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## **Lying and deception in the political education: an absolute must requirement for being a „good“ politician or a reprehensible violation of dignity?**

Starting from the arguments of Plato and Nietzsche, in my paper I will discuss the question whether in the current political world the lie is seen as a competence, as in Plato's *Hippias Minor* or in Nietzsche's *Human, All Too Human I*, as something that an effective politician must do or whether it is a reprehensible violation of dignity. Are lying and deception necessary competences for having success in politics? Are they important skills that have to be taught in an expedient political education? Should politicians violate morality in order to achieve success or avoid disasters? This question poses what has become known among philosophers as the problem of dirty hands. The dirty hands tradition dates back to Machiavelli who suggested that the man who enters political life is required to learn the following lesson: „how not to be good.“<sup>1</sup> The man who enters political life has chosen to work and struggle, as Machiavelli says, among „so many who are not good“. Machiavelli suggested that the prince should be a „master of hypocrisy and dissimulation“. (Machiavelli, *II Principe*, Kap. XVIII) Machiavelli justified the political lie. Jean- Francois Revel claimed that the first power that rules the world is the lie. [Revel 1990, p.11]. The request of my paper is to clarify whether lying in political education and in politics should be seen as a competence and an unavoidable property of the successful politician or whether it is an absolute „no go“, as Kant claims in his *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals*.<sup>2</sup> Like no one else, Kant has criticized the lie as a communication form that is under no circumstances allowed for a moral subject because lying and reason are two things that are incompatible. Kant considers the reason as a condition for the status as a person. Kant degrades the liar as a kind of monster that is stealing himself his status as a person with its human dignity: „A lie is the abandonment, and, as it were, the annihilation, of the dignity of a man. He who does not himself believe what he states to another person (were it but an ideal person), has a still less value than if he were a mere thing;“<sup>3</sup> Kant holds the position that it is not allowed that thought things and said things differ. Is Kant's position practicable in political education and in the present political world?

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1 Cf. *The Prince*, chap. XV; cf. *The Discourses*, bk. I, chaps. IX and XVIII. I quote from the Modern Library edition of the two works (New York), p. 57.

2 Cf. Kant, Immanuel: *Grundlegung zur Metaphysik der Sitten*. Werkausgabe, hrsg. von Wilhelm Weischedel, Frankfurt/ Main: Suhrkamp 1974, Band VII, p.30.

3 Kant, Immanuel: *The Metaphysic of Ethics*. Edited, with Introduction, by Rev. Henry Calderwood, LL. D. Translated by J.W. Semple, Advocate. Third Edition. Edinburgh: T.&T. Clark 1886. p.245.