ACTIVELY LISTENING TO REISS

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INTRODUCTION

Active listening consists of several stages: we hear, we carefully process information, we think about it, we are interested and, finally, we understand it. All the mentioned stages require patience. Since people today are increasingly dissatisfied, it is logical that they are also more impatient. It is the same with corruption. In both situations, the result is similar. Impatience and dissatisfaction are growing, so that someone else is always to blame for corruption. It is easy, in this way, to find yourself in a vicious circle. For this reason, it would be very useful if we once again actively listen to Reiss's warnings and act together proactively in the prevention of corruption.

There is no state, from ancient times to modern times, that has not faced the phenomenon of corruption. Namely, the evolution of corruption is, as historical facts show, symbiotically connected with the creation and development of the state (Božović, 2022:299). The paper will briefly show the socio-historical context in which Reiss wrote his book, then discuss some of the emerging forms of corruption that he pointed out, and finally, by actively listening to Reiss, give some ideas for the improvement of modern anti-corruption measures within the corruption prevention framework in Serbia.

Serbia was granted state independence in 1878 - at a time when less than one fifth of today's states enjoyed such a status. Four years later, it was declared a kingdom. With the liberation of Kosovo, Metohija, the areas of Novi Pazar and Vardar Macedonia in 1912 and after the annexation of Banat, Bačka, Baranja and the Kingdom of Montenegro, Serbia together with the unrecognized state of Slovenes, Croats and Serbs established the first Yugoslav state - the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes (Kingdom). In 1929, this kingdom was renamed the Kingdom of Yugoslavia (Antić, 2021:12-13). During the existence of the Kingdom, corruption was indeed a significant problem. The newly formed kingdom faced challenges in establishing strong governance structures and combating corruption due to various factors such as regional disparities, ethnic tensions, and a lack of institutional capacity. The nascent institutions of the kingdom struggled to establish effective anti-corruption mechanisms. Lack of transparency further facilitated corrupt activities among officials at various levels.

Dr Archibald Reiss (1875-1929), Swiss forensic scientist, publicist, doctor of chemistry and professor at the University of Lausanne, participated in the creation of that history. Namely, during the First Balkan War in 1912, Reiss was a reporter in Thessaloniki. At the invitation of the Serbian government, Reiss came to Serbia in 1914 to investigate the crimes of the Austro-Hungarian, German and Bulgarian armies against the Serbian civilian population, about which he wrote many reports, papers and books. In this regard, as an expert on war crimes against Serbs in the First World War (WW I), he was a member of the government delegation at the Paris Peace Conference. He crossed Albania and the Thessaloniki front with the Serbian army. In the post WW I era he modernized the forensics of the Ministry of the Interior and was the first director of the Police School in Belgrade.

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BRIEF OVERVIEW OF REISS'S WARNINGS

Archibald Reiss had a significant role in the Serbian society in the post WW I era. Among many things he did for Serbia and the Serbs, he left his political testimony and moral reflection over conditions in the Serbian society, especially about the political actors, institutions, and political culture and practice (Stanković, 2018:56).

The set of Reiss's insights were exposed in his short book "Listen, Serbs!", posthumously published according to the author's will. The book was written in 1928, and was dated June 1, 1928, a little more than a year before his death. The first edition waited for decades to be published. "Listen, Serbs!" got its first edition in 1997, but in the end, the work in its integral part was published in the Serbian language and distributed free of charge in 2004. The book is divided into five parts: Virtues, Flaws, About Intelligence, About Politicians, and About Youth.

Reiss's analysis is not uttered in the form of a scientific system. It is a set of direct observations and critical judgments. It encompasses description, explanation, and critical assessment of the political events, social processes, and political and social actors. As it was pointed out in sociological literature, Reiss made a concise and fruitful overview of political values, moral orientations, and psychological profiles of all social strata in Serbia in the post WW I era (Šuvaković, 2019:354).

Based on the book itself, we can conclude that Reiss was a conservative, traditionalist, meritocrat and populist - he opposed women's education, parliamentarianism and the abandonment of the countryside; believed that a successful country should develop on agriculture and glorified the Serbian peasant.

Although Reiss conceived the book as a warning, writing about the virtues and faults of Serbs, what interests us in this paper are Reiss's warnings about corruption. His recognition of corrupt actions is close to the modern understanding of corruption, regardless of the fact that, according to the time in which he lived, he does not use modern terminology. This is how he writes about the venality of the "intelligentsia", from the smallest official to the minister (Rajs, 2004:38-39), recognizing actually administrative and political corruption, while also finding mitigating circumstances in the *culture of corruption* inherited from the Ottoman Empire.[2] He recognizes and describes the conflict of interests of Milan Stojadinović, who as the Minister of Finance uses insider information for his own enrichment and the enrichment of persons connected to him. Writing about the enrichment of ministers after coming to public office, he actually points to the lack of mechanisms for reporting the assets and income of public officials and checking their lifestyle. He points to post-war patrimonialism, which enabled the "intelligentsia" to "shamelessly plunder" state property, making it "a hotbed of rot and corruption". Writing about politicians, he points to various forms of political corruption, the basic characteristic of which is "struggle for power". Although formally only two parties bear the name "Corruption"[3], Reiss actually writes a lot about different forms of political corruption, giving them appropriate names at the time, which essentially correspond to the nature of the described corrupt actions - "party connections", "party police", "downfall of parliamentarianism", "abuse of elections". In

2 In this context, we should not forget what Reiss does not state: that in fact the social arrangements of Antiquity can be considered the generators and roots of corruption in Europe. Namely, those social arrangements were based on the cumulation of the functions of rulers and officials, which enables a conflict of interests; competences established in a way that allows for exceptions in application; discriminatory provisions of the regulations depending on the status of the individual and the discretionary basis for decision-making by the ruler and his officials (Božović, 2024).

3 In comparative practice, the definition of the World Bank is most often used, according to which corruption is the "abuse of public authority for the purpose of obtaining private benefit", and at this point we will remind you of the only legal definition of corruption in our law, provided in the Law on Prevention of Corruption, according to which corruption is "a relationship arising from the use of an official or social position or influence in order to obtain an illegal benefit for oneself or another" (Božović, 2024).

the end, he blames Nikola Pašić for all of the above, whom he believes served as an example for those and such politicians. He describes the virtues of the Serbian people, but emphasizes the flaws as well, wanting to warn the Serbs to return to the virtues of which he was convinced during the war. In this context, he ends the book referring to the "spirit of Kosovo, Karađorđe, Kumanovo and Kajmakčalan", which needs to be reawakened (Rajs, 2004).

Did Reiss spare anyone in his merciless criticism of the political establishment of the day? Yes, King Alexander. He does not want to see the simple fact that the regime inaugurated by the Vidovdan constitution in 1921 established such an organization of the competences of central government bodies, which "deformed the constitutional principle of parliamentarianism, and negated the essential features of the parliamentary regime". This is supported by the fact that out of 23 governments, only two were replaced by the will of the National Assembly, and all the others by the ruler. After all, the same remark that Reiss makes to Pašić regarding getting rich could be made to King Alexander. The Swiss is silent about it - probably out of respect for Alexander's war merits (Šuvaković, 2019:342).

At first glance, it seems that Šuvaković is right. However, although Reiss did not explicitly mention King Alexander, he, as an experienced forensic scientist, implicitly "left a trail" that leads to King Alexander by pointing to ministers who became rich after being elected to public office. Namely, according to the available information, on the one hand, it was with some of the mentioned ministers that the king was involved in several corruption scandals, and on the other hand, without cooperation with the ministers of finance, he would not have been able to acquire numerous real estates and real wealth at the expense of the budget. We will mention only three examples.

Every year, the King received certain funds to cover the needs of the royal family and the court. It was called the "civil list", which was even doubled by various machinations to the detriment of the budget, but it was "not discussed". In addition, the king had the privilege of not paying taxes. According to the law, from 1928 onward, the tax was a duty that was not paid by the ruler on his private property. However, the law was so ambiguously formulated that, beyond the purpose for which it was enacted, the king's enterprises operating on a purely commercial basis were also exempted from paying taxes. In this area His Majesty the King's Civil House Act was the culmination of abuses and corruption. The entire court staff was given the position of civil servants, so instead of being from the "civil list" they were financed from the state budget (Bartoš, 1951).

The king became the owner of a large number of real estates, the acquisition (buildings or land), construction and/or furnishing were to a greater or lesser extent fully financed from the budget. The state first bought and furnished the castle of Prince Windischgretz in Bled, and then presented it to the king as a recognition for his wartime merits. The local authorities maintained the property at their own expense. In a similar way and under similar conditions, the estate in Han Pijesk, the castle of Archduke Fridrih of Belje, the castle in Zagreb, Demir gate, Morović and Miločer were presented to the king. Such solutions were made possible through "anonymous" financial laws, which contained a provision that read: "Decisions of the Ministerial Council are accepted and approved." After that, all individual decisions would be listed, with the number and date of adoption, but without any possibility for someone to inspect their content (Bartoš, 1951).

Perhaps the most significant of all corruption scandals, which generated enormous interest in its time and for which it was claimed that Alexander himself was an indirect actor, is The War damage scandal. This whole affair was very well known to Aleksandar, since the public was buzzing about it, but Stojadinović was calm, because he knew how much Aleksandar used the insider information he entrusted to him. The palace administration was one of the buyers of war damage, following "insider information", which according to Bartos was irrefutably established (Bartoš, 1951).

Of Reiss's warnings, we selected a few that we will mention and that will actually serve us to present ideas for improving the valid normative framework in Serbia in the same areas - conflict of interest, control of income and property of public officials, corruption proofing on regulation and anti-corruption education of young people.

Writing about venality as a trait of the "intelligentsia", Reiss states that numerous Serbian ministers have enriched themselves at the expense of the state by abusing their positions, and as the most typical example he cites Stojadinović, the Minister of Finance, who decides on the fate of war damage bonds, whose nominal value of 1,000 dinars fell to 50 and less, because the state did not pay the interest. During that period, he bought huge quantities of these bonds at a negligible price and, when he collected most of them for himself, he announced as a minister that the interest would be paid. At the same time, the bond rose to 250 dinars and more, and Stojadinović becomes a multimillionaire (Rajs, 2004:36-39).

Reiss states that from the war to 1928, he saw at least fifty ministers who became rich, even though they were poor before taking office, and he cites Vukićević, Lazar Marković, Boža Maksimović, Nikola Pašić, Velizar Janković, Momčilo Ninčić, Milan Stojadinović, as typical examples. In doing so, he not only mentions the huge property they acquired during the exercise of their duties, but as an experienced crime investigator he also points to their lifestyle, which far exceeds their legal income - huge monthly expenses, carefree gambling and losing large amounts of money, shopping exclusively in Paris, etc. (Rajs, 2004). In that period, in the Kingdom, as well as in the rest of the world, there were no anti-corruption measures that would enable the control of property and income of public officials. The absence of those measures in the mentioned period, on the one hand, and the enrichment of public officials, on the other hand, perhaps best indicate the necessity of improving the control of property and income in the present time.

Reiss had a very negative opinion of the assembly, claiming that laws are not debated and voted on following state and national interests, but the interests of political parties. As an example, he mentions the occasion when the assembly or the "parliament of slackers" urgently passed a law in 1914 exempting MPs from military duty, which made them unique among all their counterparts from the countries participating in the war (Rajs, 2004:62-63). Bearing in mind the previously mentioned laws that were passed so as to benefit primarily the monarch, and not the state and the budget, it is obvious that there was no mechanism for assessing the risk of corruption in the regulations in the Kingdom. A detailed analysis would probably reveal the existence of corruption risk factors in other regulations from that period as well.

From the way of writing and the character of the sentence, one gets the impression that he conceived his text as an alarm and at the same time as a call for critical reflection and urgent social action. However, for the sake of his scientific dignity and the possible political consequences, Reiss abandoned that intention (Petrović, 2019:321). The consideration of alternative directions in history originates from Greek philosophy, but writing alternative history is not new in the world. Counterfactual speculations in contemporary historiography are becoming more and more popular (Marković & Antić, 2021:13-19). Let us consider counterfactual history, in which Reiss publishes his book in 1928. It seems completely natural and human to wonder if we could have done better, all in order to avoid mistakes in the future. The question arises whether his warning would have been heard and listened to, and whether the publication of the book would have changed anything in the fight against corruption in the Kingdom.

From the moment of unification until 1928, political and inter-ethnic conflicts in the Kingdom intensified to a significant extent conditioned by the difficult economic situation, and were followed by more and more serious incidents in the parliament. In this context, we should not forget that on June 20, 1928, during the session of the National Assembly of the Kingdom, where various accusations of treason and corruption were heard, two MPs from the ranks of the HSS were killed, while the third

died of injuries a little over a month later. In addition, from November 6 to 12, 1928, the Fourth Congress of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia was held in Dresden, where the policy of destroying the Kingdom and creating independent national states was formulated. The collapse of the New York stock market and the economic crisis quickly spread to Europe, leading to a major crisis of democracy and the rise of totalitarian regimes. This further worsened the entire situation in the Kingdom. In such circumstances, the question of the survival of the state comes to the fore. After the murder, there was a major crisis, and on January 6, 1929, King Alexander suspended the Vidovdan Constitution and imposed a personal regime, making any legal political work impossible. Would a book like this change something in the Kingdom in terms of the fight against corruption, considering that in the observed period there was more talk about the civil war and the issue of amputation of part of the state territory? It would very likely serve as an additional justification for the introduction of a dictatorship, but it is hard to believe that it would lead to systemic changes or the prosecution of any of the ministers mentioned in the book. Reiss was certainly aware of the circumstances in which the Kingdom found itself at the time of the completion of his manuscript. We believe that he decided not to add fuel to the fire, knowing that his work would not produce the fundamental changes for which he wrote the book.

ARCHIBALD REISS FOR THE SECOND TIME AMONG THE SERBS

The first edition of Reiss's book that was published in its integral version in the Serbian language and in Serbia and distributed free of charge came only in 2004, many years after Reiss's death. Moreover, it is questionable how much of his writing was understood. Namely, that same year, representatives of the Government, the Ministry of Economy and Privatization and the Privatization Agency rejected the findings of the Anti-Corruption Council on the policy and process of privatization. Mirko Cvetković's government rejected all objections regarding privatization and transferred to the Council "an unacceptably low level of expert knowledge of the matter, numerous material errors and untruths, etc.".[4] Without going into the question of the quality of the Council's report at this point, the attitude of the then government about the inviolability of privatization and those who implemented it is much more significant. We still feel the consequences of such an attitude and such privatization today. It seems that the Government of Mirko Cvetković neither heard nor listened to Reiss's warnings to the Serbs.

What improved this poor start of active listening to Reiss was the ratification of the UNCAC and the adoption of the first National Strategy for the fight against corruption in 2005, as well as the creation of a normative and institutional framework for preventing corruption by passing key laws and establishing independent bodies – the Commissioner for Information of Public Importance, Ombudsman, State Audit Institution, and the Agency for the Fight against Corruption (now the Agency for the Prevention of Corruption – APC), started working on that wave in 2010, as a central institution in the prevention of corruption.

For example, Serbia has a normative framework that regulates the reports on the assets and income of public officials (hereinafter: the Report), prescribed by the Law on Prevention of Corruption, as one of the instruments for the fight against corruption. The obligation to submit the Report generally applies to all public officials, except for those who are explicitly listed as exceptions in Article 70 of the aforementioned law, and who do so only at the request of the Agency. The obligation to submit the Report also applies to persons who have ceased to hold public office, two years after the termination of public office. Article 101 of the aforementioned law prescribes the criminal offense of not declaring assets and income or providing false information about assets and income, which is punishable by a

4 https://www.arhiva.srbija.gov.rs/vesti/2004-01/23/343098.html. Downloaded 29.06.2024.

prison sentence of six months to five years. After the verdict of imprisonment for this criminal offense becomes final, the following legal consequences occur: 1) termination of public office/employment and 2) prohibition of acquiring public office for a period of ten years.

In addition, from the point of view of corruption prevention, the upcoming adoption of the third National Strategy for the fight against corruption is particularly significant. The first National Strategy was adopted in 2005, and the second in 2013. After a period of six years without a National Strategy, in which other strategic documents (action and operational plans) were used, Serbia will receive a new National Strategy for the period 2024-2028. The national strategy is planned to be implemented through the Action Plans 2024–2025 and 2026–2028. The strategic prevention of corruption in Serbia will be conditioned by its implementation, and the last year of the National Strategy's validity will be a good opportunity to once again ask the question whether we actively listened to Reiss, 100 years after the creation of his book.

PROROPOSED IDEAS / THE YEARS AHEAD

The relevance of Reiss's findings at that time is great. By reading the study, one not only gets a credible impression of the decline of society at that time, which is supported by later works in the field of history, as well as by historical sources of the first order, but inevitably notices a parallel with the current state of affairs in Serbian society (Šuvaković, 2019:331).

The 2006 Constitution of the Republic Serbia (CRS) contains several anti-corruption provisions, among which we can distinguish three types: the first refers to the conflict of interest, the second refers to the incompatibility of functions, and the third refers to the audit of public finances. Among the first, the most significant prohibition of conflict of interest in Article 6, was raised to the rank of a constitutional principle, which stipulates that no one can perform a state or public function that is in conflict with his other functions, jobs or private interests, and that the existence of a conflict of interest and responsibility for its resolution are determined by the Constitution and the law. Although the mere existence of such a principle is rare in constitutional practice and extremely important for the prevention of corruption, its deficiency is actually reflected in the stylization. It seems that wording like "it is prohibited" would prevent the relativization of this constitutional principle in legislative practice. (Božović, 2023:86).

The concept of conflict of interest is defined in a slightly different manner in Article 41, Paragraph 1.1. of the Law on Prevention of Corruption (LPC), so that the term means a situation in which a public official has a private interest that influences, can influence, or appears to influence the performance of a public function. In addition, this law does not distinguish between state and public functions, but treats all functions exclusively as public.

The principles of the constitution are the most general and basic political and legal principles on which the state is based, and more broadly, the entire political life in a country. Constitutional principles are the guardian of the constitution and constitutionality because they prevent the ultimate outcome of the implementation of the constitution by state bodies from being a violation of the constitution (Vučković, 2022). The importance of the prohibition of conflicts of interest as one of the instruments that ensures respect for the principle of separation of powers and the rule of law is the reason why the prohibition of conflicts of interest is prescribed in the Constitution as the highest legal act. The prohibition of conflicts of interest is general. It refers to any person who performs state or public functions (Pajvančić, 2009:19). However, the wording of the principle of prohibition of conflicts of interest

in Article 6, paragraph 2 of the CRS is an example of an incomprehensible "and illiterate" provision, and it remains unexplained what the CRS means by "state" and what by "public" function (Markovi ć, 2006:9). During the elaboration of this constitutional principle, the provisions of the Law on the Anti-corruption Agency completely ignored the existence of state functions, from which it follows that there are only public functions, for which there is no constitutional basis. The aforementioned inconsistency was not removed even upon the adoption of the LPC. The *rationale* behind this remains completely unclear.

In accordance with the above, for the sake of consistent application of the constitutional principle on the prohibition of conflicts of interest, the LPC should first define the concept of state function, and then redefine the concept of public function in accordance with that definition. Since 2008, when the Law on the Anti-corruption Agency was adopted, not only was the definition of state functions omitted without a constitutional basis, but the concept of public function was over-sized in populism, which was not correlated with the projected capacities of the APC. In this regard, the LPC in 2020 did not bring anything new either.

In this manner, the current situation would be avoided, in which, first in 2008 and then in 2020, the provisions of the Law on the Anti-Corruption Agency and subsequently the LPC comprise an overly broad definition of the term public official so that at the present moment there are slightly more than 44,000 active public officials in Serbia, because public officials include at the same time a member of the board of directors of the library and the president of the Government of the Republic of Serbia (Božović, 2023:86).

Of course, such changes to the LPC should not be an end in themselves, in order to consistently develop the constitutional principle of prohibiting conflicts of interest. Based on the explicit provision of state functions as a special category, we believe that the goal of the constitution maker was not to apply the same legal regime of supervision and control by the APC to these two groups of functions.

It is logical to assume that the idea of the constitution maker was that state functions refer to state bodies at the republic level (an authority of the Republic of Serbia), as well as to institutions, public enterprise and any other legal person whose founder or member is the Republic of Serbia. Accordingly, public functions would include authority of an autonomous province, local self-government unit and city municipality, as well as institutions, public enterprises and any other legal person whose founders or members they may be. In this sense, the definition of the state function and the demarcation in relation to the public function should be accompanied by a change in the Agency's focus, which would be predominantly directed at state functions. At the same time, this would contribute to the APC exercising its responsibilities in a shorter time frame, more efficiently and effectively, given the smaller number of state officials compared to the existing number of public officials.

Public functions could be further categorized, whereby the primary group would be authority of autonomous province, local self-government unit and city municipality, as well as the bodies of public enterprises and other companies, and the secondary group would be the bodies, institutions etc., all in accordance with the vulnerable areas foreseen in the National Strategy and assessments regarding the risk of corruption.

Both state and public officials would continue to have unchanged obligations regarding conflicts of interest, accumulation of functions and gifts. The criteria for simultaneous performance of functions, i.e. simultaneous performance of functions and performance of work, would remain unchanged, but prior consent of the APC would be necessary for public officials. What would significantly differ between state and public officials is that the first group would still have unchanged obligations to submit

the Report of Assets and Income (Report), while public officials would have the obligation to submit the Report at the request of the APC, in accordance with Article 70 of the LPC, in accordance with the criteria established by the Methodology.

Although there are no major objections to the normative and institutional framework for submitting and verifying the Report, this does not mean that they cannot be improved. In this sense, the key recommendations for more efficient and effective checks of the Report are the improvement of the normative framework and the improvement of the APC capacity.

The improvement of the organizational and personnel capacities of the APC would include the complete digitization of registers and procedures, which would eventually lead to the automation of the verification of the Report by connecting it qualitatively with other public registers. The "principle of one counter" would increase the reliability of data from the Register of Assets and Income of Public Officials, and at the same time facilitate and automate the obligation of public officials. Thus, the data on property and income previously reported by a public official to another competent authority (submitted tax return, registered real estate, etc.) would automatically be downloaded into the said register. In the described way, the limited personnel capacities of the APC, in which the primary verification and verification of the Report is performed by a dozen employees, would be overcome. In the final outcome, it would enable comprehensive checks of the Report in real time and monitoring the Financial Status (lifestyle) of public officials.

A special improvement is also necessary in the very definition of the mentioned criminal act in Article 101 LPC. Namely, it is not easy to prove the intention for the existence of the mentioned criminal act in court proceedings, and there is almost no way to objectively establish that the intention was the one that is criminally sanctioned. On the other hand, the current norm is too strict, because no distinction is made in essentially different and unequally important situations in which the official violated his obligation. For example. the law does not make a distinction whether information is omitted about some property that the official legally inherited and registered in the Real Estate Cadastre, or hidden property whose formal owner is a related party. In addition, the current norm does not include former officials who also have the duty to submit a report after the termination of public office, so there is no reason for them to be amnestied from criminal liability for this act.

Analysing the data published in the APC's Annual Work Reports[5] on criminal charges filed for criminal offenses under Article 72 of the Law on the Anti-Corruption Agency and Article 101 of the Law on Prevention of Corruption, it can be concluded that in the period from 2010 to 2022, the competent public prosecutor's office dismissed 34 criminal charges using the principle of opportunity.

The public prosecutor has the right to decide, based on the principle of opportunity, whether to require the suspect to fulfil one or more obligations. In order to defer criminal prosecution, the public prosecutor will determine the obligations which a suspect must fulfil, and a time limit during which the suspect must fulfil the obligations undertaken, with the provision that the time limit may not exceed one year. Terms of an agreement cannot be deferred. If the suspect fails to fulfil the obligation(s) undertaken, the public prosecutor will continue with the criminal prosecution in order to decide on the criminal complaint/allegation and whether to bring an indictment against the suspect.

However, the question arises of the adequacy of the application of the principle of opportunity, primarily because after the conclusion of the agreement, assets and income still remain unreported. For this reason, it is necessary to amend the criminal regulations, whereby the application of the principle of opportunity will necessarily include the submission of the Report, along with the performance of other obligations.

5 https://www.acas.rs/cyr/pages/godi%C5%A1nji_izve%C5%A1taj. Downloaded 29.06.2024.

Reiss had a negative opinion of parliamentarianism as a way of organizing government. One of the reasons was that, in his opinion, people's deputies did not pass laws in the interest of the state, but in the interest of the political parties they belonged to and in their own interest. In Reiss's time, nowhere in the world, not even in Serbia, was a mechanism developed to corruption proofing on legislation (CPL), which would have prevented the adoption of such laws. Today in Serbia, the situation is different - after the adoption of the LPC, state administration bodies have an explicit obligation to submit draft laws to the APC for the purpose of assessing the risk factor of corruption. The practice of the APC has shown that improvements are necessary in that process, which is why the APC submitted an initiative for amendments to the LPC. However, what is crucial in this segment is that the National Assembly represents the last barrier to prevent the domino effect and the spillover of corruption risk factors from laws into individual legal acts - decisions, judgments, etc. Therefore, for key improvements in this area, amendments to the law are not necessary, as amendments to the Rules of Procedure of the National Assembly are sufficient. With those changes, the parliamentary discussion, or at least the discussion of the departmental committee, would necessarily include a discussion of the risk factors of corruption in the draft law. Of course, as the founder of the Agency, the National Assembly could, according to its best understanding, always use all the Agency's capacities in this area. In this way, the mechanism of CPL would turn from a pillar into a foundation of corruption prevention.

And finally, but perhaps most importantly, prevention of corruption as a process will inevitably be more successful if it is focused on the target group that will biologically participate in the process for the longest time - the young. The best tool in that process is anti-corruption youth education. This is a critical component in the fight against corruption. It involves raising awareness about the negative impacts of corruption on society and promoting ethical values, integrity, transparency, and accountability. This type of education aims to empower individuals to resist and report corrupt practices, as well as to promote good governance and the rule of law. Anti-corruption education targeted at youth is particularly important as it helps instil ethical values and integrity from a young age. By educating young people about the negative impacts of corruption and empowering them to make ethical decisions, we can create a generation that is more resistant to engaging in or tolerating corrupt practices. This type of education must take place in schools through anti-corruption curricula, extracurricular activities promoting integrity and transparency, and workshops focusing on ethical leadership. Engaging youth in discussions about corruption, encouraging them to ask questions and think critically about the world around them, and providing them with the tools to challenge corruption can help shape them into responsible and ethical persons. When children and youth are building character and an understanding of societal norms at the primary and secondary education levels, it is critical to instil a well-rounded understanding of respect, ethics and integrity. The goal is very simple - to build a culture of integrity. The APC recognized the importance of anti-corruption education of young people and initiated some processes at the faculties. However, it must be the concern of the whole society - immediately and in the entire educational system.

CONCLUSION

The existence of corruption is closely related to the existence of the state. Every country in the world has experienced it to some extent. A brief analysis of Reiss's book indicates that a political system per se may be a generator of corruption, and this probably applies more or less to every political system in the world. Active listening to Reiss's warnings today seems to us more important than ever. Actively listening to Reiss does not mean political bickering and accusing the other side of corruption. Active listening to Reiss means daily proactive action and prevention of corruption and its suppression,

whenever necessary. Actively listening to Reiss means eliminating corruption and building a Serbian society based on a culture of integrity. Actively listen to Reiss, Serbs!

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