

BOOK NOTICE

Raymond Koen*

***Confronting Corruption:
Past Concerns, Present Challenges and Future Strategies***

Fritz Heimann and Mark Pieth

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xxi and 287 pages

Soft cover

The literature on corruption and anti-corruption has mushroomed over the last decade or so. Of course, all research and writing on the problem of corruption and the fight against it are to be welcomed. Regrettably, however, with volume come fragmentation and specialisation and their concomitant quandaries. Indeed, any person wanting to understand the field would be hard-pressed to find a source or even a manageable bundle of sources which encompasses the crucial issues lucidly and logically.

Let it be said upfront that *Confronting Corruption* by Fritz Heimann and Mark Pieth is not the storied single-volume holdall of definitiveness in the field. No doubt, the authors would be the first to dissociate themselves, smartly and tartly, from any such claim. Be that as it may, theirs remains a rather impressive cornucopia of accumulated knowledge, distilled wisdom and practical know-how. In fewer than 300 pages they manage to give us a fairly holistic delineation of the past, present and future of corruption and anti-corruption. Little wonder that President Jimmy Carter took the time to write the foreword.

* LLM PhD (UCT), Associate Professor, Department of Criminal Justice and Procedure, Faculty of Law, University of the Western Cape. E-mail: rkoen@uwc.ac.za.

The book consists of 23 chapters organised in six substantive parts which are titled, *seriatim*, “Setting the Scene” (Chapters 1 to 4), “Drivers of Change” (Chapters 5 to 8), “Pervasive Trouble Spots” (Chapters 9 to 16), “Criminal Law and other Forms of Regulation” (Chapters 17 and 18), “Private Sector Responses” (Chapters 19 and 20) and “Moving Forward” (Chapters 21 to 23). As is evident, these titles span the entire field, more or less. They incorporate such necessities as the meaning and extent of corruption, the evolution of international anti-corruption law, the key sites of corruption, the prosecution and punishment of corruption, and the elements of a practicable long-term anti-corruption strategy. The text is followed by eleven pages of wide-ranging primary and secondary bibliographical sources and the book ends with a useful seven-page combined index of names and topics. Collectively, the 23 chapters capture well the global constitution of corruption and anti-corruption. Think of any issue pertaining to the field and you likely will find it discussed, to a greater or lesser extent, in the pages of this book, from juicy international corruption scandals, through the construction of the anti-corruption movement, to what is to be done to make headway against the hydra of corruption.

Despite its relative brevity, the book presents the reader with a fairly generous serving of current information, nuanced analyses, sensible advice and thoughtful prognoses. This has to be seen as a *coup* of sorts, which may be ascribed in large part, if not entirely, to the fact that both authors are veterans of the international anti-corruption movement, which they had a significant say in shaping. Although both are lawyers, they come from quite different backgrounds, making for a potent mix of knowledge, skills and perspectives when they collaborate on a book to confront corruption. As one of the headings used in the book so strikingly indicates, they were “present at the creation” of the anti-corruption movement.¹ In other words, they are not tyro wannabees who are trying to cash in on the market for anti-corruption literature. They have been in the trenches of the fight against corruption, assembling their knowledge and honing their expertise over a large number of years. They are the real deal, the genuine article, so to speak. That is why they have been able to offer so much within the constraints of a text of 267 pages.

Confronting Corruption approximates to an Everyman’s guide to a subject which affects seriously every man and woman across the globe. It stands up to the rigours of conventional academic scrutiny. It is analytically mature and on solid ground philosophically. Those in search of an up-to-date *vade mecum* on

1 Heading 1 of Chapter 2.

corruption and anti-corruption will not be disappointed by the book. Those who want to make sense of the composition and complexity of the field will find many helpful signposts throughout the book. And those who seek to make a practical difference in the fight against corruption, internationally or domestically, can learn much from the adventures (and misadventures) of the authors. In a word, *Confronting Corruption* is a work of some considerable accomplishment which anybody committed to stemming the flood of corruption could consult with rich reward.