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## REVIEWS

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Peter Šoltés, László Vörös and others, *Korruption*, Bratislava: Historický ústav SAV - VEDA, 2015, 561 pages.

(Peter Šoltés, László Vörös a kol., *Korupcia*, Bratislava: Historický ústav SAV - VEDA, 2015, 561 str.)

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The book of a current title *Korupcia* (Corruption) is a monograph by a group of eleven authors led by Peter Šoltés and László Vörös, who guide the reader across 500 pages in various authors study corruption as a complex historical and social phenomenon. Only at a first glance we can conclude that this is a book which could be defined as historiographical in the narrow sense (which, in its essence, it is). Also, at first glance, this book explores the phenomenon of corruption as a historical phenomenon of a long duration primarily on the territory of present-day Republic of Slovakia in the period from the 18<sup>th</sup> to the 21<sup>st</sup> century, but in fact, in the methodological and thematic sense the horizons of this monograph are much wider.

According to the editors (Šoltés and Vörös), the concept of this monograph is determined by five thematic areas in the investigation of corruption in certain historical periods, i.e. state and political conjunctions. The first is administrative corruption that was manifested in Hungary during the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries in the field of abuse of jurisdiction and nepotism in state and county institutions of government. The second thematic area includes four chapters of the book, which are dedicated to electoral corruption in Hungary before the revolution of 1848 and during the Austro-Hungarian Dualism (1867-1918). The next thematic segment follows the high political corruption in the First Czechoslovak Republic between the two world wars. The fourth whole comprises two chapters devoted to corruption in the context of totalitarian regimes (Slovakia 1938/1939-1945).

Finally, the fifth thematic segment introduces the reader to our modern times. The last two chapters of the book analyse the problem of corruption and anti-corruption measures in the Republic of Slovakia in the period from 1995 to 2012. In the chronological span of three centuries, all of the authors have investigated the phenomenon of corruption within the framework of several states, from the Habsburg Monarchy, to Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Slovakia, but always in concrete, clearly defined social communities whose members have been creators and subjects, objects or victims of corruption. The contents of the book, due to the breadth of the view of those who knowingly defined its concept, in a thematic view far surpasses the investigation of corruption in the territory of present-day Slovakia or its historic counties. In the end, as it could be logically expected, like every book that wants to attract the attention of the scientific public, its thematic concept includes the context of wider historical flows. It is therefore not surprising that the authors of the book come not only from the scientific institutions of Slovakia, but also from Hungary and Romania as countries of the former common historical space.

The first, theoretical chapter, authored by László Vörös (pp. 12-53) has a special significance for understanding the concept of the book. In it the author analyzes and sublimates theoretical debates about the definition of corruption present in the science of the last fifty years as a relatively “new research topic.” Regarding theoretical debates about corruption, historians have stayed in the background for a long time, while politicians, sociologists and economists led the debate. Although paradoxically, most researchers agree that corruption is inevitably a historical phenomenon and has existed since there were arranged and

hierarchically organized societies, in other words, since the time when an institution of the state and organized power of power existed. Vörös concludes that in the investigation of corruption historians must use the methodology and results of other sciences, i.e. the comparative method of research, even more so because corruption should be defined not only by the place of its creation (the state and the public sector), but also on the basis of legal regulations in a historical period (corruption is only what is punishable by law), but also as all those social phenomena that endanger the universal public interest. In this sense, the book goes beyond the historiographical framework, not only in its own field of research, but also because of the fact that its authors are not historians, but also their colleagues in the fields of social and economic sciences.

In the chapter *Hungarian counties overwhelmed by clientelism and nepotism: the county administration of Orava and Liptov in the 18<sup>th</sup> century* (pp. 56-95) Tomáš Janura dynamically represents the widespread phenomenon of nepotism in the county administration in the early-modern Kingdom of Hungary relying on the paradigm of its two northern counties – Orava and Liptov. Recruiting the administration from the rank of relatives and clients was rather a rule that was passed from one generation to another than a precedent. This phenomenon ranged between 44% and 94% and was most frequent during the mandate of Vice-Chancellor Anton Okolcsányi (1758-1775) in the Liptov county and Jozef Kubinyi (1772-1781) in the Orava county. The author raises the question of whether nepotism in the county administration was a disturbance for the central authorities and concludes that there are no sources about it. Perhaps tolerance was motivated by the circumstances that the central civil and military authorities were interested in a consistent collection of state revenues in favour of their cash register, which the said administration, characterized by the continuity, fully enabled. Finally, nepotism, although morally judged, was not considered illegal at the time.

Peter Šoltés has contributed to revealing

some of the phenomena of corruption in Hungary in decades before the Revolution in two chapters in the book. In the first one, *Corruption in the state and county administration in the first half of the “long” 19<sup>th</sup> century* (pp. 100-135), he investigates the operation of the bureaucratic apparatus during a longer chronological period between 1780 and 1848. What happened in the Kingdom of Hungary Šoltés actually fits into the wider context of the situation in the Habsburg Monarchy and other Western European countries. It was the era of creating modern European states that as *condicio sine qua non* implied the centralization of government and the professionalisation of the administration. However, unlike Austria, where centralization did not encounter resistance and where the fight against corruption was visible, the Hungarian part of the state differed considerably in its particularities and old institutions, which were the source of corruption. Corruption was also enhanced by the heterogeneous administrative and legal system shaped in the coexistence of the county, municipal and city governments which enjoyed special autonomy. County officials were elected in elections so this process, which included both executive and judicial power, became, as Šoltés observes, an arena of corruption. The corruption in state administration was further exacerbated by a poor financial situation in state finances. The Monarchy was continually in the war with France for two decades, which resulted in a financial breakdown of the state treasury several times. Under such conditions, corruption among clerks was a taciturn *modus vivendi* of a decent life. In the Hungarian part of the Monarchy only in the 1840s did the state assembly and the local congregations of counties begin to discuss corruption in public services more intensively. In his second chapter, *Election Agitation (i.e. buying votes): elections in the Hungarian way* (pp. 214-246), Peter Šoltés introduces the reader to the election process for the Hungarian National Assembly (Diet). This process was characterized by a high level of irregularities and corruption which were repeated from one election to another and a saying was coined –

*elections in the Hungarian way.* The voting body was made by noblemen. In Hungary about 5% of the population (about 540,000) had such a status but many of them were completely poor and therefore subject to electoral corruption. Over time, ritual forms of electoral bribery were established among the noblemen in pre-election drinking, sharing gifts, the purchase of votes and the promises of state functions after the election. These ritual corruptive forms of elections would be maintained even after a gradual introduction of a broader electoral law among the electorate until the fall of the state in 1918.

A special value to the book is added by two chapters by András Cieger, who has already devoted his scientific career to studying corruption in Hungary between mid 19<sup>th</sup> century and 1918.<sup>1</sup> Cieger's chapters *Elections and corruption at the time of dualism in Hungary (1867-1918)* (pp. 134-177) and *Political corruption in Hungary prior to World War I: choreography of corruption scandals* (pp. 250-296) thematically and chronologically links to the previous authors and their texts in the book. At the heart of his discourse, András Cieger introduces the terms of structural, psychological and cultural causes of corruption during the Austro-Hungarian dualism. The manifestation of electoral choreography (buying votes) still maintained this continuity. With the introduction of modern political parties into the political life, the main actors of high politics and the ruling economic circles found their clients in these parties. The author analyzes in detail the corruption scandals that have shaken Hungary in the last decade of the existence of the Monarchy, which were the paradigm of the ruling political system that only seemed to come to an end in the sense of the old state borders.

In the chapter *Election corruption in Transylvania at the beginning of dualism (1867-1872)* (p.180-208), Judit Pál puts an analysis of the election in Transylvania in 1869 and 1872 in the focus of her research. The integration of Transylvania into the political system of Hungary (1867) brought the influence of central

Hungarian political parties to this historic province. Although the local elite was deprived of its former political rights (a separate parliament), it quickly fit into the framework of a new political life. Corruption accompanied the election of local parliamentary candidates in Budapest. Exactly because of the bought votes Transylvanian voters were often represented by MPs who had nothing to do with this province. It was not an exception, but a rule on the whole territory of Hungary.

The definition of "high political corruption" reaches its true elaboration in the *chapter Forms of corruption in the economy of inter-war Slovakia in the example of banking* (pp. 302-336), by Ludovita Hallona. The corruption "hero" of this chapter is Milan Hodža, a Slovak politician during the First Czechoslovak Republic, a longtime minister and prime minister (1935-1938). Using his political influence, as Hallona proves on the basis of historical sources, Milan Hodža used state money to save two Slovak banks from bankruptcy. His clients paid him a large sum of money to his private account as well as the account of his political party. In this triangle of corruption and interest, Hodža played a dominant role. For curiosity's sake, some of these banks, at least under the same name, function even today.

Two chapters explore the issue of the tragic suffering of Jews in Slovakia during the Second World War in the context of corruption. Ivan Kamenec is the author of the text *Phenomenon of corruption in the process of the so-called solution of the Jewish question in Slovakia 1938-1945* (pp. 342-369), whereas Ján Hlavinka wrote the chapter "*Capital must serve the people...*" *Corruption in the process of arianization of factory property in Slovakia* (pp. 374-416). Kamenec observes one morbid regularity: in totalitarian regimes, and fascism and Nazism hold the most notorious place in the scale according to historiography, their victims become actors of corruption, but not for the sake of gaining some benefits, but for the sake of saving their own life and existence. This was the

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<sup>1</sup> Cieger András, *Politikai korrupció a Monarchia*

*Magyarországon.* Napvilág Kiadó, Budapest, 2011.

case with Slovak Jews. In 1939, there were about 89,000 Jews in the puppet state of Slovak Republic, which was dependent on Nazi Germany. At the end of the war, only one in ten members of this nation stayed alive. Some of them were saved thanks to corruption. Ján Hlavinka follows the fate of Jewish factories and capital on the ground of Slovakia. Confiscation and redistribution of property of Jewish families was also accompanied by corruption.

That corruption is a universal phenomenon of human society and an inevitable vice is confirmed by the two final chapters in the book. Roman Đambazovič (*A view of the public: is there a corruption climate in Slovakia?* pp. 422-459) and co-authors Emilia Sičáková and Gabriel Šipoš (*Corruption and anti-corruption measures in Slovakia (1995-2012)*, pp. 464-517) analyse sociological and political aspects of the phenomenon of corruption in contemporary Slovak society. Besides traditional actors – state institutions, political parties, and political and economic elites, the area of their interest is public space and the power of public opinion as the modern determinants of any successful fight against corruption.

At the end of the book there is a brief *Conclusion* (pp. 520-523). The impression is that corruption, in addition to the proclaimed universality, changed its forms in certain historical epochs and social conditions and represents a dynamic structure like society itself. What follows is a list of authors and institutions in which they are employed, a comprehensive overview of the used archival and published sources and scientific literature (pp. 524-546). To begin with, both in the footnotes that always follow the chapter and thus do not burden the presentation, and in the list of sources materials are listed from the archives in Bratislava, Vienna, Budapest, Prague and other cities where the authors conducted their investigation. After that follows the inevitable summary in English (pp. 548-557) and the register. The authors' texts, as if by consensus, are accompanied by quotations of historical sources that directly speak of corruption. This impression is enhanced by caricatures taken from the press as well as

pamphlets, photographs of historical documents, personalities and events. The simplicity of the texts is also facilitated by numerous tables and statistics. Finally, although it is a personal judgement, the book is nicely designed, with a particular artistic solution of its covers, which points to a hidden form of corruption.

Finally, it should be noted that the monograph of this group of authors dedicated to the historical and contemporary phenomenon of corruption is in many ways a pioneering and original scientific endeavour. We believe that, due to its scientific conclusions, it will become unavoidable literature and a methodological model for all new research studies of this topic.

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Svetozar Boškov, *Antiquity in history teaching: studies and research*, Novi Sad: Filozofski fakultet, 2016, pp. 236.

(Светозар Бошков, *Антика у настави историје. Студије и истраживања*, Нови Сад: Филозофски факултет, 2016, 236 стр.)

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At the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> and the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century a modern educational system was created in Serbian schools in southern Hungary and Serbia. At that time teaching was organized on a classical basis and education was established on antique models. At the same time modern critical historiography was being established. Education, therefore, played a crucial role in the fact that antique history was singled out very early as a field of scientific interest. The first papers dealing with antique topics, although written with the intention to be used as course books for history classes, were recognized and marked as the beginning of scientific treatment of antique history among Serbs because of their scientific foundation and methodology.

The appearance and development of antique historiography presents a field of interest for a whole range of disciplines of history, archeology and classical sciences. There is an increasingly