interpretations of violence imply a narrow and broad aspects: a narrow aspect is the most manifest and open, it is a physical violent impact on the human body and psyche, and a wide understanding of violence involves not only physical, but also informational, psychological, cultural, structural and symbolic violence.” Thus, political violence is actually interpreted by him as a synonym of coercion, the purpose of which is subordination of the object to the will of the subject of power².

E. V. Pykhteeva analyses political violence as a way of strengthening the legitimacy and integrity of the Russian society. According to the author, violence is a radical form of coercion emanating from the state in order to ensure legality, resolve political conflicts and unimpeded modernization of the Russian political system³.

The author concludes that “political violence is used by the state in three different ways: coercion, encouragement and persuasion.” Here E. V. Pykhteeva also refers to the normative legal control over public behavior of people, which, in her opinion, is a more perfect form of political violence of the authorities.

The thesis emphasizes that violence is inherently inhumane, unfair and antidemocratic because its essence consists in forcing “objects and subjects” in order to make them follow the dictated and imposed will, policy, behavior and way of life in general.

At the same time, the author rightly notes that in practice the rejection of violence in politics is almost impossible. E. V. Pykhteeva makes an attempt to prove that at the time of systemic crisis and large-scale modernization, the state is faced with the necessity of using violence to bolster political power and integrity of the Russian society. Implementation of reforms with a simultaneous increase of political violence can become a source of development for the Russian civil society⁴.

As we can see, the broad interpretation of political violence, including not only physical, but also other forms of coercion (mental, symbolic, informational, etc.), has many supporters⁵. In their view, all these forms imply an open or latent imposition of someone else’s will on the policy object.

¹ Myakinchenko D.A. Institutionalization of political violence in the globalizing world. Dissertation for the rank of Candidate of political sciences. – Rostov-on-Don, 2016.

² Ibid. – P. 46.

³ Pykhteeva E.V. Political violence (coercion) as a way to strengthen the legitimacy and integrity of Russian society. Abstract of the dissertation for the rank of Candidate of political sciences. – M., 2013. – P. 9.

⁴ Pykhteeva E.V. Ibid. – P. 6.

⁵ Kudryavtsev G.A. The role of public relations services of public authorities in the democratization of society. Abstract of the dissertation for the rank of Candidate of political sciences. – M., 2012; Sergo S.V. Criteria for the quality of information in the political environment. Abstract of the dissertation for the rank of Candidate of political sciences. – Rostov-on-Don, 2015; Sidorov S.A. Russia’s policy to ensure national security in the border area of the Far East in the late XX – early XXI centuries. Dissertation for the rank of Doctor of political sciences. – Vladivostok, 2014; Shpuga E.S. Political leadership as a mechanism for the integration of society. Abstract of the dissertation for the rank of Candidate of political sciences. – M., 2014, etc.

Along with supporters of the “broad” approach to the interpretation of political violence among Russian authors, there are adherents of its “narrow” interpretation as a physical coercion applied by the parties of power relations. Thus, M. A. Mostovyuck views violence in politics as the most “radical form of coercion”¹, which, judging by the context, is dominated by physical methods of influencing the opponents.

A similar position is taken by P. V. Zuev² and Ya.S. Suntsevich³. A.Yu. Pidzhakov believes that political violence is “physical coercion, used as a means of imposing the will of the subject in order to acquire power, especially state power, for its use, distribution and protection”⁴.

S. A. Nefedov also, in fact, tends to interpret violence as physical coercion. Analyzing the forms of eco-political violence (according to the author, it is a kind of political violence caused by environmental degradation), he refers to riots, coup attempts and civil wars⁵, which involve the use of physical means of influence on opponents.

An original position is taken by V.I Krasikov, who devoted a special study to the study of violence. On the one hand, he understands violence as a special manifestation of aggression, “direct, physical or mental, confrontation, forcing interaction, direct or distant contact between the main participants in the clash of bodies and wills”⁶.

The author emphasizes the recent process of “symbolization of violence and its changing into a more cultured version of violence.” It becomes latent, it is carried out in the form of socio-psychological influence on the consciousness and sub-consciousness of people. Thus, V. I. Krasikov interprets the generic concept of “violence” very widely, treating it not only as murders, robberies and self-harm, but also as a “microcosm” of the spiritual and moral violence applied by people to each other and to themselves.

On the other hand, according to the author, political violence has a physical impact in the processes of domination or contesting it in the form of beatings, forced detentions, torture, explosions, arson, expropriations, murders, etc. It is connected with the phenomenon of constant group conflicts over power and control over resources in a particular community. V. Krasikov notes that in addition to the state, the recognized bearer of political violence, the opposition (systemic

¹ Mostovyuck M.A. Legitimacy of state violence. Abstract of the dissertation for the rank of Candidate of legal sciences. – M., 2006. – P. 3.

² Zuev P.V. Political power: mechanisms of interaction with society and trends of evolution. Dissertation for the rank of Candidate of political sciences. – Vladivostok, 2010. – P. 15.

³ Suntsevich Ya.S. Processes of influence of the main religions on the social and political life of the Republic of Korea. Dissertation for the rank of Candidate of political sciences. – Ussuriisk, 2012. – P. 66.

⁴ Pidzhakov A.Yu. Nature and types of political violence. – M., 2008. – P. 54.

⁵ Nefedov S.A. Eco-political violence as a phenomenon of modern political life. Abstract of dissertation for the rank of Doctor of political sciences. – Pyatigorsk, 2014. – P. 22.

⁶ Krasikov V. I. Violence in evolution, history and modern society. Essays. – M., 2010. – Pp. 19-20.

or non – systemic) and groups seeking political power, revolution and counter-revolution can also act as its actor.

In general, it can be concluded that supporters of the broad interpretation of political violence are in the majority among domestic political scientists. Both approaches have the right to exist and have certain advantages and disadvantages.

The “broad” approach takes into account modern changes in power relations and the emergence of latent methods of suppression of political opponents. It allows to expand ideas about the means of power so that they become more voluminous.

However, it should be noted that the identification of violence and coercion deprives the concept of “political violence” of the subject, qualitative certainty. This makes it very difficult to study and combat the practice of violence. Being dissolved in the generic concept of “coercion”, political violence becomes synonymous of “suppression”, “oppression”, “manipulation” and others related to the open or latent imposition of the one’s will to the others. As a result, a deep and comprehensive study of political violence becomes an impossible task and an opportunity for an arbitrary interpretation of its essence opens up.

An approach that regards political violence only as a form of coercion, namely, physical violence, is certainly abstracted to some extent from the complexities of modern political relations. However, it gives to this concept a clearer certainty and allows distinguishing it from other types of compulsory means of domination.

A clear definition of the boundaries of the scientific concept is of great theoretical and practical importance. We hope that a further study of political violence by supporters of both approaches will clarify and systematize scientific ideas about this important category of political science.

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