

Political ethics and the problem of dirty hands



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There is no such thing as a true democracy, according to Max Weber. Rather, political leaders contain all the power of the land, and although citizens require a political morality in order to make the right decisions during elections, everything is eventually placed into the hands of the political leader. This political leader could be a professional politician who takes his responsibility seriously. He cannot think like a citizen, and neither could he be a bureaucrat with a limited view of things.

What is more, the leader of the people must be passionate in his work, feel a sense of responsibility, and be balanced in his view of things (Sabia). Weber also believed that politics and ethics actually do not go hand in hand. All the same, it is possible to have a truly responsible leader who would put morality before the cause. The cause is, of course, inextricably connected to the power of the leader. Without the cause, there is no leader. And yet, it is difficult to understand the relationship between politics and ethics at times when even the truly responsible leader must get his hands dirty.

In the words of Daniel R. Sabia Jr. , “ if the evil we do in defense of good ends is truly unavoidable, it is not really evil. ” Hence, good and evil are “ interwoven” in politics (Sabia). While war is essentially bad because it kills and destroys, it is necessary in political ethics today seeing that war is essentially meant to eradicate evil. Moreover, there is no true democracy today, and Weber is absolutely right about that. This is the reason why the majority of Americans who voted for President Bush cannot stop his war in Iraq although they oppose it. The leader will have his way, and would not think like the citizens.